Summary of the Ph.D. Thesis

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The title of the thesis:

Role of Pathological Personality Domains in Negative and Hostile Cognitive Distortions in Individuals with Depressive Symptoms

Key words phrases:

depression, cognitive distortions, hostile attributions, pathological personality domains

Abstract

The primary aim of this project was to examine the relationship between cognitive distortions and depressive symptoms, with particular emphasis on the role played by pathological personality domains in this relationship. This study proposes a new, integrated framework in which personality pathology - conceptualized according to the Alternative Model for Personality Disorders (AMPD) in DSM-5 - constitutes the fundamental basis for the development of cognitive distortions and the depressive symptoms resulting from them.

The doctoral dissertation is based on a series of five thematically linked articles (four published in peer-reviewed scientific journals). By employing a multifaceted methodological approach, including longitudinal and experimental studies as well as advanced measurement techniques (eye-tracking, EEG), and by including diverse groups in the analyses (general population, clinically diagnosed patients, incarcerated individuals - including homicide

offenders), it was possible not only to describe specific correlates of depression but, above all, to empirically ground an integrated theoretical model.

Publications dedicated to the cognitive and social components (Articles 2, 3, 4) demonstrated that depressive symptoms are associated with a stable tendency to use negative narration, specific attentional patterns in the context of social comparisons, as well as difficulties in recognizing ambiguous emotions and relatedness frustration. These studies, going beyond standard self-report methods, allowed for an in-depth analysis of information processing mechanisms characteristic of depression.

Analyses regarding the role of personality (Article 5, supported by results from Article 1) were of key importance for the final conclusions of the dissertation. They confirmed that the direct relationship between hostile attributions and depression loses statistical significance after accounting for pathological personality domains, such as Negative Affectivity and Detachment. These results, also replicated in the specific group of homicide offenders, provide an argument for the thesis regarding the overarching, explanatory role of personality structure.

The conducted research provided a basis for formulating a new, hierarchical theoretical model. It posits that pathological personality traits constitute the foundation upon which cognitive distortions and the accompanying depressive symptoms develop. This model carries significant implications for clinical practice, pointing to the rationale for integrating interventions targeting personality mechanisms and mentalization processes. The effectiveness of such an approach was preliminarily confirmed in supplementary studies (Article 8, outside the main series), concerning the adaptation of mentalization training in a penitentiary setting.