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Components of family resilience in the context of a disadvantaged neighbourhood. Perspective of a longitudinal research

Komponenty *resilience* rodzin z defaworyzowanych sąsiedztw w obiektywie badań longitudinalnych

Abstract

Aim. The article presents some of the results of a study uncovering disadvantaged neighbourhood (DN) life-long effects on its male residents. It seeks for reconstruction of the risks of DN faced by its youth and resilience components of their families. The article adds to the discourse on the model of strength-based socio-educational work with DN communities.

Materials and methods. The empirical materials analysed are part of a longitudinal qualitative study (Holland, Thomson, & Henderson, 2004). Its first stage (2001–2005) was a socially engaged observation of the everyday life of a group of teenage boys. Narrative interviews conducted with ten, now adult, participants of the original study (2016–2019) constituted its second stage. The process of data collection and analysis was regulated by the principles of the grounded theory method in its constructivist approach (Charmaz, 2009).

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Results and conclusion. The study results include the components of a processually understood family resilience, reconstructed from the perspective of the study participants. Resilience uncovered in the study is an image of the magic of everyday life, ordinary/ extraordinary activities that strengthen the resistance of adolescents to risks and unfavourable conditions of the immediate environment. The study showed that in the case of environments whose disadvantage is multidimensional and comprehensive, a broad, ecological approach to the resilience of families with DN is needed to capture the variants of connections between individual abilities, family properties, processes taking place within the families, and between them and their neighbourhoods or/ and institutional or structural determinants.

Keywords: disadvantaged neighbourhoods (DN), territorial stigma, development risks in DN, family resilience, longitudinal qualitative research.

Abstrakt

Cel. Artykuł prezentuje część wyników badania odkrywającego znaczenie dorastania w defaworyzowanym sąsiedztwie (DS) w przebiegu życia mieszkańców. Jego celem jest rekonstrukcja komponentów resiliencji rodzin z DS. Na tle zagrożeń takiego miejsca życia, zidentyfikowanych przez uczestników badania (kiedyś nastoletnich chłopaków zamieszkujących to samo DS), uchwycone zostały procesy relacyjne w rodzinie, chroniące ich przed niekorzystnymi wpływami społecznymi oraz przed konsekwencjami ubóstwa edukacyjnych zasobów w ich najbliższym otoczeniu. Drugim celem artykułu jest ożywienie dyskusji wokół modelu opartej na siłach pracy społeczno-wychowawczej ze społecznościami DS.

Materiały i metody. Materiały empiryczne poddane analizie są częścią longitudinalnego badania jakościowego (Holland, Thomson, Henderson, 2004). Jego pierwszy etap (2001–2005) był społecznie zaangażowaną obserwacją codzienności grupy nastoletnich chłopaków w kontekście DS. Drugą część badania stanowiły wywiady narracyjne przeprowadzone z dziesięcioma dzisiaj dorosłymi już uczestnikami pierwotnego badania (2016–2019). Treść wywiadów była kluczowym źródłem analizy, a materiały empiryczne z obserwacji sprzed lat pełniły funkcję jego uzupełnienia, kontekstualizacji. Proces zbierania i analizy danych regulowały zasady konstruktywistycznej metody generowania teorii ugruntowanej (Charmaz, 2009).

Wyniki i wnioski. Wyniki badania obejmują komponenty resiliencji rodzin rozumianej procesualnie. Resiliencja odkryta w badaniu jest obrazem magii codzienności, zwykłych-niezwykłych działań wzmacniających opór dorastającej młodzieży wobec pokus i niekorzystnych warunków najbliższego otoczenia. Badanie wykazało, że w przypadku środowisk, których defaworyzacja jest wielostronna i kompleksowo warunkowana, potrzebne jest szerokie, ekologiczne ujęcie resiliencji rodzin z DS, by uchwycić warianty powiązań

pomiędzy indywidualnymi zdolnościami, własnościami rodzin, procesami zachodzącymi wewnątrz nich oraz pomiędzy nimi a sąsiedztwem czy/i instytucjonalnymi czy strukturalnymi uwarunkowaniami.

Słowa kluczowe: stygma terytorialna, zagrożenia rozwoju w DS, resiliencja rodzin, defaworyzowane sąsiedztwo, longitudinalne badanie jakościowe.

Introduction

In this research paper, I address the topic of resilience of families from disadvantaged neighbourhoods (DN) and it is part of the author's series of publications on the socio-educational aspects of growing up in such living environments, which I discovered in the course of a longitudinal qualitative research (LQR) study. The participants were adult men, once living together in one such neighbourhood in the centre of Łódź. I understand disadvantaged neighbourhoods (DN) as places of life with a reduced level of social recognition, concentrating in their area disadvantageous processes determining lower life chances and opportunities for social advancement of their residents (Gulczyńska, 2022; Gulczyńska, Granosik, 2022).

My interest in the phenomenon of resilience of families bringing up children in such environments stems from my scientific self-identification. As a social pedagogue, I understand the processes of upbringing in close connection with the living environment, in the diagnosis of which I focus on its strengths to use them to trigger processes of social co-creation of change based on the respect for the disempowered perspective. The strengths paradigm, in contrast to the one that exposes deficits, is still not satisfactorily developed in the study of urban local communities experiencing disempowerment. Arguments supporting this thesis are provided by the numerous empirically produced images of families from such communities. Their composition is dominated by a message emphasising the multiplicity of social problems represented by families with DN, distributing the accents of responsibility for them unevenly between the families themselves, presented as educationally inefficient, often – claiming – and structures independent of them, which invisibly, but significantly contextualise the unfavourable conditions of their life and socialisation.

The main objective of this contribution is to reconstruct the components of the resilience of families with DN captured through the lens of interpretative research, that is, presenting the phenomenon of interest to the researcher as it is to the subjects who experience it. The view of the resilience of families presented in the paper exposes their strengths in buffering the negative influences of the immediate social environment and compensating for the poverty of formal educational resources

in the everyday life of the young generation. The second aim, meanwhile, is to dynamize the discussion around a model of socio-educational work revitalising the potentials of families with DN, which bases the process of positive change on the discovery, and activation of their individual strengths, rather than on the construction of rescue, compensatory, or therapeutic interventions based on diagnoses focused on dysfunctions and areas of inefficiency.

In the first part of this contribution, I discuss the theoretical basis of the analysis. I focus on the differences between the negative and positive discourse developed around the so-called "neighbourhood effect" and the implications that the dominance of the former description may have for the quality of life of families and the effectiveness of interventions in their living environment. I also present the understanding of resilience adopted in the study and its potential for empowering residents' perspectives in socio-educational research and practice. I subsequently focus on the methodological aspects of the study. The central part of the paper is a reconstruction of the threats in DN and the components of family resilience that buffer their agency in the lives of young residents, using the example of one such neighbourhood in Łódź. The paper closes with a conclusion with a synthetic summary of the results of the study.

Reasoning for the need to develop a positive discourse around families with DN

Disadvantaged neighbourhoods (DN) as nurturing environments are of interest to many scientific disciplines. They have found their abundant empirical documentation in the interdisciplinary discourse centred on the phenomenon of the "neighbourhood effect." The emerging view of DN as a context for the socialisation and upbringing of children and young people is mainly expressed in the language of deficits. Such places are presented through the prism of the aggregation of many social problems (Warzywoda-Kruszyńska, 1998, Bunio-Mroczek, 2010; Warzywoda-Kruszyńska, Jankowski, 2013; Mordwa, 2017), as fostering negative socialisation in local peer groups (e.g., Crane, 1991), condemning one to be modelled by unfavourable personal role models in a living environment poor in middle-class normative references (Leventhal, Brooks-Gunn, 2000), preventing social advancement due to enslaving loyalty bonds (O'Donnell, 1981), threatening difficulties in the well-being of children and adolescents (Liu, Kia-Keating, Santacrose, & Modir, 2018), having an unprivileged position in the distribution of formal care resources (Loeb et al., 2004) and education (Condron, Roscigno, 2003; Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2002), as well as experiencing stigmatisation of res-

idents in relationships with institutions (Rios-Moore et al., 2004; Alexander, 2012) and increased institutional control (e.g., Cahill, Stoudt, & Torre, 2019).

