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Capabilities and Internal Conflicts from the Perspective of Nossrat Peseschkian's Transcultural Positive Psychotherapy: A Counselling Context

In the article, I present the tenets of transcultural positive psychotherapy founded by Nossrat Peseschkian. The main area of consideration will be, firstly, potentialities, interpreted as human capacities and capabilities, and secondly, intrapsychic conflicts resulting from the differentiation of actual capabilities. I discuss the work and selected theoretical and research writings of Peseschkian, whereby I focus on the formation of intrapsychic conflicts. I highlight the important role of the therapeutic process, which Peseschkian framed as the activation of one's individual, social and family resources. The major elements of the therapeutic process I discuss include the Balance Model, the language of therapy and the use of metaphors, folk proverbs, parables or allegories. I explain that, in Peseschkian's framework, the process of therapeutic interactions should be embedded in a broadly understood cultural context. I also seek to show that components of transcultural positive psychotherapy can be used in the counselling process.

Keywords: capabilities, capacities, internal conflicts, psychotherapy, counselling, therapy

Introduction

Transcultural positive psychotherapy is a fairly recent trend in psychotherapy that emerged in Germany in 1968 to be soon recognised and obtain official accreditation there. Initially, intensive training courses presenting the forms and methods of working with patients were organised exclusively for doctors. With time, doctors were joined by psychologists and educators. In 1994, the European Association for Psychotherapy recognised this form of support as an independent and effective method of therapeutic assistance. Today, transcultural positive psychotherapy is a therapeutic method endorsed by multiple international and European organisations that assemble the main schools of psychotherapy (Ciesielski, 2015).

Nossrat Peseschkian, the founder of the method, introduced an interesting concept of potentialities to psychotherapy. He defined 'potentialities' as human capacities and capabilities activated and developed throughout an individual's lifetime. Although the notion of 'potentialities' or 'capabilities' has long been known in scholarship, notably in the humanities and the social sciences (Rzechowska, 1996; Rzechowska, 2004), the conception of transcultural positive psychotherapy has given a new value to it.

A constant increase in the quality of life, proliferating possibilities for the social and cultural development of societies and a growing social sense of freedom and the pursuit of individual needs necessitate, as it were, an increase in the demand for broadly defined counselling (Kargulowa, 2007; Bilon, 2010) and therapeutic interventions. Hence, Peseschkian's insistence on the appreciation of a human being's own resources and the activation of individual capacities as significant values on the way to self-knowledge can and should be effectively used by people involved in counselling and therapeutic interventions.

In this article, I outline Peseschkian's life and work to discuss the tenets of transcultural positive psychotherapy and scrutinise two major constructs: capacities and internal conflicts. I seek to identify the elements that can meaningfully enrich counselling and therapeutic processes.

The Life And Work of Nossrat Peseschkian

Transcultural positive therapy was founded by Nossrat Peseschkian (1933–2010) in the mid-1960s. Born in Iran in 1954, Peseschkian emigrated to Germany and settled in Wiesbaden. He studied medicine and psychology, eventually specialising in psychiatry and neurology. Besides, he trained as a psychotherapist. He was particularly interested in the humanistic and psychodynamic aspects of psychology and psychotherapy. He personally met prominent psychiatrists and psychotherapists, such as Viktor Frankl and Jacob L. Moreno, and these encounters must have been an important factor that contributed to the crystallisation of his views on the methods, forms and aims of psychotherapy.

