

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Relation of inmates' entitlement to identification with criminal groups, narcissism and readiness for self-improvement

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BACKGROUND

Inmates often show narcissistic and entitlement attitudes, as expressed in their numerous unjustified complaints and lawsuits concerning the conditions of imprisonment. The aim of the study was to examine the relationship between entitlement, criminal social identity, narcissism and readiness for self-improvement in a group of inmates. The study also attempted to create a psychological profile of prisoners with different levels of entitlement.

PARTICIPANTS AND PROCEDURE

The study included 87 prisoners ($M = 32.10$, $SD = 8.49$) aged 20-57 years. The Measure of Criminal Social Identity, Readiness for Self-Improvement Questionnaire, Entitlement Questionnaire, and Narcissistic Admiration and Rivalry Questionnaire were used in the study.

RESULTS

The results of the analyses indicate that entitlement in the study group is high. Active entitlement is positively associ-

ated with readiness to improve oneself, readiness to take care of one's health and admiration. Passive entitlement is negatively associated with cognitive centrality, in-group affect, and narcissism, and negatively associated with readiness to improve oneself and readiness to take care of one's health. Revenge entitlement is positively associated with criminal social identity, narcissism and rivalry. Inmates with a high and low level of entitlement are differentiated by psychological and demographic variables.

CONCLUSIONS

When searching for factors determining the entitlement in a group of inmates, their personality and demographic variables should be taken into account.

KEY WORDS

entitlement; narcissism; criminal social identity, self-improvement; inmates

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BACKGROUND

NARCISSISM

The first descriptions of narcissistic individuals and patients with narcissistic personality disorders can be found in the works of Freud (1916/1963), who understood narcissism both as a normal development phase (primary narcissism) and a pathological condition (secondary narcissism). That disorder involves the inability or failure to establish a relationship with an object and turning towards the self. It manifests itself in a pathological focus on the self and treating other objects as part of one's ego. According to the psychodynamic approach, the essence of narcissism consists of an unrealistic image of the self, abnormal defence mechanisms and abnormal relationships with an object (Kohut, 1977). Narcissism stems from an abnormal relationship with parents. Otto Kernberg made a distinction between normal narcissism and narcissistic personality disorder. Although normal narcissism is not completely adaptive, the affected individuals do not experience major problems with self-esteem and can enjoy their lives (Żemojtel-Piotrowska, 2016). Contemporarily, Symington (1993/2013) believes that narcissism arises from a reaction to trauma. From the very beginning narcissism was associated with demanding special privileges (Freud, 1916/1963). Narcissistic entitlement was interpreted as a defence reaction of a narcissistic individual to hurting or suffering (Bishop & Lane, 2002). Two forms of narcissism were identified: grandiose and vulnerable (Miller et al., 2015). A key feature of vulnerable narcissism is hostile attribution bias, whereas self-enhancement is an essential part of grandiose narcissism. Psychoanalytical concepts are frequently criticised as unsupported by scientific research. In a non-clinical approach, narcissistic entitlement constitutes a personality variable that characterises individuals without disorders (Żemojtel-Piotrowska, 2016). Campbell and Foster (2007) believe that entitlement is one of the components of narcissism, as demonstrated in a number of studies (Szalkowska, Żemojtel-Piotrowska, & Clinton, 2015). Comparative studies reveal a high degree of narcissism among sex offenders (Pospiszyl, 2002).

ENTITLEMENT

Entitlement may be defined as "a tendency to protect one's interests accompanied by expectations of others but without consideration for the interests of other persons or groups in one's actions" (Żemojtel-Piotrowska, 2016, p. 35). Entitlement is associated with the tendency to dwell on one's injuries and to vindictiveness. Therefore, three forms of entitlement were identified: active, passive and revenge entitle-

ment. Active entitlement is defined as promoting one's own interest while disregarding the interests of others. It is based on the individual's conviction that he or she deserves appropriate treatment but without the conviction of one's uniqueness or greatness. Passive entitlement is understood as the belief in the existence of social obligations that require assisting an individual in need in accordance with the universal norms of social responsibility. Passive entitlement manifests itself in an individual's expectations of institutions and other people. Revenge entitlement is expressed as seeking retribution and compensation for the injuries suffered and difficulty in forgiving the party who infringed one's interest (Żemojtel-Piotrowska, 2016, p. 36).

