

**“IT IS LIKE THE KING AND HIS KINGDOM”:  
MAPPING CONSTELLATIONS VIA THE MODEL OF THE AGONISTIC SELF  
METHODOLOGY (MAS-M)<sup>1</sup>**

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*Abstract.* Building on the Dialogical Self Theory (DST) and the Model of Agonistic Self (MAS), this paper introduces the Model of Agonistic Self Methodology (MAS-M). This methodological approach employs constellations as the interpretative framework for the qualitative analysis of data on the self-in-context. Constellations are defined as wider patterns of interactions between voices of the self-in-context, which follow specific and repetitive scenarios. In order to develop MAS-M, reflexive thematic analysis was performed on individual reports written after interviewing nine elementary school teachers. The data gathering procedure involved a two-stage interview process employing the previously developed Agonistic Self Interview (ASI), which was introduced into the standard MAS-M procedure. We identified six constellations, whose structure and dynamics we described at the formal level: the King and His Kingdom constellation, Crisis Intervention, Defense of Purpose, Value Conflict, Temporary Inclusion of Sidelined Perspectives, and Reflection. In this paper, we discuss the psychological function of each of the identified constellations, along with the possibility of their application as a practical, diagnostic, and research framework.

*Key words:* Dialogical Self Theory, Qualitative methodology, Power relations, Agonistic Self Interview, Teacher's professional self.

*Disclosure statement.* The authors report there are no competing interests to declare.

*Funding details.* This research was funded by the Ministry of Science, Technological Development and Innovation of the Republic of Serbia (Contract. No. 451-03-47/2023-01/200018 and 451-03-47/2023-01/200163)

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<sup>1</sup> The Version of Record of this manuscript has been published (online: 21 Apr 2023) and is available in *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 20(2), 289–335. doi: 10.1080/14780887.2023.2201199 <https://www.tandfonline.com/>

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## Introduction

### *From the Dialogical Self to the Agonistic Self*

In the paper introducing the Model of the Agonistic Self – MAS (Džinović, Grbić, & Vesić, 2023), we hypothesized that in order to understand human subjectivity and behavior, the unit of analysis should not be the isolated self, but the self-in-context. We expressed this idea using the concept of strategic situation, which we defined as *a temporary, dynamic, and context-embedded constellation of power that entails internal and internalized voices of the self and exterior voices*. This conceptualization implies the adoption of the metaphor of human beings as self-defining (e.g., Shotter, 1975; Taylor, 1985). This metaphor is one of the root metaphors in personal constructivism which highlights personal potentials for creating meanings and decision making (Kelly, 1955) but also in social constructionism which conceives man as an agent who uses socially created meanings in order to interpret herself (Gergen, 2009; Harre, 1998). At the same time, we take the standpoint which is common to social constructionism and post-structuralism, that humans are socially, institutionally, and culturally determined, i.e. limited in ways in which they can understand themselves and the world around them. These restrictions stem from the social context: institutions and their dominant discourses, power relations, material resources etc. (e.g. Foucault, 1995; Harre, 1998; Hermans, 2018; Procter & Winter, 2020). At the theoretical level, the Model of the Agonistic Self builds on the widely accepted Dialogical Self Theory (DST; Hermans, 2018). We will present the defining features of our model in the context of its similarities and differences with the DST.

**Dialogue Between Voices.** According to the DST, the self consists of I-positions whose mutual relationships form a dynamic self system characterized by two key mechanisms that provide the foundation for self-understanding and behavior. The first mechanism is *dialogue*, which arises when *I* alternates between multiple I-positions in an imaginal space, thus endowing each of them with a voice (Hermans, 1996). The second mechanism is known as *positioning* and pertains to I-positions entertaining relationships of agreement and disagreement with one another (Hermans, 2018). Unlike the DST, the MAS does not assume the existence of an integrative *I*, but rather hypothesizes individual self-understanding and behavior as results of complex agonistic dialogues between voices, which we define as *personified, voiced, and named ideologies that encompass a relatively coherent set of values and courses of action* (Džinović, Grbić, & Vesić, 2023). Without continuity embodied in the instance of *I*, the strategic situation that encompasses the agonistic self is characterized by *temporariness*, given that a sudden change in the distribution of power leads to the disappearance of the previous situation and the epistemological appearance of a new strategic situation and the self within it.

