

VILNIUS UNIVERSITY

Dovilė
PETRONYTĖ-KVEDARAUSKIENĖ

Development of Relationship with Authority and the Problem of Narcissism in Psychotherapy

SUMMARY OF DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

Social Sciences,
Psychology (06 S)

VILNIUS 2018

This dissertation was written between 2014 and 2018 at Vilnius University

The research was supported by Research Council of Lithuania

Academic supervisor:

Prof. Dr. Gražina Gudaitė (Vilnius University, Social Sciences, Psychology – 06 S)

This doctoral dissertation will be defended in a public meeting of the Dissertation Defence Panel:

Chair – Prof. Habil. Dr. Danutė Gailienė (Vilnius University, Social Sciences, Psychology – 06 S)

Members:

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Rasa Barkauskienė (Vilnius University, Social Sciences, Psychology – 06 S)

Prof. Dr. Verena Kast (University of Zurich, Social Sciences, Psychology – 06 S)

Prof. Dr. Evaldas Kazlauskas (Vilnius University, Social Sciences, Psychology – 06 S)

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Rūta Sargautytė (Vilnius University, Social Sciences, Psychology – 06 S)

The dissertation will be defended in a public meeting of the Dissertation Defence Panel on the 16th of November 2018, at 2:00 pm. Location: room 201, Faculty of Philosophy, Vilnius University, Universiteto 9/1, LT-01513, Vilnius, Lithuania.

The text of the dissertation can be accessed at the Library of Vilnius University (Universiteto Str. 3, LT-01513, Vilnius, Lithuania), as well as on the website of Vilnius University: www.vu.lt/lt/naujienos/ivykiu-kalendorius

VILNIAUS UNIVERSITETAS

Dovilė
PETRONYTĖ-KVEDARAUSKIENĖ

Santykio su autoritetu plėtotė ir narcizmo problema psichoterapijoje

DAKTARO DISERTACIJOS SANTRAUKA

Socialiniai mokslai,
psichologija (06 S)

VILNIUS 2018

Disertacija rengta 2014-2018 metais Vilniaus universitete
Mokslinį tyrimą rėmė Lietuvos mokslo taryba

Mokslinė vadovė:

prof. dr. Gražina Gudaitė (Vilnius universitetas, socialiniai mokslai,
psichologija – 06 S)

Gynimo taryba:

Pirmininkė – prof. habil. dr. Danutė Gailienė (Vilnius universitetas,
socialiniai mokslai, psichologija – 06 S)

Nariai:

doc. dr. Rasa Barkauskienė (Vilnius universitetas, socialiniai
mokslai, psichologija – 06 S)

prof. dr. Verena Kast (Ciuricho universitetas, socialiniai mokslai,
psichologija – 06 S)

prof. dr. Evaldas Kazlauskas (Vilnius universitetas, socialiniai
mokslai, psichologija – 06 S)

doc. dr. Rūta Sargautytė (Vilnius universitetas, socialiniai mokslai,
psichologija – 06 S)

Disertacija ginama viešame Gynimo tarybos posėdyje 2018 m.
lapkričio 16 d. 14:00 val. Vilniaus universiteto Filosofijos fakulteto
201 auditorijoje, Universiteto g. 9/1, LT-01513, Vilnius, Lietuva.

Disertaciją galima peržiūrėti Vilniaus universiteto bibliotekoje
(Universiteto g. 3, LT01513, Vilnius, Lietuva) ir VU interneto
svetainėje adresu: www.vu.lt/lt/naujienos/ivykiu-kalendorius

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INTRODUCTION

Relationship with authority is a significant psychosocial factor, which influences separate persons, groups of people and the whole society. Authority principle is grounded in collective consciousness – human societies always have certain authorities (Bochenski, 2004; Dieckmann, 1977). Quality of relationship with authority determines the way how a person and the society develops (Kohut, 2009; Morselli & Passini, 2011). Relationship with authority is supposed to be a psychological foundation for a person's identity and the feeling of self-esteem, to enable perception of meaning, structure and purpose of one's life. Relations with outer authorities influence formation of inner authority, which embraces individual values, a sense of self-confidence, personal strength, an ability to create and to be satisfied with one's life. Constructive relationship with authority, starting from the interactions with parents, teachers and possibly reaching relations with transcendent authority, presupposes recognition of the Other – different, superior, respectable. This experience can stimulate acknowledgement of one's limits as well as the sense of unconditional worth of a human being (Gudaitė, 2014, 2016; Jacoby, 2008).

The soviet authoritarian regime, survived by Lithuania and other countries, has damaged relationship with authority. Psychological research presents evidence that individuals who have lived under the soviet system tend to distrust authorities, to see them as dangerous and hostile and to avoid them (Gudaitė, 2014, 2016). Such people lack initiative and self-confidence (Gailienė, 2015; Peterson & Luik, 2014). In the soviet system a person was not treated as valuable. Political authorities ruined unconditional worth and authentic identity of a human being, humiliated people. A person could feel important only in so far as he or she conformed to the faceless collective system and obeyed the dictate. In this sense the authoritarian regime formed proper conditions for narcissistic disturbances with the main theme of a weak self-esteem to flourish.

Negative consequences of an authoritarian regime affect people who endured it as well as their descendants of the second and even the

third generation (Gailienė, 2015; Peterson & Luik, 2014). Therefore the problem of relationship with authority is very important for the society of nowadays Lithuania. To be aware of the problem and to restore constructive relationship with authority and at the same time the worth and dignity of a human being are urgent tasks in seeking psychological and social well-being of Lithuanian people.

In the time of Lithuania's political changes and tendency to follow Western world, scientists observe that relationship with authority meets difficulties in Western cultures as well (Morselli & Passini, 2011). Overemphasis on an individual and decline of authority, although contrary to collectivism, also lead to narcissistic problems. On one hand, neglect of authority, ignorance of connection with the other, self-sufficient stance go together with egocentricity, arrogance and abuse of others. On the other hand, that creates inner suffering of painful isolation and inferiority (Asper, 1993; McWilliams, 2014). Feeling of inferiority is being compensated by grandiose self-image with high standards for oneself and others impossible to reach. As relationship with a true self, with others and with the purposes has been lost, anxiety, emotional instability and a sense of meaninglessness take the place (Lasch, 1991; Pulcini, 2012).

After all, having denied traditional authority forms, people again seek for something that could give safety, validate worth and answer competently to fundamental questions of life. In Lithuania as well as in Western cultures the rise of different gurus, religious systems and spiritual practices can be witnessed. That can be seen as a response to a salient need for constructive relationship with authority (Seligman, 2003; Wertz, 2013).

People who come to psychotherapy often seek relationship with authority (in this case – with psychotherapist) as well as attempt to solve problems connected to unstable and weak self-esteem. Relying on the theory of psychodynamic psychotherapy, we presume that both the need of authority and the problem of self-esteem can go together. In psychotherapy, successful restoration of relationship with authority can significantly reduce narcissistic difficulties (Jacoby, 2008; Kohut,

2009). Currently, narcissism is treated not as a necessarily clinically significant disorder, but as a feature characteristic to many nowadays people (McWilliams, 2014; Rubinstein, 2014). In a psychotherapy office it is not surprising to meet a person with complaints of anxiety or depression associated with feelings of inferiority, meaninglessness and emptiness, lack of relationship with oneself and others. Narcissistic problems are dominant in the present psychotherapy practice, their treatment is difficult and challenging (Diamond, Yeomans, & Levy, 2011; Ronningstam, 2016). Therefore it is important to study factors which are related to the formation and possible reduction of narcissistic difficulties. The object of our research is relationship with authority, its expression and dynamics in psychotherapy in the context of the problem of narcissism.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1. Psychological conception of relationship with authority

Relationship with authority has been little studied in clinical psychology so far. In an attempt to present clinically relevant conception of relationship with authority, we rely on psychodynamic paradigm mainly. It emphasizes external as well as internal human psyche relations, which are responsible for development, structure of personality and possibilities of transformation. Analytical psychology plays an important role in our study, since analytical authors have presented their ideas on relationship with authority as a factor of inner psychic dynamics (Dieckmann, 1977; Edinger, 1992; Gudaitė, 2016; Wilke, 1977).

Authority can be defined as influence, attributed to a person, an institution, a social group or transcendent agent. Personal authorities with significant personal characteristics and formal authorities, resting upon law or social status, are distinguished (Psichologijos žodynas, 1993; Reber, 1987; Corsini, 2002). Influence of authority can have

different sources: 1) power; 2) reputation; 3) knowledge and wisdom (Dieckmann, 1977). Authority depends on those who acknowledge it, therefore it always involves a relation (Dieckmann, 1977; Bochenski, 2004).

Relationship with authority affects psychic functioning while manifesting itself in three levels: *external (interpersonal relations)*, *internal (intrapersonal relations)* and *transcendent (transpersonal relations)*. In a personal history, external authorities are mainly represented by parents whose crucial influence on human psyche development is broadly described in psychodynamic literature (Kernberg, 1986a,b; Kohut, 2009; McWilliams, 2014). The way how personal psyche evolves is delineated not only by quality of external relations with parents but also by experience of formal authorities: political, institutional, etc. Results of the studies on detrimental consequences of authoritarian regimes show that living under the rule of destructive formal authorities can hinder the formation of inner authority as well as prevent the relationship with transcendent authority (Dieckmann, 1977; Gailienė, 2008, 2015; Gudaitė, 2014b, 2016).

Inner authority, referring to intrapersonal relations, is a term introduced to psychological literature only recently. Resting upon our review and analysis of scientific ideas, presented mainly by analytical authors (Gudaitė, 2016; Jacoby, 2008; Samuels, 1985; Wertz, 2013; Young-Eisendrath & Wiedemann, 1987), we define inner authority as an intrapsychic structure which owns the center of personal strength, identity, initiative, evaluation, knowing and creativity. An internal locus of authority is contrary to projection of influence onto external authorities. Reliability of inner authority depends on a level of development of a person's inner relations. The stronger inner authority, the better abilities to realize one's true self.

The concept of *superego* with its functions of structure, evaluation and control in classical psychoanalysis corresponds to inner authority in a sense. However, inner authority is more than a stable psychic formation with clearly defined functions completed after internalizing parents' requirements in childhood. Inner authority is a dynamic

structure, which changes and develops within the whole human life. Step by step, dependence on external authority figures transforms into a deep responsibility for one's behavior, into an ability to be and feel an author of one's life (Jacoby, 2008; Kegan, 1994). Inner authority with its characteristic of self-confidence does not rule out another authority. On the contrary, it enables constructive relationship with other authorities, recognition of their superiority and humility when necessary (Gudaitė, 2016).

In analytical psychology transpersonal nature of authority is acknowledged. According to Dieckmann (1977), authority is an instinctive principle of structure and order inherent in nature. What is natural and instinctive, has a connection to spiritual dimension in analytical psychology, therefore authority is associated with a higher, divine force. In Jung's (1951/1978) words, the task of a person's consciousness is to recognize its descent from a higher unity, to pay due and careful regard to this source and to execute its commands responsibly (par. 253). "Higher unity", or "higher will" (Jung, 1961/2010), is one possible attribute of the Self, which is related to transpersonal dimension. Edinger (1992, p.3) refers to the Self as "the supreme psychic authority" which the Ego is subordinate to. The Ego is related to subjective psychic identity while the Self is connected to objective psychic identity. How can a person execute the program of "higher will" or "supreme authority"? In Analytical psychology a construct of *Ego-Self axis* is used to describe relations between the two psychic structures. Stages of Ego-Self axis formation, important factors influencing its strength as well as mental health are distinguished (Asper, 1993; Edinger, 1992; Jacoby, 2008). According to Edinger (1992), when the Ego is mature and differentiated enough, it can have a good and trustful relationship with the Self – "the supreme psychic authority". Strong, solid Ego means responsibility for one's life, good reflection and differentiation of one's emotions and needs. Healthy Ego-Self axis stimulates humility concerning higher transpersonal forces and acknowledgment of one's limits (Jung, 1951/1978). A proper connection between the Ego and the Self fosters trust in oneself

and the world. It gives vitality, provokes life interests and activity, it leads to a sense of meaning and purpose (Edinger, 1992; Jacoby, 2008).

Relationship with transcendent authority, experience of inner authority and relations with external authorities are interconnected and influence each other. From psychodynamic point of view, parents play mediators' role in formation of all levels of a person's relationship with authority. At the beginning unconditionally accepting, later setting relevant boundaries and requirements, parents can significantly contribute to constructive relations with other authority figures, to relationship with transcendent authority and to formation of solid inner authority of their child. In unsuccessful case, when a child's relations with parents are vicious, relationship with authority: outer, inner and transcendent - can be complicated (Edinger, 1992; Kohut, 2009).

Some analytical authors talking about authority refer to exclusively fatherly traits: power, activity, courage, structure, determination, moral values (Dieckmann, 1977; Samuels, 1985). Young-Eisendrath and Wiedemann (1987) note that such motherly characteristics as ability to create a contact, to love, to accept, to react empathically, to nurture can also be authoritative.

Wilke (1977) states that authority is of an androgenic nature, having in itself both motherly and fatherly power qualities. Power is the main attribute of authority. Power is especially obvious when constellation of *authority complex* takes its role. Authority complex can be formed by intense negative experience in relationship with mother or father as well as with formal political authorities. They all can exert a big power and influence upon a person because of his or her dependence on them. Some possible manifestations of authority complex is uncontrollable rage, hate, destructive impulses, omnipotence ideas and authoritarian behavior. Contrariwise, authority complex can express itself as excessive submissiveness and feelings of helplessness or impotence (Wilke, 1977). Gudaitė (2013, 2016), presenting authority complex as a negative heritage of an authoritarian regime, points such aspects of the complex as feeling insecure, perceiving the world as threatening,

acting in (auto)destructive ways and cheating others as well as oneself.

The above information illustrates that relationship with authority can be both destructive and constructive. In our work, we regard relationship with authority as dynamic and specific personal connections with inner as well as outer authority agents. Relationship with authority can express itself in various emotional, cognitive and bodily reactions.