ENTITLEMENT OF INMATES

The phenomena of entitlement and exclusion have been repeatedly analysed, but predominantly as part of sociological studies (Żemojtel-Piotrowska, 2016). Social psychology interprets social exclusion as being deprived of ties with other individuals or as ostracism (Baumeister, Twenge, & Nuss, 2002). Social exclusion produces negative mental and social effects, such as mental numbness manifesting itself in reduced sensitivity to physical pain (DeWall & Baumeister, 2006), decline in cognitive abilities (Baumeister et al., 2002), increased aggressive behaviour (DeWall, Twenge, Gitter, & Baumeister, 2009) or decrease in pro-social behaviour (Twenge, Baumeister, DeWall, Ciarocco, & Bartels, 2007). All the above psychological phenomena can be observed in prisoners.

Entitlement of inmates has been the subject of relatively few studies, even though it is possible to measure it directly or indirectly using tools dedicated specifically to that group. Entitlement is one of the 5 dimensions of the Criminogenic Cognitions Scale. The other dimensions are: failure to accept responsibility, short-term orientation, insensitivity to impact of crime and negative attitudes toward authority (Tangney et al., 2012). Results obtained on that scale are related to egocentricity, aggression, externalization of blame, antisocial personality, psychopathy, tendency to blame others and stimulus seeking. Psychological Inventory of Criminal Thinking Styles contains a scale for measuring the degree of entitlement (Walters, 2001). It helps to predict e.g. disciplinary procedures against inmates and their chances of early release.

Analysis of the level of entitlement among prisoners demonstrates a high level of revenge entitlement, relatively low passive entitlement and an average level of active entitlement (Żemojtel-Piotrowska, 2016, p. 115). Moreover, convicts show a higher level of entitlement than non-convicts. According to Falardeau, Morin, and Bellemare (2015) repressive

and overcrowded prisons may increase the inmates' level of entitlement.

Prisoners are not a homogeneous group. Violent offenders show a higher level of entitlement in terms of attitudes and behaviours compared to non-violent offenders (Fisher & Hall, 2011). Similar results were obtained by Hepper and others (2014) using the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI; Raskin & Terry, 1988). Of all the NPI dimensions entitlement level proved to be the highest – inmates were characterised by a far higher level of entitlement than persons without a criminal record. The prisoners with the highest entitlement factor values also enjoyed the highest prison status (Szulc & Pawlewicz, 2015). According to the authors, a high level of entitlement may induce an individual to break the law to achieve his or her goals. Furthermore, the study results suggest that clinical narcissism may not constitute a qualitatively distinct construct but instead reflect an extreme end of a certain dimension, with entitlement being its most antisocial component. Narcissism combined with entitlement and lack of empathy increases the likelihood of criminal behaviour.

The level of entitlement increases with the age of convicted offenders and makes it possible to predict recidivism (Walters, Deming, & Casbon, 2015), including in juvenile offenders (Pechorro, Braga, Kahn, Gonçalves, & Delisi, 2018). However, Fisher and Hall (2011) did not find a relationship between entitlement and age. The data quoted by Yu (2016) indicate that a rehabilitation programme (Choices programme) may correct criminal thinking styles and entitlement of inmates. An important part of the programme is reducing the addiction to psychoactive substances.

Psychological entitlement, or more precisely an inflated psychological sense of entitlement, has been proposed as a criminogenic need (Fisher, Hall, & Beven, 2008). Criminogenic needs are factors that are directly associated with criminal behaviours (Andrews, Bonta, & Hoge, 1990). Criminogenic needs are specific factors that need to be addressed in the rehabilitation process. Reducing the level of entitlement may be a good and effective method to be applied in the therapy of violent offenders.

A clear example of the entitlement of inmates is complaint filing. Convicted offenders file ca. 170,000 complaints per year, with a marked growing trend at a rate of 8%. Prisoners complain about undersized meals and lack of access to medical care. It is worth emphasising at this point that most prisoners have a considerably better diet and medical care in prison than before their imprisonment. A majority of inmates do not use dental care before their incarceration but, while in prison, they complain about its low availability or waiting time, even though they do not incur any costs of the treatment that they would not be able to afford at liberty. More than 98% of prisoners' complaints are groundless (Ministry of Justice,

2016, p. 24). Unfortunately, each complaint has to be registered and dealt with, adding to the already heavy workload of prison staff (Piotrowski & Jurek, 2019). Just several inmates may generate up to 60% of all complaints filed in a particular institution, with the top complainers writing more than 200 per year. Here are a few examples of prisoners' complaints: "I would like to inform you that I am not allowed to have a PlayStation, laptop or mobile phone"; "The director refuses to let me register online for a space flight programme"; "There were apple pips in rice with apples"; "I wish to complain about the bars in the exercise area that prevent me from getting a smooth tan"; "When searching my cell, the officer took a pigeon feather from the window sill, to which I had been emotionally attached".