**Social Embeddedness.** The MAS is further built on the idea that the internal dynamics of the self reflect interpersonal relationships or wider institutionalized relations. Specifically, the DST assumes that relations within the self represent replicas of the relations with other individuals, such

as self-compassion and self-criticism, or the relations characteristic of organizations and political communities, such as self-government and self-sabotage (Hermans & Hermans-Konopka, 2010; Hermans, 2018). Based on our research findings, we have offered a precise definition and operationalization of dyadic relations between voices of the self, encompassing a wider range of possible relations than envisioned by the DST (Džinović, Grbić, & Vesić, 2023). We will briefly discuss them in the following paragraphs.

The DST views the social context as a source from which the self is saturated with positions of subjectivity, which we recognize as the *formative* effect of the context. However, our findings suggest that what also gets internalized are the interrelations between the positions of subjectivity. Furthermore, the context continually influences power relations within the self through its discursive products beyond positions of subjectivity, including material products, procedures, and norms. When the context reinforces certain voices within the self while weakening others, we consider its effect to be *legitimizing* (Džinović, Grbić, & Vesić, 2023).

**Power Relations.** The DST assumes that power asymmetry is inherent in all communication activity (Hermans, 1996; Hermans, & Hermans-Konopka, 2010). Hermans (2018) states that in addition to consensual (consonant) dialogue that fosters a sense of community, there is agonistic (dissonant) dialogue that acknowledges the power imbalance between perspectives and thus allows for changes in the dynamics of dialogical self. The MAS insists on the constitutive role of power struggle, as it assumes that power imbalance is not only an inevitable consequence of pluralism, but that it is impossible to have any sense of self without the voices struggling for dominance. This approach builds on the work of Foucault (1979; 1982; 1995), who translated the Hellenic agonistic principle into the language of social power mechanisms and was the first to demonstrate their role in the production of discourses of people as psychological subjects. These power mechanisms operate in a dispersed network of institutional procedures and rules, yielding a multitude of discursive positions of subjectivity, that is, vacant places (Foucault, 1972) that individuals can occupy. This forms the basis for the essentially pluralistic, discontinued, tensive, and socially embedded sense of self that is predominant in postmodern approaches in psychology.

**The interplay of the two key metaphors: the voice and power struggle.** We conceptualize voices as metaphors that personify both broadly understood experience and the way a person reflects on and narratively encompasses that experience, within the possible ways of framing it in the given context (which is, in our view, meant by the term “ideology”, i.e. point of view a person has in connection to that experience). This will, in turn, also be connected to a particular action orientation. The power of this metaphor is that it enables us to partially step away from the idea of a fully integrated self, and to theoretically explain observations that a person can have several different and sometimes conflicting perspectives on some matter and, hence, incoherent action orientations, that often correspond to opposing societal discourses and subject positions (Gergen, 2009). Furthermore, understanding the once unique self as a strategic situation of power struggle between multiple voices within the subjectivity-shaping context allows us to give a different answer on how a particular sense of self could be achieved. Namely, self can be understood as the result of a complex play of dominance and resistance, in which the performance of each voice is

not guided by its previous "will", but is a dialogical response to other voices. This is in line with Foucault's (1979) conception of power relations as a purposeful strategy but without the strategist. Considering that the social immersion of the self means that other people are involved in the dynamics of the strategic situation as external voices, it is further emphasized that purposefulness is positioned in a complex network of social interaction. Since we start from the assumption that an individual is (at least partially) capable of analytically seeing how exposure to the field of multiple subjectivities shapes her as a psychological being and it is agentic in framing her experiences, we consider the model of voices and their mutual relations to be a suitable metaphor for this analytical view. However, we believe that it is one of the possible ways to interpret the experience of being exposed to numerous, incompatible and socially contextualized narratives about oneself which are offered to individuals.