1.2. Research on relationship with authority, following totalitarian regimes

Few psychological research projects, which have addressed the issue of relationship with authority so far, were mainly accomplished for the purpose to understand destructive influences of big political authorities. Widely known and cited Milgram's experiment on obedience to authority (Milgram, 1963, 1965, 1974) was conducted after the world wars, holocaust and other cruel social events of the first half of the 20th century had left painful consequences and questions about human behavior. Milgram, a psychologist of Yale University, created a series of experiments in order to find out under what conditions a person would obey authority and make another person suffer and when he or she would refuse to obey. The results of the experiments turned out to be astonishing - the majority of research participants obeyed destructive regulations of the authority figure. The outcomes of Milgram's experiments claimed that human beings depended on situational factors and tended to obey authority despite their own values and attitudes. However, some scientists are inclined to question such results. Inner personal factors of research participants, the nature of instructions, artificial laboratory conditions and excessive emphasis on destructiveness of authority which were overlooked in interpretations of the experiments call for their attention (Caiazza, 2017; Haslam, Reicher, & Birner, 2014).

Psychology scientists from countries which had lived under authoritarian regime, made research on multidimensional inner and outer

dynamics of relationship with authority. Above we have presented the works of analytical scientists Dieckmann (1977) and Wilke (1977) from Germany. Several studies on relationship with authority have been conducted in post-soviet countries. In the first glance, quantitative studies have shown optimistic results. Nowadays Serbian students tend to value moral features of authorities more than instrumental ones (Ratkovic-Njegovan, Vukadinovic, & Grubic Nestic, 2011). Positive relationship with authority is more common to Lithuanian people of different age groups than troubled relationship with authority (Grigutyte & Rukšaitė, 2016). After a detailed analysis of the results of the latter Lithuanian study, a more informative and comprehensive picture appears. The more troubled the relationship with authority is, the worse elderly people feel psychologically, the more antidepressants or other medicine they take and the less they turn to family members or friends for help. In the middle generation a resistant relation with authority associates with a poorer psychological well-being. The youngest generation stands out by the highest frequency of suicidal thoughts in the research. Importantly, the more positive young adult's relation with external authority and reliance on inner authority are, the less they think about suicide in times of difficulty.

Qualitative studies present yet another kind of data about relationship with authority. In a thematic qualitative research, conducted by a group of scientists of Vilnius University (Bieliauskienė & Gudaitė, 2016), two age groups of people: elderly who were born and lived under the soviet regime and younger who were born in independent Lithuania were interviewed. 5 main themes were identified: Resistance against authority; Availability of authority; Denial of authority; Recognition of authority; Similarity with authority. All the elder participants had a strong need to resist authority, rebelling against it. This tendency was less common for young participants. The authority of at least one parent was denied in both age groups, with father's authority denied mostly because of his passivity and detachment from the family, while mothers were not considered authority because of their dominance, wish to control and high emotionality.

From the research presented earlier we can see that relationship with authority is a multidimensional factor and its personal experience, expression and influence on psychic life needs further studies. It is important to study relationship with authority in vulnerable groups of people and to look for ways to strengthen their inner authority, to create relations with constructive authority and to recognize and confront destructive authority.

1.3. Manifestation of relationship with authority in psychotherapy

Scientific studies on relationship with authority in psychotherapy has only recently been started to conduct. Professor of Vilnius University Gudaitė (2004, 2013, 2014, 2014b, 2016) has presented the results of qualitative research based on case analysis which investigated the process and effectiveness of psychotherapy with regard to dynamics of relationship with authority. More than half of 64 clients who participated in the research perceived authority as dangerous and destructive at the start of psychotherapy. Ambivalent relationship with authority was characteristic to one third of psychotherapy clients. Only 12 percent of clients saw authority as helpful and supportive. The majority of research participants experienced insecurity and threat in relationship with authority. Often, an appearing image in the dreams was a soldier's figure which symbolized obedience to the soviet system and loss of individuality (Gudaitė, 2013). According to Czech psychoanalytic theorist Sebek (1996), who also studied the consequences of the authoritarian regime on people's psyche, a soldier's figure would correspond to a person's ego submitting to an internalized "totalitarian object". "Totalitarian object" abuses power, manipulates and ignores individuality in intrapersonal as well as interpersonal relations.

In psychodynamic and analytical theoretical and practical literature on psychotherapy process, the relationship with authority as an important psychotherapeutic factor has been mentioned and analyzed

for several decades already. At least at the beginning of psychotherapy a psychotherapist is treated as an authority who has more knowledge, wisdom and personal strength. Psychotherapist is often perceived as able to help, to sustain, to show the necessary direction. Later on, clients can get disappointed with psychotherapist, and that is a necessary part of outer as well as inner psychic dynamics. Clients bring their problems connected to unsuccessful experience in relations with significant authorities and they are being dealt with in psychotherapy. Authority principle is being enacted in structuring psychotherapy process. (Edinger, 1992; Greenberg, 1999; Gudaitė, 2016; Kegan, 1982; Kohut, 1977/2009; Wilke, 1977). Edinger (1992) associates psychotherapy and psychotherapeutic relationship with the universal human need to seek connection with the “Supreme authority” or the Self. In psychotherapy a person perceives acceptance and this can be a very deep and essentially healing experience for one with a wounded Ego-Self axis. On the other hand, destructive powerful authority figure can be projected onto psychotherapist, and this can give an important information for effective psychotherapy work as well as predetermine unsuccessful psychotherapy (Wilke, 1977).

Gudaitė (2013), having analyzed psychotherapy cases, distinguishes several steps which are significant in changing disturbed relationship with authority in psychotherapy: 1) recognition and awareness of one’s authority complex and its projection on other people; 2) actualization of inner authority with one’s strength, ability to make influence and create meaningful internal as well as external relations; 3) getting conscious of authority shadow and finding constructive ways of treating it; 4) opening to relationship with transcendental dimension of authority which enables to feel oneself an author in the bigger Author’s scenario.

To sum up, relationship with authority is acknowledged as one, which can change itself and make changes in psychotherapy. But so far scientific research on this factor is scarce. Our qualitative research will seek to broader, deeper understand the manifestation and possible dynamics of the relationship with authority in psychotherapy.

1.4. Psychological conception of narcissism

Psychodynamic paradigm pays a lot of attention to etiology, expression and treatment of narcissism. Relational school of psychoanalysis (object relations and interpersonal relations theories) emphasizes that early relations have a big influence on the formation and development of a person's psyche. In the case of narcissism, inner representations of how a person was treated in childhood affect how one values and accepts oneself as well as expects others to value and accept him or her later in life (Fiscalini, 2004; Kernberg, 1986; Winnicott, 1965/1990).

The author of Self psychology Kohut (1977/2009) and analytical author Jacoby (2008) define narcissism as a natural aspiration of a human being to be valued, validated and to realize oneself. When a person's natural narcissistic needs to be treated as lovable, perfect and acceptable are not satisfied in early childhood, they stay primitive and a person is permanently preoccupied with meeting these childish needs. He or she has low self-esteem, obscure self-identity and anxiously seeks for self-validation and evaluation instead of meaningful realization of the self.

Majority of analytic authors writing on narcissism note that the two narcissistic states - grandiosity and inferiority – are interchangeable and compensate each other. They are both characteristic to the same narcissistic person. When a person consciously identifies with helplessness and inferiority, he or she will have fantasies of superiority and almightiness. When grandiose identity is more obvious, there is a fright of one's devaluation and disability deep inside. Intense mood swings which often characterize narcissistic persons accord to changing grandiose and inferior states (Asper, 1993; Jacoby, 2008; Miller, 1986, 2011; Schwartz-Salant, 1982).

Therefore in our work we define narcissism as a disturbed system of inner and outer relations, seeking to sustain fragile self-esteem and to get self-validation. We recognize grandiosity and inferiority as the two possible and tightly connected states of narcissism.

1.5. The problem of narcissism assessment

Narcissism assessment is a big challenge for nowadays scientists and clinicians because of its sophisticated internal and external relations, various expressions and the two opposite states which can go together. Narcissistic grandiosity, with its demonstrated arrogance, self-confidence, self-sufficient stance and exploitative position in relations, and narcissistic inferiority (sometimes referred to as vulnerability), with its shyness, restrictedness, big sensitivity and low self-esteem, are difficult to embrace in one assessment instrument. Diagnostic and statistical manuals of mental disorders (DSM-IV, DSM-IV-TR) present criteria of narcissistic personality disorder which cover only grandiose dimension. The same is true for Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI) (Raskin & Terry, 1988) which is widely used in quantitative psychology research. The results of assessments using these instruments give a one-sided picture. Clinicians warn about the danger of overlooking vulnerable dimension of narcissism in assessment procedures because of its associations with depression, high anxiety levels, self-harm and suicidality (Caligor et al., 2015; Miller et al., 2016; Pincus et al., 2014).

Another challenging question in assessing narcissism is differentiation between norm and pathology. DSM criteria are intended to diagnose a disorder but capture only grandiosity dimension. The above mentioned NPI gives contradictory results and their interpretations. Sometimes the instrument is treated as measuring adaptive grandiose traits, e.g., ability to assert oneself (Pincus & Lukowitsky, 2010). Other researchers see it as evaluating the level of a disorder (Miller et al., 2016). Pathological Narcissism Inventory (PNI) (Pincus et al., 2009) claims to assess pathological narcissism and embraces grandiosity as well as vulnerability. But its correlation with other narcissism assessment instruments and its validity has been questioned (Miller et al., 2016).

Given the difficulties of narcissism assessment, contradictions between researchers, lack of a unanimous definition of the construct and unclear epidemiology of the disorder it was thought to refuse

the narcissistic personality diagnosis while preparing DSM-5, a new version of the manual. However a lot of discussions and claim of prevalence of the problem of narcissism in clinical practice and in scientific research lead to leaving the diagnosis in DSM-5 (Miller, Widiger, & Campbell; Pincus et al., 2010; Ronningstam, 2011). 9 criteria of narcissistic grandiosity are enumerated in the section II of DSM-5. Importantly, intense previous discussions have made an influence – there appears the section III with the Alternative model for personality disorders in DSM-5. Here not only the observable features of narcissistic personality but also the role of impairment of self, such as deficits in self-definition, self-esteem and affect regulation, consolidation of internal goals and standards, is indicated (Caligor et al., 2015; APA, 2013).

While there is no relevant, valid and exhaustive instrument to assess narcissism, clinicians as well as researchers often use semi structured interviews to evaluate it. Questions concerning the experience of oneself and others, value issues in interpersonal as well as intrapersonal relations are addressed in such interviews (Caligor et al., 2015; Diamond & Meehan, 2013; Pincus, 2014). In our work we also use a semi structured interview to reveal narcissistic difficulties.

1.6. Narcissism in psychotherapy

Systemic empirical research on narcissism psychotherapy has hardly been done so far because of the above described problem of narcissism assessment. When narcissism is treated only as grandiose expression, one can find not many narcissistic persons in psychotherapy. Grandiosity in its essence contradicts recognition of personal deficits or a need for help. Even if a person with grandiose identity comes to psychotherapy, he or she tends to quit it fast devaluating a psychotherapist or psychotherapy itself (Diamond & Meehan, 2013; Ellison et al., 2013; Pincus et al., 2014; Ronningstam, 2016).

Psychodynamic theory of narcissism psychotherapy is illustrated with psychotherapy cases which embrace both grandiose and vulner-

able narcissism dimensions. The main tool in psychotherapy work with a broad range of narcissistic difficulties is therapeutic relations. They are also means of recognizing, diagnosing and healing narcissism. Transference of significant early relations on a therapist, living through and working through them in psychotherapy is a corner-stone of narcissism treatment. Transference in narcissistic cases is very intense because a part of the self is projected on a therapist. Therapist is used for mirroring, validating and consolidating a narcissistic person's self (Caligor et al., 2015; Diamond & Meehan, 2013; Fiscalini 2004; Kernberg, 2004; Kohut, 1977/2009; McWilliams, 2014; Mitchell, 1986).

Relationship with authority is an important part of narcissistic relations which play a role in psychotherapy. Accordingly, we will further introduce experience and expression of relationship with authority in narcissism which is the focus of our study.

1.7. Relationship with authority in narcissism

Looking for relevance of relationship with authority in narcissism, the ideas of Kohut's (1977/2009) theory become very meaningful. According to the author, narcissism development goes along two lines. First line regards the needs of being mirrored, accepted and unconditionally valued. When these needs are met, usually mother is responsible for that, self-esteem is formed. Second line concerns relation with an *idealized figure*, who is represented by father or by both parents and sometimes by institutions, culture, political system, etc. "Idealized figure" is a kind of authority who has to play a role of a strong, wise, competent figure suitable for idealization as well as supporting and encouraging a child. Relationship with an idealized figure is important in the formation of values, direction and purpose of life. It influences the development of inner authority, self-efficacy and capability of being authority for others. When the relation with "idealized figure" is unsuccessful, a person may constantly seek for authorities to lean on and to idealize later in his or her life. By

idealizing authorities, a narcissistic person compensates for the lack of self-esteem and inner authority. Another way of protecting self-esteem is to devalue authorities in order to prevent devaluation coming from them (Jacoby, 2008; Kohut, 1977/2009).

Analytical author Edinger (1992), referring to the Self as the supreme and ultimate authority, states that during development of relations with the Self, the Ego of a person undergoes many *inflation* and *alienation* episodes. Description of these episodes corresponds to the two narcissistic states: grandiosity and inferiority. *Ego inflation* is the Ego's state of identification with the Self. Feeling of omnipotence and perfection is characteristic to this state and is necessary for healthy psychic development in early childhood. Outstaying in the state of inflation hinders development of the Ego and leads to narcissistic grandiosity. *Ego alienation* means absence of connection with the Self. Some level of alienation is inescapable because the Ego develops by means of separation from the Self. Encountering the world's frustrations, experiencing one's potentials and limits is the way to form a unique personal identity. Ego alienation of an unbearable level, experienced too early or too long, can damage Ego-Self axis. That can lead to feelings of abandonment, unworthiness, inappropriateness, extreme guilt – the components of narcissistic inferiority with depression being a frequent concomitant.

Resting mostly on Kohut's and Edinger's ideas about relationship with authority and combining them with psychodynamic knowledge of narcissism, we distinguished possible characteristic modes of narcissistic relationship with authority. Exhaustive analysis of literature and development of our thought has been presented in the article "Relationship with authority in narcissism" (Petronytė-Kvedarauskienė & Gudaitė, 2016). *Heightening or depreciating one's own authority, fright and anger with regard to authorities, idealization or devaluation of authorities, abusive authoritative stance or excessive submissiveness* are the motives inherent in narcissism. Importance of power instead of being connected is an attribute of both authority complex and narcissistic relations (Wilke, 1977; Schwartz-

Salant, 1982). That presupposes *fight against authorities* as one more characteristic motive of narcissistic relations. The distinguished motives have to be validated, specified, ruled out and/or complemented to by empirical research.