In the 1970s, Peseschkian gave a number of lectures and seminars for doctors, psychotherapists and psychologists, presenting his own vision of psychotherapy. These events were authorised by the medical authorities of Hesse and recognised as specialist psychotherapeutic training courses. In that period, Peseschkian (1987[1977]) also wrote a study describing positive psychotherapy as a method that brought together the humanistic and psychodynamic approaches and made the therapeutic process accommodate various socio-cultural and intercultural factors influencing patients' biographies. The study was originally titled *Differential Analysis*, but as Peseschkian himself later said, the publisher concluded that the phrase would be difficult to understand, which could harm the sales. To avoid

that, the title was changed to *Positive Psychotherapy*. Peseschkian (1987[1977]) also used the term 'transcultural psychotherapy.' The 1970s and 80s saw the publication of a number of Peseschkian's studies that developed this strand of psychotherapy. In *Positive Psychotherapy of Everyday Life* (1974), Peseschkian proposed expanding transcultural psychotherapy through the adoption of a perspective derived from the wisdom of proverbs and metaphors; he also illuminated the positive facet of conflicts and sufferings experienced by individuals. He discussed conflicts in relationships, at the same time suggesting what could be done to deal with these problems effectively (Peseschkian, 1974; Peseschkian, 2016). In 1979, the German version of *Oriental Stories* was published. In this book Peseschkian compiled and edited a substantial collection of narratives, funny parables and allegorical tales of Eastern origin. In the volume, he combined Western rationality and the wisdom and intuition that were part of the culture of the East (Ciesielski, 2015). He also underscored the relevance and therapeutic dimension of the wisdom coming from the interpretation of tales, hidden metaphors and allegorical parables.

In the 1980s, the Wiesbaden Inventory for Positive Psychotherapy and Family Therapy (WIPPF) was developed as the first research tool used in psychotherapy and published by Peseschkian in collaboration with his son Hamid Peseschkian and Hans Deidenbach. *Positive Family Therapy* was another hallmark publication of the positive psychotherapy school. In Poland the study was published in Roman Ciesielski's translation as *Pozytywna terapia rodzin. Rodzina w roli terapeuty* [*Positive family therapy: The family as a therapist*] in 2015. In *Psychosomatik und positive Psychotherapie*, a study published in 1992, Peseschkian discussed the therapeutic possibilities of transcultural positive psychotherapy, offering a detailed analysis of around forty different cases of mental disorders.

Between 1995 and 1997, a team of researchers, including Peseschkian, carried out a study to examine the effectiveness of transcultural positive psychotherapy. In 1999, *Positive Psychotherapy: Effectiveness of an Interdisciplinary Approach* was published as an outcome of the study to confirm the considerable effectiveness of this therapeutic method (Tritt, Loew, Meyer, Werner, & Peseschkian, 1999). In 2005, Peseschkian and his wife founded the Peseschkian Foundation—International Academy for Positive and Transcultural Psychotherapy (IAPP) with a mission to promote the idea of positive and transcultural therapy across the world. The goals of the Foundation are as defined on its website: 'We have dedicated ourselves to the international further training of psychologists, doctors and educators in a special way, whereby the education and therapy work with children and adolescents plays an important role' (Peseschkian Stiftung, n.d.).

In 2016, some years after Peseschkian's death, the term 'transcultural' was added to the name of the World Association for Positive Psychotherapy. Ever since, the organisation has been known as the World Association for Positive and Transcultural Psychotherapy (WAPP). Institutions disseminating the idea of transcultural positive psychotherapy began to be set up in several countries, for example, in

Germany, Bulgaria, Romania and Ukraine. In Poland, centres promoting Peseschkian's legacy were established as well, including the Wrocław Institute of Psychotherapy, the Polish Centre of Positive and Transcultural Psychotherapy in Wrocław and the Centre of Positive and Transcultural Psychotherapy in Leszno.

The author of 26 books on transcultural positive psychotherapy, translated into more than twenty languages, Peseschkian died in 2010, and his work was taken up by his son, Hamid Peseschkian, who became the Director of the Academy for Psychotherapy in Wiesbaden and the Managing Director of the World Association for Positive and Transcultural Psychotherapy (WAPP). Today, transcultural positive psychotherapy, as an independent and effective approach in psychotherapy, is recommended for therapeutic and training purposes by the International Federation for Psychotherapy (IFP) and the European Association for Psychotherapy. It also has the accreditation of the World Certificate for Psychotherapy (WCPC) and is represented in the World Council for Psychotherapy (WCP) (Ciesielski, 2015, p. 9).