The need to attend to unjustified complaints generates huge financial and staff costs, while also causing the feeling of frustration among staff, who believe that the convicts have more rights than the officers (Piotrowski, 2018). Prison staff find it difficult to accept that a minor error made under a heavy workload may cause a reduction in their bonuses if the complaint is considered justified. At the same time, over 98% of complaints are groundless but the prisoners who wrote them do not suffer any consequences.

According to the applicable regulations, each complaint, however absurd, must be responded to. This generates huge costs for the Prison Service. Prison officers repeatedly emphasize that entitlement of inmates presents a serious problem. A survey devoted to the development of a questionnaire for measuring the stress levels in the Prison Service contained questions about various aspects of the functioning of convicted offenders (Piotrowski, 2011). Over 50% of prison staff believe that prisoners show excessive entitlement behaviours and 85% are of the opinion that inmates have more rights than necessary.

CRIMINAL SOCIAL IDENTITY

Criminal behaviour research clearly indicates that criminal thinking style (criminal attitudes) are the most important predictor of later criminal behaviour. Such conclusions have been reached in numerous studies in the field of social and criminal psychology (Boduszek, Adamson, Shevlin, Hyland, & Bourke, 2013). Yochelson and Samenow (1976) suggested thinking factors that are specific to criminals: power orientation, mollification, cognitive indolence, cut-off, sentimentality, superoptimism, discontinuity in promises and intentions over time, and finally entitlement. Mills and Kroner (1999) developed their notion of criminal thinking style based on the following dimensions: attitudes toward violence, antisocial intent, entitlement, and attitudes toward criminal asso-

ciates. Three dimensions of the criminal social identity have been distinguished: in-group ties, cognitive centrality and in-group affect (Boduszek et al., 2013). In-group ties concern the level of personal bonding with other criminals; cognitive centrality is psychological salience of a criminal's group identity; and in-group affect concerns the criminals' felt attitude toward other in-group criminals.

Criminal social identity serves as a mediator in the relationship between criminal friends and criminal thinking styles. Tajfel and Turner (1979) propose that the attitudes of individuals towards members of a group develop from the need to identify with and belong to groups perceived as superior. As a result of these processes, an individual tends to perceive other members of the group as more similar and consequently shows preferences regarding the attitudes and behaviours towards these group members. The mechanism of depersonalization determines the transition from personal to social identity. The process not only depersonalizes self-perception but also transforms self-conception and assimilates all aspects of attitudes, feelings and behaviours to the in-group model, thus causing changes in what individuals think, feel and do (Hogg, 2001). Therefore it is proposed that identity serves as an intermediary in the process of development of thinking styles that are expected and supported by a particular social group. Previous studies demonstrated that even in the absence of actual group interaction, i.e. absence of persuasion, the attitudes of individuals who identify themselves with a particular group shift towards the perceived group norm (Haslam, Oakes, McGarty, Turner, & Onorato, 1995). A high level of entitlement is a common attitude among prisoners, which is supported by the group in accordance with the social identity theory.

READINESS FOR SELF-IMPROVEMENT

Readiness for self-improvement is the willingness to improve one's traits, skills or health (Szulc & Parchem, 2014). The importance of self-improvement has been confirmed in numerous studies; it is especially important in the process of resocialization (Tripodi, 2014). The results indicate that self-improvement motivation occurs while experiencing setbacks (e.g. feeling of shame or guilt) and then enhances problem solving orientation (Tennen, Affleck, & Greshman, 1986). The feeling of guilt or shame may induce the wish to improve oneself and thus reduce the likelihood of recidivism (Hosser, Windzio, & Greve, 2008). Self-improvement leads to personal development and better adjustment to the social environment (Sedekides & Strube, 1997). Self-improvement is often guided by social expectations visible within a group of reference, for example a penitentiary department. The process is the main aim of rehabilitation, which is in-

