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On not Yielding to Temptation

Instead of an introduction

The notion of yielding to temptation has already been studied by ethnographers, sociologists, and morality researchers. Yet the situation is different in the area of social psychology. My review of literature in that scope indicated the existence of two dominant research perspectives used in the studies on the situation of giving in to temptation: the perspective related to resocialisation psychology, which discusses the notion in terms of antisocial behaviour,¹ and the perspective of the psychology of morality.² The results of the research by Zaleski and

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- 1 Vide, e.g.: K. Pospiszyl, *Psychologiczna analiza wadliwych postaw społecznych młodzieży*, PWN, Warszawa 1973; idem, *Psychopatia. Istota, przyczyny i sposoby resocjalizacji antysocjalności*, PWN, Warszawa 1985; K. Pospiszyl, E. Żabczyńska, *Psychologia dziecka niedostosowanego społecznie*, PWN, Warszawa 1980; *Problemy psychologiczno-psychiatryczne w procesie karnym*, J.M. Stanik (ed.), Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, Katowice 1985; *Psychologiczne i psychiatryczne opiniotawstwo sądowe w ramach nowych uregulowań prawnych*, J.M. Stanik, Z. Majchrzyk (eds.), Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, Katowice 2001; J.M. Stanik, "Warunki opiekuńczo-wychowawcze w rodzinie, radzenie sobie z wymaganiami szkolnymi a stopień ryzyka przestępczości nieletnich", [in:] *Przestępczość nieletnich. Aspekty psychospołeczne i prawne*, J.M. Stanik, L. Woszczek (eds.), Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, Katowice 2005; J.M. Stanik, "Diagnozowanie niedostosowania społecznego i asocjalności", [in:] *Resocjalizacja. Teoria i praktyka pedagogiczna*, J.M. Stanik, B. Urban (eds.), vol. 1, PWN, Warszawa 2007; J.M. Stanik, "Wybrane koncepcje i wyniki badań kryminologicznych a perspektywy resocjalizacji", [in:] *Resocjalizacja. Teoria i praktyka pedagogiczna*, J.M. Stanik, B. Urban (eds.), Warszawa 2007; J. Kucharewicz, *Psychologiczna analiza procesów motywacyjnych przestępstw popełnianych przez nieletnich (na przykładzie przestępstw agresywnych i nieagresywnych)*, Katowice 2008, doctoral dissertation prepared at the University of Silesia, Faculty of Pedagogy and Psychology.
- 2 Vide, e.g.: M. Kosewski, *Ludzie w sytuacji pokusy i upokorzenia*, Wiedza Powszechna, Warszawa 1985; Z. Zaleski, A. Woźnicka, "Uleganie pokusie czynu nielegalnego z perspektywy psychologicznej", *Prakseologia* 2003, issue 143, pp. 331–349.

Woźnicka,³ which indicated that in most cases people are ready to yield to the temptation of easy gains despite their declared appreciation of the legal and ethical norms prohibiting the misappropriation of other people's property, form the starting point for my study. What else if not the legal framework can prevent a person from giving in to temptation when it arises? What role does our personality play here?

The situation of temptation from the psychological perspective⁴

There are a few definitions of temptation developed on the basis of psychological theories. Zaleski and Woźnicka defined temptation as

a situation in which at a minimum cost one can acquire some goods (items, authorship, land, or money) expecting the fact never to be revealed publicly, either by a law enforcer or by anyone else. The behaviour of a person in a specific situation depends on a host of facts, which dynamically interact with one another.⁵

In defining temptation, Kosewski referred to Lewin's concept of conflict: "temptation is a situation of conflict between opposite pursuits which draws us in opposite directions."⁶ Conflict, in turn, was defined by Lewin as "the psychological state which formed as a result of the internal struggle of motivations and decisions made, where one must make a choice as to the mode and object of an action."⁷ In such a situation the choice seems a difficulty which manifests itself, on the one hand, in a person's behaviour (uncertainty, deferring, irritation, doubts), and, on the other, in their internal experiences (anxiety and hesitation). When experiencing conflict in psychological terms, a person always experiences uncertainty as to the legitimacy of the decision they are about to make. That is because a psychologically healthy individual knows they may make a mistake, and if so, is aware of the

³ Z. Zaleski, A. Woźnicka, *op. cit.*

⁴ The issue of the mode and the object of misappropriation, though exceeding the limits of the study presented in this article considerably, seems extremely interesting. There are various kinds, and thus various levels, of social and personal approval or disapproval, tolerance or lack thereof, indifference or contempt, for the act of misappropriation. The verification of the hypotheses also in this area seems an interesting undertaking, though requiring a separate (and extensive) study.