The Tenets of Transcultural Positive Psychotherapy¹

In any attempt to depict the tenets of transcultural positive psychotherapy, questions arise about what transcultural positive psychotherapy is, what determines the sense of satisfaction, and what vision of the world it promotes. Obviously, this is not a complete list of questions. Let me try and describe transcultural positive psychotherapy as imagined by its founder.

As he studied in Germany, Peseschkian began his education from psychoanalysis. He also trained with proponents other psychotherapeutic schools, such as Viktor Frankl, Jacob L. Moreno, Heinrich Meng, Raymond Battegay and Gaetano Benedetti. He was surprised to find that the various psychotherapeutic approaches did not form a coherent system of support. He discovered that every school of psychotherapy was a closed, separate system of forms and methods of support. However, none of these schools took into account the specificity of a given disorder or the real needs and capacities of the patient.² What Peseschkian found missing was a form of therapeutic assistance that would best serve the patient and, at the same time, would integrate various psychotherapeutic approaches. What he had in mind was developing a support system that would be receptive to diverse therapeutic methods and forms, as many of the disorders required strategies from different strands of psychotherapy: humanistic, psychodynamic, behavioural and others. Peseschkian called for the integration of all these strands in the process of supporting the patient, because it could make support interventions more effective. Another important problem that Peseschkian identified was that the language

¹ Another frequently used term is Positive and Transcultural Psychotherapy (PPT).

² See an interview with Arno Remmers (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WtQ0N5JRFis>).

of psychotherapy was hermetic and, consequently, incomprehensible to many patients. As a response to this predicament, he called for greater clarity and simplicity.

Consequently, Peseschkian pursued his vision of integrating psychotherapy: a humanistic vision of the human being, a psychodynamic understanding of internal conflicts (psychoanalytical approach), systemic reflection on transculturality, the cognitive-behavioural structure of the therapeutic process and strategic thinking (an individualised structure of therapy), which encompassed a multi-stage resource- and goal-based support process (Remmers, 2020). The idea was that the language used in the process should be simple enough for the patient not to need a psychotherapist to deal with the problems after the conclusion of therapy. An interesting space for self-help was generated as called for by Peseschkian (1987 [1977]), consistently with the principle of teaching people to fish, rather than giving them a fish.

Peseschkian's belief that the cultural factor was crucial in capability development was sparked by his childhood observations of how members of other cultures functioned and consolidated by his subsequent numerous international contacts and the many years of research. Peseschkian recognised the cultural values shared by all people, but also those that starkly differed, which seemed particularly interesting in the era of all-encompassing globalisation. Encounters of people from various social and cultural backgrounds led to a mutual assimilation of distinct behaviours and attitudes.

The socio-cultural context is also a factor that determines the attitudes and beliefs a person adopts; it is an important circumstance in exploring the source of the problems one experiences. The place of birth, family models, intergenerational transmission and the historical moment a person inhabits influence their way of thinking, existential value-judgment system and, consequently, attitudes to problems. This has been pointed out by Roman Ciesielski, who observes in his study on transcultural positive psychotherapy: 'Professor Nossrat Peseschkian, a Persian by birth who lived in Germany until his death, reminds us that culture determines our thinking and value-judgement system. Thus, by understanding better the socio-cultural background of our patients, we identify the sources of their suffering and come up with more adequate forms of psychological assistance' (2015, p. 5).