Empirical research is also needed to investigate how narcissistic modes of relationship with authority can change during psychotherapy and how that contributes to transformation of narcissism. Several psychodynamic authors studying narcissism mention that authority is being projected onto psychotherapist and psychotherapy situation. Disturbed relationship can be recognized and worked through in psychotherapy to diminish narcissism. Positive psychotherapy process is evinced by a client starting to see the therapist as a “live” person and not as his or her projections. Narcissistic difficulties decrease together with a client being able to calmly learn from, respect the therapist and not to lose self-esteem. That leads to less “functional”, more genuine and egalitarian interpersonal relations (Fiscalini, 2004; Kernberg, 1986a). At the beginning idealization of and later disappointment with the therapist enable a narcissistic person to return evaluation projections to him or herself, to form an independent value system and to strengthen inner authority (Jacoby, 2008; Kohut, 1977/2009). Our research is intended to contribute to the knowledge about association between dynamics of relationship with authority and narcissistic difficulties in psychotherapy.

1.8. Relevance and novelty of the study

We investigate the factor of relationship with authority which is indicated as significant in etiology, expression and transformation of narcissism in psychodynamic literature. In clinical psychology, the experience of relationship with authority has been little researched so far. Specificities of relationship with authority in narcissism has not been studied at all.

Quality of interpersonal and intrapersonal relations is informative in understanding psychological difficulties, in our work – narcissistic

difficulties. Reconstruction of external as well as internal relations is one of the crucial criteria in assessing the effectiveness of long-term psychotherapy (Mullin, Hilsenroth, Gold, & Farber, 2018; Target, 2018). In psychotherapy effectiveness research quantitative methods are usually used and there is a need of qualitative studies to explore changes in psychotherapy and therapeutic factors (McLeod, 2015). In the last decade in Lithuania qualitative research on psychotherapy process and effectiveness with regard to external and internal relations has been proceeded (Gudaitė (ed.), 2008, 2014). The current study will contribute to this work with a new focus – investigating dynamics of relationship with authority in psychotherapy in the context of narcissistic difficulties.

It is acknowledged that narcissism has become a common feature of many nowadays people (Jacoby, 2008; McWilliams, 2014; Rubinstein, 2014). Therefore we talk about and investigate “narcissistic difficulties” and not “narcissistic disorder” in our work. Psychotherapy research on narcissism is problematic because of the absence of relevant instruments to measure it and the lack of unanimous definition encompassing both grandiose and vulnerable narcissistic dimensions (Campbell & Miller, 2011; Miller et al., 2016; Pincus et al., 2014). In our research we use qualitative strategy which lets us reveal and embrace participants’ subjective experience, diversity and changes of narcissistic difficulties in psychotherapy. Qualitative method is also advantageous in exploring relationship with authority. As the phenomenon is quite new in psychological research, qualitative inquiry and analysis will help find out aspects we cannot foresee.

Analysis of three levels of relationship with authority – internal, external and transcendent – is novel in the research. Analytical psychology, which addresses all the three dimensions of human experience, gives a conceptual background for that. Exploration of several dimensions of relationship with authority allows to grasp diversity of experience of this relationship and its deep influence on psyche. Relationship with transcendent authority is investigated in phenomenological sense without questioning its religious relevance.

According to analytical authors, while the idea of God exists, it is psychologically true (Edinger, 1992; Jung, 1998).

Psychotherapy can help change external as well as internal relations of a person. In our psychotherapy research we intend to reveal how people having narcissistic difficulties and seeking psychotherapeutic help experience their problems and what are the features of their relationship with authority. We also have a purpose to find out how relationship with authority changes in psychotherapy and how this associates with the changes in narcissistic difficulties. In addition, therapeutic and hindering factors, affecting these changes, are in the scope of our interest.

1.9. Research aims and objectives of the doctoral dissertation

The aims:

1. To reveal specific motives of relationship with authority which are characteristic for people with narcissistic difficulties.
2. To reveal development of relationship with authority of people with narcissistic difficulties in psychotherapy.

The objectives:

1. To reveal narcissistic difficulties, how they are experienced by people who have sought psychotherapeutic help.
2. To investigate motives of relationship with authority, characteristic for people with narcissistic difficulties, distinguishing the problems in and the expectations for the relationship.
3. To explore the changes of relationship with authority in psychotherapy process.
4. To distinguish therapeutic and hindering factors affecting changes in relationship with authority.
5. To investigate association between changes in relationship with authority and changes in narcissistic difficulties.

2. METHOD

2.1. Research strategy and design

Data was collected and analyzed using **qualitative methods** in order to reveal diversity of subjective experience of relationship with authority and to find new aspects of this experience unpredictable by the scientific knowledge we had so far.

Participants were interviewed **in natural conditions** – in the mental health center where they came for psychotherapeutic help and were attending therapy sessions. Participants were questioned by their psychotherapist who made the research. During interviews people described their experiences in their own words. In this way research comes closer to psychotherapy practice and real life (Castonguay et al., 2010; McLeod, 2015). This way allows to ensure “ecological validity” of the results (APA, 2006).

The research was conducted in **two stages**. In the first stage, participants were interviewed at the beginning of psychotherapy between sessions 10-14. This time was enough for the therapist to create a necessary contact, to evaluate, to select and suggest her clients to take part in the research. In the second stage, participants of the research were interviewed after 40-45 sessions of psychotherapy, when psychotherapy was continued. This period of psychotherapy was chosen given the knowledge, that after 20 sessions, first significant therapeutic changes appear and processes of long-term psychotherapy influencing intrapersonal and interpersonal relations start to work. We chose a limit of 40-45 sessions with regard to the possibilities to proceed and finish the research within the time of doctoral studies.

2.2. Research participants

12 adults: 7 women and 5 men, who sought psychotherapeutic help, had difficulties qualified as narcissistic by the therapist, agreed to participate in the research after invitation, were interviewed at the beginning (10-14 sessions) of psychotherapy. They were aged

between 27 and 53 (average 36) years. They sought therapeutic help for different emotional, interpersonal and self-realization problems. All of them had difficulties in relating with authorities: parents, chiefs at work, etc.

7 adults: 4 women and 3 men, who continued psychotherapy, had regular sessions, had taken part in the first and agreed to participate in the second part of the research, were interviewed after a year (40-45 sessions) of psychotherapy. They were aged between 30 and 54 (average 39) years.

Prevalence of narcissistic difficulties in a client was qualified resting upon psychodynamic understanding of narcissism and its description in the section III of DSM-V. The features, which were spotlighted: fragile self-esteem, highly dependent on judgments of others, and constant efforts to sustain it; grandiose or inferior sense of oneself; judgmental description of oneself and others, very high requirements for oneself and others; constant seeking for validation of self-esteem in interpersonal relations.

2.3. Researcher and psychotherapist

The researcher and the psychotherapist was the same person in our study. That made recruitment of research participants easier: they were more available and relevantly motivated. The researcher being also the therapist of the participants could ensure that inquiry would do no psychological harm for them and that research and psychotherapy processes would contribute to each other. That responds to invitation of scientific society to involve clinicians into research and to diminish the gap between science and practice (Bager-Charleson, 2014; Cooper, 2008; Castonguay et al., Lebow, 2006).

The researcher and the psychotherapist is educated and works as a clinical psychologist and psychotherapist. She has got a qualification of Jungian analyst.

2.4. Procedure and method of data collection

When meeting a participant for the first interview, research aims, process and the stages were presented. Confidentiality principle and the right to withdraw from the research that would not affect possibility to continue psychotherapy was emphasized. Written informed consent was obtained from each participant before interviewing.

In **the first stage of the research** a *semi structured interview* which consisted of two parts was conducted. First part included questions, intended to reveal participants' subjective experience of *narcissistic difficulties*. They were asked about how they valued themselves and how they felt to be valued by others, what were their reactions to assessment situations, how they accepted themselves and others. Second part of questions were associated to *relationship with authority* and intended to reveal participants' experience of and needs for this relationship. Participants were asked about their relations with external authority figures, experience of inner authority and transcendent authority. The two latter dimensions of authority had to be specified when some participants hesitated before answering. Expression of inner authority was linked to confidence in oneself, decisiveness, possession of values to guide one's life. Transcendent authority was associated with other concepts such as God, religion, belief or something that oversteps the limits of human existence.

When the sessions 40-45 of psychotherapy were approaching, 7 clients, who had participated in the first interview and continued psychotherapy on regular basis, were informed about the possibility to take part in **the second stage of the research**. All 7 participants agreed to participate and were met for the second interview. A *semi structured interview* was conducted seeking to find out *changes which informants linked to psychotherapy, with the special focus on relationship with authority*. Therapeutic, as well as hindering factors having influenced changes, were also asked about.

Interviews of both research stages were audio-recorded and transcribed.

2.5. Data analysis

Transcribed texts of the interviews were analyzed according to **thematic analysis** principles (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Boyatzis, 1998). We combined *inductive* and *deductive approaches*. By inductive way, codes and themes are derived directly from data avoiding any theoretical premises. Deductive way rests upon theoretical knowledge – in our case psychodynamic and analytical psychology – which plays a role in formulating themes. *Latent* and *semantic levels* of analysis were combined. Semantic codes reflect information directly reported by participants. Latent codes are formulated after researchers' interpretations of information provided by participants verbally or nonverbally.

According to recommendations for presenting qualitative research results (Braun & Clarke, 2013), we limited the use of number values in pointing the frequency of themes and subthemes found in the interviews. When in the first stage of the research a theme or a subtheme is indicated by 9 or more informants, we refer to them as “majority”, when 7-8 – “more than a half”, when 2-5 – “several”. Accordingly, in the second stage, 5-6 informants – “majority”, 4 – “more than a half”, 2-3 – “several”.

2.6. Credibility and ethics of the research

Several validity-enhancing procedures indicated and recommended in literature on qualitative research (Elliot et al., 1999; McLeod, 2015) were implemented.

Involving multiple experts. Two additional experts as well as the supervisor of the dissertation, who have experience in analytical psychotherapy and qualitative research, were involved in the study to discuss the main ideas, aims and to contribute to analysis of data. Final codes and themes were discussed among the main researcher and all the experts. *Owning researchers' perspective.* We rest upon psychodynamic and analytical conceptions of the phenomena investigated and present them in the theoretical part. The author of the work describes her role as both psychotherapist and researcher in the study, gives the reason for and reflects upon possible effect of her double role on the research.

Situating the sample and contextualizing the study. Research participants are described, information about therapeutic and research setting and conditions is provided in order to show the relevance of the study and findings to psychotherapy science and practice.

Ensuring coherence. In presenting the results and interpreting them, integration, reasonable structure and preservation of authentic data meaning is sought to achieve.

Grounding data in examples. The citations of direct informants' speech allow appraisal of the fit between the data and the author's understanding of it.

Considering replicability. The results are sought to be presented in a clear manner for the study to be possible to replicate and to include in meta-analyses. The results are compared with and discussed in the context of other studies' findings.

Noting catalytic validity. Participants reported and the researcher-psychotherapist followed in later therapy sessions that the interviews gave useful insights and understandings about their experiences and problems.

Focusing on ethical issues started while considering invitation of clients to take part in the research. Clients were invited at the beginning of therapy, when strong transference with emotional dependency, for which they could not refuse to participate, had not formed yet. In cases where it had happened, the clients were not invited to participate. Participants were relevantly informed about the research and signed an informed consent. The therapist-researcher's professional competence in reflecting her own reactions and emotional dynamics of therapeutic relationship was used to avoid manipulating the clients-participants and imposing expectations on them.

When participants revealed sensitive or painful experiences during interviews, necessary means were taken to protect them from emotional harm. After interviews or in later therapy sessions they could share reactions and were helped to contain emotions.

Confidentiality principle is followed – identification data about the informants are concealed or changed – presenting and publishing the results of the research.

3. THE MAIN RESULTS

At first we will present the results which reflect *the dynamics of relationship with authority* of the research participants in psychotherapy. Then we will present *narcissistic difficulties and their changes with regard to their connection to the dynamics of relationship with authority* in psychotherapy. At the end *the therapeutic factors* indicated by the participants will be introduced.

In the analysis of the data, 3 categories of the themes describing the participants' experience of relationship with authority were distinguished: **Relationship with authority figures**, **Experience of inner authority** and **Relationship with transcendent authority**. We structure presentation of the results according to these three categories.

3.1. Dynamics of relationship with authority figures

In the *Picture 1* the dynamics of the participants' relationship with authority figures in psychotherapy is reflected. Below, the generated themes and subthemes, specifying relationship with authority figures at the beginning of psychotherapy and changes in relationship with authority figures after one year of psychotherapy, are listed and described.

3.1.1. Relationship with authority figures at the beginning of psychotherapy

In the analysis of the first interview, such themes, describing the participants' experience of the relationship with authority figures, emerged: **Judgmental relationship**, **Relationship of unequal power**, **Dependence on authorities**, **Authority – a reliable guide** and **Dilemma of authority's Shadow**.

Judgmental relationship. Evaluation is stressed by all the participants while talking about relationship with authoritative persons. The participants feel being judged by authorities and they themselves judge authorities. *“You are catching every word of her and*

think whether it sounds praising or criticizing you” (Rokas). “For my parents I am maybe such an unsuccessful project” (Mantas). Majority of the participants express the need for a relationship with an authority figure who accepts and not judges. “And there was no judging, she was very supporting. She was showing the way and... /.../ She was fostering our self-realization” (Šarūnė).

The following subthemes in this theme were distinguished:

The experience of devaluation by authorities

The feeling of inferiority in the face of authorities

Idealization or devaluation of authorities

Great significance of authorities’ judgment on the feeling of self-esteem, the emotional state and the sense of meaning of one’s life

The need for the accepting authority

Relationship of unequal power. All the participants share the experience of psychological and/or physical force of the authority figures. Only in a few cases the force of authority is considered to be positive and necessary to control the situation. In most statements, the force used by authority figures is conceived as abuse and stimulates feelings of a participants’ weakness. “*Generally you were afraid of a belt, upbringing was such... /.../ And the top of hierarchy and everything... And you see him as a man, a strong man and then... Without any questioning that it should be otherwise*” (Rokas). Majority of the participants speak about the need to feel their equal worth in the relationship with authority. “*And there was no dictate actually. /.../ I felt very good that such an honorable man treated me as equal* (Aušra).