⁵ Z. Zaleski, A. Woźnicka, *op. cit.*, p. 334 [Unless indicated otherwise, English quotations were translated from Polish].

⁶ M. Kosewski, *Ludzie...*, p. 21.

⁷ K. Lewin, *Field Theory of Social Science: Selected Theoretical Papers*, D. Cartwright (ed.), Harper & Brothers, New York 1951, as quoted in: C.S. Hall, G. Lindzey, *Teorie osobowości*, trans. collective work, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 1998, p. 393.

related consequences – the sometimes irreversible outcomes of their actions. Thus, conflict is an experience which is naturally related to experiencing anxiety.

Lewin defined three kinds of conflict.⁸ In the first kind, i.e. *striving – striving*, two valuable items exist simultaneously. The conflict plays out at the level of the choice between two desirable items. The situation is resolved when, after making their choice, a person is content with their decision.

The second kind of conflict is *avoiding – avoiding*, where all the possible choices seem to be negative and unpleasant. The internal struggle of motivation leads to choosing the lesser evil.

The third kind of a conflict, and the most detrimental, is the *striving – avoiding* conflict. It appears when a person may acquire some positive value, but at the expense of accepting a negative value. As the person nears their aim, the intensities of both striving and of avoiding increase. If the person abandons their desire to acquire the positive value, in their perception the value's desirability increases. Some aspects of the situation encourage the person to resist the temptation (striving), while others encourage them to yield to it (avoiding). An unresolved conflict is always the source of fear and negative emotions, sometimes transforming into neurosis.

The temptation situation is, according to Kosewski, an example of the striving – avoiding conflict.⁹ On the one hand, the person strives to acquire an easy benefit, but, on the other, the fact of acquiring it entails negative consequences for them. An individual thus faces a dilemma where they either yield to the temptation of increasing their wealth, or, due to their respect for the law and moral rules, or from fear of social condemnation, they abandon their striving for the goods.

The situation of temptation is inseparably linked with the necessity of the person transgressing certain standards developed by society and culture for organising interpersonal relations and limiting people's avarice. Thus, the psychological field of (intra-psychological) conflict receives the addition of the category of a transgression of social, legal, cultural or religious standards. A person who operates in various areas and communities, who experiences the influences of various factors and forces, faces a set of motivations and stimuli regarding which they must act in a specific manner.

The ability to offer an excuse for oneself as a determining factor in a person's behaviour in a situation of temptation was also discussed in Leon Festinger's theory of cognitive dissonance. By providing an excuse for themselves, a person yields to temptation yet retains their positive image of themselves from before.¹⁰ That is because by possessing an excuse for their actions they can reduce the cognitive

⁸ Ibid., pp. 401–403.

⁹ M. Kosewski, *Ludzie...*, p. 21.

¹⁰ M. Kosewski, *Agresywni przestępcy*, Wiedza Powszechna, Warszawa 1977, p. 71.

dissonance caused by their choice of either behaving in a socially accepted manner or acquiring the desired goods. According to Festinger, cognitive dissonance is a “feeling of discomfort, originally defined as being caused by holding two or more inconsistent cognitions and subsequently defined as being caused by performing an action that is discrepant from one’s customary, typically positive self-conception.”¹¹ In order to remove the unpleasant tension felt, a person undertakes actions aimed at reducing it. Towards that end, they reformulate one or both cognitive elements so that there is as little conflict as possible. Sometimes, the person also adds a new cognitive perspective, which changes the perspective of earlier elements.¹² The mechanism for reducing cognitive dissonance explains a person’s behaviour in situations when one must make a choice contrary to one’s attitude, values, or beliefs.

A similar pattern applies to the mechanism of the criminal neutralisation or rationalisation.¹³ An act of violating the law is also conducted by reducing dissonance and finding a “reliable excuse” for it. Criminals offer various mechanisms which involve rationalising their criminal acts, manipulating the evaluations thereof, and trying to find various justifications for their actions. People provide themselves with those excuses both before and after committing an illegal act.¹⁴ Their actions are often determined by fear.