Peseschkian proposed a holistic vision of the world. Essential to this conception is the assumption that the human being, as an internally integrated system of values and beliefs, is part of the universe. Thus, an individual's physical, mental, social and spiritual aspects are interlinked and constitute a whole. This is illustrated by the notion that what influences the body influences the mind as well. This idea is inscribed in Peseschkian's Balance Model, which is a simple tool for studying the level of inner harmony, energy distribution and involvement in the four important areas of individual life.³ The tool also makes it possible to detect the sources of internal

³ These are: 1. body/senses; 2. diligence/achievement; 3. contact; 4. future (qtd. Ciesielski, 2015 p. 18)

conflicts, establish and classify diagnostically significant symptoms, assess an individual's response to a difficult situation and detect that individual's resources (Ciesielski, 2015, pp. 18–19).

What matters in transcultural positive psychotherapy is that 'positive' is its intrinsic component. In Peseschkian's concept, the term is linked to the notion of *Positum*, which denotes 'the real, the given' (Peseschkian, 1987[1977]; Ciesielski, 2015). Therapeutic practice should be informed by the idea that a person bears not only symptoms of disorders and problems, but also capacities and capabilities with various activity potentials that enable the person to carry on despite the difficulties they experience. Of special interest is Peseschkian's theory of microtraumas or internal conflicts, which accords a prominent place to the idea of capacity, echoing the theory of salutogenesis as an important point of reference in this strand of psychotherapy.⁴

Consistently with Peseschkian's principles, transcultural positive psychotherapy endorses an integrated therapeutic system, reflexivity derived from transculturality, individualised therapeutic interventions, the salience of human capabilities and capacities, a holistic worldview and the pursuit of inner balance as a determinant of satisfaction and health.

Peseschkian on Capabilities

Compelling to many therapists and regarded as Peseschkian's pivotal achievement, his concept of potentialities is rendered as 'capabilities' or 'capacities' in English-language studies on transcultural positive psychotherapy. In the Polish translation, the terms fully convey the essence of potentiality, as they denote specific capacities and capabilities acquired throughout an individual's life. Peseschkian's crucial finding holds that capabilities indicate possibilities for, rather than limitations to, development. Briefly put, potentialities are the capacities and capabilities that become inner norms in the successive stages of a person's life and determine the way in which the person functions, interprets events in their life, recognises values and limits and experiences inner conflicts (Ciesielski, 2015). To be activated, potentialities need a specific social context.

In order to understand the nature of capabilities, we can imagine a symphony orchestra that performs a piece of music. What makes our listening experience pleasant is, among others, a smooth collaboration of all the instruments in the orchestra. Capabilities are like the instruments that have their own individual performing capacities. Indeed, the violin, the trumpet and the drum play differently each, but they all work to achieve the same goal, which is to perform the piece

⁴ Salutogenesis is Aaron Antonovsky's model, which emphasises the preservation of health, rather than the treatment of disease. Maintaining one's balance/health depends on one's resources and acquired patterns of behaviour in a given situation. It is the opposite of the pathogenetic model.

properly. What matter are the good tuning and good condition of the instruments, the musicians' skills, the difficulty of the pieces and the like factors. An instrument that is not in good condition or is not well tuned will not play harmoniously with the other instruments. Moreover, each instrument has a different role in the composition being played. A good performance and a good reception of a piece of music are also predicated on the right setting and circumstances. A symphonic work will sound one way in a concert hall with the proper acoustics, and a different way in an ordinary room; we listen to a piece of music differently in the morning and differently in the evening; differently among people who like and know classical music, and differently among fans of pop music. Thus, the capacities of the instruments, the skills of the musicians and the circumstances of the performance will probably influence the final rendition of the piece. And, significantly, a Stradivari violin will play differently than an ordinary fiddle. Yet both instruments can or will be vehicles for music, satisfaction and fulfilment.

The capacities and capabilities referred to here tend to be confused with life values. However, the term 'potentiality' prompts the belief that a capacity (for example, a capacity to love or to have a sense of justice) can develop; it suggests dynamism. As opposed to that, the term 'value' suggests something static, established and not evolving. This, in short, is the difference in the linguistic meaning between these two terms.

