



The Locus of Control and Attitudes towards the Economic System and Social Issues: Quantitative Research from Poland

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Abstract

Purpose: The main aim of this research is an investigation of attitudes towards the economic system and social issues. It was assumed that these attitudes depend on personality traits, locus of control being one of them. **Methods:** The study group consisted of 371 students. The locus of control was measured using Delta Questionnaire (Drwal). The attitudes were diagnosed based on the set of views (six pairs of statements from Morawski's publication and the paper edited by Reykowski). **Results:** The obtained results indicate that the differentiation of control in the 'internal-external' dimension affects the following attitudes: people accept free-market rules with their consequences, or favour the welfare state which protects social issues, employment, and redistribution of resources. **Conclusions:** The obtained results turned out to be in line with the content of the tested hypotheses and form the basis for a more general conclusion: the personality trait – the sense of locus of control – guides the way of thinking about which principles of the organization of society's life should be respected.

Keywords: personality traits, locus of control, attitudes, economic system, the welfare state

Introduction

Subjective Culture and Economic System

Over 30 years ago, Poland embarked on a process of systemic changes, adopting a model of democratic and capitalist statehood patterned

after Western countries. This transition sparked hopes for an increase in freedom and quality of life, with the expectation that citizens would "take

their fate into their own hands" and relinquish expectations towards the state. However, only a select few successfully managed to "take their fate

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into their own hands." Shortly thereafter, a significant stratification in wealth became apparent, and a large portion of society faced the adverse effects of this transformation, including unemployment, job insecurity, and loss of social benefits. Poverty constrained freedom and the ability to enjoy the benefits of democracy.

Who managed to "take their fate into their own hands"? Answering this question requires considering numerous factors across various scientific disciplines. This article focuses on the analysis of mental and personality variables. It is important to note that liberal democracy and a free-market economy have flourished in Western countries characterized by an individualistic mentality (the triad: democracy – capitalism – individualism). This mentality can be considered not only in a systemic context but also in a personality context. The studies described below focus on the personality trait of "locus of control." The research aimed to determine whether an internal locus of control is associated with approval of the free-market order, while an external locus of control correlates with approval of state interventionism and the state's caregiving role. It was hypothesized that such relationships would be revealed in the study described in this article. Resolving this issue seems crucial, as the acceptance and implementation of specific systemic solutions require meeting certain psychological conditions without which people will not want or be able to carry out the intended logic of the system (Boski, 1995).

The construct of "mentality" – or "subjective culture" – has been frequently invoked in discussions on the effectiveness of systemic changes in Poland. The most commonly examined dimension was "collectivism – individualism." Subjective culture relates to the content of the mind (Czerniawska, 2010). It reflects the external world's properties: political, economic, and social conditions. It plays a crucial role in determining how a person perceives themselves and others, what they think and feel, how their actions are motivated, and how they behave. It becomes a determinant of activity in the material, intellectual, and spiritual spheres, connecting people, groups, and social institutions, and intervening in the creation of social structures. Triandis (2001) indicated that subjective culture could be decomposed into basic elements such as categories, associations, attitudes, beliefs, goals,

attributions, expectations, norms, roles, definitions of self, stereotypes, ideals, values, standards (aesthetic, economic, social, political, scientific, religious), theories, myths, ideologies, religions, and approved behavior patterns. People harmonize these elements and organize them around certain themes, thus forming cultural syndromes determined by correlations among components of subjective culture. Collectivism (a set of elements of subjective culture coherent with the assumption that individuals are primarily members of a group) and individualism (a set of elements of subjective culture coherent with the assumption that individuals are autonomous beings) are examples of such syndromes (Triandis, 2001, pp. 235-237). People typically create a Self that is appropriate in a given socio-cultural context and is highly valued therein. Broadly speaking, the concept of Self is associated with normative goals that different cultures (societies) demand of their representatives. In this sense, culture is embedded in personality, and the Self becomes the locus where socio-cultural influences of the environment concentrate (Markus and Kitayama, 1991; Oyserman and Markus, 1993; Kitayama et al., 1997; Lipman and Hursh, 2007; Korzeb et al., 2022).