The subthemes:

The experience of authorities’ exerted power

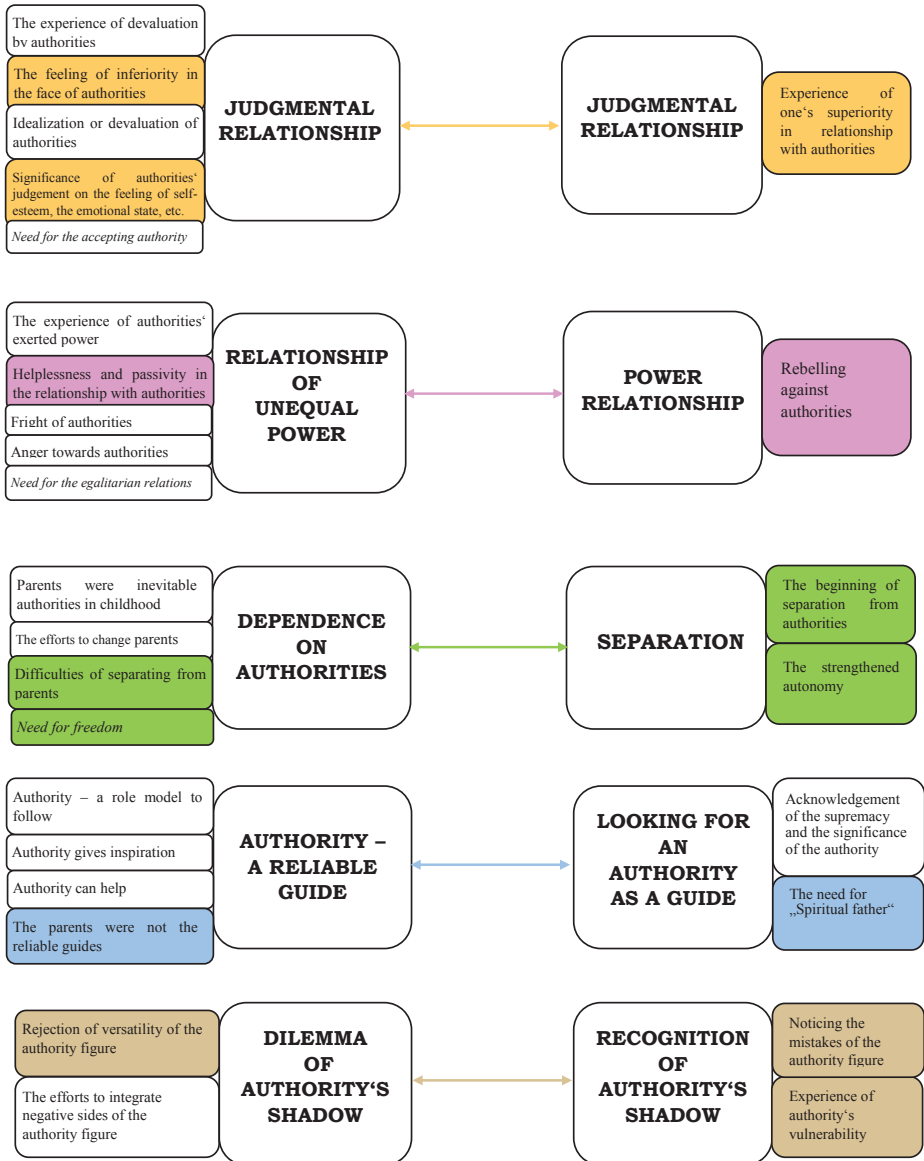
Fright of authorities

Anger towards the authorities exerting power

Helplessness and passivity in the relationship with authorities

Single efforts to resist the authorities

The need for the egalitarian relationship with authority



Picture 1. Relationship with authority figures at the beginning of psychotherapy and changes in relationship with authority figures after one year of psychotherapy

Dependence on authorities. All the participants feel dependent on authorities. Having commenced in childhood relations with parents, the dependence continues through adult life. Several participants cannot feel autonomous, make individual decisions in the face of their chiefs at work. It is difficult to separate from authorities. However, several participants express the need to get independent. *“You try to convince yourself that you are an adult person and you have to separate from your parents, to leave them. But /.../ a strong feeling of guilt appears”* (Mantas).

The subthemes:

Parents were inevitable authorities in childhood

The efforts to change parents

Difficulties of separating from parents

The need for freedom

Authority – a reliable guide. All the participants speak about their wish to have an authority figure who could be an example and a stimulus for personal or professional growth. Such an authority would also give support when necessary. Majority of the participants have met at least one such positive authority in their lives. Parents often failed to play the role of reliable guides. *“I wanted more initiative from their side. Maybe not suggestions but some energy, drive, impulse – this was lacking”* (Saulė).

The subthemes:

Authority – a role model to follow

Authority gives inspiration

Authority can help

The parents were not the reliable guides

Dilemma of authority’s Shadow. More than a half of participants get confused when meeting with consciously unacceptable features of authority figures. *“When he behaves badly... /.../ I think of him as not authority any more. /.../ If he is an authority, he has to be extraordinary in every sense”* (Zigmas).

The subthemes:

Rejection of versatility of the authority figure

The efforts to integrate negative sides of the authority figure

3.1.2. Changes in relationship with authority figures after one year of psychotherapy

In the analysis of the second interview, the themes of the changes in relationship with authority figures correspond to the themes generated from the data of the first interview. However, we modified the labels of the themes to reflect the dynamics in experience of relationship with authority. Such themes were formulated: **Judgmental relationship**, **Power relationship**, **Separation**, **Looking for an authority as a guide** and **Recognition of authority's Shadow**. The subthemes listed below each theme specify the changes more exactly.

Judgmental relationship. Evaluation is still important for the participants in relationship with authority figures after a year of therapy. A new motive appears - several participants feel having better or more skills than some authority figures. *"I feel not their superiority but, on the contrary, my superiority"* (Mantas). Accordingly, such subtheme was distinguished:

Experience of one's superiority in relationship with authorities

Power relationship. After a year of psychotherapy the power motive is still distinct in relationship with authority figures. But force distribution has changed. Majority of the participants state that they have stopped or diminished their obedience to the authority figures. They express their own position – it is important *"to try to claim or assert myself outside"* (Vaidas). Some of them still timidly, others actively and openly resist authorities. *"The obedience have disappeared, absolutely. /.../I see a lot of rebellion in myself now. I go against the grain"* (Aušra). Some of the participants remember psychotherapy episodes when they did not conform to the therapist. *"It was useful for me to argue with you"* (Aušra). Taking into account the word *"rebel"*, emphasized by two participants, we formulated the following subtheme:

Rebelling against authorities

Separation. Majority of the research participants feel more freedom to withdraw from the relationship with an authority figure. Some of the participants made real steps of separation: took a physical distance from parents, changed the job. *"The decision to not stay in*

the emotionally dangerous space together with the parents has come” (Mantas). They also feel more capable to make independent decisions regardless an authority’s opinion.

The subthemes:

The beginning of separation from authorities

The strengthened autonomy

Looking for an authority as a guide. In the second interview, several participants indicate their activity in seeking an authority as a guide for them. They recognize and accept authority’s supremacy. Two men participants express their need to have a spiritual male authority. *“I want to have a positive authority, fatherly care, attention, support, /.../ formation, criticism. /.../ Spiritual fatherhood. I want to look for such teachers” (Rokas).*

The subthemes:

Acknowledgement of the supremacy and the significance of the authority

The need for “Spiritual father”

Recognition of authority’s Shadow. Several participants speak about the authorities’ mistakes and negative features which they can see and which do not evoke any emotional tension or dissatisfaction. Some participants witness human limits and fragility of the authorities. *“I see her as a wounded human being now” (Vaidas).*

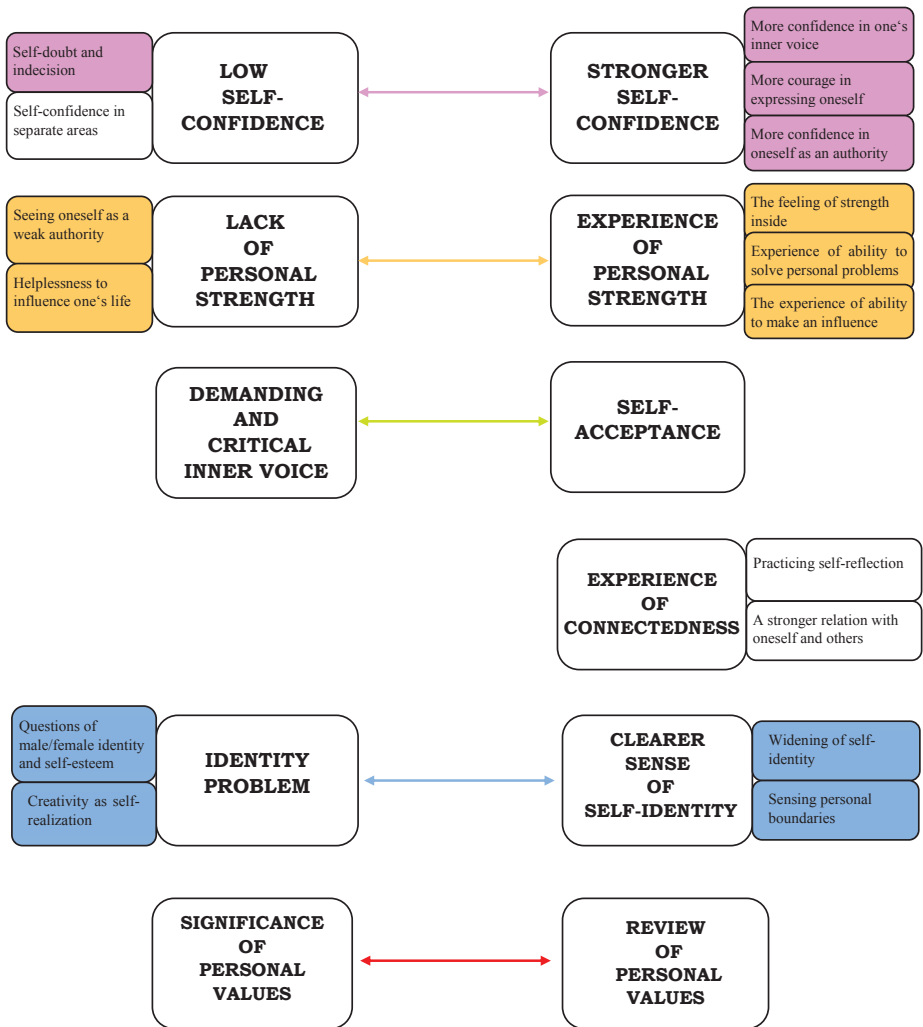
The subthemes:

Noticing the mistakes of the authority figure

Experience of authority’s vulnerability

3.2. Dynamics of inner authority

During the analysis of the data the themes and subthemes, describing the experience of inner authority at the beginning of psychotherapy and after a year of psychotherapy, were generated. In the *Picture 2* the dynamics of the participants’ experience of inner authority in psychotherapy is shown. Below, the themes and the subthemes, specifying the experience of inner authority at the beginning and after a year of psychotherapy, are presented.



Picture 2. Experience of inner authority at the beginning of psychotherapy and changes in experience of inner authority after one year of psychotherapy

3.2.1. Experience of inner authority at the beginning of psychotherapy

In the analysis of the first interview, such themes, describing the participants' experience of their inner authority, emerged: **Low self-confidence, Lack of personal strength, Demanding and critical inner voice, Identity problem and Significance of personal values.**

Low self-confidence. All the participants share their lack of self-confidence and self-doubts in intrapersonal relations or at work. They hesitate a lot before expressing their needs, position or decision. *“I have many doubts whether I am right or wrong, whether I have done it well, or maybe it has to be done otherwise. If that is right, why all this anxiousness, why can't I sleep?” (Vaidas).* However, majority of the participants have single life areas where they feel themselves competent.

The subthemes:

Self-doubt and indecision

Self-confidence in separate areas

Lack of personal strength. Majority of the participants tell that for them it is difficult to feel and use personal power. They consider themselves as too weak to make an influence on others or on their own lives. *“Somehow crippled and disabled I go through this life” (Monika).*

The subthemes:

Seeing oneself as a weak authority

Helplessness to influence one's life

Demanding and critical inner voice. The theme was formulated after having found that several participants equated inner authority with an inner critic or an inner voice, raising unattainable high requirements. *“Everything seems not good enough all the time” (Rasa).* Several participants criticized themselves during the first interview.

Identity problem – the theme which embraces uncertainty, doubts and questions about self-identity, self-knowledge and self-expression.

“I am only a mother, and that is badly hard for me /.../. Because a career, a job are more valuable” (Monika). Half of the research participants see creativity as their innate feature which helps to know, to show and to share themselves with others.

***The questions of male/female identity and self-esteem
Creativity as self-realization***

Significance of personal values. When asked about inner authority, majority of the participants speak about values which are important for them to follow. Half of the participants have solid personal values. Several participants would like to have such values but they question their sincerity and relevance. *“It is more a pharisaic position /.../. The rules, the letters” (Rokas).*

3.2.2. Changes in experience of inner authority
after one year of psychotherapy

Most of the themes reflecting the changes in experience of inner authority after a year of psychotherapy correspond to the themes generated from the data of the first interview. The formulations of the themes have been modified to reflect the dynamics of experience of inner authority. New subthemes were distinguished. Such themes were generated: **Stronger self-confidence, Experience of personal strength, Self-acceptance, Experience of connectedness, A clearer sense of self-identity and Review of personal values.**

Stronger self-confidence. Majority of the research participants indicate that they feel more confident in themselves after a year of psychotherapy. *“I would say it is like a jump forward... Towards self-confidence” (Inga).* The participants connect a stronger self-confidence to knowing and hearing themselves better. Feeling more certain, they can express and assert themselves easier. Majority of the participants feel themselves more certain when being in an authority’s position.

The subthemes:

More confidence in one’s inner voice

More courage in expressing and asserting oneself

More confidence in oneself as an authority to others

Experience of personal strength. All the participants tell having experienced or enhanced the feeling of personal power during psychotherapy. Participants share a sense of *“being strong inside”* (Šarūnė, Inga), *“firmness”* (Lina, Rokas). They say having become more resilient and less vulnerable to criticism. Majority of the participants found out that they were able to solve their problems and make influence. *“In the professional area, how I felt a year before and now, these are incomparable things. /.../ It is not my competencies that have changed and improved, but /.../ the sense that I can do that”* (Rokas).

The subthemes:

The feeling of strength inside

The experience of ability to solve personal problems

The experience of ability to make an influence

Self-acceptance. In the second interview, we don't hear the demanding and critical voice any more. Instead, majority of the participants see themselves more favorably than a year before. Several participants talk about the diminished inner requirements to seek perfection. *“The understanding that it is normal to be imperfect has appeared. /.../ You are not bad when you are imperfect”* (Inga).