Fear as the determining factor for human behaviour in situations involving temptation

Fear is “an emotional condition with an unpleasant tint for the individual, which features the sensations of unjustified anxiety or sense of threat, with various levels of intensity and duration.”¹⁵ Fear may fulfil stimulating or indicating functions, which are positive, but it may also fulfil destructive functions when experiencing it exceeds an individual’s adaptive capabilities. According to research,¹⁶ fear is sometimes the basis for various kinds of antisocial behaviour among humans. Both the permanent propensity to react in an elevated level of anxiety to various situations (fear-feature) and the current level of fear being experienced by a person

¹¹ E. Aronson, T.D. Wilson, R.M. Akert, *Psychologia społeczna – serce i umysł*, trans. A. Bezwinska, E. Hornowska, Zys i S-ka, Poznań 2004, p. 397 [English version: idem, *Social Psychology*, Pearson Education, Inc., Boston 2013, p. 136].

¹² Ibid., p. 397.

¹³ M. Kosewski, *Agresywni przestępcy*.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 78.

¹⁵ Charles D. Spielberger, as quoted in: T. Sosnowski, K. Wrześniewski, “Polska adaptacja inwentarza STAI do badania stanu i cechy lęku”, *Przegląd Psychologiczny* 1983, vol. 26, issue 2, p. 353 [393–412].

¹⁶ J. Kucharewicz, *op. cit.*

(fear-condition) may thus correlate to a person's propensity to succumb to – or the ability to resist – the temptation to misappropriate someone else's property.¹⁷

The personality of an individual and giving in to temptation

The factor analyses which had been conducted for decades, and the results of psychometric studies and laboratory experiments, led Hans J. Eysenck to the conclusion that there exists a tri-factor structure of temperament, which consists of: PSYCHOTISM (P), EXTROVERSION (E) AND NEUROTISM (N).¹⁸

A recent study by Joanna Kucharewicz¹⁹ regarding the personality-based conditions of antisocial behaviour confirmed the existence of a relationship between a high intensity of psychotic qualities and a person's propensity for antisocial behaviour, and between a high level of fear as a state and a person's propensity to avoid antisocial behaviour. Even Eysenck, during his many years of research, indicated the existence of the following relationships: introverts, i.e. persons with whom the conditioning process occurs more easily, are less prone to crime than extroverts, as it is easier to create in them a fear reaction which prevents them from engaging in antisocial behaviour. Moreover, extroverts, due to their lower susceptibility to conditioning, are less successful in absorbing the rules of community life than introverts. Persons who display antisocial behaviour feature a higher level of neurotism. The same applies to the dimension of psychotism: the higher the intensity of the characteristic, the more a person is prone to antisocial behaviour.²⁰

In search of psychological correlations of succumbing to temptation Assumptions and the course of study into the situation of temptation

The aim of the study was to answer the following research question: *Do personal traits constitute correlates of yielding to temptation (using the example of misappropriating someone else's property)?*

Based on the above theoretical discussion, I formulated the following research hypotheses:

17 Vide T. Sosnowski, "Lęk jako stan i jako cecha w ujęciu Charlesa D. Spielbergera", *Przegląd Psychologiczny* 1997, vol. 20, no. 2, pp. 349–359.

18 Vide P. Oleś, *Wprowadzenie do psychologii osobowości*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe „Scholar”, Warszawa 2003.

19 J. Kucharewicz, *op. cit.*

20 P. Brzozowski, R. Drwał, *Kwestionariusz osobowości Eysencka. Polska adaptacja EPQ-R. Podręcznik*, Pracownia Testów Psychologicznych, Warszawa 1995; R. Drwał, *Adaptacja kwestionariuszy osobowości. Wybrane zagadnienia i techniki*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 1995.

H1: Persons who yield to the temptation of misappropriating someone else's property possess a lower level of fear, considered as their characteristic, than people who resist temptation.

H2: Persons who yield to the temptation of misappropriating someone else's property possess a higher level of extroversion than people who resist temptation.

H3: Persons who yield to the temptation of misappropriating someone else's property possess a higher level of psychotism than people who resist temptation.

H4: Persons who yield to the temptation of misappropriating someone else's property possess a higher level of neurotism than people who resist temptation.

H5: Persons who yield to the temptation of misappropriating someone else's property possess a lower level of the desire for social approval than people who resist temptation.

In order to verify the hypotheses, I conducted a study using the following research tools: Simulated Situations of Temptation (8 *quasi*-experimental scenarios of temptation of my own creation, which I used to operationalise the variable of yielding to the temptation of misappropriating someone else's property), the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory by C.D. Spielberger as adapted by Kazimierz Wrześniewski and Tytus Sosnowski, and the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire-Revised.