tended to bring about socially accepted changes in the attitudes and behaviours of prisoners. This happens by organizing work that provides the opportunity to acquire vocational qualifications, teaching, cultural and educational activities, sports activities and special therapies. There are reliable and proven rehabilitation programmes supporting self-improvement. For example, the *Future Soldiers Program*, based on self-discipline, prepares the participants for military service (Dempsey, 2013). While it does not guarantee that a juvenile who completes the programme will become a soldier, the acquired skills (self-sufficiency, self-discipline, communication, fitness, self-efficacy, civic behaviours, respect for superiors) allow the participants to function better outside prison upon their release. Inmates who have completed such a programme show considerably decreased recidivism.

Of course, the process of self-improvement must be oriented towards socially acceptable attitudes and behaviours, rather than skills useful in continuing criminal or antisocial behaviours.

The current study was inspired by the finding that inmates are characterised by specific identification with a group of similar persons. They often show narcissistic and entitlement attitudes, as expressed in their numerous unjustified complaints and lawsuits concerning the conditions of imprisonment. The aim of this study was to investigate how the individual dimensions of entitlement are related to criminal social identity, readiness for self-improvement, and narcissism. The following research questions were addressed:

What are the levels of the individual dimensions of entitlement in the group of inmates?

How is entitlement related to criminal social identity?

How is entitlement related to self-improvement?

How is entitlement related to narcissism?

How is entitlement related to demographic variables (e.g. age, sentence received, number of years served)?

Is it possible to identify distinct convict groups showing different levels of entitlement and, if so, what are their psychological characteristics?

PARTICIPANTS AND PROCEDURE

PARTICIPANTS

The sample consisted of 87 male native Polish prisoners incarcerated in Gdansk-Przeróbka half-open prison and Elbląg jail. The respondents ranged in age from 20 to 57. The average age of the participants was 32.10 ($M = 32.10$, $SD = 8.49$). Among the participants, there were 6.9% ($n = 6$) with elementary education, 17.2% ($n = 15$) with primary, 25.3% ($n = 22$) with junior high school, 37.9% ($n = 33$) with basic vocational, 8.0% ($n = 7$) with average and 4.6% ($n = 4$) with un-

dergraduate. Before incarceration the prisoners had the following sources of income: own work – 43.7% ($n = 38$), own work and parents' assistance – 10.3% ($n = 9$), only parents' support – 3.4% ($n = 3$), other persons' support – 2.3% ($n = 2$), criminal activity – 8.0% ($n = 7$), own work and criminal activity – 32.2% ($n = 28$). Inmates have been convicted of crimes against: property 46.0% ($n = 40$), health and life 32.2% ($n = 28$), family 5.7% ($n = 5$), communication crime 4.6% ($n = 4$) economic crime 3.4% ($n = 3$) and other 8.0% ($n = 7$). The penalty of up to 2 years imprisonment was imposed in 40.2% ($n = 35$), from 2 to 5 years in 35.6% ($n = 31$) from 5 to 15 years in 14.9% ($n = 13$) and over 10 years in 9.2% ($n = 8$). The study also asked how long the current person is currently in prison. Most offenders (63.9%; $n = 55$) stay in prison for up to 2 years, 22.9% ($n = 19$) up to 5 years, 9.2% ($n = 8$) from 5 to 10 years and 3.4% ($n = 3$) over 10 years. Since the behaviour of prisoners changes depending on their level of recidivism, the inmates were also asked how many prison sentences they had served. It was the first penalty in the case of 36.8% ($n = 32$) inmates, the second in 23.0% ($n = 20$), the third in 16.1% ($n = 14$), the fourth in 23.0% ($n = 20$) and the fifth in 1.1% ($n = 1$).

PROCEDURE

The sample was recruited from Gdansk half-open prison and Elbląg jail. The official consent of the director of the penitentiary unit was obtained before the research. The ethical approval was granted by the Polish Prison Service. Appropriate prison staff was instructed by the researcher about the procedures involved in conducting this study. The survey was devised and delivered to the prison and jail by the researcher. Participation in the study was voluntary and anonymous. Participants completed anonymous self-administered, psychometric tests with sociodemographic questions which were compiled into a single booklet along with instructions. Participants completed the questionnaires in their living units without the presence of the prison staff. Due to the nature of the sample (the majority with basic education) the questionnaires were left with prisoners for a few hours. After completing the questionnaire, prisoners were asked to return it to the prison officer, who gave it to the researcher.