Peseschkian's assumption was that all human beings were born with two immanent capacities ('basic capacities'), which, as 'primary capacities,' enabled them to build relationships, feel love and experience emotional bonds, and, as 'secondary capacities,' helped them acquire knowledge and explore themselves and the world (Peseschkian, 1987[1977]; Ciesielski, 2015). The former are fostered in people's relationships with their loved ones early in their lives, and the latter stem from accumulated experiences and the endorsement of social norms. As people's lives unfold at a certain place and time, capabilities diversify to form actual capacities, which Roman Ciesielski defines as '[i]nternalised beliefs, values, implicit rules and unconscious internal standards, which determine the quality of our emotional relationships and social contacts' (2016, p. 15). Consequently, actual capabilities not only reflect individuals' personalities but also serve as indicators of the formation of people's individual and social identities (Erikson, 1968; Szczurek-Boruta, 2007; Wróblewska, 2011).

Peseschkian's conception stresses the uniqueness of every human being, which is affected by three factors: the body, the background and time. Although all people are endowed with the same primary capacities at birth, these capacities evolve over the course of their lives. Certain capabilities will be activated in people with a disability and other ones in athletes; some in actors and other ones in machine builders (the somatic context). Certain capabilities will develop in Buddhists and other ones in Christians; some in big-city dwellers and other ones in villagers; some in families of high social status and other ones in underprivileged families (the social

context). Certain capabilities will prevail in youngsters and other ones in adults. The capabilities of people living in the Middle Ages evolved differently than those of people living today (the temporal context). The general idea is that every human being is a bearer of capabilities that become differentiated throughout their lifetime as a result of the experiences they accumulate, the knowledge they acquire, the psychophysical constitution they develop and the socio-cultural context, community, time and place they inhabit, with this differentiation giving rise to an internal conflict. In brief, Peseschkian's theory of capabilities holds that:

- ◆ Irrespective of the time, place and socio-cultural background, a human being is born with two *basic capacities*: to establish relationships and to adopt social norms.
- ◆ The differentiation of these basic capacities (activation or inertia) depends on the individual's biological set-up, socio-cultural background and the time in which they live.
- ◆ The differentiation of the basic capacities leads to the emergence of *primary capacities*, which arise in the family environment, and *secondary capacities*, which are activated in education and socialisation.
- ◆ The differentiation of basic capacities (primary and secondary capacities that are part of the Love and Learning area) results in the emergence of *actual capacities*. The process depends on the person's current development, historical context and social and cultural determinants.
- ◆ *Internal conflicts* are intrapsychic and unfold in the area of *actual capacities*. Which of these capabilities will become genuine indicators of the difficulties one experiences depends on the patterns of behaviour and beliefs formed in the family environment. The formation of these attitudes families is bound up with the social norms and cultural paradigms characteristic of a given period (Ciesielski, 2016).
- ◆ Primary capacities encompass love, trust, time, contact, unity, faith, hope, self-confidence, sexuality and an ability to doubt. Secondary capacities include reliability, obedience, justice, orderliness, cleanliness, punctuality, thrift, precision, conscientiousness, diligence, courtesy and openness (Dobiała, 2021). As a psychological construct, capacities are an interesting research area, given the unique and cultural *loci communes*.⁵

Internal Conflicts as Viewed by Nossrat Peseschkian

Etymologically, 'conflict' derives from the Latin word *confligere*, which is a compound verb that consists of *con* ('together') and *fligō* ('strike'), translated as 'to clash,

⁵ Cultural commonplaces. For an illuminating discussion of the issue with regard to literary and culture studies, see Ernst Robert Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages* (1990), especially chapter 'Topics' (pp. 79–105).

fight, get involved, quarrel, disagree' (Georges, 1998). The meta-meanings of the term point to persistence over time, dynamism and activity.