120 persons (78 women and 42 men) aged 19–25 participated in the study; they were students of courses in humanities at the University of Lodz. The members of the group were in a similar financial situation. All the subjects had completed at least secondary education. They lived in cities with populations of at least 400,000. The above details were stated in subject interviews which preceded the study.

The results

The analyses of the results indicated the existence of various relationships between the analysed relative (being discussed) variable of yielding to the temptation of misappropriating someone else's property and the level of psychotism, neurotism, extroversion (as per Eysenck's concept), fear as a trait and as a state (as understood by Spielberger), and the desire for social approval.

In the regression analysis model of the entire group of subjects, I achieved statistically significant relationships between the level of psychotism, the desire for social approval, and fear as a state, which explained the 34% changeability of the value of yielding to temptation. The highest frequency of yielding to the temptation to misappropriate someone else's property was recorded in the subjects with elevated levels of psychotism, while persons who had a larger desire for social approval and a higher level of fear as a state less often recalled having misappropriated property. Those findings were later confirmed by an analysis of the correlation between specific variables and the variable of yielding to temptation. Apart from the level of psychotism, the desire for social approval and fear as a state, the rela-

tionship between a higher level of extroversion and the higher level of yielding to temptation also proved statistical valid.

I used the method of step-based analysis of linear regression for the entire study group, where as the discussed (relative) variable I used the index of yielding to temptation, and as the defining (non-relative) variables I used fear as a trait, fear as a state, neurotism, extroversion, psychotism, and the desire for social approval. Thus, I achieved a model where the interactions with the discussed variable proved statistically significant for three variables: psychotism, fear as a state, and the desire for social approval. The analysis of the variants indicated the appropriate adjustment of the statistical model to the data held (significance below $p<0.001$), meaning that the relationships between the variables were of a linear nature.

The R-squared determination coefficient = 0.34 indicated that the presented set of relationships between the variables explains 34% of the entirety of the variability of the results achieved (cf. Table 1 and Diagram 1).

Table 1. Major relationships between the variable of yielding to temptation and the defining variables

Defining variables	Beta coefficient	R-squared	Relevance
Psychotism	-.460	.34	.000
Fear state	.225		.004
Social approval	.186		.024

Source: own study.

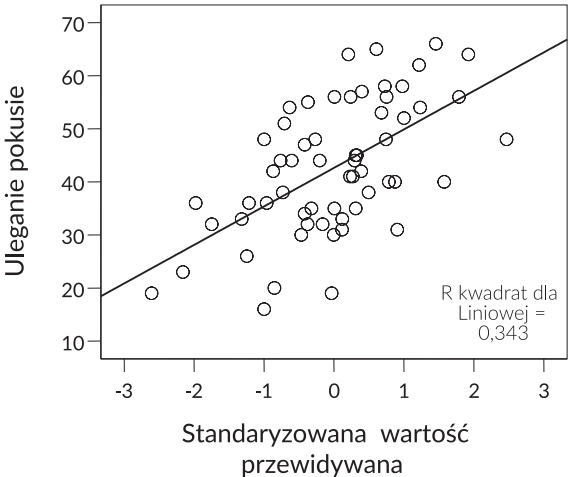


Diagram 1. Graphic representation of the determination coefficient for the regression analysis model for the variable explaining yielding to temptation

Source: own study.

As the results regarding yielding to temptation increased, the results related to the level of psychotism decreased, which meant that a lower propensity to yield to temptation entailed a lower level of psychotism, while persons with higher level of psychotism more often yielded to temptation. Such a relationship displayed high statistical significance, i.e. $p < 0.001$, while its strength (the Beta coefficient = $-.460$) could be considered as moderate. The level of fear as a state and the desire for social approval positively correlated with higher results of the indicator of a situation of temptation, which meant that a higher fear as a state and a higher level of the desire for social approval existed along with a lower level of yielding to the temptation to commit an illegal act. The intensity of those relations was minor (the Beta coefficient amounted to $.225$ and $.186$ respectively), yet both were statistically relevant (measuring $p < 0.01$ and $p < 0.05$ respectively).

A comparison of the average results of personality changes for the two groups of subjects, i.e. those who yielded to temptation and those who resisted it, confirmed the observed relations for the variables of psychotism and the desire for social approval, and it indicated a statistically relevant difference in the level of fear as a trait. The study subjects who resisted temptation had, on average, a higher level of fear as a relatively permanent personality trait (Table 2).