MEASURES

Four instruments were used in the study: the Measure of Criminal Social Identity, Readiness for Self-Improvement Questionnaire, Entitlement Questionnaire, and Narcissistic Admiration and Rivalry Questionnaire.

The Measure of Criminal Social Identity – Revised (Boduszek & Debowska, 2017). The scale consists

of 18 items. Each item is scored on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). The scale is composed of three subscales: The cognitive centrality (six items, e.g. "I often think about being a criminal") subscale measures the psychological salience of a criminal's group identity; the in-group affect (six items, e.g. "In general I'm glad to be part of a criminal group") subscale measures a criminal's felt attitude toward other in-group criminals; and the in-group ties (six items, e.g. "I have a lot in common with other people who have committed a crime") subscale measures the level of personal bonding with other criminals. Scores range from 18 to 90, with higher scores indicating higher levels of criminal social identity. In the present sample, Cronbach's α were all acceptable (cognitive centrality = .69, in-group affect = .73, and in-group ties = .74).

Readiness for Self-Improvement Questionnaire (SRSI; Zawadzka & Szabowska-Walaszczyk, 2011). The scale consists of 14 items including two subscales: readiness to improve oneself (eleven items, e.g. "My weaknesses motivate me to act") and readiness to take care of one's health (three items, e.g. "Healthy diet is important for me"). Respondents give answers using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*this doesn't describe me at all*) to 5 (*this definitely describes me*). Scores range from 3 to 15 for the readiness to improve oneself subscale and from 11 to 55 for readiness to take care of one's health. Higher scores indicate higher levels of readiness for self-improvement. Cronbach's α were all acceptable (readiness to improve oneself = .68, readiness to take care of one's health = .72).

Entitlement Questionnaire (Żemojtel-Piotrowska et al., 2017). The scale consists of 15 items. Each item is scored on a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*). The scale is composed of three subscales: active (five items, e.g. "I deserve the best"), passive (five items, e.g. "Disadvantaged persons deserve institutional help"), and revenge entitlement (five items, e.g. "Someone who hurts me cannot expect my sympathy"). Scores range from 5 to 30, with higher scores indicating higher levels of entitlement. In the present sample, Cronbach's α were all acceptable (active = .69, passive = .72, and revenge = .73).

Narcissistic Admiration and Rivalry Questionnaire (NARQ; Back et al., 2013 – in the Polish adaptation by Rogoza, Rogoza, & Wyszynska, 2016). The scale consists of 18 items including two subscales: admiration (nine items, e.g. "Most of the time I am able to draw people's attention to myself in conversations") and rivalry (nine items, e.g. "I enjoy it when another person is inferior to me"). Respondents give answers using a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*do not agree at all*) to 6 (*agree completely*). Scores range from 9 to 54 on every scale, with higher scores indicating higher levels of narcissism. It is also possible to

calculate the overall score by adding up the subscale scores. In the present sample, Cronbach's α were all acceptable (admiration = .67, rivalry = .74).

RESULTS

The descriptive statistics for the entire group are presented in Table 1.

Analysis of criminal social identity level shows that the participants have a below-average level of criminal social identity, both overall and with respect to the individual parameters.

Interestingly, self-improvement and readiness to take care of one's health in the inmates group investigated are considerably above average. The active entitlement level is high, passive entitlement is very high, whereas the revenge entitlement level is average. The skewness parameter for passive entitlement is noteworthy. Frequency analysis (not included in the table) revealed that nearly 70% of participants scored at least 25 points out of 30. The levels of admiration and rivalry – components of narcissism – were average in the group investigated.

To investigate the relationship between the variables, Pearson's r correlation analysis was performed. The coefficients obtained are shown in Table 2.

The individual components of entitlement are unequally correlated with the remaining variables analysed. There is a positive correlation between active entitlement and the following variables: readiness to improve oneself, readiness to take care of one's health and admiration. The higher the active entitlement, the higher the readiness to improve oneself, readiness to take care of one's health and admiration. Passive entitlement is negatively correlated with cognitive centrality, in-group affect and with overall narcissism and features thereof, but positively correlated with the readiness to improve oneself and readiness to take care of one's health. Revenge entitlement in the group investigated shows a statistically significant positive correlation with criminal social identity, both in the total score and in the individual dimensions. Revenge entitlement is also positively correlated with narcissism (total score) and rivalry.