***Bridging the individual-social divide.*** The existing theories of subjectivity within the postmodern paradigm focus on either the individual perspective or the social structure. In spite of the theorization of the relationship between these two levels, there is a conspicuous absence of an adequate methodological solution for examining psychosocial consequences of exposure to multiple possibilities for shaping subjectivity *for a specific individual*. What is unique for the MAS is that it aspires to offer both a conception of the mental functioning of a subject immersed in the agonistic social realm and concrete methodological guidelines for its examination, with the goal of empirically bridging the individual-social divide. The Bakhtinian idea of voice (Bakhtin, 1929/1984) interpreted within the Foucauldian framework of power relations is, as we would argue, what facilitates bridging the divide between the individual and the social. Bakhtin starts with the assumption that wider ideological conflicts between opposing social camps are refracted in individual consciousness. It means that in a multi-voiced conscience, as in society, there is no single perspective from which one's experience of oneself or the world is shaped, but rather a multitude of incommensurable and mutually irreducible voices, fighting for the opportunity to tell their version of the story. The psychology of the subject is characterized by the coexistence and mutual influence of several conflicting consciousnesses. The unity in multitude is realized through a constant dialectical relationship between the voices, which do not cancel each other, but permeate and complement each other, so that the meaning carried by each voice can be understood only within the complex dialogical relationship through which the polyphonic conscience is constituted. However, he emphasizes that this dialogue does not preclude the fact that some of these ideas are dominant in a sense that they have greater social power, while others are muted or even unable to be fully shaped. Therefore, we believe that dialogic complementation in the Bakhtinian sense has an agonistic character. Foucault points to a similar point in his works claiming that social structure rests upon power relations, which produce inequalities, define "vacant places" and significantly influence the possible forms of subjectivity. We believe that the 'point' of the strongest complementarity of the mentioned authors is the analysis of the individual experience of oneself. Namely, as we have argued (Džinović, Grbić, & Vesić, 2023), Foucaultian theory does not permit us to understand how it looks like being exposed to multiple positions of subjectivity from the point of the individual itself. While Foucault offered an analysis of power as a way to understand

the experience of the self, Bakhtin, with his idea of consciousness as a tense dialogue, offered a more practical guideline for studying how the pluralism of discourses reflects on individual experience. By adopting the perspective of an individual, we can understand how Foucauldian social positions of subjectivity become idiosyncratically refracted and how voices manifest in the individual consciousness (Džinović, Grbić, & Vesić, 2023). At the individual level, these voices enter power relations within a strategic situation. This makes the strategic situation *dynamic*, which means that tendencies towards conflict and cooperation among voices are diversely expressed within it.

### ***Category system that underlines MAS***

Building on Foucault's and DST authors' contributions, in our previous paper we proposed a tripartite category system that constitutes the basis of the conceptual and theoretical framework for the MAS. At the same time, we worked out a methodological procedure for researching these categories, which we built into the process of data gathering (see the Methodology section). What follows is an overview of this category system that we embedded into the constellation-based methodological framework. For a comprehensive overview of this categorization, please see Džinović, Grbić, & Vesić (2023).