Experience of connectedness. This is a new theme which emerged after a year and was assigned to the experience of inner authority. All the participants say that they came closer to their inner world and to other people during psychotherapy. They can integrate and contain their different sides. *“Now I devote much time to reflect my senses—why I am angry, why sad, why nervous. All the time I have a permanent auditor, an auditor of feelings”* (Mantas). They see the associations between their inner world and happenings in the outer world better.

The subthemes:

Practicing self-reflection

A stronger relation with oneself and others

A clearer sense of self-identity. Majority of the research participants have better understood who they are and who they are not

during psychotherapy. They have found new aspects of themselves and have recognized the boundaries between themselves and others. *“Now I can see that the person fights with himself. /.../ Earlier I would have taken for granted that it is me with whom he is angry” (Aušra).*

Widening of self-identity

Sensing personal boundaries

Review of personal values. Several research participants question their old values, try to interpret them differently or look for the new ones. It has become important to match the values with their inner perceptions. *“Maybe God’s will acts somehow differently. Maybe God says that you have to listen to your own voice and to what you hear” (Vaidas).*

3.3. Dynamics of narcissistic difficulties and relationship with authority

In the section 3.3.1 we will present the themes and subthemes which describe narcissistic difficulties that were experienced by the research participants at the beginning of psychotherapy. After one year of psychotherapy, participants told about changes, some of which were associated to relationship with authority and some were not. The latter ones were assigned to the category “General changes”. They will be presented in the section 3.3.2.

We noticed that the general changes as well as the changes in experience of inner authority after a year of psychotherapy were related to a diminishment of the narcissistic difficulties distinguished in the first interview. The links between the narcissistic difficulties, the general changes and the changes in experience of inner authority are illustrated in the *Picture 3*.



Picture 3. Narcissistic difficulties, 1) general changes and 2) changes in experience of inner authority

3.3.1. Narcissistic difficulties at the beginning of psychotherapy

In the analysis of the first interview, six themes were formulated to describe narcissistic difficulties experienced by the participants at the beginning of psychotherapy: **Sensitivity to judgment**, **Lack of personal strength**, **Conforming to others**, **Use of defenses**, **Insecurity** and **Loneliness**. Below the description of each theme we will list the subthemes, which extend the picture of narcissistic difficulties, characteristic to the research participants.

Sensitivity to judgment. All the research participants indicate the significance of evaluations which they hear or imagine to get from other people. They are also prone to evaluate and often to devalue themselves and other people.

The feeling of inferiority or self-exaltation

The efforts to prove one's worth

Devaluation of self and others

Great significance of others' judgment to the feeling of self-esteem, the emotional state and the sense of meaning of one's life

Acknowledgement of one's single valuable features

Lack of personal strength. Majority of the research participants feel having not enough psychological power to compete, make an influence, assert themselves and be heard.

The sense of oneself as weak against the strong others

Helplessness to influence one's life and interpersonal relations

Submissiveness or passive resistance to the other's force

Conforming to others. All the research participants tell the situations in which they behave according to others' wishes or expectations. Consciously or without awareness they sacrifice their own feelings and needs.

The efforts to conform in order to be valued

The efforts to please in order to sustain the relationship

The efforts to conform to make the other feel well

The need to be oneself and to be accepted

Use of defenses. Majority of the participants tend to keep a distance from their emotional experiences and from emotional involvement to interpersonal relations. Defensiveness of the participants can be witnessed from their stories and observed in their behavior during interview.

Neglecting significance of feelings

Avoiding feelings

Controlling the spontaneous reactions of oneself and others

The need for an open relationship with emotional involvement

Insecurity. Half of the participants feel the world to be unsafe, threatening or hostile. Some participants have a sense that they are not interesting and important to others, therefore they feel abandoned and insecure.

Guarding personal boundaries against the others' disfavor

Insecurity because of the others' indifference

The need to feel safe when being seen and accepted

Loneliness. More than a half of the participants share their inability to feel being related to others. They look for various ways to come out from the sense of isolation.

The feeling of isolation

The experience of fusion with others

The need for community experience

3.3.2. General changes after one year of psychotherapy

The general changes, named by the participants after a year of psychotherapy, were grouped into several themes: **Firmer sense of self-esteem, Increased openness, Improvement of the emotional state and Losses related to the changes.** The subthemes specify the general changes in more detail.

Firmer sense of self-esteem. The participants recognize that they are still sensitive to judgments after a year of psychotherapy. Nevertheless, majority of them mention episodes of experiences when they felt their self-esteem as more realistic, stable and resilient to devaluation.

Less vulnerable self-esteem
More realistic evaluation of oneself
The sense of oneself as important
Accepting one's imperfection

Increased openness. Diminished defenses, attempts to be more open with oneself and others are characteristic to all the research participants after a year of psychotherapy.

Openness in interpersonal relations
Opening up to the emotional experience

Improvement of the emotional state. Majority of the participants indicate that they feel themselves better than a year ago. Some diminishment of anxiety and different fears is mentioned. Several participants share that emotional outbursts lessened and feelings are easier to contain after becoming more conscious about them.

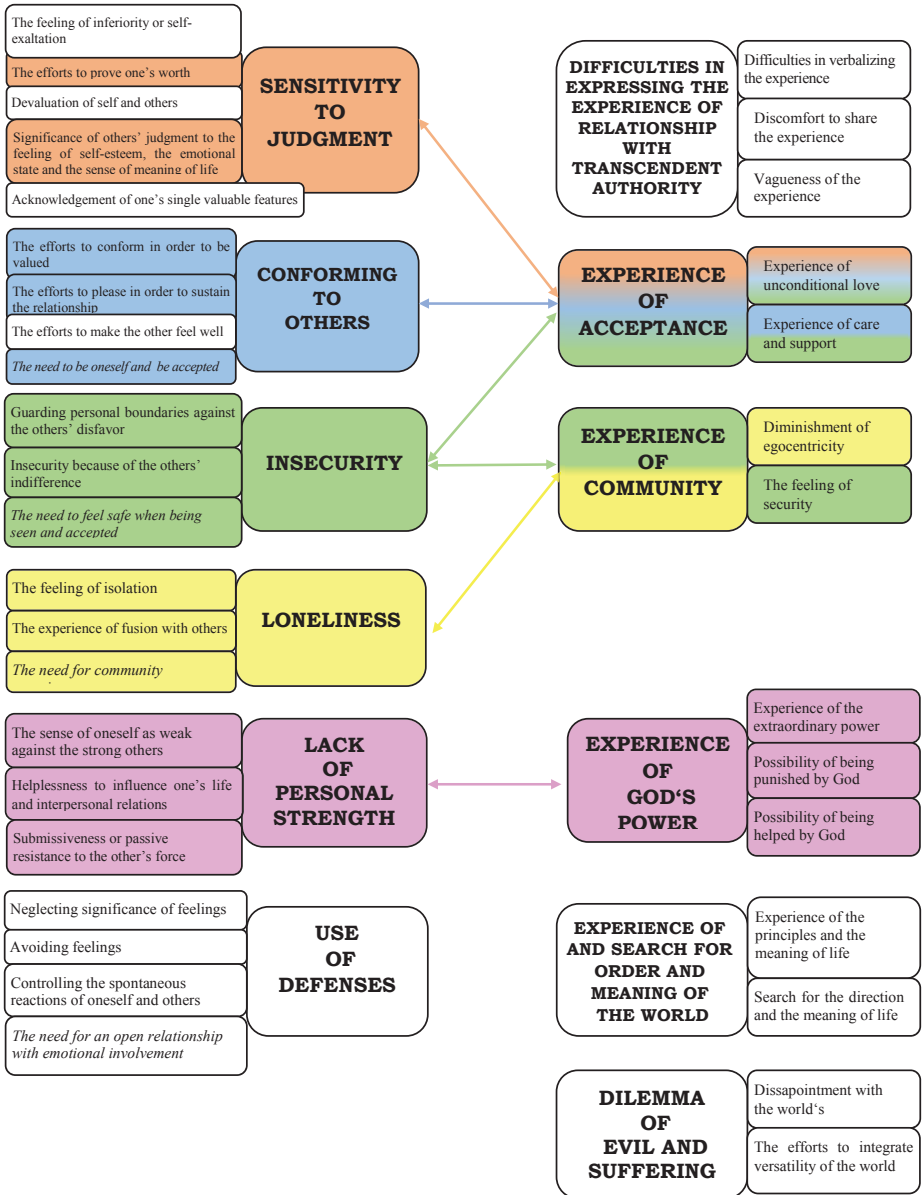
Losses related to the changes. Majority of the participants note that the psychotherapeutic changes are not only positive but have their price as well. They are not always pleasant for the participants or for their close people.

Painful feelings related to the changes
Conflicts in interpersonal relations
The loss of grandiose illusions

3.4. Relationship with transcendent authority and narcissistic difficulties

We noticed that narcissistic difficulties which the research participants talked about in the first interview, are also mentioned while speaking about the relationship with transcendent authority. Only in the latter case, solutions of the difficulties and fulfillment of the needs are more obvious. To illustrate how narcissistic difficulties and relationship with authority are associated, we paralleled them in the *Picture 4*.

Below, the generated themes and the subthemes, specifying relationship with transcendent authority at the beginning of psychotherapy, are listed and described.



Picture 4. Narcissistic difficulties at the beginning of psychotherapy and relationship with transcendent authority

3.4.1. Relationship with transcendent authority at the beginning of psychotherapy

Several themes were distinguished in participants' answers to the question about relationship with transcendent authority: **Difficulties in expressing the experience of relationship with transcendent authority**, **Experience of God's power**, **Experience of and search for order and meaning of the world**, **Experience of community**, **Experience of acceptance** and **Dilemma of evil and suffering**. The subthemes elaborating the themes are presented below the definitions of the themes.

Difficulties in expressing the experience of relationship with transcendent authority. Majority of the research participants get confused when asked about their relationship with transcendent authority. It seems that to talk about the experience of the transcendent dimension is neither usual nor easy. It is "*a very sensitive*" (*Šarūnė*) issue.

Difficulties in verbalizing the experience

Discomfort to share the experience

Vagueness of the experience

Experience of God's power. More than a half of the research participants associate the transcendent authority with a great power. Some of the participants have experienced the God's power as capable and prone to help, punish or answer the essential questions. "*In the time of a severe depression /.../ I could have a rest while praying*" (*Monika*). Other participants cannot find any personal relation with the transcendent power but recognize its existence and action.

Experience of the extraordinary power

Possibility of being punished by God

Possibility of being helped by God

Experience of and search for order and meaning of the world. Majority of the participants see the transcendent authority as ensuring order, rhythm and meaning of life. Some of the participants feel and can verbalize the meaning of their life. "*Possibly, we are here for the*

purpose to move towards the divinity...” (Rimas). Others, who are still looking for the meaning, recognize that it could be found in the relationship with transcendent authority.

Experience of the principles and the meaning of life

Search for the direction and the meaning of life

Experience of community. Relationship with transcendent authority helps to feel connected with the world, nature and other people for majority of the research participants. Several participants speak about the experience of people being parts of the same whole. *“Such a feeling that you belong to something bigger /.../, that you are not alone, hanged up somewhere. But you can feel a connection” (Lina).*

Diminishment of egocentricity

The feeling of security

Experience of acceptance. Half of the participants experience the transcendent authority as caring, loving and supporting, at least sometimes. In this sense, relationship with transcendent authority is contrary to judgmental relations. The transcendent authority *“does not look at you from above” (Aušra).* God values you *“just because you are as you are” (Šarūnė).*

Experience of unconditional love

Experience of care and support

Dilemma of evil and suffering. Several participants face the dilemma of the dark side of the world. Why does God let people suffer? Why does the evil exist? *“The relation with God is not easy, /.../ when you encounter these life difficulties /.../. So why? Why is the world not perfect? /.../ I carry some pain and reproach for God, which sometimes is expressed, and sometimes not. Anger and wish to take a distance from Him” (Vaidas).*

Disappointment with the world’s imperfection

The efforts to integrate versatility of the world

3.5. Therapeutic factors

In the analysis of participants' information about the helpful therapeutic things in psychotherapy three themes were generated: **Therapeutic relationship**, **Psychotherapy processes** and **Contribution of the client**. Below we give definitions of the themes and some subthemes which are necessary to reveal therapeutic factors, important for the research participants to achieve changes. At the end of this chapter we present the information regarding the absence of the themes indicating hindering factors.

Therapeutic relationship. In the second interview after a year of psychotherapy every participant named at least several therapeutic factors connected to the relationship with the psychotherapist. *“I think that the most obvious element affecting changes is the psychotherapist as a person to whom you tell everything”* (Mantas). Nine formulated subthemes show the variety of the aspects of therapeutic relationship, which have influenced changes in psychotherapy.

Durability and stability of the relationship

Possibility to say aloud and to share

The experience of accepting and non-demanding relationship

Support

Understanding and explanations

Empathy and mirroring

The help to find and to keep the direction of the therapeutic work

The experience of the psychotherapist as an authority in her professional area. Several participants tell that they saw the therapist as a competent professional who knows and does her work well. Some of them followed her recommendations – that carries a latent meaning of seeing the therapist as an authority.

Projection of devaluation to the relationship with the therapist.

Majority of the participants mention the devaluation which they were afraid of in therapeutic relationship. Several participants themselves devaluated the therapist in some moments of therapy. *“The therapist doesn't tell me anything, what is wrong with me and what I have to change. So what is the use?”* (Inga).

Psychotherapy processes. This theme includes psychotherapy setting, structure and means which were indicated as helpful and effective by the research participants.

Continuity and regularity of the psychotherapy sessions

Self-knowledge and self-understanding

Experience and awareness of emotions

Recollection of the childhood experiences

Contribution of the client. Majority of the participants mention, or the researchers discover in the latent level of analysis, the active participation of a client in seeking therapeutic changes.

Taking responsibility for one's problems and their solutions.

Majority of the participants recognize their input in creating their personal difficulties. They are prone to be responsible for the solutions of the problems. *"I understood that I had to support myself also"* (Inga).

Motivation and efforts. Self-reflection, analysis of the problems, practicing new ways of behavior during and after therapy sessions are indicated by majority of the participants. *"I was working like a bee all this year here. I feel like that"* (Aušra).

Purposeful projections to the psychotherapist. It was noticed that different research participants emphasize different aspects of the therapeutic relationship which were most important for their changes. To one participant it was most helpful that the therapist *"heard"* (Vaidas) him. To the other it seemed that the therapist was very much interested in him, therefore he started to feel *"interesting"* (Rokas) to himself and other people. As the same therapist was working with all the clients, we presume that they unconsciously projected and/or by means of projective identification delegated to the therapist a mode of behavior which helped them seek changes.