The construct "collectivism – individualism" is used to compare people from different cultures. It is also valid to apply it to characterize individuals within a single community: people differ in the degree to which their psyche reflects the culture in which they were socialized. Who, then, is an "individualist"? Why was the individualistic mentality considered an important psychological prerequisite for the transformation of the economic system in Poland at the beginning of the transition, and now – as a factor conducive to effective functioning in a free-market economy?

An individualist attributes greater importance to freedom and challenges at work, focuses actions on achievements and success earned through personal effort, exhibits a tendency towards self-sufficiency, a propensity to set standards and goals independently, and independence in their realization. They compete, strive to be the best, demonstrate open-mindedness, independent thinking, creativity, and productivity, and are engaged in business and entrepreneurship. Their value is measured by achievements, which in turn are linked to the skills and competencies they possess (Reykowski, 1992, 2000; Daab, 1993;

Jarymowicz, 1999; Realo et al., 2002; Szydło, 2018; Szydło and Grześ-Bukłaho, 2020). An individualist has specific – and thus individualistic – views on the "arrangement" of the world, including the broadly understood market. They believe that individual rights are more important than group rights (the principle of the primacy of individual rights: the individual has the right to autonomy and freedom), achieving goals and task efficiency are more important than interpersonal relationships, wage levels should be linked to productivity, and the distribution of goods should be governed by the principle of achievement. Each has the right to what they can achieve (the principle of limiting earnings need not be respected, norms of distribution do not have to include equality but rather meritocracy) (Reykowski, 1990; Leung and Stephan, 2003; Matsumoto and Juang, 2007. Responsibility is considered by the individualist from the perspective of the individual, that is – each is responsible for themselves. The principle of co-responsibility (which is an indicator of collectivist thinking) is devalued, according to which the collective is responsible for the individual, and the individual is responsible for the well-being of the collective (Reykowski, 1990; Barni et al., 2016).

In different cultures, the importance of personal responsibility and co-responsibility is emphasized to varying degrees. Simultaneously, in attributing responsibility, personality traits play a role, especially the locus of control. Internal control – whose hallmark is the rational responsibility of the individual for their existence – is part (as indicated above) of the characteristics of an individualist. This trait may have a fundamental significance about the form of the economic order: its possessors – as assumed in the hypotheses in the described study – will prefer a free-market economy over broadly understood state interventionism. What is the psychological profile of the locus of control, and what consequences does its variation in the dimension of "externality – internality" entail?

Locus of Control: Construct

Characteristics and Research Overview

Locus of control is regarded as a relatively stable personality trait formed during the socialization process. It is identified with an individual's

tendency to attribute the outcomes of their actions either to themselves or to external forces. It is crucial to emphasize that this pertains to the perception of control, rather than the actual exercise of control.

The concept of locus of control (in its contemporary understanding) was elaborated by Rotter (1966, 1990). He proposed a continuum with endpoints representing individuals possessing a distinctly internal or external sense of control. These individuals employ different attributional strategies. A person with an internal locus of control assumes greater responsibility for the events in their life, explaining them through their behavior, character, or abilities. They feel accountable for their successes and failures. External control manifests when a person attributes responsibility for events to the surrounding environment, fate, or chance. Other people are considered the "causes" of their failures and successes. This essentially reveals a deficit in personal responsibility, which may hinder effective functioning within a free-market system (this deficit also explains the low achievements of the poorer segments of capitalist societies; Gardner, 2007).

Locus of control is a variable considered in numerous studies across various contexts. Given the focus of this article, emphasis is placed on analyzing results pertinent to an individual's professional activity. This activity may be valued differently depending on the culture and the specific economic system. For instance, it has been found that locus of control is a personality trait that can predict a wide range of workplace behaviors, such as job engagement (Reitz and Jewell, 1979; Parent-Rochelleau et al., 2016; Chhabra, 2013), job satisfaction, performance, and turnover (Byrne, 2011; Üzümcüker, 2016; Allen et al., 2005; Chen and Silverthorne, 2008; Chiu et al., 2005; Ng et al., 2006). An internal locus of control corresponds with objective professional success, work outcomes (personal effectiveness), job satisfaction (among employees and management), organizational efficiency, and commitment to welfare, whereas an external locus of control correlates with high turnover (Smidt et al., 2018; Campagna et al., 2015; Asiedu-Appiah, Addai, 2014; Bhardwaj and Gupta, 2017; Singh et al., 2018). Individuals with an internal orientation believe that finding a job is a result of their efforts and exerted effort (Caliendo et al., 2015;