On the background of the lavishly illustrated constraints and barriers to development in DN, one is struck by the modesty of the empirically supported images highlighting the individual, social, economic or cultural forces of such places. This disparity in the discursively produced representation of DN as living environments is astonishing. This is because academic debates emphasise humanistic depictions of human beings struggling with adversity, while the research output on DN is dominated by negative images that present their residents as problematic and highlight the deficits of their living places.

As a social pedagogue, I see certain dangers in such a reflection of DN in the social sciences. The first is the perspective alien to the subjects themselves in describing their lives and problems. Research that exposes deficits refers to the norms of objective science, the logic of which differs from that of subjective or locally constructed science, and therefore support models based on them do not always accurately identify problems considered real in the lived world of the pupils or their families. The support infrastructure created in this way may not be recognised by the local population, which I see as one of the reasons for the widening gap between the real state of needs and the designed socio-educational measures.

Additionally, the language of deficits, prevalent in the description of such communities, can contribute to perpetuating, rather than changing, a status quo in which their position relative to other groups of city citizens is far from sustainable. Explanations of the impact of such places on the development of residents, exposing deficiencies, contribute to stigmatisation in resource distribution processes and sustain divisions of the urban population into those "deserving" and "undeserving." The perpetuation of processes of spatial-social segregation threatens to reinforce the reduction in financial support documented in the research for educational programmes that raise young DN residents' awareness of structural inequalities, teach active citizenship, and empower their voice in the distribution of power and prestige in the city in the future. Science's provision of a language for describing DN in terms of deficits may threaten to exacerbate these inequalities when we look at contemporary revitalisation developments and reflect on the relationship of their concepts to the stigmatisation of residents of impoverished communities. Research has shown that during such thoroughgoing, exposing and conflict-of-interest-inducing big-budget changes, discourses negatively labelling DN residents are revived, including attributing responsibility to them for the critical state of their places of residence. The negative discourse constructed around DN can provide justifications for changes to the fabric of the city, resulting in the destabilisation and further marginalisation of DN residents (Wacquant, 2007, p. 69). The stigma of place provides arguments in support of a fundamental class

transformation, usually implemented through the demolition of existing buildings (demolition land clearance), the building of infrastructure and service offerings aimed at wealthier residents (in: Kallin, Slater, 2014). Within this view, effective justifications for gentrification can be seen in promoting the development of a negative discourse around DN.

In such a multifaceted context, research that enriches the positive discourse developed around DN becomes particularly important. Above all, their feature is to empower the perspective of the residents themselves in explaining their living situation and designing the needed changes based on the strengths of the discredited communities themselves, including the potentials of their families. This paper addresses this need as it uncovers the strengths in the everyday lives of families with DN in their processes of buffering negative social impacts on their children and coping with structural barriers to equal life chances in a disadvantaged place of residence. The theoretical framework orienting the researcher's attention to the strengths of the study participants' families was the concept of resilience.

Resilience of families with DN as a sensitising concept in research

A rich output of research on the educational aspects of DM shows that, despite the many risks of socialisation in such places (Brenner, Zimmerman, Bauermeister, & Caldwell, 2013), their young residents manifest coping strategies "despite," their resilience becomes apparent (Gaylord-Harden, Barbarin, Tolan, & Murry, 2018; Rabinowitz et al., 2019). An indirect role in their development is attributed to the family. The concept of resilience has been widely applied in uncovering and organising knowledge about the role of families with DN in buffering the outcomes of negative social influences and structurally embedded inequality in educational resources. Some have demonstrated the fundamental importance of positive relationships between children and parents (Barnhart, Bode, Gearhart, & Maguire-Jack, 2022) and the centrality of the family in the value system of its members for enhancing life chances in disadvantaged communities (Falicov, 1998). The latter property is particularly strongly represented in studies of Latin American impoverished communities, which cherish loyalty to their indigenous identity and prioritise family members' interdependence on each other over independence, and cooperation over competition (Falicov, 1998).

Family resilience increases when the family's neighbourhood serves as a cohesive community. In such living spaces, feelings of togetherness and acceptance are a source of strength for families in their coping with adversity, enabling them to sustain well-being, good health, and a sense of security (Van Gundy, Stracuzzi,

Rebellon, Tucker, & Cohn, 2011). Close communities offer both mutual monitoring of children's safety and responsiveness when children are at risk while playing in the neighbourhood (Barnhart et al., 2022). The empowerment of young residents is served by positive family attitudes towards education. Research conducted in communities experiencing relocation in the course of redevelopment has documented stronger resilience of children of parents with higher education (with diploma) compared to others (Eiseman, Cove, & Popkin, 2005). Research has also uncovered associations between parents' involvement in their children's school reality, expressed in homework help, interest in school performance, attendance at assemblies or school visits when performance is deteriorating, and their children's attribution of importance to education (Nord, West, 2001). In addition, the literature documents a record of extended family members (mainly siblings or distant relatives) whose educational support was attentive to education and, with it, increased protection for children and young people with DN from the adverse effects of growing up in impoverished neighbourhoods (Nord, West, 2001).

In the referenced studies, resilience is exemplified both in the form of individual characteristics of individuals, family ownership as well as processes within family life or the relationship between family and neighbourhood. My study, through its longitudinal nature, has made it possible to illustrate the resilience of families in a dynamic, not static, way. I reconstruct its components in the form of processes, not protective factors or traits of individuals subjected to adverse influences. In this sense, the study saturates the concept of resilience, reduced to social relationships (Luthar, 2006, p. 780), especially those that enable positive development despite negative circumstances (Masten, 2001; Norman, 2000).

In the presented results of the analysis, the concept of resilience fulfils a sensitising role, which stems from the assumption of empowering the perspective of the research participants. Against the backdrop of various proposals for understanding and operationalising family resilience, Froma Walsh's (2016) account seemed the most dynamic and receptive to the cultural diversity of variants of this phenomenon. In her conception, F. Walsh distinguished three areas of family causation in buffering adverse life circumstances: the belief system, family organisation and resources, and communication processes. The belief system is the interpretation that the family gives to the crisis and expresses in action. Families with higher resilience perceive the crisis as a shared challenge, not the responsibility of powerful individuals alone to take control in the process of restoring its equilibrium. Nurtured relationships and bonds constitute capital that is activated in acts of collective cooperation in situations of danger, and helps to see in the difficulties experienced an opportunity for growth and change in the life cycle of this community, rather than an obstacle blocking it. A positive attitude is also an inherent part of the belief system of families

with higher resilience. They are characterised by an optimistic approach to life, which is both an effect and a positive predictor of the outcome of subsequent crises, as it promotes the development of control over them. In time, breakdowns in equilibrium become learning experiences to choose the best options and, in situations not amenable to change, to accept them. Another property of the belief system that fosters family resilience – transcendence and spirituality – is useful in its development. This is because family strength can be expressed by attributing an externally defined and higher validity to the difficulties experienced.

In the area of organising the family's life and resources, the flexibility of the structure to adapt more adequately to new needs comes to the fore. The reorganisation of roles and responsibilities is not a temporary experience when it leads to the stabilisation of a new equilibrium. At the same time, the flexibility of Walsh is associated with a leader who focuses on security and ensuring the predictability of events, thereby helping the vulnerable to get through the crisis. External social and economic resources, such as a network of informal social support (extended family, friends, neighbours), and supportive organisations in difficult times, are a source of practical information, specific services, emotional support, and a sense of connection to the wider community, also help to increase the family's resilience.

The final area where Walsh identified features that intensify the strengths of this basic nurturing environment is communication. Increasing resilience is facilitated by direct, clear, and honest communication, in which members share opinions, openly verbalise emotions in an atmosphere of mutual trust and empathy, and seek opportunities for joy and time spent together that synergistically serve as a respite. In such an environment, it is easier to understand crises and to make decisions (family meetings, brainstorming, etc.) together and with respect for different views. Choices made in this way and the analysis of their outcomes, especially unsatisfactory ones, become lessons for the family to remain resilient in future challenges.