The first part of our model entails functions of voices. We posited that certain voices fall into the category of the *Ideologue*, since their highly developed and influential ideology represents the backbone of the value system and the main interpersonal and identity orientation. Much of the dynamics of a strategic situation could be described as complex ways of implementing such ideology. Executors and Facilitators aid in implementing Ideologue's standpoint, which makes them members of Ideologue's coalition. *Executor* straightforwardly executes Ideologue's values relying on its own practical level of ideology, that is, on the competencies related to know-how. *Facilitator's* standpoint is compatible with the Ideologue's and under the strong legitimizing influence of the Ideologue it temporarily acts with the goal of facilitating the implementation of the Ideologue's goals. *Advocate* is an influential standpoint that, instead of "working for" the Ideologue, makes the Ideologue modify its performance to include what the Advocate stands for. *Illegitimate Facilitator* tends to contribute to the implementation of the main ideology in radical, often socially undesirable ways, which makes it controversial and objectionable from the standpoint of other voices. *Protestor's standpoint is fully incompatible with the Ideologue's values*, which means that it only rarely and briefly usurps power and controls behavior. Finally, *Process Modifier* and *Subsequent Evaluator* perform the supervising function and modify the dynamics of the strategic situation while it unfolds or afterwards, by evaluating its outcomes.

Further, we have distinguished between three forms of exercising power. *Dominance* refers to a relatively stable and transsituational "rule" of the dominant Ideologue which personifies important other(s) from the past and legitimizes a wide range of voices. Unlike Dominance, *Prevailment* is a temporary and context dependent influence on other voices' performance and its legitimizing power is limited in scope. It means that a voice can prevail over another voice and at the same time be prevailed by a third. For example, prevailing Ideologue, i.e. the King, has his

team of Executors and Facilitators, but the Advocates and the evaluative voices prevail over it. Any other voice that is not in the position of prevailment exerts *Resistance*<sup>3</sup>. Exercising power and resistance is achieved through the practices of *legitimation* of compatible voices and *delegitimation* of the incompatible ones.

Finally, our model entails dyadic interactions between voices, which, as we hypothesized, stem from the continuous interplay between the tendency towards domination and the opposing tendency towards plurality of ideological standpoints. The only two relations the dominant Ideologue can form are identification and acceptance with critique. When ideologies are fully compatible, voices can enter a relation of *identification*, in which one voice adopts all parts of the ideology of the other, dominant Ideologue. When two voices have partially compatible ideologies but one of them is dominant, they develop a relationship of *acceptance with critique*. The developmentally younger voice (e.g. prevailing Ideologue) identifies with certain aspects of the older Ideologue's standpoint and adopts them. At the same time, it opposes the remaining ideological postulates of the older Ideologue. Relations between Ideologues (or Evaluators) and their Executors or Facilitators fall within the category of *team work*, which the person experiences as harmonious action of auxiliary voices in the interest of prevailing voices. When ideologies are highly compatible, they can be implemented simultaneously through *cooperation*, in which one voice accepts the ideology of the other voice, and implements it in its own performance, which is accompanied by a sense of harmonious accord. Partial compatibility between ideologies allows for a *productive tension*, where one voice accepts parts of the other voice's ideology and implements them in its own performance in order to retain the power to shape behavior. However, at the phenomenological level, this is perceived as tense. Relations between the prevailing Ideologue and the Advocate fall within one of the two aforementioned categories, while the relations of any type of voice with evaluative voices (Process Modifiers and Subsequent Evaluators) is exclusively productive tension. *Conflict* denotes a relation of mutual exclusivity, which is associated with incompatibility between two ideologies and the experience of inner struggle between contradictory values. The incompatibilities that are the basis for conflict can be permanent, as is the case with the relationship between the Ideologue and the Protestor, or they can manifest as acute conflicts, as in the case of the temporary incompatibility between the Ideologue and the Advocate (Džinović, Grbić, & Vesić, 2022). Barring the voices of the King's coalition, any voice could enter conflict with the King.