Hindering factors

In the analysis of the second interview we could not generate distinct themes of hindering factors. More than a half of the participants do not mention any impeding things or they say that the beneficial factors

were much more obvious. Several participants refer to the frustrations at some moments of therapy, when the process was going some other way than they had expected. But after, the same process showed up to stimulate their changes. *“What I now indicate as aiding [the support], at the beginning I saw /.../ as if nothing was happening. When nobody beats [“criticizes”] you ...”* (Inga).

4. DISCUSSION

4.1. Relationship with authority at the beginning of psychotherapy

The themes describing the experience of relationship with authority were grouped into three categories: **Relationship with authority figures**, **Experience of inner authority** and **Relationship with transcendent authority**. These categories correspond to the levels of relationship with authority which we distinguished in the review of the literature. The three levels were regarded while formulating the questions for the interviews.

Relationship with authority figures. Five themes, indicating the motives of relationship with authority figures characteristic for people with narcissistic difficulties, were generated in our research. Three of them – *“Judgmental relationship”*, *“Dependence on authorities”* and *“Dilemma of authority’s Shadow”* - were not mentioned in another qualitative study on relationship with authority (Bieliauskienė & Gudaitė, 2016), in which no specific psychological difficulties of the people inquired were taken into account.

The theme *“Judgmental relationship”*, revealed in our research, was emphasized by all the research participants, although directly we did not ask about the experience of the evaluation in relationship with authorities. The theme seems to be specifically important for people with narcissistic difficulties. Research confirms the significance of real or anticipated evaluation for the state and behavior of narcissism-prone people (Matzuo & DeSouza, 2016; Nicholls & Stukas, 2011).

Psychodynamic literature indicates that narcissistic persons rest upon judgments while describing themselves and others. They expect and are afraid of others', especially authorities', evaluations because their self-esteem depends on them (Kohut, 2009; McWilliams, 2014).

“Dependence on authorities” may be the consequence of the lack of successful relationship with the first authorities – parents – which is often the case with narcissistic people. Unsatisfied need for supporting authority does not disappear. It provokes constant seeking for authority figures to lean on and causes difficulties of separation from them (Kohut, 2009; Miller, 2011). The unmet need is confirmed by the subtheme “Parents were not the reliable guides” in the theme ***“Authority – a reliable guide”***. To have a human figure who would inspire, help and be relevant to follow is important for our research participants. This theme is similar to the theme “Availability of authority” in the research conducted by Bieliauskienė & Gudaitė (2016).

“Dilemma of authority’s Shadow” is a novel motive of relationship with authority revealed in our research. Inability to accept one’s negative sides is one of the main narcissistic problems mentioned in psychodynamic literature (Asper, 1993; Jacoby, 2008) and evidenced in personality psychology research (Horvath & Morf, 2010). Not allowing negative traits for oneself, it can be also hard to accept an authority’s shadow. Besides, our research participants’ reluctance to acknowledge authority’s versatility can be rooted in the experience of the destructive soviet Shadow. Keeping a distance from it was a life-saving strategy.

“Relationship of unequal power” includes the participants’ perception of authorities as exerting force on them. It can be linked to a lack of personal strength, which the participants indicated as a narcissistic difficulty. There is a significant difference between the reaction to the power of authorities found in our research and that of Bieliauskienė & Gudaitė (2016). In the latter study, the generated theme “Resistance against authority” pointed to the active and conscious protesting, expressed by the participants, whose age was between 44

and 49. That was associated to their living under the soviet regime and opposing authorities, seen as threatening. In our research, helplessness and passivity in the face of powerful authorities is characteristic to the participants, whose age varies between 27 and 53. Majority of them also endured the soviet system, at least in childhood. Given this difference, we presume that a passive position against authorities is related with narcissistic difficulties – fragile self-esteem, lack of personal strength, conforming to others and insecurity – characteristic to the participants of our research.

Experience of inner authority. The themes “*Low self-confidence*”, “*Lack of personal strength*” and “*Significance of personal values*” can be interpreted in the light of Kohut’s (2009) thought of the role of relationship with “idealized figure” in personal development. In the analysis of the information given by our research participants, we found that majority of them had experienced a father as a weak or absent authority. That matches with the psychosocial “fatherless” problem presented by Sebek (1999) while speaking about post-soviet countries. In soviet times a lot of men were imprisoned, exiled or otherwise deprived of their impact (Kuodytė, 2005). Low self-confidence can be associated with the deficiency of encouragement, incentive and support from a fatherly figure in childhood. Lack of interactions with a strong, active and stimulating authority can lead to the sense of weakness and shortage of psychic energy. Feeling oneself feeble can be a part of the authority complex which has formed due to the negative experience with powerful authorities: parents or political dictate. In this case, the participants of our study identify themselves with the helpless and submissive pole of the complex.

Values and ideas are thought to be related with a father’s realm in psychodynamic literature (Kohut, 2009; Samuels, 1985). Unsuccessful relations with a fatherly figure could explain why some of our research participants have introjected values as instrumental and somewhat formal, but not personal and meaningful.

In a way, “*Identity problem*” can also be related to the absence of “idealized figure”. The women in the interview talk about the lack

of self-efficacy and inability to compete in a career realm. The men feel unable to express masculinity which they understand as making influence.

In a broader sense, obscure identity of the participants can show the lack of self-cohesion, which is characteristic to the persons with narcissistic difficulties (Kohut, 2009). Analytical authors point to the weak *Ego-Self* axis in the case of troubled self-identity (Asper, 1993; Jacoby, 2008). Creativity, which is indicated by the participants as a means to express themselves, can help to be in touch with the self. But there is a danger to get into *ego-inflation* and not to be in conscious relation with the self, while the ego is not differentiated enough.

“***Demanding and critical inner voice***” of the research participants reminds of a rigid, aggressive and persecuting *superego* of narcissistic persons, described by Kernberg (1986a). Such *superego* threatens and punishes instead of protecting and caring.

Relationship with transcendent authority. It was not easy to formulate the questions concerning the transcendent dimension because of limited rational understanding of the phenomenon. To answer the questions for the informants was hard because of the sensitivity and obscurity of the issue. That is witnessed by the theme “***Difficulties in expressing the experience of relationship with transcendent authority***”. Nevertheless, the results of our research confirmed the necessity of recognizing, investigating and paying due attention to the relationship with transcendent authority in psychotherapy. “***Experience of God’s power***”, “***Experience of community***” and “***Experience of acceptance***” in relationship with transcendent authority appeared to be linked to narcissistic difficulties in the form of their solution. The fear of evaluation and efforts to conform to others can diminish while experiencing God’s acceptance. Insecurity and loneliness can be alleviated by the sense of belonging and being important to some bigger whole. The lack of personal strength can be compensated by feeling God’s helpful power. Positive projections to the transcendent authority give hope and show the perspective of retrieving them into a person’s psyche.

4.2. Narcissistic difficulties at the beginning of psychotherapy

The questions regarding the participants' narcissistic difficulties were mainly based on psychodynamic understanding of them. Besides, there was a possibility for the informants to express their specific individual experience of the difficulties. The results of the analysis almost exclusively reflect narcissistic vulnerability. *“Sensitivity to judgment”*, *“Lack of personal strength”*, *“Conforming to others”*, *“Use of defenses”*, *“Insecurity”* and *“Loneliness”* – the generated themes do not match the criteria for narcissistic personality disorder enumerated in the DSM-V section II. This confirms the notions of scientists and clinicians that assessment of narcissism resting upon the DSM and corresponding instruments captures grandiosity but disregards other narcissistic aspects, which are related to inner suffering (Caligor et al., 2015; Pincus et al., 2014). Our choice to use a semi structured interview for collecting the data answered the purpose. Such method allowed to reveal narcissistic difficulties which are naturally experienced by the people seeking psychotherapeutic help.

4.3. Changes in relationship with authority after one year of psychotherapy

We will discuss the changes in relationship with authority figures and in experience of inner authority as well as their links to diminishment of narcissistic difficulties. Changes in relationship with transcendent authority were not obvious in the analysis of the second interview. A year of psychotherapy is probably too short period for the noticeable dynamics of this experience.

Changes in relationship with authority figures. In the subtheme “Experience of one’s superiority in relationship with authority” of the theme *“Judgmental relationship”* the revival of self-esteem can be heard. It reminds of grandiosity and corresponds to the psychodynamic thought that the sense of self-worth, in order to integrate it, has to be enlarged first (Kohut, 2009).

“Power relationship”. After a year of psychotherapy “Rebelling against authorities” becomes characteristic for the participants. The subtheme indicates an appearing personal strength, necessary to protest and to assert oneself, instead of helplessness and passivity in relationship with authorities notable at the beginning of psychotherapy. Confronting the stronger ones can be the first step on the way to integrating personal power. According to analytical literature, rebel against authorities is important for psychic development and individuation (Dieckmann, 1977; Edinger, 1992). Researchers of social processes emphasize significance of the possibility to disobey authorities for the constructive relationship with them (Morselli & Passini, 2011; Westra, 2014). The soviet system, which did not allow any opposition, blocked healthy development of human psyche. In this sense, our research results reveal a hopeful perspective – natural processes of disobedience can be restored during psychotherapy.

Negative and dangerous aspects of rebellion, especially prolonged and/or not conscious, have also to be taken into account. It can lead to chaos and destruction, when the meaning of rebelling is lost (Durkheim, 2002). Our research participants mention conflicts in interpersonal relations as a consequence of their changing behavior. So retrieving one’s strength is connected with new possibilities as well as with threats which should not be overlooked in psychotherapy.

The theme **“Separation”** also indicates personal strength of the participants, which helps to take independent steps. **“Looking for an authority as a guide”** points to some activity of the participants in meeting their own needs. Two male participants seek for “Spiritual father”. The weight of such change can be illustrated by a recent study with the representative sample of Lithuanian people. Troubled relationship with a father associated with men’s suicidal thoughts (Grigienė et al., 2015). The researchers state that restoring and developing relationship with fatherly authorities can significantly improve men’s self-esteem and diminish self-destruction.

“Recognition of authority’s Shadow” by the participants can go together with the acceptance of their own negative sides, mentioned in

the category of “General changes” (chapter 3.3.2). Acknowledgement of the supremacy of authority as well as authority’s imperfection may lead to recognition of personal limits, which can be helpful in alleviating narcissistic difficulties.

Changes in experience of inner authority. Two of the themes – *“Experience of connectedness”* and *“A clearer sense of self-identity”* - reflect awareness and expression of the participants’ inner world as well as differentiation and development of intrapersonal relations. Probably, these important processes affected other changes in experience of inner authority. *“Self-acceptance”* of the research participants could have been enhanced by knowing, understanding and getting connected to different parts of themselves. In turn, self-acceptance, contrary to perfectionistic requirements, is the basis for deep changes in personality and for the reduction of narcissistic difficulties. It can lessen the fragility of self-esteem (Asper, 1993; Miller, 2011).

Development of inner relations and changes in self-identity could have led to the *“Review of personal values”*. Jung (1918/2012) says that an individual needs to proceed inner reevaluations for the purpose of coming closer to one’s true nature, personal and social identity.

“Stronger self-confidence”, according to the participants, is related to knowing themselves better. Hearing and recognizing their needs and feelings, participants trust and can realize their own decisions. After a year of therapy, they feel more certain being in authority’s position. This concurs with the results of the qualitative psychotherapy study conducted by Gudaitė (2013) – identification with inner authority was shown to be one of the criteria of effective psychotherapy.

Retrieving authority’s projections to oneself enhances self-confidence as well as contributes to *“Experience of personal strength”*. During a year of psychotherapy the participants’ helplessness to influence their lives and passivity in the face of stronger authorities changed to the sense of being able to act and make impact. Acknowledgement of diverse sides of oneself had probably built a bridge to inner resources, which strengthened personality (Kast, 2002). One of the resources could be an integrated aggression that may help to

feel personal power and to confront powerful others when necessary. In the studies of possibilities to overcome negative consequences of authoritarian regime, assimilation of aggression and its constructive expression are indicated as helpful factors (Gudaitė, 2014b). Indeed, several participants of our research mentioned recognition of their anger as an important psychotherapeutic change.

The sense of personal strength and self-confidence associate to the *self-efficacy* construct which is assessed in relation to narcissism in some research (Brookes, 2015). Evaluation of their ability to perform tasks (self-efficacy) is linked to integration of “idealized figure” in Kohut’s (2009) theory on narcissism. This evaluation became more positive in the course of psychotherapy of our participants. The transference of a competent and capable authority on the psychotherapist and identification with her could contribute to the sense of self-efficacy of the participants.

Strengthened sense and expression of inner authority alleviated some narcissistic difficulties of the research participants. Experience of connectedness and a clearer sense of self-identity could diminish loneliness. When knowing themselves better and feeling more self-confident, participants need to conform to others less. Participants have got the experience of personal strength. Self-acceptance as well as other positive changes regarding inner authority make the sense of self-esteem stronger. The true self-worth depends on the relationship with inner world, with others and on the possibility to realize oneself (Asper, 1993; Jacoby, 2008).

4.4. Therapeutic factors

Helpful factors which were mentioned by the research participants when talking about changes in psychotherapy were grouped into three themes: “*Therapeutic relationship*”, “*Psychotherapy processes*” and “*Contribution of the client*”. These themes correspond to the ones indicated in other studies of therapeutic factors subjectively experienced by clients (Cary et al., 2007; Lozovska, 2014; Timulak, 2007).

“Therapeutic relationship”. Participants noted many helpful factors – 9 subthemes were distinguished – linked to the relation with the psychotherapist. That confirms the results of contemporary research on psychotherapy efficacy. Therapeutic relationship is found to make the biggest positive influence (Norcross & Lambert, 2014; Wampold & Imel, 2015). *Durability and stability of the relationship, possibility to say aloud and to share, the experience of accepting and non-demanding relationship, support, understanding and explanations, empathy and mirroring* – these factors, indicated by our research participants, echo the therapeutic factors revealed in Lithuanian studies made by Bieliauskienė (2014a) and/or Lozovska (2014). The same elements are included in the categories of therapeutic factors, distinguished by Timulak (2007) in the meta-analysis, embracing seven international studies.

The help to find and to keep the direction of the therapeutic work and the experience of the psychotherapist as an authority in her professional area, therapeutic to our research participants of both genders, correspond to the factor of “Finding a teacher”, named as helpful only by male participants in the research of Bieliauskienė (2014a). *Projection of devaluation to the relationship with the therapist* is a therapeutic factor mentioned in psychodynamic theory and research on narcissism psychotherapy. When judgments or their projections occur in therapeutic relations, a possibility of working through them appear (Diamond & Meehan, 2013; Fiscalini, 2004).