Additional analyses (not summarized in the tables) were performed to identify the interrelations between demographic variables (education, source of income before incarceration, type of offence committed) and entitlement. It was impossible to carry out valid statistical procedures due to the fact that some groups consisted of only a few individuals. It is noteworthy, however, that prisoners with a university degree are characterised by the lowest active and passive entitle-

Table 1

Means, standard deviations, skewness, and kurtosis for all study variables

Variables	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>SKE</i>	<i>K</i>
Criminal Social Identity traits				
Cognitive centrality	11.70	4.83	0.56	-0.59
In-group affect	12.65	5.29	0.54	-0.28
In-group ties	15.83	5.91	0.06	-0.60
Criminal Social Identity total score	40.18	15.07	0.35	-0.49
Readiness for Self-Improvement traits				
Readiness to Improve Oneself	43.80	7.92	-0.76	0.47
Readiness to Take Care of One's Health	10.98	2.60	-0.43	-0.01
Entitlement				
Active Entitlement	22.79	3.85	-0.29	-0.33
Passive Entitlement	25.62	4.39	-1.37	2.26
Revenge Entitlement	17.39	5.67	-0.02	-0.98
Entitlement total score	65.80	9.90	-0.16	-0.63
Narcissism traits				
Admiration	28.81	9.21	0.27	-0.20
Rivalry	24.83	10.08	0.35	-0.48
Narcissism total score	53.65	16.79	0.29	0.03

Table 2
Correlations between all study variables

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Cognitive centrality	–											
2. In-group affect	0.91**	–										
3. In-group ties	0.75**	0.82**	–									
4. Criminal Social Identity	0.93**	0.96**	0.92**	–								
5. Readiness to Improve Oneself	-0.30**	-0.31**	-0.27*	-0.31**	–							
6. Readiness to Take Care of One's Health	-0.07	-0.09	-0.06	-0.08	0.65**	–						
7. Admiration	0.08	0.14	-0.05	0.05	0.27*	0.18	–					
8. Rivalry	0.51**	0.54**	0.36**	0.50**	-0.14	-0.03	0.51**	–				
9. Narcissism total score	0.35**	0.40**	0.19	0.33**	0.06	0.08	0.86**	0.88**	–			
10. Active Entitlement	0.08	0.04	0.05	0.06	0.25*	0.24*	0.21*	0.06	0.15	–		
11. Passive Entitlement	-0.23*	-0.22*	-0.06	-0.18	0.21*	0.34**	-0.19	-0.22*	-0.24*	0.36**	–	
12. Revenge Entitlement	0.31**	0.27*	0.24*	0.29**	-0.19	-0.08	0.16	0.44**	0.35**	0.45**	0.00	–
13. Entitlement total score	0.11	0.07	0.13	0.11	0.08	0.20	0.09	0.18	0.16	0.80**	0.58**	0.75**

Note. ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$; two-tailed test

ment level, and those with incomplete primary and tertiary education show the lowest revenge entitlement scores. Additionally, offenders who committed white-collar crimes have the lowest levels of entitlement in every dimension compared with offenders convicted for other crimes. Living off crime as the main source of income is related to high active and passive entitlement. Inmates financially supported by their parents show a high level of revenge entitlement.

To determine whether convict groups with different entitlement levels can be identified and to establish their psychological characteristics, the k-means clustering algorithm was applied. However, the analysis failed to clearly identify the profiles of individuals with various entitlement levels. Since entitlement did not appear to be a differentiating variable, the 30% method was used. It involves dividing a sample into 3 equinumerous subgroups whose components have low, medium and high scores. The extreme groups – with low and high scores – are then compared using statistical analysis. As the sample investigated consisted of

87 individuals, analysis was performed on the 30 highest-scoring individuals and 30 lowest-scoring ones. The comparison was made using the Mann-Whitney U test. The results obtained are shown in Table 3.

Convicted offenders characterised by high active and passive entitlement show a very high level of readiness to take care of one’s health compared to prisoners with low levels of active and passive entitlement ($p < .05$). Furthermore, inmates with a high degree of passive entitlement also show a high readiness to improve oneself ($p < .05$). Survey participants with a high degree of revenge entitlement are characterised by a high level of criminal social identity ($p < .05$), including its individual components (cognitive centrality, in-group affect and in-group ties) and readiness to improve oneself ($p < .05$). They also show a high level of narcissism ($p < .01$), in particular rivalry ($p < .01$). An overall high level of entitlement is demonstrated by participants who expressed a high degree of readiness to take care of their health ($p < .01$) and rivalry ($p < .01$).