Goszczyńska, 2010; Czerniawska et al., 2021). However, this regularity is limited to situations where socioeconomic problems are not overwhelming, hence cannot be compensated for by personality traits (Ng-Knight and Schoon, 2017). Long-term unemployment may lead to shifts in the locus of control (although it is a relatively stable trait) towards a more external orientation. When an unemployed individual finds new work, the locus of control may once again lean towards internality (Preuss and Hennecke, 2018). An internal locus of control (along with a sense of coherence) reduces discomfort and stress (anxiety) associated with employment uncertainty (Pienaar and De Witte, 2016). Furthermore, locus of control serves as a moderator in the relationship between stress and job satisfaction (Agarwal and Srivastava, 2016; Judge and Bono, 2001) and between job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Chhabra, 2013) in such a way that this relationship is stronger among employees with a sense of internality.

In a free-market economy, the significance of individual entrepreneurship is emphasized. It was found that an internal locus of control facilitates its expression (applicable to employees and managers at all levels), which seems particularly important in countries undergoing transitional periods (Jain, 2011; Goszczyńska, 2010; Knežević et al., 2021; Bołoz, 2020; Hsiao et al., 2016). Such a locus of control was recognized as one of the eight (Suárez-Álvarez and Pedrosa, 2016; Luca and Simo, 2016), and even one of the three – alongside the need for achievement and creative thinking (Chen and Lai, 2010) – most significant determinants of entrepreneurship. The link between an internal locus of control and entrepreneurship becomes apparent as early as during school years when students' intentions regarding their professional functioning are diagnosed (Tentama and Abdussalam, 2020). Moreover, this construct – combined with high uncertainty tolerance – corresponds with students' sense of efficacy and their aspirations (Uzun and Karatas, 2020; Kot, 2016). Interestingly, entrepreneurial students (combining study with work) have a lower level of academic stress compared to non-entrepreneurial students (Ramírez, 2020). For students, an internal locus of control correlated not only with efficacy and perseverance but also with decision-making skills (especially in situations of information deficit or inconsistency) (Kirdök and

Harman, 2018) and with thinking ability (Çelik and Sariçam, 2018), criticalness (Oguz and Sariçam, 2016), and innovativeness (Eröz, 2016; Xu et al., 2020). Directors legitimizing possession of this trait were prone to taking risks, introduced more innovations in production, and successfully distanced the competition (Miller et al., 1982).

A serious problem in professional (and not only) functioning is procrastination, which is interpreted as a manifestation of failures in self-regulation. It involves delaying the execution of tasks. It has been established that the higher the level of internal locus of control, the lower the level of procrastination (Sari and Fakhrudiana, 2019; Akbay and Delibalta, 2020; Siah et al., 2021; Prihadi et al., 2018). There is no gap then between the established goal and behaviors leading to its realization (Klingsieck, 2013; Bartczak et al., 2018; Haesevoets et al., 2022; Steel, 2007; Steel et al., 2022). Interestingly, religious people may abandon internal control, believing their matters are in the hands of God. Submitting to divine power provides them with a substitute form of control, reducing self-regulation problems (Zarzycka et al., 2021).

An internal locus of control has a positive impact not only on setting tasks in the workplace but also on creating professional relationships (Seçkin, 2019). The fact that managers possessed this trait influenced their well-being (Spector et al., 2002), both in collectivist and individualist societies (study conducted in 24 geopolitical entities). Internally oriented individuals achieved higher indices not only of general well-being but also of its components: personal development, life goals set before themselves, and self-acceptance (Sharma and Juyal, 2017; Malhotra, 2017; Carneiro, and Fernandes, 2015). Internal orientation favors job satisfaction – on the one hand, and maintaining a balance between professional and private life – on the other (Bano et al., 2020). It was found that it also relates to material well-being (Prawitz and Cohart, 2016), promotes saving (Buccioli and Trucchi, 2021), and investment behaviors (Salamanca et al., 2020).