In the non-demanding relationship with the therapist, whom the participants perceived as a competent figure, their need for the accepting authority, indicated at the beginning of psychotherapy, could be fulfilled. Support, understanding and explanations as well as the help to follow the right direction in therapy are relevant functions of authority – a reliable guide – described and wanted by the participants in the first interview.

“Psychotherapy processes”. Two of the factors of psychotherapy processes, revealed in our research: *self-knowledge and self-understanding, experience and awareness of emotions* – were also found in

the studies of Timulak (2007), Bieliauskienė (2014a) and Lozovska (2014). In the latter two, *continuity and regularity of the psychotherapy sessions* appeared to be therapeutic, the same as in our research. *Recollection of the childhood experiences*, helpful to the participants of our study, is mentioned as a significant therapeutic factor in the psychotherapy research conducted by Gudaitė (2014). Recreation of personal history gives the sense of continuity and cohesion.

“Contribution of the client”. *Motivation and efforts* – a therapeutic factor found in our research – corresponds to the factors of willful and purposeful activity of the clients, indicated in other studies (Bieliauskienė, 2014a; Carey et al., 2007; Lozovska, 2014; Timulak, 2007). *Taking responsibility for one’s problems and their solutions* has not been distinguished as a separate therapeutic factor in other empirical works as it has in ours. Taking responsibility for their lives and difficulties can be linked to enhanced personal strength of the research participants.

Purposeful projections to the psychotherapist is a unique therapeutic factor, revealed in the latent level of the data collected in our research. Although this factor is described in analytical literature (Jacoby, 1984; Jung, 1946/1985), we could not find any empirical research investigating it. Purposeful projections, which helped to seek the necessary changes, show the participants’ ability and personal power to influence psychotherapy process, albeit unconsciously.

One possible explanation of the absence of significant **hindering factors** in the data, given by our informants, points to the same person appearing in both psychotherapist’s and researcher’s role. Perhaps the clients were not eager to tell anything negative about the psychotherapy to the therapist. Nevertheless, in another research, conducted by an independent researcher, after 18-22 psychotherapy sessions clients mentioned just a few hindering factors (3) in comparison with many more therapeutic factors (13) (Bieliauskienė, 2014a). As idealizing transference often takes place during the first year of psychotherapy, the things happening in psychotherapy can be seen as exclusively positive. Negative factors may be dismissed.

4.5. The main findings and their novelty in the context of psychotherapy research

We compared the changes, indicated by our research participants after one year of psychotherapy, with those found in other research on psychotherapy effectiveness. General changes – a firmer sense of self-esteem, increased openness, improvement of the emotional state – are also mentioned in other studies (Binder et al., 2010; Carey et al., 2007; Lozovska, 2014). One or several of the changes, which we assigned to the category “Changes in experience of inner authority”, are observed elsewhere. Stronger self-confidence, self-acceptance, experience of connectedness, a clearer sense of self-identity and modification of values have been indicated by different psychotherapy researchers (Binder et al., 2010; Carey et al., 2007; Gudaitė, 2014; Lozovska, 2014, 2014a). ***Experience of personal strength*** is noted in several qualitative studies as a therapeutic factor. Clients point to the important moments of being let and encouraged to take initiative, to assert themselves (Biliauskienė, 2014a; Timulak, 2007). Meanwhile in our research participants emphasize the experience of personal strength as a significant change and outcome of their psychotherapy. ***Rebelling against authorities*** and ***separation*** from them are specific changes in relationship with authority figures, revealed in our work, and not mentioned in other psychotherapy effectiveness studies. Such dynamics of interpersonal relations can be associated with expression of inner authority, especially its attribute of personal strength. ***Taking responsibility for one’s problems and their solutions*** and ***purposeful projections to the psychotherapist*** – novel therapeutic factors distinguished in this research – reflect the participants’ personal power and ability to influence psychotherapy process.

Distinct in our study, but not apparent in other psychotherapy research, the theme of ***personal strength*** can be relevant for the psychotherapy of people with narcissistic difficulties. However, we haven’t find this theme being denoted in scarce empirical research on effectiveness of narcissism psychotherapy. We make a premise that

restoration of the sense of personal strength and of ability to make impact is urgent in alleviating narcissistic difficulties in our culture. Such an assumption could be verified by comparative international research. Maybe the movement from helplessness and passivity in the face of authorities towards rebellion against them, withdrawal of power projections to oneself and development of inner authority is the dynamics of relationship with authority, which is necessary for the fragile self-esteem of post-soviet people to heal. The big changes can start from the sense of “being able”.

CONCLUSIONS

1. The analysis of the research data revealed the dynamics of relationship with authority figures from the beginning of psychotherapy to the 45th session:
 - a. At the beginning of psychotherapy the research participants experienced authorities as judging and exerting their power. Helplessness and passive stance in the face of authorities were expressed. Dependence on authorities and difficulties to separate from them were distinguished. It was hard for the participants to integrate negative sides of authorities - perfection was expected.
 - b. At the beginning of psychotherapy participants wished to be accepted and to have egalitarian relations with authorities as reliable guides. They wanted to freely choose an authority.
 - c. Changes in relationship with authority figures after one year of psychotherapy – rebelling against and separating from authorities – indicate enhanced personal strength of the participants.
2. During one year of psychotherapy the expression of inner authority increased:
 - a. At the beginning of psychotherapy weak inner authority was experienced as low self-confidence, lack of personal strength, obscure self-identity and poor integration of personal values. Inner authority was equaled to demanding and critical voice.

- b. After one year of psychotherapy inner authority expresses itself in experience of connectedness, a clearer sense of identity, self-acceptance, integration of personal strength, stronger self-confidence, and search for authentic values.
3. The dynamics of inner authority is associated with the diminishment of narcissistic difficulties:
 - a. At the beginning of psychotherapy narcissistic vulnerability and difficulties related to it – high sensitivity to judgmental issues, lack of personal strength, conforming to others, use of defenses, insecurity and loneliness – are characteristic to the research participants.
 - b. Enhancement of inner authority during one year of psychotherapy is linked to alleviation of some narcissistic difficulties: fright of evaluation, lack of personal strength, loneliness and a need to conform to others.
4. Acceptance and community, experienced in relationship with transcendent authority, and perceiving it as a helpful extraordinary force can reduce such narcissistic difficulties: fright of judgment, feelings of insecurity and loneliness, a need to conform and lack of personal strength.
5. Participants indicated therapeutic factors, having influenced their subjectively experienced changes, which can be assigned to three groups: therapeutic relationship, psychotherapy processes and contribution of the client.

Taking responsibility for one's problems and their solutions and purposeful projections to the psychotherapist were distinguished as specific therapeutic factors in our research. They show the expression of the participants' personal power necessary to influence therapeutic changes.

IŠSAMI DISERTACIJOS REZIUMĖ

Santykis su autoritetu yra svarbus psichosocialinis reiškiny, įtakojančiantis atskirą asmenį, žmonių grupes ir visą visuomenę. Santykis su autoritetu kuria pagrindus asmens tapatumo ir vertės jausmui, įgalina gyvenimo prasmės, struktūros ir krypties suvokimą. Santykis su išoriniais autoritetais veikia vidinio autoriteto – vertybių sistemos, pasitikėjimo savimi, savo galios jausmo, gebėjimo kurti ir džiaugtis gyvenimu – formavimąsi (Gudaitė, 2014; Jacoby, 2008).

Lietuvoje bei kitose posovietinėse valstybėse santykis su autoritetu yra pažeistas buvusio autoritarinio režimo. Analizuojant neigiamas psichologines režimo pasekmes randama, kad asmenys, gyvenę sovietinės santvarkos laikais, nepasitiki autoritetu, reaguoja į autoritetą kaip į pavojingą ir priešišką, jo vengia (Gudaitė, 2014, 2016). Autoritarines sąlygas išgyvenusiems žmonėms būdinga baimė, iniciatyvos stoka ir nepasitikėjimas savimi (Gailienė, 2015; Peterson & Luik, 2014). Sovietinė sistema nelaikė žmogaus vertingu savaime. Politiniai autoritetai naikino asmens besąlyginę vertę, autentišką tapatumą, žemino jį, leisdami reikštis ir jaustis reikalingu tiek, kiek jis prisitaikė prie beveidės kolektyvinės sistemos ir pakluso diktatui. Šia prasme autoritarinis režimas sukūrė tinkamą dirvą narcistiniams sunkumams, kurių ašis – silpnas savo vertės jausmas.

Neigiamos autoritarinio režimo pasekmės veikia ne tik tiesiogiai jį patyrusius asmenis, bet ir antros bei trečios kartos palikuonis (Gailienė, 2015; Peterson & Luik, 2014), todėl santykio su autoritetu problema reikšminga dabartinei Lietuvos visuomenei. Svarbu suprasti santykio su autoritetu sunkumus ir rasti būdų atkurti konstruktyvų santykį su autoritetu, o tuo pačiu asmens vertę ir orumą.

Psichoterapinės pagalbos besikreipiantys žmonės dažnai siekia tiek santykio su autoritetu (šiuo atveju psichoterapeutu), tiek ir pagalbos sprendžiant problemas, kurias įtakoja nestabilus ir trapus savęs vertinimas. Psichodinaminėje literatūroje teigiama, kad autoriteto paieška ir savo vertės problema gali būti susijusios, o psichoterapijoje sėkmingai atkuriami santykiai su autoritetu gali reikšmingai palengvinti

narcistinius sunkumus. Santykio su autoritetu veiksnys apžvelgtoje psichologinėje literatūroje nurodomas kaip reikšmingas narcizmo etiologijoje, raiškoje ir transformacijoje (Jacoby, 2008; Kohut, 2009).

Paskutiniu metu psichologijoje pripažįstama, kad narcizmas yra nebūtinai kliniškai reikšmingas sutrikimas. Jis mažesniu ar didesniu lygiu būdingas daugeliui šių laikų žmonių (Jacoby, 2008; McWilliams, 2014; Rubinstein, 2014). Psichoterapeuto kabinete jau tampa įprasta sutikti asmenį, besiskundžiantį nerimu ar depresija, susijusiais su menkavertiškumo jausmu, ryšio su savimi ir kitais praradimu, prasmės netekimu ir tuštumos jausmu. Narcistinių sunkumų, šiuo metu vyraujančių psichoterapinėje praktikoje, gydymas yra sunkus ir keliantis daug iššūkių (Diamond, Yeomans, & Levy, 2011; Ronnings-tam, 2016). Todėl svarbu gilintis į veiksnius, susijusius su narcizmo formavimusi ir narcistinių sunkumų sprendimu bei ieškoti efektyvios psichoterapinės pagalbos būdų. Mūsų tyrimo objektas – santykis su autoritetu, jo raiška ir dinamika psichoterapijoje narcistinių sunkumų bei jų įveikos kontekste.

Nors psichologijos moksle neabejojama didele santykio su autoritetu svarba, mokslinių tyrimų, nagrinėjančių šį veiksni, trūksta. Beveik netirtas subjektyvus santykio su autoritetu patyrimas ir jo sąsajos su psichologiniais sunkumais. Vilniaus universiteto tyrėjų grupė yra atlikusi keletą kiekybinių ir kokybinių studijų, kurių objektas – santykio su autoritetu patirties pobūdis, raiška, jų skirtumai tarp įvairių amžiaus grupių ir lyčių, galimi pokyčiai psichoterapijoje (Bieliauskienė ir Gudaitė, 2016; Grigutytė ir Rukšaitė, 2016; Gudaitė, 2013, 2014, 2016). Santykio su autoritetu ypatumai, siejant juos su vidine narcizmo dinamika, dar nėra tyrinėti.

Vidinių ir išorinių asmenybės santykių kokybės vertinimas yra svarbus suprantant psichologinius sunkumus, mūsų tyrimo atveju – narcistinius sunkumus. Vidinių ir išorinių santykių atkūrimas yra vienas lemiamų efektyvios ilgalaikės asmenybės psichoterapijos veiksnių, ypač akcentuojamų psichodinaminėje psichoterapijoje ir jos efektyvumo tyrimuose įvairiose šalyse (Mullin, Hilsenroth, Gold, & Farber, 2018; Target, 2018). Tačiau psichoterapijos efektyvumo

tyrimuose paprastai naudojami kiekybiniai metodai, ir labai trūksta kokybinių tyrimų, vertinančių psichoterapinius pokyčius bei jiems palankius veiksnius (McLeod, 2015). Paskutinį dešimtmetį Lietuvoje vykdomi kokybiniai tyrimai siejant psichoterapijos veiksmingumą su santykių psichologija (Gudaitė (sud.), 2008, 2014a). Mūsų darbas ir kokybinė tyrimo strategija prisideda prie šių studijų nauja kryptimi – tiriant santykio su autoritetu dinamiką narcistinių sunkumų psichoterapijos kontekste.

Narcizmo psichoterapijos tyrimai yra problemiška sritis pirmiausia dėl paties narcizmo, sudėtingo ir įvairialypio reiškinių, apibrėžimo ir įvertinimo. Socialinė psichologijos narcizmo studijose dažniausiai aprašomas ir tiriamas narcistinis grandioziškumas: pasipūtimas, savęs sureikšminimas, neįjautrumas kitiems ir kitų išnaudojimas, demonstruojamas pasitikėjimas savimi, dėmesio ir žavėjimosi siekimas (Campbell & Miller, 2011). Tuo tarpu klinikinėje psichologijoje ir psichoterapijoje paprastai susiduriama su narcistiniu pažeidžiamumu: menkavertiškumo, susvetimėjimo, gilios izoliacijos ir vienišumo patyrimu, liūdesio, gėdos jausmais (Caligor et al., 2015; Pincus, Cain & Wright, 2014). Nesutariama dėl vieningų diagnostinių kriterijų, apimančių skirtingus narcizmo polius: pažeidžiamą ir grandiozinį. Narcizmo įvertinimas yra tapęs nuolatinių ir nesibaigiančių diskusijų, prieštaravimų ir klausimų tema (Besser, 2014; Miller, Lynam & Campbell, 2016). Remdamosi psichodinaminėmis ir analitinėmis teorijomis, savo darbe *grandiozinę ir pažeidžiamą narcizmo dimensijas* laikome besikeičiančiomis ir viena kitą kompensuojančiomis būsenomis, būdingomis tam pačiam žmogui (Asper, 1993; Jacoby, 2008; Miller, 1986, 2011; Pincus et al., 2014) *Narcizmą* apibrėžiame kaip problemišką vidinių ir išorinių santykių sistemą, siekiančią sustiprinti trapų žmogaus savo vertės jausmą ir gauti savęs patvirtinimą. Šiame darbe naudojama kokybinė tyrimo strategija įgalina atskleisti pačių tyrimo dalyvių narcistinių sunkumų patyrimą, jų įvairovę ir individualumą bei pokyčius psichoterapijos metu. Kokybinis metodas palankus ir santykio su autoritetu tyrimui. Šis fenomenas dar naujas psichologijos tyrimuose, todėl svarbu atskleisti jo ypatumus, kurių iš anksto negalime numatyti.