Walsh emphasises the importance of geographical and cultural variation in her account of resilience and the need to develop it with sensitivity to these differences. My study is an attempt to address this need using the experiences of the families of one inner-city DN in Łódź, which I have revisited in different variations of the researcher's role over a dozen years.

Methodological assumptions of the study

The study was conducted in Łódź, a city in whose central part the effects of the coupling of economic and spatial segregation accumulate.

The view of family resilience reconstructed in this paper emerged while analysing qualitative data collected with two techniques at different time intervals. The integrating methodological framework was longitudinal qualitative research (e.g., Holland, Thomas, & Henderson, 2004)*. In the years 2001–2019, I conducted the study twice, with the common denominator being the place – one of Łódź's inner-city DS, which at the time was part of the range of the map of Łódź's poverty enclaves (Warzywoda-Kruszyńska, 1998; Warzywoda-Kruszyńska, Golczyńska-Grondas, 2010)**. At the time of the original research, I combined here the role of a resident (1998–2007) and a socially engaged researcher conducting participatory observation of the activities of a group of boys (14–20 years old), in which I discovered numerous areas and the complex configuration of their conditions (families, neighbourhood community, representatives of institutions present in their lives)***. In 2016–2019, I returned to the role of researcher of the meaning of this neighbourhood in the lives of its inhabitants. I conducted narrative interviews with 10 participants of the previous study and several free conversations on the validity of the analytical conclusions reached****. The empirical material from this study directed my attention to the strengths of the families of origin in the lives of these men, now adults, which, from their current perspective, buffered the negative influences of the neighbourhood. The interviews were the main material analysed.

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* This is part of the findings of the study conducted at the intervals described above, whose overarching research problem was the question of the importance of growing up in DN in the lives of the residents.

** Neighbourhood boundaries are here understood intersubjectively. It is a geographical area defined by a vaguely demarcated area shared by the childhood and youth experiences of the study participants. They all had either close relationships with each other or sporadic contact; all but one attended the same district primary school. Above all, however, and an extremely important identity feature of the place, they identified themselves through the prism of local individual or group histories, which were fragments of a locally co-created story about people and place by each of its historical generations, including their generation.

*** The researcher's role naturally evolved into that of a "female-educator of the neighbourhood" organising the young people's leisure time and, at their express request, assisting in situations deemed difficult by them.

**** Only some of these were the primary participants in the original study, members of one of the local peer groups connected by the shared experience of growing up in the neighbourhood. The others (two of the participants in the second phase of the study) appeared in the previous phase of the study as members of other local peer groups – they lived in the same place and had direct or indirect relationships with the primary participants. In the second case, I am referring to recognising themselves as being from the same neighbourhood and identifying in the stories created and nurtured in the local discourse.

Where participants in the study referred to situations from a period of their lives, richly documented by me during the primary study, the data from the interviews were enriched by those from participating observation.

Common to both editions of the study were not only the participants but also the qualitative research paradigm modelled on constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2009).

On the resilience of families from disadvantaged neighbourhoods empirically

The components of resilience in families with DN discovered in the study are expressed either in relational processes leading to favourable changes in the boys' attitudes towards negative factors or experiences in their living environment, or in favourable redefinitions of their perceptions by entities or institutions directly or indirectly determining their life chances. The logic of these processes and their protective role in the study participants' lives would not be understood without first reconstructing the study participants' intersubjective theory explaining the developmental risks of youth in DN.

Reconstructing the dangers of growing up in DN from the narrators' perspective

The documented view of boys' everyday life growing up in DN is composed of two plans. The first comprises narratives of group practices full of energy, fantasy, and peer emotions. It is created in contrast to their background (the second plane), a setting composed of material and social barriers to their activities. The composition of the image of everyday life, based on contrast, captures the complexity of the configuration of the conditions of children's and adolescents' activities in the area of this residence. Today, in their forms and consequences, they identify developmental risks, which they have been able to resist to varying degrees. The elements of the configuration of conditions (background) are: 1) material barriers (elements of material space not amenable to change in the course of children's explorations – concrete, brick glass, metal, etc.) or the development of courtyard spaces limiting the realisation of the needs of the younger generation of residents (expansion of car parks at the expense of places designated for play) and 2) social barriers (Gulczyńska, 2013). The last ones expressed themselves in conflicts with selected adults taking on the roles of guardians of the concept of neighbourhood space defined by them, not by young residents. The social pressures imposed on young people took on, over time, forms that were felt by

them as "expulsion"* from their own living space, with the result that they gradually relocated to areas under the gates leading from the street to the backyards or the corner area of the neighbourhood streets. Such a positioning aroused the interest of "strangers" from outside the neighbourhood (police, school counsellor, probation officers, etc.), to which they gave the meaning of unwarranted control, hence they resisted. At the same time, the unavailability of socio-educational services appropriate to their age caused them to make sense of the various forms of "melting time under the gate," which, often evolving into practices of "tick off," extended to the greater part of their day**. The dynamics of "ticking off" are illustrated by the statement of Filip***:

> I grew up here. I ticked off what was mine and went to primary school here. From middle school, I was taken to a children's home. After I got out, it started to run with the boys here. Some drugs turned up, and that's how life passed carefree... Ehm, at parties and so I rocked up with the company.

"Ticking off" has adopted forms of activity combining elements of play, resistance to imposed orders and prohibitions, and patterns of social positioning within the group, which are components of the local culture identified by the research participants in the concept of the neighbourhood (Gulczyńska, 2013)****.

In the histories of local youth groups, a peculiar evolution of forms of "ticking off" can be captured. Initially, the coupling of material barriers with social barriers and the unavailability of educational and social support encouraged innocent mis-

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* In the section presenting the results of the study, words that appear in inverted commas and are often colloquialisms are *in vivo* codes – concepts derived from the respondents, the use of which is commonly recommended in the grounded theory method (Charmaz, 2009). The bolding in this section of the paper captures the important categories discovered and their variants.

** A third type of barrier contextualising the activities of the young generation in this location was the geographical, economic and "conceptual" inaccessibility of such services. Between 2001 and 2005 (the time of the first edition of the study), there were two community centres in the immediate area, and their emphasis on compensating for educational or upbringing deficiencies did not attract young people with a different perception of the attractiveness of such services.

*** The names of the study participants are fictitious. All but one (Podróżnik) were chosen by them.

**** More about the analogy of the negotiation of identities of subjects in the world of the neighbourhood to those captured in Strauss's conception of the social world (Strauss, 2013), in: Gulczyńska, 2013.

chief in the backyard areas, to increase, as conflicts escalated and the group moved to the street, the feeling of disagreement with control by adults (including those from outside the neighbourhood), which, in conditions of overwhelming boredom, summed up to deviant behaviour (e.g., vandalism resulting in quarrels with neighbours, destruction of property, petty thefts, experiments, etc.).

The attraction and progressive nature of "ticking off" had its cultural justifications. The normative interpretation of the "neighbourhood" world placed clear expectations on its participants, closely related to the distribution of the pool of prestige and privilege between them. According to these, participants had to emerge as "non-givers" or "enemies of the suckers and the police" and avoid the reputation of "lapses." "Non-givers" did not succumb to degrading tactics from either "their own" or "outsiders," with which they built a reputation as someone deserving of respect and a rewarding position both within their primary reference group and in their relationships with others in the "neighbourhood" (Gulczyńska, 2013). Alignment with these expectations manifested itself in the boys' level of involvement first in specific group activity scenarios and then in social reshuffling, resulting over time in the formation of groups of individuals united by the type of involvement prevalent in their everyday lives.

> Gniewko: With Solmyr and Chudy we were the three of us who didn't want to soak it all in, right? We used to hang out with each other, and we were able to spend time with these and those, but when the drugs started, we weren't attracted anymore.