The locus of control has proved useful in studying the moral reasoning and ethical decision-making of managers. An internal orientation favors deontological reasoning, adoption of moral principles, and adherence to them, ultimately contributing to improving the ethical climate of an

organization (Cherry and Fraedrich, 2000). It is associated with a belief in a just world, resulting in interpersonal trust (Fink and Wilkins, 1976) and acceptance of the ethics of social responsibility (Gutkin and Suls, 1979; Testé and Benoît, 2012). A link was documented between the sense of internal control and specific social attitudes, such as environmental activism (Huebner and Lipsey, 1981) and political activism (Carlson and Hyde, 1980; Chebat, 1986). It was further noted that such people much more often accept inequalities, both arbitrary and effort-based (Aguiar et al., 2021). This undoubtedly suggests a departure from the idea of egalitarianism.

Research Problem

In the study presented, an attempt was made to answer whether attitudes towards the economic system and social issues are dependent on the variation of the locus of control in the "internal-external" dimension. It was hypothesized that depending on the intensity of this trait, people would favor different visions of the state: either one where liberalism and acceptance of free market rules prevail, or one where state responsibility for the individual is evident, along with care for social issues, employment, and redistribution of goods.

Considering the conclusions drawn from the literature analysis, it should be noted that an internal locus of control facilitates effective functioning in a free-market economy. There are theoretical grounds to assume that this relationship will manifest at the level of beliefs, i.e., an internal locus of control will be associated with positive attitudes (attitudes are an element of the belief system) towards the free-market order, thus accepting its principles and the resulting consequences. People most often support those principles that allow for the expression of personality traits and are associated with satisfying experiences in a given area (people can effectively implement these principles and avoid a large extent of negative consequences). This is undoubtedly related to self-esteem: an individual establishes goals, organizes their activities, and selects roles that allow for the expansion of the Self in subjectively positive categories. In this context, Abelson's thesis (Prentice, 1987) seems correct, that our beliefs are similar to what we possess, hence we value what we can achieve,

considering our individual properties. Attitudes – like other elements of the belief system – thus have a deeper psychological cause in the form of personality traits.

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested:

1. Positive attitudes toward the free market economy are declared by students characterized by higher indicators of a sense of internal control. They recognize that:
 - a. it is the task of the state to favor private business;
 - b. meritocratic wage rules are the fairest;
 - c. unemployment is a natural phenomenon and it even promotes economic development;
 - d. choosing and getting a job is a matter for each citizen;
 - e. 'business people' should be considered the heroes of our time;
 - f. a strong economy will eliminate common crime and economic scandals.
2. Positive attitudes towards state interventionism and the state's welfare function are declared by students characterized by higher indicators of a sense of external control. They recognize that:
 - a. the task of the state is to perform a welfare function towards less well-off citizens;
 - b. the principles of egalitarianism should be taken into account and society's income should be regulated;
 - c. unemployment is a source of poverty and demoralization;
 - d. the state should intervene in the field of employment and ensure that citizens work by their education and qualifications;
 - e. the success of 'business people' is based on fraud and circumvention of the law;
 - f. the free market economy is the cause of crime and economic scandals.

Research Tools

Attitudes are understood as a lasting evaluation - positive or negative - of people, material objects, ideas, viewpoints, and one's own and other's behaviours. Hence, they are an effective method of valuation. Valuation can be expressed through various reactions: affective, cognitive, or

behavioral, both verbally and non-verbally (Olson and Zanna, 1993; Eagly and Chaiken, 1993; Manstead, 2001).

In this study, attitudes were diagnosed based on a set of views towards the economic system. The respondents provided answers to six pairs of statements. Each pair of statements contained two opposing views. The respondents' task was to choose the view that more closely reflected the individual's beliefs. The content of the attitudes is presented in Table 1. The statements used in attitudes I, III, IV, V, and VI are a content-modified version of the tool included in the book edited by Reykowski (1993), while the statements used in attitude II – from the work of Morawski (2001).