Autoritetas apibrėžiamas kaip įtakingumas, priskiriamas asmeniui, institucijai, socialinei grupei ar viršasmeninei sričiai. Išskiriami keli įtakingumo aspektai: 1) jėgos arba galios; 2) reputacijos; 3) žinių bei išminties (Dieckmann, 1977). Vienas iš mūsų darbo savitumų – trijų santykio su autoritetu lygių: *vidinio*, *tarpasmeninio* ir *viršasmeninio*, analizavimas. Šiam tikslui pasitarnauja analitinė psichologija, apimanti ir siejanti žmogaus vidinę, išorinę ir transcendentinę patirtis. *Vidinį autoritetą* disertacijoje apibrėžiame kaip intrapsichinę struktūrą, talpinančią savyje asmens galios, tapatumo, iniciatyvos, vertinimo, gyvenimo krypties ir kūrybos centrą. Vidinis autoriteto lokusas yra priešingas įtakingumo projektavimui į išorines autoriteto figūras. *Viršasmeninis autoritetas* – įtakingumas, priskiriamas žmogiško suvokimo ir pažinimo ribas peržengiančiai sričiai. Santykis su viršasmeniniu autoritetu suponuoja vidinio autoriteto sklaidą. O brandus vidinis autoritetas įgalina ryšį su transcendentiniu autoritetu (Edinger, 1992; Gudaitė, 2016). Reikšmingos autoritetų figūros - tėvai, mokytojai, visuomenės veikėjai, institucijos ar politinė sistema –atlieka svarbų vaidmenį, psichikos raidoje formuojantis santykio vidiniams ir išoriniams santykiams su autoritetu (Edinger, 1992; Kohut, 2009). Taigi visos santykio su autoritetu dimensijos: vidinė, tarpasmeninė ir viršasmeninė, yra susijusios ir įtakoja viena kitą.

Psichoterapija yra asmenybės gydymo būdas, kuris gali padėti keisti tiek išorinius, tiek vidinius asmenybės santykius. Savo darbe siekiame atskleisti, kaip narcistinių sunkumų turintys žmonės, kurie kreipiasi psichoterapinės pagalbos, patiria su narcizmu susijusias problemas, ir kokie yra jų santykio su autoritetu ypatumai. Taip pat siekiame suprasti, kaip keičiasi santykis su autoritetu psichoterapijos metu, kaip tai siejasi su narcistinių sunkumų pokyčiais ir kokie yra tam palankūs ir trukdantys psichoterapiniai veiksniai.

Tyrimo tikslai:

1. Atskleisti narcistinių sunkumų turinčių žmonių santykio su autoritetu ypatumus.
2. Atskleisti narcistinių sunkumų turinčių žmonių santykio su autoritetu dinamiką psichoterapijos procese.

Tyrimo tikslams pasiekti keliami tokie uždaviniai:

1. Atskleisti žmonių, kurie kreipėsi psichoterapinės pagalbos, narcistinius sunkumus.
2. Tirti narcistinių sunkumų turinčių žmonių santykio su autoritetu specifiką, išskiriant santykio su autoritetu problemas ir lūkesčius santykyje su autoritetu psichoterapijos pradžioje.
3. Tirti santykio su autoritetu dinamiką psichoterapijos procese.
4. Išskirti santykio su autoritetu pokyčiams palankius bei trukdančius psichoterapinius veiksnius.
5. Tirti santykio su autoritetu dinamikos ryšį su narcistinių sunkumų pokyčiais.

Tyrimo metodika

Tyrimas vykdytas dviem etapais: po 10-14 ir po 40-45 psichoterapijos sesijų atlikti tyrėjų sudaryti pusiau struktūruoti interviu. Pirmajame etape dalyvavo 12 žmonių, kurie kreipėsi psichoterapinės pagalbos dėl psichologinių problemų ir buvo įvertinti kaip turintys narcistinių sunkumų. Kiekvienas dalyvis apklaustas, siekiant atskleisti subjektyvų narcistinių sunkumų patyrimą bei santykių su autoritetais ypatumus. Antrajame etape dalyvavo 7 žmonės, tęsę psichoterapiją vienerius metus. Domėtasi psichoterapijoje įvykusiais pokyčiais, terapiniais veiksniais bei konkrečiai santykio su autoritetu pokyčiais. Duomenys analizuoti pasitelkiant kokybinę teminę analizę.

Tyrimo rezultatus lyginant su kitais tyrimais, išsiskiria po psichoterapijos metų iškilusios *maištavimo* prieš autoritetus ir *atsiskyrimo* nuo autoritetų temos, pakeitusios bejėgiškumą ir pasyvią poziciją bei priklausomybę nuo autoritetų psichoterapijos pradžioje. Šios temos susijusios su sustiprėjusiu tyrimo dalyvių vidiniu autoritetu, ypač jo galios aspektu. *Asmeninės galios patyrimas*, kaip svarbus psichoterapinis pokytis, akcentuojamas tyrimo dalyvių, gali būti specifiskai svarbus posovietinei Lietuvos kultūrai būdingų narcistinių sunkumų įveikai. Tarpkultūriniai tyrimai galėtų patvirtinti ar pakoreguoti šią prielaidą.

Pagrindinius tyrimo rezultatus galima apibendrinti tokiomis išvadomis:

1. Tyrimo duomenų analizė atskleidė tarpasmeninių santykių su autoritetais patyrimo dinamiką, vykusią nuo psichoterapijos pradžios iki 45-tos psichoterapijos sesijos:
 - a. Psichoterapijos pradžioje tyrimo dalyviai patyrė autoritetus kaip vertinančius ir galinčius piktnaudžiauti jėga. Išsiskyrė bejėgiškumo jausmas ir pasyvumas santykyje su autoritetu. Reiškėsi priklausomybė nuo autoritetų ir sunkumas atsiskirti. Išryškėjo autoriteto įvairiapusiškumo integracijos sunkumai ir tobulumo reikalavimai autoritetui.
 - b. Psichoterapijos pradžioje tyrimo dalyviams būdingas priimančio ir lygiaverčio santykio su autoritetu kaip patikimu vedliu poreikis ir noras laisvai rinktis autoritetą.
 - c. Pokyčiai išoriniuose santykiuose su autoritetais po psichoterapijos metų – maištavimas ir pirmieji atsiskyrimo nuo autoritetų žingsniai – rodo vykstantį tyrimo dalyvių asmeninės galios susigrąžinimo procesą.
2. Per psichoterapijos metus stiprėjo tyrimo dalyvių vidinio autoriteto patyrimas:
 - a. Psichoterapijos pradžioje silpnas tyrimo dalyvių vidinis autoritetas reiškėsi nepasitikėjimu savimi, nepakankamos galios jausmu, tapatumo raiškos sunkumais ir menku vertybių integravimu. Vidinis autoritetas buvo patiriamas kaip reiklus ir kritiškas vidinis balsas.
 - b. Po psichoterapijos metų sustiprėjęs vidinis autoritetas reiškiasi savo susietumo patyrimu, aiškesniu tapatumo jausmu, savęs priėmimu, didesniu pasitikėjimu savimi, asmeninės galios integravimu ir autentiškų vertybių paieška.
3. Vidinio autoriteto dinamika susijusi su narcistinių sunkumų įveika:
 - a. Psichoterapijos pradžioje tyrimo dalyviams būdingas narcistinis pažeidžiamumas ir su juo susiję sunkumai: jautrumas vertinimui, asmeninės galios stoka, prisitaikymas prie kitų, gynybinių strategijų naudojimas, nesaugumo išgyvenimas ir vienišumas.

- b. Vidinio autoriteto stiprėjimas per psichoterapijos metus susijęs su narcistinių sunkumų - vertinimo baimės, asmeninės galios stokos, vienišumo jausmo ir prisitaikymo prie kitų - mažėjimu.
4. Santykyje su viršasmeniniu autoritetu išgyvenamas priėmimas, bendrystė ir gelbstinčios galios patyrimas gali palengvinti narcistinius sunkumus: vertinimo baimę, nesaugumo ir vienišumo jausmus, polinkį prisitaikyti prie kitų bei asmeninės galios stoką.
 5. Subjektyviai patiriami psichoterapiniai pokyčiai susiję su tyrimo dalyvių nurodytais palankiais terapiniais veiksniais, kurie gali būti priskirti santykio su psichoterapeute, psichoterapijos procesų ir kliento indėlio veiksnių grupėms.

Atsakomybės už savo problemas ir jų sprendimą prisiėmimas bei tikslingos projekcijos į psichoterapeutę mūsų tyrime išsiskyrė kaip specifiniai terapiniai veiksniai, susiję su tyrimo dalyvių asmeninės galios raiška.

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SUPPLEMENT

Concepts of Analytical Psychology

Complex – a nuclear of suppressed intense emotional experience, which is often connected with interpersonal relations, around which associations (thoughts, feelings, behaviors and images) assemble.

Ego – the center of consciousness.

Archetype – universal images and patterns of human experience, originating from collective unconsciousness.

The Self has a double meaning in analytical psychology: 1) the whole of a personality, embracing consciousness and unconsciousness, personal and collective (transcendent) parts of a psyche; 2) the center and the organizing force of a personality, which directs the development of a human being.

Ego – Self axis – the bond between the two psychic structures, responsible for a full and deep functioning of a person while realizing his or her conscious and unconscious potentials.

Inflation – the state of the ego's identification with the Self. It expresses as either exalted or depleted conception of oneself. While in inflation, the ego doesn't differentiate from unconsciousness.

Individuation – getting aware of one's uniqueness and realization of it together with deepening interpersonal relations.

Shadow – an unconscious structure, declined or ignored by the ego for not suiting one's conscious identity.

Purposeful projections – transferring psychic contents onto external objects for the aim of retrieving them to oneself. Purposeful projections are directed to the psychotherapist because a client needs to get conscious of and to internalize them. Purposeful projections are of a prospective rather than regressive nature, the latter being characteristic to the transference of troubled modes of childhood relationship on the therapist (Jacoby, 1984; Jung, 1946/1985; Kirsch, 1995).

AUTHOR'S PUBLICATIONS
ON THE DISSERTATION TOPIC /
AUTORĖS PUBLIKACIJOS
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Petronytė-Kvedarauskienė, D. ir Gudaitė, G. (2018). Narcisistinių asmenybių santykio su autoritetu patyrimas: kokybinė analizė. *Sveikatos mokslai*, 28 (1), 40-46. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.7220/2345-024X.19.4>

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PRESENTATIONS AT SCIENTIFIC
CONFERENCES ON THE DISSERTATION TOPIC /
PRANEŠIMAI MOKSLINĖSE KONFERENCIJOSE
DISERTACIJOS TEMA

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Petronytė-Kvedaruskienė, D. „*Relationship with authority in narcissism: psychotherapy case study*“. International conference „Relationship with Authority: Challenges and Opportunities“, organized by Vilnius University and Research Council of Lithuania. Vilnius, 21st of October, 2016.

Petronytė-Kvedaruskienė, D. „*Psichoterapiją pradėjusių žmonių narcisistiniai sunkumai ir santykio su autoritetu ypatumai*“. XIII-oji Jaunųjų mokslininkų psichologų konferencijoje, Vilnius, 2016 04 22.

Petronytė-Kvedaruskienė, D., & Gudaitė, G. „*Development of inner authority in confronting consequences of experience of violence*“. International conference „The evil of violence in post-modernity: psychopathology of violent behaviours“, organized by International Association for Analytical Psychology and Italian Association for Research on Analytical Psychology. Rome, Italy, 3-6 March, 2016.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dovilė Petronytė-Kvedaruskienė studied at Vilnius University and received her Bachelor's degree in Psychology in 1999 and her Master's degree in Clinical Psychology in 2001. From 2014 to 2018 she was a doctoral student of Psychology at Vilnius University.

Since 2001 Dovilė has been actively interested in the theory and practice of psychotherapy. She attended and finished the program of gestalt psychotherapy. Later, she continued studies of analytical psychotherapy, concluding them with the qualifications of a psychotherapist and a Jungian analyst in 2013. Dovilė has been working as a clinical psychologist and psychotherapist since 2001. Starting from 2013, she participates in training programs for analytical psychotherapists as a teacher, lecturer, supervisor and analyst.

Dovilė Petronytė-Kvedaruskienė is a member of Lithuanian Association for Analytical Psychology (LAPA), International Association for Analytical Psychology (IAAP) and the Society for Psychotherapy Research (SPR).

TRUMPAI APIE AUTOREŲ

Dovilė Petronytė-Kvedaruskienė 1999 m. įgijo psichologijos bakalauro laipsnį, o 2001 m. klinikinės psichologijos magistro laipsnį Vilniaus universitete. Nuo 2014 m. iki 2018 m. ji studijavo psichologijos doktorantūroje Vilniaus universitete.

Nuo 2001 m. Dovilė aktyviai domisi psichoterapijos teorija ir praktika. Mokėsi ir baigė bazinę geštaltinės psichoterapijos programą. Vėliau tęsė ir baigė analitinės psichoterapijos studijas. 2013 m. įgijo psichoterapeutės kvalifikaciją ir jungišką krypties analitikės kvalifikaciją. Nuo 2001 m. dirba praktinę klinikinės psichologės ir psichoterapeutės darbą. Nuo 2013 m. dalyvauja Lietuvos ir kitų šalių analitinės krypties psichoterapeutų rengime kaip lektorė, supervizorė ir analitikė.

Dovilė Petronytė-Kvedaruskienė yra Lietuvos analitinės psichologijos asociacijos (LAPA), Tarptautinės analitinės psichologijos asociacijos (IAAP) ir tarptautinės Psichoterapijos tyrimų asociacijos (SPR) narė.

Vilniaus universiteto leidykla
Universiteto g. 1, LT-01513 Vilnius
El. p. info@leidykla.vu.lt,
www.leidykla.vu.lt
Tiražas 45 egz.