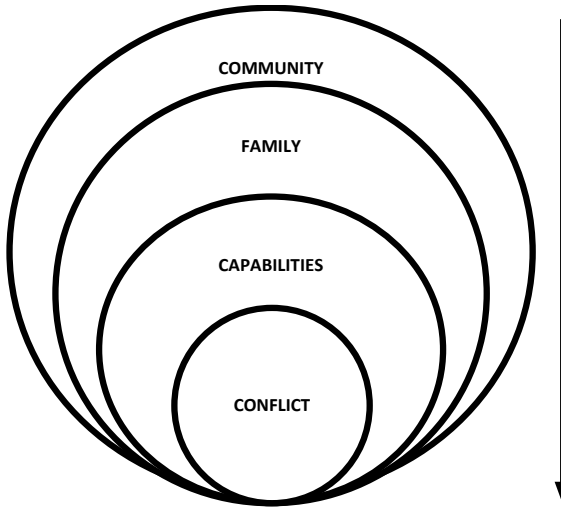


Fig. 1. The model of conflict creation
(Inspired by Ciesielski R., 2016a)

On this take, a community that lives in a given historical period produces personal role models and behavioural norms that influence the ways that families function. On this basis, various capacities will be activated, and their differentiation can become a source of conflict. Conformity to the norms and rules in place will influence people's overall sense of life harmony. However, as the literature on transcultural positive psychotherapy underscores, despite the prevailing norms, humans are highly individualised beings, which means that they bring their unique developmental needs, capabilities and capacities into the reality they experience (Ciesielski, 2016). In the space of functioning which is shaped in this way, people are bound to encounter unpleasant experiences and to succumb to many unconscious compromises, which can (and do) give rise to intrapsychic micro-conflicts resulting in the disruption of their established self-images and world-perceptions. In transcultural positive psychotherapy, existentially experienced micro-conflicts are referred to as micro-traumas, which Ciesielski defines as 'recurring micro-conflicts that destabilise the established self-image and model of the world constructed through actual capacities, which simultaneously reactivate the underlying conflict' (2016, p. 39). A destabilisation in an individual's perception of their life can inferably stem from the modelling of unconscious compromises within the space of family rules and from the demands of the time, beliefs and social norms. According

to Ciesielski, this process, which is founded on the simple principle of ‘if A then B,’⁶ can occur invariantly between all capacities (2016, p. 11).

The first conflict to surface is the *basic conflict* determining the essence of human personality. It emerges in early childhood and may involve differentiation between primary and secondary capacities. The child’s individual emotional needs are confronted with the family’s norms and rules.

Developed in childhood, a socially and culturally defined compromise between one’s individual needs and social expectations and norms—or, more precisely, between primary and secondary capacities—can generate a situation where a person cannot realise any of these capacities. As a result, an *internal conflict* arises, which may unfold as a conscious confrontation with a particular situation or manifest itself through an unconscious use of various defence mechanisms.

What a human being is experiencing at a given moment, their struggle with a difficult situation in which remaining true to their professed values—in this case, secondary capacities—is uncertain is called an *actual conflict* in Peseschkian’s conception.

Finally, there is the *key conflict* rooted in the ‘honesty’ or ‘openness’ relationship. Specialists in transcultural positive psychotherapy claim that the ‘dynamics of the key conflict are specific to a given human being. They are influenced both by the person’s temperamental traits and by their family and cultural tradition’ (Leszczyńskie Centrum Psychoterapii Pozytywnej, 2022). In this case a reference to the ‘openness’ capability may trigger interpersonal conflicts, while activity in the ‘courtesy’ sphere may cause an individual to experience anxiety or psychosomatic problems.

Transcultural Positive Psychotherapy and the Counselling Process

In his books, Peseschkian reiterates that the methodology of transcultural positive psychotherapy can be effectively used first and foremost in *therapeutic interventions*, which include psychotherapy, educational therapy, psychological support, psychological therapy, socio-therapy, rehabilitation, family therapy and similar contexts. *Counselling*, including psychological and pedagogical counselling, certainly forms important setting in which the principles of this modality can be applied. They can similarly be useful in educational counselling interventions for students with special learning needs or requiring special learning formats on account of their developmental, functional and social difficulties. Elements of transcultural positive psychotherapy can be an inspiration for counselling focused on *developmental interventions*, which include supervision, coaching, mentorship and tutoring, and for *preventive interventions*, such as streetworking. Thus, components of transcultural

⁶ For example, the belief that ‘If I keep the house tidy, my parents will be proud of me.’

positive psychotherapy will certainly be an attractive option for practitioners of multiple counselling varieties.