Gniewko, like the other interviewees, identifies a level of danger in "getting into drugs" that he did not want to exceed in his "ticking off"*. From the perspective of the interviewees, criminal careers in DN were the result of escalating youth involvement in increasingly spectacular forms of "ticking off," combined with stimulants, which led to a formal criminal label being given to those particularly actively "ticking off" and occurred in three locally recognised patterns: 1) from "ticking off" to "criminality" (brawls, fights, etc.), 2) "shady deals" (joining illegal local distribution networks), and 3)

* An interesting analogy with Ewa Marynowicz-Hetka's (1987) concept of "danger thresholds" emerges, a perspective on the development of socio-pedagogical concepts based on this study. The concept, published in 1987 for the objective measurement of the situation of the child in a multi-problem family, can serve as a starting point for the development of its variants in the logic of the interpretative paradigm and relation not to the threats to child development in the family, but to the threats to development in the DN. In this isolation of the conclusive meaning of "getting into drugs" by the interviewees, one of the developmental risk thresholds of adolescents with DN can be read as part of the socially created concept of developmental risk thresholds in DN.

crime for addiction (illegal forms of obtaining resources for intoxication). The resilience of their families helped to avoid any of the above patterns of biographical organisation being reflected in the lives of the participants in my study.

Components of family resilience of young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods

Taking the perspective of the participants in the study, there is a perception that resilience manifests itself in their lives in the form of processes that give them individual strength in building resistance to the pressures of the "neighbourhood," processes that neutralise its causal role as a regulator of social behaviour and/or an important azimuth in the formulation of individual life plans.

The study uncovered important components of the resilience of the study participants' families, among them: processes of self-discovery, loyalty commitment to the mother, mothers' resistance to the processes of socially creating deviants out of their sons, social recognition of the family as not deviating from the norm, and the co-construction of a strength-based father image. Their richly illustrated presentation is dedicated to the crucial part of this paragraph.

Self-development processes initiated in families with DS

What I have in mind here is self-education "understood as lifelong learning – through life," releasing "an understanding of oneself and the world through distance" (Czerniawska, 2002, pp. 20, 22). In the collected material, it was expressed in two forms: self-learning initiated by observation of family members and self-learning initiated by the mother's support of education. I will discuss the former using the example of Gniewko's story:

> AG: And what difference do you see just between you and the brothers who... Well, somewhere they ended up in places you wouldn't want to go [prison], though?
> Gniewko: Head [...]. You have to have your wits about you... Not to be susceptible to... others, I don't know. I think the head. [...] Well I might have ended up differently too, yeah? With those, but... When I saw something was wrong, I would bounce back, walk away from it [...]. Definitely the drugs... Well, I didn't like that uncontrolled behaviour of mine.

In Gniewko's statement, the head seems to be a kind of metaphor for the internal control mechanism of regulating relationships with others. The narrator defines this concept as an individual mental trait developed through the observation of close members. Thanks to the interpretation developed in reflection on the fate of other family members, the entity gives the currently observed (often co-created) events

the meaning of risky and/or unwarranted and prophylactically withdraws from collective action. Risk is understood here as an increase in the likelihood of the individual losing control throughout group activities and suffering the consequences of being socially and/or formally recognised as a criminal. The process of entering the criminal path generated by aligning one's line of action with that of the group Gniewko illustrates in his statement as follows:

> AG: And the brothers are going back to prison?
> Gniewko: Two are back. But they are all on the right track now, I suppose to say.
> AG: The success of Polish rehabilitation?
> Gniewko (*with a laugh*): No, maybe I also just think it was the environment that got them there. And when they've got their wits about them now and it's got to them, they've got on with their lives, not their colleagues. That's what I used to think too, that it could happen to anyone, yes? But now it doesn't. [...] My brothers, it's known that they were out of prison and that's it. I saw what it was like, and I didn't ever want that. Maybe I pulled from their experience? [...] I just thought to myself that I didn't want to end up like that or start my life like that... And I did everything so that it wouldn't be like that.

What emerges from Gniewko's story is a picture of a reflective analyst of others' experiences, including members of his own family. In the words "I saw what it was like, and I didn't ever want that," we read the logic of learning through life as a result of the inductive accumulation of knowledge gained from indirect experience. In what others saw as carefree fun, he saw over time the beginning of a process of self-destruction, epitomised in the life stories of, for example, his brothers.

In the logic of the operation of this process, it is possible to read an example, escaping the rules of social learning theory, of the resistance of a subject systematically exposed to the influence of negative personal models (imitation) and modelling by significant family members. This lifelong learning from the brothers' life stories, not the protective isolation of the subject from them, fostered the development of Gniewsko's self-reflection and his self-development organised according to the pattern "I know who I don't want to be."

Self-empowerment fuelled by a mother's support of education is revealed through the story of Chudy. In its background stands a mother supporting her son in combining his passion (playing football) with formal education. In this marriage, based on her son's strengths, they both saw an opportunity for him to transcend the barriers of his socio-geographical background.

Lifelong learning processes, activated by the experience of socio-cultural hybridisation and reinforced by educational opportunity, were enabled by the change from a local school to a sports school located in another part of the city*.

> Chudy: Well, that whole period was connected with the school, mainly training [...]. There was also less staying at home because new acquaintances had also already been made, with whom [...] this passion connected.

The boy, recruited there by a representative of the world of professional football, devoted most of his time to training, studying and interacting with his new friends. Experiencing the difference between other places to live and the lifestyles of his schoolmates revitalised his layers of self-reflexivity.

> [...] There is a difference between people from the blocks and the inner city. Looking at the upbringing of such a person compared to us, the difference is colossal. Kids from the housing estates think they're better, or something like that. Social status is a bit higher than people from the centre, from those poor neighbourhoods...

Experiencing this socio-cultural and spatial difference, together with gaining a satisfactory position and prospects for a better future in the new social world, was made possible by daily returns to the place of the source identity and maintaining contacts with acquaintances from the original group of reference. This context of everyday life fostered processes of self-education in the pattern of "I know who and where I want to be" and the implementation of a biographical plan of action (Schütze, 1997)**.

The invisible but highly significant background to this transformation is Chudy's mother, interpreted by his colleagues as someone who "keeps him short." In the de-

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* The primary research highlighted the connections between unsuccessful educational careers in the local school and processes of stigmatisation (Gulczyńska, 2019). Students, observed by their "neighbourhood" peers on the school grounds, fulfilling the expectations of the "neighbourhood" world on the school grounds, negotiated their identity to maintain its continuity in the perception of their peers, thereby condemning themselves to a low status as a student and consequently invalidating the good of formal education in their lives.

** I discuss more extensively the configuration of the boy's biographical transformation, initiated by a turning point of educational significance, in "Resocjalizacja Polska," the subject of which is the phenomenon of the departure from deviant activities of adolescents with DN. The article is in the process of publication.

scriptions of this notion given to me in the first phase of the study, I read a strong emphasis placed on the difference between their mothers' attitudes and those of Chudy's mother, which was expressed in Chudy's non-negotiable rules and responsibilities, which translated into a lower frequency of his presence in the neighbourhood. Healthy discipline was accompanied by the mother's support for the implementation of formal education, to which she subordinated other commitments at some stage. In a situation where the public school, discouraged by the boy's health condition, terminated his scholarship rights, the mother took on an additional job at his school to compensate for her inability to pay tuition fees. By this act, she contributed to reinforcing a strong loyalty obligation in their relationship, which, based on other cases, I describe in the section below as a separate component of family resilience.

Loyalty commitment to the mother

An empirical illustration of the mechanism by which a son's loyalty commitment to his mother works in preventing his involvement in "ticking off" is found in Nikodem's statement:

> I've never been a leader, but rather a person standing on the sidelines, observing. My mother taught me that. What did she teach me? That is not to go too far, to have some rules. Of course, if she knew what I was doing, she wouldn't have liked it, but somewhere she was always standing there behind me, she was in my head and I knew that I couldn't cross a certain line, that there were certain boundaries.

The mothers I met at the primary research stage were women who were aware of social risks in their immediate environment and referred to this knowledge in preventive conversations with their sons. However, only a few participants in my study, among the mechanisms regulating their self-control in situations of temptation, evoked an internal dialogue with the mother figure similar to Nikodem, who, in describing the mother's causality, gives her the role of a significant other (Berger, Luckmann 1983)*.