Table 3

Means, standard deviations for inmates with low and high level of entitlement for Criminal Social Identity (Cognitive centrality, In-group affect, and In-group ties), Readiness for Self-Improvement (Readiness to Improve Oneself and Readiness to Take Care of One’s Health), and Narcissism (Admiration and Rivalry)

	E	Active		Passive		Revenge		Total score	
		M	Z	M	Z	M	Z	M	Z
Cognitive centrality	low	29.12		33.55		25.82		28.93	
	high	31.88	-0.62	28.74	-1.03	35.18	-2.09*	32.07	-0.70
In-group affect	low	29.80		32.95		25.78		29.12	
	high	31.20	-0.31	29.08	-0.84	35.22	-2.11*	31.88	-0.62
In-group ties	low	29.42		30.64		25.90		28.42	
	high	31.58	-0.48	30.42	-0.05	35.10	-2.04*	32.58	-0.93
Criminal Social Identity	low	29.20		32.43		25.58		28.73	
	high	31.80	-0.58	29.38	-0.65	35.42	-2.18*	32.27	-0.78
Readiness to Improve Oneself	low	26.57		24.82		35.02		29.13	
	high	34.43	-0.75	33.79	-1.92*	25.98	-2.01*	31.87	-0.61
Readiness to Take Care of One’s Health	low	25.77		21.34		32.08		25.65	
	high	35.23	-0.12*	35.80	-3.13**	28.92	-0.71	35.35	-2.17*
Admiration	low	28.88		31.84		27.58		29.20	
	high	32.12	-0.72	29.72	-0.45	33.42	-1.29	31.80	-0.58
Rivalry	low	29.27		32.57		22.50		25.95	
	high	31.73	-0.55	29.30	-0.70	38.50	-3.55**	35.05	-2.02*
Narcissism total score	low	28.45		32.48		23.57		26.55	
	high	32.55	-0.91	29.36	-0.67	37.43	-3.08**	34.45	-1.75

Note. E – Entitlement, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$

DISCUSSION

The current study aimed to investigate the degree of entitlement among prisoners and the interrelations between entitlement and psychological and demographic variables. An attempt was also made to create profiles of inmates with a high and low degree of entitlement. As a result of the investigation, the inmates were found to combine a high degree of active and passive entitlement with an average degree of revenge entitlement. These findings are consistent with the results obtained by Žemojtel-Piotrowska (2016) in a study of a group of repeat offenders. Convicts are aware of their rights and defend them very eagerly. Passive entitlement, shown by inmates to a very high extent, indicates their conviction that other people and institutions are obliged to assist them. This induces them to exercise their rights, while often violating the social justice principle, in the opinion of prison officers. Prison staff are convinced that prisoners have more rights than necessary and that their behaviour indicates a high level of entitlement (Piotrowski, 2014). The fact that prisoners' complaints and requests are given more attention than complaints and requests submitted by staff presents a problem for the functioning of the prison system. For example, an officer slandered or physically attacked by a prisoner is not entitled to legal assistance (Pastwa-Wojciechowska & Piotrowski, 2016).

The criminal identity is below average in the group of inmates investigated, which is probably due to the low number of repeat offenders in the group. What is also significant, the study was conducted in a semi-open prison and in a detention centre. Semi-open prisons are designed for inmates at the end of their terms, who are being intensively prepared for functioning outside prison. Other inmates of semi-open prisons are offenders with short sentences or inmates for unintentional offences. It is not in their interest to integrate with the criminal subculture, which would reduce their chances of early release (Boduszek & Debowska, 2017). The individuals kept in detention centres are prisoners awaiting their sentence who stay there for a few months and therefore do not form an integrated group.

In the prisoner population examined, admiration and rivalry – components of narcissism – were at an average level. The individuals investigated did not include sex offenders and half of them were serving prison sentences for offences against property rather than against life and health, which is why their narcissism is at an average level (Bayse, Allgood, & Van Wyk, 1992).