This calls for specifying which elements of transcultural positive psychotherapy can be usefully implemented in the counselling process.

The 'transcultural' aspects will certainly be of interest in this context as counselling has acknowledged the value of the idea of cross-culturality for quite a while now (cf. Kargulowa, 2014, p. 64; Słowik, 2007; Siarkiewicz, Słowik, Bilon-Piórko, 2021). As already indicated in, transculturality means the coexistence of members of various cultures; it influences people's lives and their responses to the reality they experience in their unique socio-cultural environment, where diversity is cognitively important (cf. Welsch, 1998). Counselling can help people identify and enrich their resources, develop attitudes and actions and recognise an epistemically significant construct of Self, Reflection and Action.

The idea of *Positum*, which is understood as a collection of equivalent good and bad experiences, is another element of transcultural positive psychotherapy that could be transferred to counselling. In Peseschkian's conception, one's negative and positive experiences and emotions are part of one's resources and, at the same time, speak to one's real capacities and needs, stretching along the continuum between deficit/problem/limitation and persistence/capacity/capability. The support-provider's role is not only to focus on the individual's problems but also to highlight that they persists despite their difficult situation. An important question that arises in this context is what values, capacities, beliefs and capabilities make this persistence possible.

Invoked above, the Balance Model is a simple and, at the same time, an interesting diagnostic, therapeutic and support tool. By analysing an individual's biography in conjunction with the four key areas of their functioning (body/senses, diligence/achievement, contact, future/spirituality; in Ciesielski, 2015, p. 18), it is possible to identify which of those determines the individual's emotional state at a given moment. This facilitates designing support interventions with a view to restoring the person's inner harmony. The tool will certainly have an important part in counselling, for example, in identifying deficits in various areas of life—deficits affecting people's social and emotional functioning, the formation of their interpersonal relations and the decisions they make at important points in their lives. An in-depth analysis of the use of this tool in counselling or therapy requires a separate study. The four crucial areas of human life and the application of the tool are depicted and discussed in the literature on transcultural positive psychotherapy (Peseschkian, 1987[1977]; Ciesielski, 2015; Dobiała, 2021).

Potentiality theory, which helps identify the sources of internal conflicts and grants prominence to individual capacities and capabilities, is also perfectly aligned with the counselling and therapeutic process (Ciesielski, 2016). For example, it can inspire interventions that help people notice capacities of which they have been unaware before. Besides, capacities can reflect people's competencies, and

explorations regarding them can be instrumental in career counselling (Zarek & Wyszadko, 2018).

Suited for the field of family counselling, the Differentiation-Analytic Inventory (DAI) is a tool for determining the significance of actual capacities to family members. It can be a starting point for a conversation about the real sources of conflicts experienced by family members. Besides establishing the importance of a given capability, it is important that participants in therapeutic or counselling activities present their own reflections on and responses to what they perceive as manifestations of this capability in their loved one's behaviour and what this observation implies for their functioning. The tool can also be used for partners and can capture relations between various family members. It can be an important element of the counselling process, the aim of which can be to improve the functioning of the family and/or the relations among its members.