This leads to the question of what distinguished these sons' relationships with their mothers, in whose behaviour this mechanism became apparent in regulating their peer group relationships. The stories of Solmyr and Nikodem exemplify the agency

* The "significant other" is usually the primary carer, whose perspective becomes the primary source for interpreting stimuli from the environment – it is the source that the mentee refers to.

of "embracing" mothers, although the very notion of "embracing" was common to most of the interviewees.

> Nikodem: So to some, I don't know, well I don't remember too much of those beginnings. Maybe I erased it from my head too, because I didn't want to remember it. But mum always gave advice, she always worked hard, she always provided for us, uhm, because there was still, apart from me, there was my brother who was 12 years older. She always provided us with food, love, and warmth. [...] Well she tried to embrace it, in the sense that she worked, she didn't drink, and we as a family came first. [...] Well it impressed me that a woman herself could take care of the house, and cook.

"Embracing" appears as an antonym of "not-embracing," expressing in other interviews the unstable economic and psychological situation in the family, which either some of them had experienced themselves or had observed in the homes of other colleagues or neighbours.

> AG: And what did the mother do in these situations [when there was no money]?
> Bajker: She sat down and cried, what was she supposed to do? She was helpless. I mean no. She tried, you know? [...] I'll tell you that I also remember such times, as you know, when trips to the Russians were popular, well my aunt made a lot of money out of it and my mother wanted to too. My aunt proposed to her and she went, but when she came back, well, I was probably seven or eight years old then, I remember like today, when I was frying scrambled eggs, I used to put a stool for myself, because, you know, I couldn't see the pan from above, right? And daddy wasn't able to make us anything to eat. [...] I think mother was afraid to leave us, and then she didn't have the strength anymore, by the way, you know she was still working at the end, yeah?

In the sons' constructed image of the "embracing" mother, the effective combination of the role of the breadwinner mother with the care of a stable and ritualised home space is made explicit.

The analysis of the empirical material made it possible to distinguish other common features of the context of the families of "embracing mothers." The biographical time of their families is divided into two stages, which critically differed in the level of "embracing."

> Nikodem: I remember my mum once said that she came home after some work or something, my father, hmm... lying there drunk or sleeping drunk...

> And I was sitting, I don't know how old I was then... three, maybe four years old, cooking something on the floor, spilling some pasta, sugar, mixing everything up and so on, and my father was drunk. Well, and I think that was such a turning point too, that (*grunt*) my mother couldn't, trust him enough anymore... Because from what I remember her saying, she was just saying that he was... (*huge shrug*), that dad wanted to change, he was saying he was going to change... But, like an alcoholic, you can never trust him and you always have to keep that control.

Nikodem dissects the biographical timeline of the family by reference to a specific situation bearing the hallmarks of a peculiar turning point. Solmyr details descriptions of family life based on order, predictability, calmness and the work of communication, which are fundamental and unique to him, thanks to the vestigial, but still vivid, memory of chaos, uncertainty and unpredictability during the time of the "non-embracing."

The second common feature of the threads dedicated to mothers is the nurturing of family ties, of which we find a detailed illustration in Solmyr's story.

> Solmyr: My mum always tried to keep the family fire going, didn't she? If someone fought, she'd always reconcile us, and although those fights are never that fierce, it's just like it's in the family, like a brother with a sister or... Sometimes mum exaggerates everything like that. I'll quarrel, like with my brother or something, and the next day it's all good, and she has to shake it up (*with a tender laugh*) for three months and... And I say, every day or every week we get together, on Sunday we always all, well... And we talk regularly unless there's some, I don't know, holiday or something, or I'm away somewhere, because I often go away.

A natural consequence of the single-person economic responsibility for the family was a reduction in the time the mother spent together with her children and a loosening of parental control during her working hours. In the nurturing of family bonds, actions to compensate for these frequent absences can be discerned. These were expressed in ritualised forms, i.e., daily or weekly meetings between the mother and her children and their relatives, which Solmyr sees as conducive to nurturing communication ("and we talk regularly," "she always reconciled us"). The central positioning of these family events over others and the density of their description in his story may be indicative of the stretching of the family's time together on the subjective time scale of the narrator's childhood. These repetitive forms of caring for the domestic hearth gave Solmyr a sense of familial harmony and order despite the external circumstances fostering

caring and educational disorganisation of the family (the mother's frequent absence as a result of economic coercion).

Such a harmonious family home in Solmyr's story escapes the measures of its subjective chronology, as can be inferred from an analysis of the linguistic layer of the passages devoted to it. In their description, the past and present tenses are often mixed, and the adverb always accompanies images of certain practices of family life that seem to have continued uninterruptedly in this family for years. Whether the family is evoked in conversation by a question about childhood ("What family do you remember?") or appears as a context for the description of activities undertaken in adult life, its importance and role in Solmyr's life still seem primordial and unchanging.

Another common property of the families of "embracing" mothers is that they are given the meaning of "sacrificing' women by their sons, "everyday heroines," which is expressed in the narrative by a procedure of contrasting their attitudes with the images of "non-embracing" families available to them in everyday observations or the messages of neighbourhood discourse. The image of the family as an unstable environment was widely disseminated in the neighbourhood discourse, which may have normalised it and given the different families the meaning of exemplary. Socially constructed standards of family evaluation, which placed Solmyr's and Nikodem's families above the local norm, seemed to intensify mutual loyalty in the sons and strengthen the bond with their mothers, to whom they did not want to "add to." Nikodem said: "I rather avoid trouble. I didn't want my mum to have problems, to worry."

Mothers' resistance to the processes of socially creating deviants in their sons

According to research, one of the constraints to the life chances of young people with DN is the higher intensity of territorial stigmatisation in such places of residence, hence they are more likely to be socially defined in deviant roles, e.g., as individuals responsible for the poor condition of the neighbourhood infrastructure (Gulczyńska, 2013), difficult students (Gulczyńska, 2019), or juvenile delinquents (Cahill et al., 2019). The mechanism of this process and its relationship to the stigmatisation of young people with socially discrediting characteristics, such as social class, place of residence, race, etc., has been synthesised by Caitlin Cahill in the notion of criminalising spaces, areas of the city in which the intertwining of the social relations of young people from marginalised groups, spatial forms of control and punitive state policies, foster processes of premature criminalisation of young people (Cahill et al., 2019).

Referring to the data from the primary study, we can see that the typological characteristics of such a space are identified in the "gateway" and the "street," where the co-occurrence of group forms of "time smelting," practices of "ticking off," territo-

rial stigmatisation and frequent preventive visits by the police, made the circumstances conducive to the social formation of juvenile offenders. An important substrate for their dynamic and causal course was that the world of the "neighbourhood" gave the status-forming stage to interactions with the police (Gulczyńska, 2013)*.

The data from both phases of the study provide evidence of the mothers' proficiency in blocking the processes of giving formal labels of "deviant" to their sons, a telling example of which is found in the statements of Bajker and Dex's mother: "He is just a hooligan. You won't make a criminal out of him." The boys' mother represented the characteristics of a "fighting" mother, aware of the mechanisms of social labelling and their consequences for young people. With the quoted statement, she ended attempts by the school authorities to convince her to apply to the court for her son (Dex) to be placed in MOS**, when, previously defined as a challenging student, they wanted to get rid of him from school. Feeling pressure from the school, which issued an ultimatum – "we are not calling the police, but you take him out of school" – she first ascertained in the neighbourhood whether her son was indeed innocent, and then successfully thwarted his institutionalisation.

Fighting mothers not only blocked their sons' acts of premature criminalisation, thereby preventing their criminal careers, but also, like "embracing" mothers, reinforced their sons' loyalty commitments to them.

Social recognition of the family as not deviating from the norm

Discussing this component of the resilience of the study participants' families requires first understanding the process that is its antithesis – the social recognition of the family as escaping the norm, which I identified in Filip's story.