Self-improvement and readiness to take care of one's health in the prisoners surveyed are considerably above average. The aim of a prison sentence is to induce the will to reform in inmates. However,

the high self-improvement scores are debatable in view of the nearly 40% recidivism rate. It is possible that the score is more declared than actual. Furthermore, prisoners tend to present themselves in the best light possible, especially if they can benefit from it (cancellation of some or all disciplinary penalties, additional home leave from prison, or parole), while treating the survey as a means of self-presentation (Jastrzębska, Pastwa-Wojciechowska, & Piotrowski, 2017). A high level of readiness to take care of one's health indicates that prisoners attach great importance to their health. Nevertheless, in many cases they hardly looked after their health before incarceration. Prisoners notice that their health improves during imprisonment (Yu, Sung, Mellow, & Koenigsmann, 2015). Balanced diet, regular meals, reduced access to alcohol and psychoactive substances and medical care have a beneficial effect on the health of inmates.

The study demonstrated that the higher the active entitlement is, the higher is the readiness to improve oneself, readiness to take care of one's health and admiration. While the relationship between active entitlement and narcissism has already been documented by researchers (Sleep, Sellbom, Campbell, & Miller, 2017), we do not know how active entitlement relates to readiness to improve oneself. The study revealed that an increase in active entitlement is related to increased readiness to improve oneself and readiness to take care of one's health. Promoting one's interest while disregarding the interest of others is associated with the readiness to improve oneself and one's health. This gives rise to the following question: do inmates perceive readiness to improve oneself in a socially acceptable way? It is likely that they care more about their fitness than morality (Wojciszke, 2005). Increased active and passive entitlement is associated with increased willingness to improve one's health. Unfortunately, this is often reflected in unjustified complaints but not in actual efforts to get fit following one's release from prison.

Passive entitlement is negatively correlated with cognitive centrality and in-group affect. An increased belief in the existence of social obligations to assist a convict is associated with decreased psychological salience of a criminal's group identity and criminal's felt attitude toward other in-group criminals. A reverse relationship was found to exist in the group of repeat offenders (Boduszek et al., 2013). Recidivism probably plays a mediating role between criminal identity and the sense of entitlement. This statement is supported by the finding that revenge entitlement in the group investigated is positively correlated with criminal social identity, both in the general score and in the individual dimensions. The tendency to seek retribution for the injuries suffered, common among prisoners, may stem from increased criminal social identity.

The study also demonstrated that demographic variables may differentiate the extent of entitlement. Education level, type of offence and source of income immediately before incarceration may indirectly indicate the likely level of entitlement upon release from prison (Żemojtel-Piotrowska, 2016, p. 85).

The present study compared individuals with a high and low degree of entitlement. It was found that prisoners showing a high degree of overall, active and passive entitlement are characterised by a very high readiness to take care of their health compared to inmates with a low active and passive entitlement level. A high score in these dimensions of entitlement will translate into inmates' attention to their health, which in turn will increase the amount of staff attention required by filing unjustified complaints. Prisoners with a high level of revenge entitlement are characterised by a high degree of criminal social identity. Therefore, efforts of prison staff should be aimed at reducing the degree of inmates' identification with criminal groups, which will result in a decreased level of entitlement. To decrease entitlement levels, it is necessary to consider not only psychological variables (e.g. narcissism), but also social ones (e.g. criminal social identity) in rehabilitation programmes.

LIMITATIONS

Some important limitations of our study deserve attention. As a questionnaire was used, we cannot be sure whether all participants correctly understood the instructions due to the level of education of the respondents (most of them have not completed more than 8 years of education – less than a complete command of language). Prisoners tend to present themselves in the best possible way. Inmates are characterized by social desirability bias (Adams & Krasnoff, 1989) and a tendency to lie (Bond & Lee, 2005). This tendency may cause the need to present themselves in the best way. The study design could not be controlled by the researcher as a whole given the nature of the sample population under investigation and the constraints inherent in working with inmates. The results of the research may not be extrapolated to other countries, due to the specific nature of the Polish penitentiary system (Piotrowski & Baran, 2016).

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Females should be included in further studies since the author was not able to analyse the impact of gender roles on the results. Further research should also be conducted in other types of penitentiary facilities and among repeat offenders. It is also advisable to include other variables, such as criminal thinking styles, prisoner's criminal record, the dark triad, val-

ues, addiction to alcohol and psychoactive substances and the number of complaints filed by the prisoner. It would also be beneficial to adapt rehabilitation programmes with the aim of reducing inmates' entitlement levels (Yu, 2016).

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