Table 2. Average values of independent variables in the groups of subjects who yielded to temptation (N=58) and those who resisted it (N=62)

Variable independent	Temptation	Average	Standard deviation	Difference in average	T	Relevance
Fear – state	Resisting	5.61	1.894	.509	1.344	.509
	Yielding	5.10	2.253			
Fear – trait	Resisting	5.52	2.014	.758	2.078	.040
	Yielding	4.76	1.976			
Neurotism	Resisting	5.03	2.567	.067	.160	.873
	Yielding	4.97	1.937			
Extrovertism	Resisting	6.42	1.635	-.132	-.385	.701
	Yielding	6.55	2.112			
Psychotism	Resisting	4.19	1.854	-1.565	-3.989	.000
	Yielding	5.76	2.423			
Social approval	Resisting	5.77	2.425	1.257	2.864	.006
	Yielding	4.52	2.379			

Source: own study.

The psychotism variable proved the most significant in the discussed analyses ($t = 3.989$, $p < 0.001$). Persons who yielded to temptation had, on average, a higher level of psychotism in the Eysenck model than those who resisted it. Also the difference in the level of the desire for social approval proved statistically relevant

($t = 2.864$, $p < 0.01$), i.e. persons who resisted temptation had, on average, a higher level of the desire than those who yielded to it, and the difference amounted to slightly over a half of standard deviation. This difference was achieved by the level of fear as a trait ($t = 2.078$, $p < 0.05$). Persons who yielded to temptation had, on average, a statistically relevant lower level of the variable of fear as a relatively permanent personal trait when compared to those who resisted it. The remaining variables did not produce statistically relevant results.

The analysis of the correlations for all the study subjects together and when divided into women and men proved the existence of a relationship between the variables of psychotism and the desire for social approval. Additionally, upon analysing all the subjects and then only women, I was able to verify the relevance of the level of fear as a state (Table 3).

Table 3. Correlation between independent variables and the variable of yielding to temptation

Independent variables	r Pearson	Relevance
Neurotism	.097	.291
Extrovertism	-.243	.008
Psychotism	-.511	.000
Social approval	.363	.000
Fear – state	.180	.049
Fear – trait	.156	.088

Source: own study.

The analysis indicated four statistically relevant correlations. Apart from the relevant correlations between the variables identified based on the analysis of regression (psychotism, social approval, and fear as a state), I also obtained a correlation between the indicator of temptation and the level of extroversion among the study subjects. The level of psychotism attained the highest correlation with the variable of yielding to temptation. The result of $r = 0.511$, $p < 0.001$ indicated the moderate strength of the negative correlation, i.e. a higher level of psychotism means a lower numerical index of yielding to temptation, which in turn means more frequent yielding to temptation (the lower the result in the indicator for yielding to temptation, the higher the propensity to yield to it, and the higher the result, the lower the propensity to yielding to it). There also existed a moderate positive correlation ($r = 0.363$, $p < 0.001$) between the level of the desire for social approval and the indicator of yielding to temptation. A higher level of the desire for social approval existed along with a lower tendency for yielding to temptation (expressed as a higher numerical result). In the study, I obtained a negative correlation

between yielding to temptation and the level of extroversion $r = -0.243$, $p < 0.01$. That indicated that as the level of extroversion increased, the indicator of yielding to temptation decreased, i.e. persons with a higher level of extroversion were more prone to yielding to temptation. The lowest correlation existed between the variable of temptation and fear as a state ($r = 0.18$, $p < 0.05$), which indicated the coexistence of a higher level of fear currently being experienced and a lower propensity to yielding to temptation, though the strength of the correlation was minor.

Discussing the results

An analysis of the results of the study enabled me to offer a positive answer to the question about the existence of personality-based determining factors for yielding to the temptation of misappropriating someone else's property. The results unequivocally proved the hypothesis on the existence of a significant correlation between the level of psychotism and yielding to this temptation. Persons who display a higher level of this trait considerably more often declared that they had displayed such behaviour. The correlation emerged from various statistical analyses, usually with moderate intensity, it applied to both women and men, though it was much stronger in men. The result remained in line with the results of the studies by Kucharewicz on antisocial behaviour among teenagers,²¹ and with Eysenck's theory of crime. Persons who display a high level of psychotism feature a lower level of social adaptation, and lower emotional sensitivity and empathy. Their level of understanding of social and legal norms, their ability to absorb them, and their motivation to observe them are lower. Such persons are more prone to focussing on their needs and emotions than on those rules which consider other people's well-being.