> Filip: I was 13, I was "grown up," I started smoking cigarettes (*laughs*). A change of society, a change of mindset... Maybe that's when puberty started and growing up with my friends on the principle of messing around, taking life into my own hands, showing how tough you are, and disobeying your parents. By then I knew how they should raise me, and they did things differently. Others get it and I don't get it. Other parents take me somewhere and my parents don't take me. [...] I had these friends who were also different, people who were from good homes, arranged

* In my book based on the original study (2001–2005), I describe processes analogous to those captured through C. Cahill's concept of "criminalizing space" (Cahill et al., 2019) using the example of the "gateway" and my study participants' threat of criminalization in their relationships with the police (more in: Gulczyńska, 2013).

** Abbreviation for the youth socio-therapy centre – a correctional and educational unit operating in a semi-open system.

> and polite. They were kids who had support, love, interest or worry from their parents and they just... Well, they didn't get into trouble.
> AG: You said they [friends] had parental interest. [...] What did you not have, or what did you have that caused you to get into trouble more easily?
> Filip: Uhm... Warmth, support, and interest, there was alcohol, hmm... I sometimes felt inferior in front of my peers, like my father, so to speak, would catcall disco polo music at full volume after drinking. And I was ridiculed because of it.

In the features of his colleagues' families highlighted by Filip (parental control in the neighbourhood, not shaming children with their style of feasting, monitoring children's leisure time, activity-based educational enhancement of children's life chances), we read the features of parenting constructed concerning middle-class standards. Observing parenting patterns close to the middle-class perspective intensified his feeling that his family was slipping away from the norm, and consequently led to embarrassment, grief and anger. He was relieved by participating in a group of "self-pity comforters." As a young man, Filip strongly experienced regret for his parents. The grief, reinforced by the reaction of neighbourhood peers, led to a closing of the circle of those who shared and understood this kind of experience. Together with them, Filip ritualised his life with rituals for silencing negative feelings, based on the joint consumption of alcohol ("consoling himself"), which in his case led to self-destructive behaviour and a loss of control over his own life. Today, with several years separating him from those times, including those spent working hard on sobriety and mutual forgiveness, an important part of Filip's life philosophy is to avoid creating negative emotions in his head as a result of blaming others. In negative emotions, he sees the beginning of a self-perpetuating wheel of self-destruction that happily no longer regulates the rhythm of his daily life.

Bajker's sense of a family escaping the norm was acquired at school, where he experienced unequal treatment due to his family's poverty. In one conversation, he asked me if I had seen a photograph of him from this period. My negative answer initiated a narrative of school relationships in which he perceived himself as poor in situations where he was carelessly excluded from group activities in which participation was economically conditioned.

> I could tell, they were making [the teachers] a laughing stock of us. I'll give you an example. Before the trip the arrangements were made in class, who was going, and who wasn't. And it was: "Bajker! Aaaaaa, you're definitely not going." You know, you felt inferior in school. Not surprisingly, when I left school, I wanted to forget. Already at the height of the school fence, I was somebody. Here I was someone.

Despite the experience of social discrediting due to family traits shared by Filip and Bajker, their ways of dealing with it are different. Bajker mobilised his energies and imagination to create particularly committed forms of self-presentation of the "non-givers" ("He was somebody") to repair his damaged reputation. In addition, with the economic resources he gained from washing cars or helping his father at work, he not only stabilised the difficult and fluctuating economic situation of his family but also his social position outside of it. The possession of money became an immanent property of his image "in the neighbourhood," effectively devaluing the role of formal education in the boy's value system, despite his teachers' recognition of him as an "intelligent rascal."

The connections shown in Filip's and Bajker's stories between the perception of the family as escaping the norm and their increased involvement in deviant activities provide a contrasting backdrop to the view of the family as relatively normal reconstructed from Solmyr's story. Together with his siblings, he was raised by an "embracing" mother. His alcohol-abusing father, despite leaving home, remained in the neighbourhood in the role of one of the "sticking out corners," thereby guaranteeing himself an inscrutable place in the family's discourse and its relationship with the neighbourhood*. By his presence and low position in the local community, he prevented the family from symbolically closing a painful chapter in their history. The social repercussions of such a father's presence in the neighbourhood are not mentioned by Solmyr; moments directly focused on the father rarely appear spontaneously in the main narrative, and when evoked, take a synthetic form such as this: 'Well the family is known, well Zygmunt [father's name] as Zygmunt. He won't make any more changes (*smile*)." The placement of this statement in the interview and the essentiality of the father's presentation, in the absence of Solmyr's self-contained references to his person in the further course of our conversation, may indicate an aperture. This would justify the hypothesis of negative emotions accumulated around his alcoholism and the consequences borne by the whole family and, ultimately, its abandonment by the father, which Solmyr might be coping with through a displacement mechanism. In addition, the father's presence in the neighbourhood after being pronounced cohabitant may have fostered stigmatisation in the neighbourhood (Filip's case) and complicated Solmyr's social positioning processes "on the block."

The father's socially constructed memory in this family weakens these hypotheses.

* During the original study, this homeless man joined a local group of men who "lived" in the neighbourhood and were recognised as "sticking out on corners" (Gulczyńska, 2013). They spent most of the day on the corner of one of the neighbourhood streets (next to the tenement house inhabited by Solmyr's family), engaged in collecting the means to consume alcohol.

AG: And at home how do you talk about your father?
Solmyr: Rather... well rather, well funny. My mum always says when I come back from a party "ooo young Zygmunt" or something like that (*gentle laughter*).
AG: But does she say it in a way that she's concerned or is she laughing?
Solmyr: No, well she laughs, she rather laughs.

The humorous colouring of the statements, the absence of negative emotions revealing, for example, the mother's fears about the son's reproduction of the father's disturbing behaviour, and the tone of the statement with which Solmyr introduced the father into the interview, testify to the normalisation of the father's image in this family. In the referenced conversation, the interlocutors do not so much seem to establish an interpretation of the father as ill, but to refer to this long-established and jointly established one, in which one can see signs of the success of the collective biographical work of the whole family. The delegation of causality to external factors (illness, deterministic nature) neutralised negative emotions over time, fostered the recognition of the father as he is, and prevented helplessness fuelled by the constant experience of reorganising life during periods of remission or subsequent failure. In addition, it made it possible to maintain a relationship with him despite his exclusion from the shared household.

Solmyr: Now sometimes, once a month, he will come in on Sundays just for lunch, if he sees that everyone is there... If he comes in sober, he can come in and get tea or something to eat there... No problem.

Solmyr and his relatives regained family homeostasis by delegating responsibility to external factors in the course of the family normalisation process by attributing the discrediting problem to the illness, in the course of which they distanced themselves from difficult experiences and their social reception.

Another participant in the study, Podróżnik [Traveller], normalised his embarrassment and feelings of being inferior to his peers, caused by his family's economic and infrastructural poverty, by attributing responsibility for this situation to historical processes generating social inequalities

Podróżnik: You may also have your opinion, but I don't think my family was pathological or anything like that. There was no violence or excessive boozing. You know, they sort of kept a pretty good level, that kind of a bit of a loose marriage during the communist era. They would go out to see their friends, and visit each other, there were some parties, card games, music, dancing, and singing. My dad's from the countryside, my mum's from

> the countryside too, so it kind of transferred to me. And my dad, I think he still has it, but he used to have a bigger, uhm, origin complex. It's kind of stayed that way until now.

In his interpretation of the conditions and lifestyle of his family, he refers to the origin of his parents, seeing them as representatives of a certain historically shaped category of city dwellers. In the description of the idyllic, group lifestyle of the inhabitants of his original place of residence (another DN in the centre of Łódź) and the poverty of their dwelling, which embarrasses him, or the feasting lifestyle of his family, reduced to class-cultural features, we can read features common to a certain generation of Łódź citizens. I am referring here to the city's immigrant citizens who, encouraged by the idea of industrialisation, left their hometowns and realised their dreams of a better life as forces developing the textile capital of the country. The Podróżnik's perception of the family was created in a pattern exposing similarities with other families sharing the properties of (a certain) historical generation of Łódź. It is difficult to say at what stage of the work on his own identity the Podróżnik normalised the image of his family in this way, especially when we consider his subsequent, extremely rich fate. Driven by the force of his dreams for a better life, he was already building and constantly redefining biographical projects in his teenage years, in which he crossed the borders of his social background, but also the borders of several countries (including continents) to find his place in one of them and fulfil his dream of living from what he can and loves to do. The normalisation of his view of the family and himself may have been one of the stages of his dynamically changing life to merge these, so different, two images of himself into one coherent personal story. Today a happy husband, father of two children as well as owner of a successful business, the fulfilment of a childhood dream, and a mental citizen (not an immigrant) of another country, he sees his family of origin as typical at a given moment in the history of a city and country whose fate unified the biographical lines of certain groups of citizens. His story outlines a variant of the normalisation of the family by interpreting it as coping with conditions constrained by structures external to it.