In Peseschkian's concept, the therapeutic process is founded on the therapist/counsellor–patient/client relationship (Ciesielski, 2016a, pp. 40–1), which can be described as a 'relationship in a dialogue.' This relationship is based on three basic elements: attachment, differentiation and detachment (Ciesielski, 2016a, pp. 33–4). Interestingly, in her discussion of counselling, Czerkawska points to an asset that she calls a 'dialogical bond in a counselling relationship' (2018, p. 333). Both positions reflect the humanistic facet of counselling. Admittedly, the literature on various approaches to the counsellor/counselee relationship is quite extensive (Kargulowa, 1986; Wojtasik, 2009; Czerkawska, 2013; Czerkawska, 2018). In discussing the humanistic paradigm in counselling, Alicja Kargulowa concludes that '[n]ew horizons in counselling research were opened up by the humanistic paradigm, which followed the neo-positivist paradigm in the development of counselling and placed at the centre of attention the human being in relationships with him/herself, other people and the world' (2014, pp. 56–7). That is why, as Kargulowa emphasises, counselling, like transcultural positive psychotherapy, came to be analysed from new perspectives focused on human relationships (therapist/counsellor–patient/client) and on the psychological condition of the individuals involved in counselling or therapy (2014, p. 57). Kargulowa (2014, p. 57) explains that the development of the new model of counselling was also importantly inspired by the thought of Carl Rogers and Viktor Frankl. We can, therefore, assume that central to transcultural positive psychotherapy and counselling in the humanistic paradigm are questions enumerated by Kargulowa as: 'What is a human being? What is their world? What are their relations with the world' (2014, p. 57). Both varieties of support interventions (transcultural positive therapy and humanistic counselling) look at the future of the human being in counselling and therapeutic processes. And, as Kargulowa observes, '[t]he future of the counselee [...] is envisioned as the realisation of a personal life project, often pursued against the realities at hand, and above all focused on self-development' (2014, p. 58).

Conclusion

This article has been inspired by reflection on a possible link between transcultural positive psychotherapy and counselling. Its argument also considers in how far elements of therapy within the positive and transcultural paradigm can contribute to the counselling process. Another question is whether both strands of support interventions share some ideas and approaches. Without a doubt, the twenty-first century abounds with new challenges to counselling and to counselling. Given this, a space for perceiving new possibilities for counselling seems to emerge in our globalised and often multicultural reality in connection with a range of socio-economic determinants. The idea is to develop intervention modes capable of responding to the needs of multicultural societies (Kargul, 2016). The therapeutic and counselling processes that more and more frequently take place in a multicultural space form thus the pivotal thematic concern of this paper. Both therapy and counselling cannot but rely on interventions geared to the needs of individuals who inhabit multicultural realities.

At the centre of the transcultural and positive therapeutic process, as well as of the counselling process, is a person who has a unique life story and '*gives rise to thought*' through this story (Ricoeur, 1969). Consequently, questions arise concerning that person's capacities and limitations, their reaction to the reality in which they live, the meaning of the failures they experience and their strategy for persisting despite the difficulties occasioned by the experience of life. Other important questions pertain to the individual's relations with other people and the world. The inspirations of humanistic psychology that inform transcultural positive psychotherapy and counselling in the humanistic paradigm make us attend not so much to people's deficits as rather to their capacities, capabilities, autonomy, creativity and, thus, to *potentialities*, which turn into actual norms that influence the way people function and form part of their individual resources. It seems that humanistic counselling, too, recognises the relevance of capacities, which in this case may also form part of an existential 'project' promoting individual development, with a chance to recognise one's own resources being inscribed in it (cf. Kargulowa, 2014, p. 57).

I believe that what transcultural positive psychotherapy and counselling have in common is the understanding of the way internal conflicts arise in people. Every historical timeframe develops its set of social norms, which have an impact on how families function. This largely determines which certain capacities become activated or differentiated. In Peseschkian's framework, the differentiation of capacities is a source of internal conflicts, while according to Kargulowa, who analyses the humanistic model in counselling research, the need for self-realisation is sometimes pursued 'against' the reality experienced by people (2014, p. 58), which will certainly be associated with inner disharmony.

To conclude, the elements of transcultural positive psychotherapy discussed in this article can be an important source of inspiration for counselling in multicultural settings.

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