The sense of locus of control was diagnosed using the Delta Questionnaire by Drwal (1995). The respondents provided answers to 24 statements (P – true, F – false), of which 14 refer to a sense of control. The indicators obtained a range from 0 to 14, with 0 – indicating a minimum indicator of a sense of external control and at the same time a maximum indicator of a sense of internal control; 14 – indicates a maximum indicator of a sense of external control and at the same time a minimum indicator of a sense of internal control.

Study Group

In the study, 371 individuals participated: approximately 50% of the participants were pedagogy students from the University of

Bialystok, and about 50% were management students from the Bialystok University of Technology. The ages of the participants ranged from 20 to 24 years. Women constituted 60% of the study population, while men accounted for 40%. The study was conducted in 2023 and was anonymous.

Quantitative research plays a crucial role in social sciences, economics, and many other fields, providing precise and measurable evidence to support theories and hypotheses. It enables large-scale data analysis, essential for identifying trends, patterns, and causal relationships between various variables. Moreover, its standardized nature allows for the repeatability of studies, which is key to verifying results and ensuring their credibility.

Results

In this study, efforts were made to determine whether attitudes toward the economic system and social issues are dependent on the variation of locus of control in the "internal-external" dimension.

Table 1 presents the averaged indicators of variables and the results of statistical analysis, which will allow for the verification of research hypotheses. The locus of control is treated as a continuum. Given this fact, a high external control index simultaneously indicates a low internal control index (and vice versa).

Table 1. Locus of control and attitudes towards the economic system and social issues

No.	Attitude option	Attitudes towards the economic system	\bar{x} =	s =	Results of the statistical analysis
I	1	The state should first and foremost favour the interests of private business. The development of the country depends on this. (116*)	4.88	2.70	t = -3.17 p = 0.002
	2	Above all, the state should protect the living standards of less well-off families and prevent the creation of fortunes. (255)	6.00	2.97	
II	1	How much people earn should be differentiated according to qualifications and performance. (270)	5.39	2.89	t = -2.62 p = 0.009
	2	Income disparities should not be too large so that a group of	6.29	2.93	

No.	Attitude option	Attitudes towards the economic system	\bar{x} =	s =	Results of the statistical analysis
		poor and rich does not emerge. Above all, the incomes of top earners should be limited. (101)			
III	1	Unemployment is a natural matter in a healthy economy (part of a market economy). Inefficient workers should even be fired, as this will teach them to respect work. (123)	5.41	2.81	t = -2.94 p = 0.003
	2	Unemployment is a misfortune and a social scourge; it entails poverty and demoralization of people. (248)	6.53	3.18	
IV	1	Choosing and getting a job is a private matter for each citizen. The state is not obliged to provide work. (162)	5.04	3.06	t = 2.53 p = 0.012
	2	The state should provide every citizen with a job that is in line with their education and qualifications. (209)	5.93	2.84	
V	1	Business people should be recognized as heroes of our time and role models of success. (184)	4.12	2.76	t = 4.87 p = 0.000
	2	So-called 'business people' are shady individuals who have made fortunes through fraud and circumvention of the law. (187)	6.05	2.85	
VI	1	The rise of common crime and economic scandals are features of the capitalist system that has been implemented in our country for the last 30 years. (197)	6.20	2.83	t = 5.13 p = 0.000
	2	The rise in common crime and economic scandals is a temporary thing in the difficult transition away from communism. A strong economy will normalise this pathology. (179)	4.45	2.81	

* the number of people choosing a particular attitude option is indicated in brackets

\bar{x} – averaged index of sense of external control

s – standard deviation

t – result of statistical analysis by Students' test

p – level of statistical significance

Source: Authors' own study.

It was found (cf. Table 1) that individuals with higher indicators of internal locus of control (a lower numerical index signifies a stronger sense of internal control) perceive the role of the state as promoting the interests of private business (Attitude I), favor meritocratic resolutions, thus differentiating income based on qualifications and productivity (Attitude II), view unemployment as an attribute of the market economy, and even as a stimulant for respect towards work (Attitude III), accept the "free market" in the employment sphere and recognize that obtaining work is the individual responsibility of each citizen (Attitude IV). They admire business people (Attitude V), and view a strong economy as a panacea for common crime and economic scandals (Attitude VI). The

results obtained support all the assumptions verbalized in Hypothesis 1.