In contrast to the normalisation processes of externally locating responsibility for problems discrediting the family, Filip, in his AA therapy-activated biographical work, normalised the family by taking responsibility himself:

> They certainly tried their best. It wasn't easy for them and they did the best they could. I will say this without any reproach to them: they brought me up as best as they could for the moment and I don't hold anything against them.

This variant of family normalisation took place post-factum when, following the suspension of contact with his closest relatives caused by his worsening alcoholism and his stay in prison, Filip, reinforced by the strength of the therapeutic community's support, rebuilt his relationship with his parents and created his place on earth in isolation from past and potential "comforters."

Co-creation of a strength-based father image

In the literature on the role of the father in boys' lives, we find abundant justifications for the crucial importance of male role models in their upbringing. Fathers' modelling seems to become particularly important when adolescents are socialised in a local environment, poor in middle-class role models, where they are highly likely to choose representatives of the older generation of the "neighbourhood world" as their reference point in social learning processes. Particularly in such a context, the fact of alcohol abuse by the fathers of most of the participants in my study increased the risk of a negative impact on the local community*. Taking this into account, two stories showing the co-construction of a strength-based father image in the family seem to illustrate the intervening resilience component of DN families. The first of its variants is captured in Solmyr's narrative.

> AG: And what father do you remember before [before leaving home caused by alcoholism]?
> Solmyr: I don't know... It was so long ago that I don't remember him at all. The only situation I remember is when he bought a dog. I guess that's all I remember of such situations... A little bit also from what my mum and sister there, the eldest one, always told me... Apparently, he was also such a "funny guy" (*with a warm gentle laugh*). Once my sister wanted a pet for her birthday, so he bought her a live hen (*AG laughs*). I just don't remember my father when he was still sober. And the only thing I remember anymore is that we had what it's like, vinyl and that he listened to Presley. That's so much of what was so memorable too. I think that's it because I was so young when he passed away. I don't remember too much.

* The study is not quantitative, thus referring to the distribution of this characteristic in the research sample is not methodologically justified, but only human, to highlight what one of the participants, the Podróżnik, repeatedly highlighted in the narrative – culture (rituals of feasting with neighbours as in the village of origin of the parents) and class background (industrial workers came from the surrounding villages) not addiction determined the frequency and rituals of alcohol consumption in the family home, which did not reduce their quality of life.

In the selection of situations chosen for Solmyr's presentation of his father and in the rubbishy form of the message, it is possible to read the signs of the success of the collective biographical work of this family*. His recollection, prompted by my question, is a patchwork of positive snapshots in which his father appears as a cheerful, playful man, striving to fulfil his children's wishes and imbue the family microclimate with joy. His family, with the central position of the "embracing mother," has not only regained balance and stability, but has also worked through pain and grief, and abstracted and nurtured what is good and empowering from the memory of their life together with their father.

In addition, an analysis of the interview excerpts dealing with Solmyr's functioning in non-familial contexts showed that the socially constructed image of the father "the funny guy" is reflected in the son's processes of negotiating his own and his social identity.

> AG: And sometimes you were able to insult the teacher so respectfully or were you more cautious?
> Solmyr: No, I was more of a funny guy. I was more like if there was something there, it was with guts, just to throw in some jokes.
> AG: So you didn't go hard? I remember some boys pushing their teachers up against the wall.
> Solmyr (*with a gentle laugh*): I remember that too. I think Dex fought with the religion teacher, I mean I don't know if he fought with him, or if he struggled with him, but there was some kind of a brawl there... "Eo" probably kicked a lot too, that Kowalska there.
> AG: And the funny guy, what was he doing? (*shared laughter*). It's a cool term.
> Solmyr: Well, nothing, I was just laughing at the whole thing, yes? Well, somehow I wasn't angry all the time and I didn't have to challenge someone, I was just more putting a pin in someone, somewhere pointing out some flaws or something. Teachers mainly, yeah?

Against the backdrop of the dominant forms of student resistance driven by anger and the desire to negotiate a "non-giver" identity at school (Gulczyńska, 2013), Solmyr enters the role of the "funny guy" – the student humorously and bitingly

* In Fritz Schütze's and Gerard Riemann's extension, "the concept of trajectory generally means disordered social processes that cause suffering" (Riemann, Schütze 1991, p. 335). The concept of trajectory thus has the analytical potential to link the personal, institutional and public spheres. Unfortunately, "trajectory processes disrupt and even destroy existing structures of social order in biographies" (Riemann, Schütze, 1991, p. 339).

but inoffensively "pointing out" flaws to teachers. In the manifestation of this identity, one can read an analogy with the father image created in the family and based on strength, which allows us to hypothesise the educational role of the father role model co-created in the form of a patchwork of positive depictions. Being the "funny-guy" in the classroom guaranteed the respect of the "rascals" while at the same time not inflaming interactions with teachers, with which Solmyr ensured a satisfactory position in relations with representatives of both worlds and a trouble-free course of formal education.

Preparing for the narrative interview with Solmyr, after years of no contact with him, I revived in my memory the image of a distanced from school, perpetually smiling teenager, obtrusively and against the insults of his peers perfecting the shape of his "put up fringe," who, with humorous, somewhat virulent retorts, resisted peer pressure, and when called upon for a physical confrontation, despite his then frail physical build, fiercely "fought to the end," having, by the way, many opportunities to do so due to his special gift of "attracting the fuck." Years later, in the course of our conversation, I saw in him a young man whose extraordinary family of origin, a cousin and a few friends from outside the place where he lived, together with the characters of the dozens of books he read each year, filled the content of his lived world, as opposed to his neighbourhood social life. The latter, with a detachment worthy of a skilled ethnographer, he now merely observes from his window, names and understands, as an example of a place subject to the processes of degradation typical of inner-city DN.

A second variant of the power-based co-construction of the father's image in the family discourse as an example of resilience is found in Bajker's story. In contrast to Solmyr's experience, Bajker's family tolerated for many years a sinusoidal rhythm of suspensions and reactivations of the father in the fulfilment of his roles in the family. Sustained by the family's undying hope for change, the system's economic, caring and educational balance was fragile and unpredictable. The long-term persistence of the Bajker family in this state was made possible by the father's personality, which does not lend itself to easy judgements. On the one hand, his image in the narrative forms the backdrop for descriptions of situations depicting the end of the mother's endurance and the resulting destabilisation of the family equilibrium or the functioning of family members in external roles (e.g., the role of student, the role of worker, etc.). On the other hand, in the interviews with Bajker, the father appears as a caring caregiver from his childhood and a talented construction worker of several specialisations, whose expertise, appreciated by his bosses, ensured a smooth return to the role of worker and breadwinner. The hope of stabilising the family's balance with his father, not without him, disrupted the process of establishing his unambigu-

ously negative interpretation of family members and delayed the decision to exclude him from the family household.

> Bajker: We lived in one place together with my grandparents, my mum's, uhm, parents, and it wasn't too bad. And then, you know what, things kind of started to change in my eyes. My father started drinking, my mother split the flats with my grandparents. They went, you know, to a new flat, we stayed in the old flat. And then it was such a downward slope then... It got worse and worse, year after year. My father drank more and more, as I once told you, I was thirteen, and I had already started working. [...] Anyway, I'm saying – my father had a very good trade in his hands and he was a good professional, if it wasn't for the fucking booze, you know, if it wasn't for his drunkenness, we'd be standing well for sure. Still in those days...