Another hypothesis I was able to verify was that persons who yielded to the temptation to misappropriate someone else's property displayed a lower level of the desire for social approval. Persons with a lower level of social adaptation and less empathy usually display a lower desire for making a good impression on other people and observing norms, while persons who display a higher desire for social approval act in such a manner to be appreciated by their environment, to avoid violating any bans imposed by others thus avoiding any negative evaluations.

I was only able to partly verify the hypothesis on the higher level of fear as a trait among people who resisted the temptation to misappropriate property. The correlation existed when I compared groups of people with different levels of intensity of their yielding to temptation, and the variable did not return any statistically relevant levels of correlation to other variables. It seems justified to state that persons who more often experience fear will be less prone to engaging in situations which might evoke fear.

²¹ J. Kucharewicz, *op. cit.*

Interestingly enough, the level of fear as a state proved more often relevant in the statistical analyses. That variable was more related to a specific situations and behaviour, the resulting stimulation, and the activation of the nervous system. Therefore, it may be more relevant in a specific risk situation, a certain danger, and the temptation to violate some norms and prohibitions. A person who more often reacts with fear to specific circumstances and who is more dependent on a specific moment and stimulus will more often avoid a situation of risk and threat, which when experienced evokes a psychological conflict of opposite strivings (Lewin). The specific correlations between fear in its various forms and the behaviour of a person in the special situation of yielding to the temptation of misappropriating someone else's property seems to be an area worth studying.

I was not able to prove my hypothesis on the higher level of extroversion among the people who yield to the temptation of misappropriating someone else's property, while Eysenck assigned a significant role to extroversion in explaining criminal theory and behaviour. He claimed that extroverts are less open to the process of conditioning, which means they are less successful at absorbing the rules of community life.²² It may be interesting to further analyse extroversion in various types of antisocial behaviour from the perspective of Eysenck's theory.

Neither was I able to prove the hypothesis on the higher level of neurotism among people who yielded to the temptation to misappropriate someone else's property. According to Eysenck, a higher level of the variable is typical for persons who display antisocial behaviour as a result of the fear of the habitual nature of their behaviour.²³ The verification of this aspect of Eysenck's theory could also prove an interesting research focus.

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²² Vide J. Strelau, *Psychologia temperamentu*, 2nd edition, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2002, p. 64.

²³ Vide ibid.

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O uleganiu pokusie

Streszczenie

Fenomen ulegania pokusie doczekał się wielu opracowań na gruncie badań etnograficznych, socjologicznych czy też nauki o moralności. Inaczej rzecz ta wygląda w przypadku rozważań prowadzonych na gruncie psychologii społecznej. Dokonany przeze mnie przegląd literatury w tym zakresie wskazuje na istnienie dwóch dominujących perspektyw badawczych, przyjmowanych w badaniach nad sytuacją ulegania pokusie: perspektywy właściwej psychologii resocjalizacyjnej, ujmującej zjawisko w kategoriach zachowań, oraz perspektywy psychologii moralności. Wyniki badań pokazujące, iż ludzie w większości przypadków skłonni są np. ulegać pokusom łatwych korzyści, mimo deklarowanego uznania dla norm prawnych i etycznych zakazujących zawłaszczania cudzego mienia, stały się punktem wyjścia rozważań autorki niniejszego artykułu. Co jeszcze, jeśli nie legalizm prawny, może być buforem powstrzymującym człowieka w sytuacji pokusy? Jaką rolę w tym zakresie odgrywa nasza osobowość? Artykuł prezentuje wyniki badań nad zależnością pomiędzy zmiennymi osobowościowymi a uleganiem pokusie przez człowieka.

Słowa kluczowe: osobowość, pokusa, legalizm moralny i prawny, normy społeczne.

On not Yielding to Temptation

Summary

The notion of yielding to temptation has already been studied by ethnographers, sociologists, and morality researchers. Yet the situation is different in the area of social psychology. My review of the literature in that scope indicated the existence of two dominant research perspectives used in studies on the situation of giving in to temptation: the perspective related to resocialisation psychology, which discusses the notion in terms of behaviour, and the perspective of the psychology of morality. The results of the research which indicated that in most cases people are ready to, e.g. yield to the temptation of easy gains, despite their declared appreciation of the legal and ethical norms prohibiting the misappropriation of other people's property, formed the starting point for my study. What else if not the legal framework can prevent a person from giving in to temptation when it arises? What role does our

personality play in that? The article presents the results of a study into the correlation between personality-based variables and a person's yielding to temptation.

Keywords: personality, temptation, moral and legal legalism, social norms.

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