Individuals characterized by higher indicators of external locus of control (a higher numerical index signifies a stronger sense of external control) exhibit opposing attitudes (cf. Table 1). They believe that the state must fulfill a caregiving function towards its citizens, i.e., to protect less well-off families (Attitude I). They are proponents of egalitarianism, thus maintaining that excessive wealth differentiation should not be allowed (Attitude II), and they also point out the negative consequences of unemployment (Attitude III) and the state's duty to ensure employment for citizens (Attitude IV). They are suspicious of "business

people" (Attitude V), and consider common crime and economic scandals in their country as a consequence of the introduction of a capitalist system (Attitude VI). The results obtained are consistent with the content of Hypothesis 2.

It should be emphasized that for the six attitudes analyzed, differences were noted in the indicators of the personality trait of locus of control. This means that depending on the intensity of this trait, people exhibit different ways of thinking about the economic system, especially regarding the role of the state in this area (e.g., establishing equality through the redistribution of goods). The locus of control becomes a sort of "lens" through which an individual perceives and evaluates the economic system. The results of the studies confirm the validity that personality factors play a significant role in predicting ideological attitudes in politics (Furnham and Heaven, 2001).

Conclusion and Summary

Internal locus of control is a personality trait that determines the propensity to "hold one's destiny in one's own hands," actively influence the course of events and base outcomes on one's activities. It fosters functioning within a free-market system (as confirmed in the theoretical part of the article) and directs— as demonstrated in this study— the way of thinking about the economic system. A stronger sense of internal control is associated with pro-liberal attitudes. Such individuals endorse unrestricted freedom of action for companies (economic independence of enterprises), meritocracy that considers the concept of deservingness, and the free market in employment (including the acceptance of unemployment). They have a positive view of the economic elite and believe that economic development will lead to the elimination of economic scandals and common crime (as known, such positive outcomes are not even observed in the most economically developed countries). A stronger sense of external control, on the other hand, is associated with acceptance of a welfare state model (focusing on protecting the living standards of the less well-off part of society), egalitarianism (favoring social harmony and reducing social inequalities), and state intervention in employment (ensuring jobs and counteracting the alienation of the unemployed). Individuals with such a locus of control have

negative attitudes towards "business people," that is, the part of society that has transformed into a group of entrepreneurs, shareholders, etc. Their economic success is seen as morally dubious. They attribute the causes of economic scandals and common crime to changes in the economic system. Anti-liberal attitudes may stem from the fact that people lack important attributes (e.g., internal locus of control), that provide a sense of influence throughout events and hope for material success in a competitive and meritocratic environment. They then consider state intervention in economic and social spheres, which "allows" co-responsibility instead of individual responsibility, as justified.

The results obtained are consistent with the content of the tested hypotheses and form the basis of a more general conclusion: the personality trait— the locus of control— directs the way of thinking about what principles of social life organization should be respected. If the principles are adapted to the possessed trait, it becomes easier to follow them in life and to acquire more satisfying experiences (personality traits largely condition the possibility of implementing certain principles). This makes it likely to define oneself in subjectively positive categories. Self-esteem may then be maintained both by individuals with an internal and external locus of control, but they will consider different principles of economic order as justified.

However, the presented results do not resolve the issue of which constructs are determined and which are determined. It can be presumed that early childhood experiences (related, for example, to parenting styles used by parents) may influence the formation of traits such as an internal locus of control (this regularity also applies to other traits, see Peplińska et al., 2015). However, such oriented socialization impacts are more likely in individualistic cultures, where there is widespread acceptance of this trait. In this interpretation, attention is drawn to the role of culture in shaping personality. On the other hand, functioning in a free-market system may enhance the sense of internal control even in adults. In everyone? Probably not, since this trait can also be considered by taking into account the innate temperament. It determines to some extent human proactivity and reactivity, which are compatible with an internal or external locus of control. Therefore, the reasons why people can or

cannot "hold their fate" can be discerned in various ways. Typically, however (aside from cases of so-called learned helplessness), the locus of control changes with development and the accumulation of social experiences, and its internalization should be treated as a measure of personality maturity. In the above analysis— it should be emphasized— the focus was placed on selected psychological factors, omitting those considered by representatives of other scientific disciplines (e.g., economics, political science, and sociology). These significantly determine whether "a person can take their fate into their own hands" and can enhance or block the expression of personality traits.