The complexity of the father's image made the family's situation extremely unstable, which in time led to Bajker's inclusion as a subject co-responsible for the family's economic condition. As a teenager, the boy began to help his father on a construction site, where he gained his first skills in a profession that still provides a satisfactory economic status for his own family today. This experience developed in him a sense of agency, repeatedly verbalised in the narrative in the form of rhetorical questions or summaries such as: "If not me, then who?", "I was resourceful," or "I'll always manage,"

> Bajker: It was always my dream to be a builder. Somehow I was attracted to it, probably because of my father, because my father was a plumber. You know, I started working early, and I felt like I could do it. When I went to technical school, it was, you know, whether it was technology or drawing stuff and so on, I was bored in lessons. Even the teachers would say, "Why do you come here? Are you trying to teach us something?". And you know, that also maybe had an influence, yes? Because I felt powerful, and nobody was paying me for school, right? And when I went to work, I felt money. I've always been such a swinger, you know? I could manage. And I was tempted by the money because you could show off in front of the company, you know what I mean? And it was always easier to get girls out there if you had money in your pocket, right? And that was probably the main reason that I dropped out of school because I never had any problems with my studies either.

This inner conviction, developed, among other things, during his participation in the course of stabilising his family's economic situation, resulted

in a "quick buck," a learned profession in joint work with his father, and a feeling of the uselessness of formal schooling. The elevation of his position in the world of the "neighbourhood," thanks to his possession of money, became, I believe, a factor conducive to the development of a biographical plan consistently pursued in adulthood, based on learning through life, not in the course of formal education, initiated by his father in the role of a personal role model confined to the area of professional competence.

Conclusion

My study is part of a positive perspective in researching and describing disadvantaged neighbourhoods (DN). Its results document the research participants' theory on the developmental risks of the young DN generation and present the families' ways of coping in preventing their consequences from reproducing themselves in the lives of their teenage sons. A crucial result is the reconstruction of the components of DN families' resilience, framed as a process, in the light of the neighbourhood's "bad impact" on their teenage sons, in which we simultaneously identify interesting illustrations of F. Walsh's (2016) concept of family resilience.

The reconstructed view of the resilience of the DN families studied captures the phenomenon I am interested in primarily from the perspective of the study participants, not of scientific theories external to their experience. The threats of the DN were expressed processually and are related to the processes of negotiating social identity in the community that contextualise the multiple material, economic and social constraints on their free peer activities. Their neighbourhood group activities are an intertwining of their responses to the experience of marginalisation in their neighbourhood, their coping with boredom, and their attempts to live up to the expectations imposed on them by their local culture (expectations of expressing their belonging to a symbolic community of "enemies of the suckers and the police") and take various forms of "ticking off." In the escalation of "ticking off," participants in the study today see the core of social risks in DN and the mechanism that dynamizes the processes leading to criminal careers.

Significant components of their families' resilience, which they attributed to the causal role in increasing their self-monitoring and avoiding involvement in dangerous group practices, were the self-discipleship processes initiated within the families, the loyalty commitment to the mother, the mothers' resistance to the processes of socially creating deviants from their sons, the social recognition of the family as not deviating from the norm, and the co-creation of a strength-based image of the fathers.

The self-education processes initiated in the families of the study participants are captured in two variants. The first is the process of learning from the experience of other family members, metaphorically expressed by the term 'head', resulting in the adolescent DN resident's knowledge of "who he does not want to be" and consequent behaviour in situations of peer pressure. The second – self-education fed by the mother's support of education – manifests itself in the mother's support of her son in his educational path, which they both see as an opportunity for social advancement. In the path taken (change of school), an important determinant of her success was the son's experience of socio-cultural difference, which accentuated the negative feeling of his place of residence, reduced the attractiveness of the world of the "neighbourhood" and increased the individual determination to implement the biographical action plan (Schütze, 1997) in the pattern "I know who and where I want to be."

Loyalty commitments to the mother were expressed through processes of increased self-monitoring by study participants in situations of temptation expressing parental agency in the role of the "significant other" – the source of the primordial meanings prescribed by the child to the environment. An important element of the context that increased the mothers' symbolic power by activating their sons' loyalty and commitment to them was their view of themselves as women "embracing," i.e., maintaining a stable family situation, nurturing family bonds and communication despite difficult circumstances. A central determinant of this process was its contextualisation. Their strength-based perception of the sons emerged in a social environment that enabled the adolescents to observe extremely different families and created conditions for their social normalisation.

The mothers' buffering of the negative consequences of their sons growing up in DN was also expressed in their efforts to block the processes of formal labelling of their sons as "deviant," a feature of struggling mothers. By disrupting the dynamics of the processes of socially creating delinquents out of their sons in territorially stigma-laden relationships with institutions of education or public order, they simultaneously intensified their sons' loyalty commitments to them, similar to "embracing" mothers.

Another component of family resilience took the form of collective biographical work that resulted in the normalisation of the family as perceived by the adolescent sons. The study captured the processes leading from adolescent boys' perceptions of the family as escaping the norm, and the connections between such reception of relatives and the increase in adolescent boys' involvement in group deviant practices. Against this background, the work of normalising the image of the family as perceived by the sons was conducive to buffering the effects of this threat. In the empirical material, this component of family resilience was expressed in three variants:

- the normalisation of the family by attributing to the problem their discrediting meaning of illness,
- normalising the family by interpreting it as coping with conditions constrained by structures external to them,
- normalising the family by taking responsibility for themselves.

The reinterpretation of family problems in the sons' lived world, following the logic of one of the three options, was conducive to sustaining the importance of family homeostasis in the boys' individual validity systems and the influence of the mothers' perspective on self-control mechanisms in situations of risky choices.

In the co-creation of a strength-based father image, associated with processes of family normalisation, a form of compensating for the absence of a father role model in the upbringing of the study participants can be recognised. In the physical or psychological absence of fathers in their relationship with their sons, the family co-created the image of their memory either in a patchwork pattern of positive snapshots or based on an appreciation of a selected competence (e.g., professional or social), which in the boys' later lives proved to be a point of reference in the processes of negotiating their identities.

The study revealed how experiencing cumulative deprivation in the lives of families with DN initiated their creation of configurations of unique forces, in the cumulative result of which a space developed to buffer the impact of threats and/or shortcomings of the immediate environment. The reconstructed view of the resilience of these families reveals to us the (in)ordinary magic of everyday life, an arrangement of ordinary-unusual practices reinforcing adolescent resistance to the temptations and disadvantages of the immediate environment, developed in the course of their history of coping with objective difficulties experienced on account of their underprivileged position in the socio-economic and geographical structure of the city.

The reconstructed view of family strengths is expressed in terms of processes that are interrelated. While we see parallels to the categories of family resilience captured in the concept of F. Walsh (2016), however the interactivity of the components of resilience captured through the lens of the longitudinal study demonstrated the limits of the processuality of the concept sensitising the analysis at its outset. The study found that for environments whose disadvantage is multifaceted and complexly contingent, a broad, ecological (Fraser, Galinsky, & Richman, 1999) framing of the resilience of families with DN is needed to capture variants of connections between individual abilities, family properties, processes within families, and between them and neighbourhood and/or institutional or structural conditions.

The need to be attentive to the "expert by experience" perspective in the study of the phenomenon under investigation resonated strongly with the results of the anal-

ysis. The study highlighted elements of the "invisible environment" (Radlińska, 1961) elusive in low-contextualised explorations. It was the processes of co-creation in families of the meaning given to difficult periods of their lives and the body of knowledge from the experience of crises and difficulties that constituted a central element in the configuration of the determinants of the strength of sons' resistance to the threats and deficits of the immediate living environment.

The components of family resilience uncovered in the study provide intervening justifications for the development of a strengths-based socio-educational work model in DN. It is possible to perceive them as a complementary element to documented efforts to conceptualise a community strengths-based socio-educational work model in disadvantaged neighbourhoods (Gulczyńska, 2022; Gulczyńska, Granosik, 2002).

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