This work leads to the question of whether it is worthwhile to focus on personality to predict the content of views in the economic sphere. It turns out that such a relationship is evident in the case of other traits, namely directiveness and empathy. Pro-liberal attitudes are observed in the case of the former (Czerniawska, 2018), and anti-liberal attitudes in the case of the latter (Czerniawska, 2015). Empathy and Machiavellianism are traits that allow predicting a different attitude towards culture and national traditions (Czerniawska, 2013). Authoritarian individuals resisted reforms during the period of systemic transformations in Poland and sought to strengthen the then institutions and consolidate the position of leaders (Koralewicz, 1990). Moreover, acceptance of the principles of economic operation is associated with the differentiation of value preferences in the "individualism-collectivism" dimension. It turns out that an individualistic orientation in the value system is associated with pro-liberal attitudes, i.e., those in which total independence of the private sector from the state and support for the interests of private business are accepted. A collectivist orientation in the value system is associated with the belief that the economic freedom of enterprises should be limited (economic statism) and the emergence of a financial elite should not be allowed. The state then has to support less prosperous businesses (Czerniawska, 2010, 2012).

Identifying such dependencies sensitizes problems (although it does not solve them) of a social nature. Within one society, people differ both in mentality (e.g., in the "individualism-collectivism" dimension) and in personality (e.g., internal and external locus of control). In every society, there is (although to varying degrees) a

characteristic political-economic conflict between economic efficiency and social equality (Deutsch, 1975, 1985; Kasser et al., 2007). The same question keeps arising: what does the concept of "fair distribution of goods" mean and what is the role of the state in their redistribution? The market economy intensifies economic development but leads to wealth differentiation within society. Under its principles, it is considered that people with diverse competencies and achievements do not deserve the same. Advocating for meritocracy can, however, be a stand against clear disproportions in the material situation of society if these are not linked to productivity and work efficiency. It is also possible to defend against the internalization of an extremely neoliberal ethos.

Limitations

Based on the provided document, here are some potential limitations that could be discussed in the article about attitudes toward the economic system and social issues about locus of control in Poland:

- **Sample Limitation:** The study exclusively utilized a student population from Poland, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other demographic groups or geographical locations. Students may have distinct socio-economic backgrounds or educational experiences that are not representative of the broader population;
- **Cross-Sectional Design:** Given that the study employs a cross-sectional design, it can only capture attitudes and locus of control at a single point in time. This design does not allow for the assessment of changes over time or the establishment of causal relationships between locus of control and economic attitudes;
- **Cultural and Economic Specificity:** The findings are deeply rooted in the specific cultural, historical, and economic context of Poland, particularly its transition to a market economy. These factors might influence the generalizability of the results to countries with different economic systems or cultural backgrounds;
- **Interpretation of Locus of Control:** The interpretation and implications of

internal versus external locus of control might vary significantly across different cultural or socioeconomic groups, which could affect the results' applicability to a broader audience;

- Response Bias: As with any survey-based research, there is the potential for response bias. Participants might respond in a socially desirable manner rather than truthfully, especially on sensitive topics like economic attitudes and personal control.

These limitations could be elaborated on to discuss how they might influence the study's conclusions and the potential directions for future research.

Disclosure

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Declaration by authors of the nature of

research - ethical issues

The study was non-interventional and did not require permission from the Ethics Committee. The research does not fall within the field of clinical psychology. Neither is it of a clinical nature. This type of research does not in any way threaten the well-being of the people involved. The respondents were informed in advance that the research concerns attitudes towards the economic system and social issues. The survey was conducted during a 2.5-hour meeting (groups of 20-30 people). The respondents answered the questions included in the questionnaires. Handing out the next questionnaire was preceded by a 15-minute break. The survey was anonymous and the participation in it was voluntary. The respondents could resign from participation at any time.

Data Availability Statement

We agree to make available the data and materials supporting the results or analyses presented in their paper upon reasonable request.

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