### ***From Compositions to Constellations***

The authors of the DST model recognized the need to develop concepts that would explain how relations between a multitude of I-positions form a certain order. For example, they proposed the concept of *coalition*, which commonly comprises the dominant position and its collaborators and auxiliaries (Hermans & Hermans-Konopka, 2010). However, it is possible for coalitions to include

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<sup>3</sup> Voice resistance can vary in intensity: a) habitual, b) increased or c) decreased to the point of inaudibility (suppression) (Džinović, Grbić, & Vesić, 2023).

tension and power relations (Hermans & Hermans-Jansen, 2004; Honos-Webb, Surko, Stiles, & Greenberg, 1999). In transitional life stages, *Challengers* appear as personifications of undesirable or sidelined perspectives, whose conflicts with the dominant positions or coalitions can lead to reconciliation of conflicting positions and the formation of new, more adaptive coalitions. The concepts of *metaposition* and *promoter position* serve to describe how multiple I-positions are organized under the leadership of higher-order positions (Hermans, 2018). *Metaposition* performs the function of supervising the network of relations between multiple I-positions, thus ensuring the change of habitual patterns of positions. *Promoter position* has the power to direct various positions towards a common developmental goal, thus contributing to the formation of new productive coalitions. Finally, *the third position* plays a role in the resolution of the internal conflict between two confronted positions (Hermans & Hermans-Konopka, 2010). In the context of therapy, Hermans and Hermans-Konopka (2010) propose the concept of *composition*. It denotes a patterned whole in which the importance of the spatial organization of the various voices of the self and exterior voices surpasses that of interactions between voice dyads. Compositions are conceived as patterned wholes that include internal, internalized, and exterior voices, which operate within the wider social context. This artistic approach allows the illustration of the blurred boundaries between individuals and their environment, while the simultaneous juxtaposition of multiple I-positions allows for the development of new personal meanings.

Since the DST offers conceptualizations of patterns of relations that include multiple I-positions, whose interactions are responsible for behavior, it is somewhat surprising that no comprehensive, in-depth description of them has been proposed nor the guidelines for their analysis. To give our contribution to bridging this theoretical and methodological gap, we directed our research efforts towards mapping and systematically describing wider patterns of power distribution within the self, which we have named *constellations*. We define constellation as a *strategic situation that follows a specific and repetitive scenario shared by a large number of individuals*. Unlike with the compositions, here the focus is on temporality rather than the spatial organization of elements, in the sense that we insist on precise and systematic mapping of the time-limited and distinctive scenarios they follow.

## **From the Personal Position Repertoire to the MAS-M**

### ***Previous Methodological Approaches to the Dialogical Self:***

#### ***Mapping voices, dyadic relationships and patterns***

Methodological approaches derived from the DST can be divided into two general categories. The first category includes approaches based on external observation of interactions, after which the researcher identifies the participant's I-positions (e.g., Salgado, Cunha, & Bento, 2013 ). The second category encompasses approaches based on participants' retrospective reports about their personal history of life events. Although derived from the dialogical theory, these two types of approaches have radically different empirical scopes. This paper belongs to the second category. In the following paragraphs, we will briefly present methodological contributions within this line

of research. We will further substantiate our belief that the existing methods do not entirely correspond to the theoretical and methodological principles recognized by the MAS-M.

Hermans's research is based on the Personal Position Repertoire (Hermans, 2001) and the Self-Confrontation Method (Hermans & Kempen, 1993; Lyddon, Yowell, & Hermans, 2006). *The Personal Position Repertoire (PPR)* differentiates between exterior and internal voices, which are seen as mutually connected. The first step in building the repertoire requires participants to use two standard check-lists and identify exterior and internal voices that are relevant to them. In the process, participants can add other idiosyncratic voices of personal importance. In the second step, participants assign numerical values to internal positions, determining how prominent they are in relation to each of the identified exterior positions. This results in the creation of the position matrix of interconnected internal and exterior positions that differ in prominence. Additionally, Hermans calculates the correlations between internal voices and thus determines which internal voices appear simultaneously in situations in which certain exterior voices are present. The identified dyads of I-positions form *coalitions*. Analogously, based on high negative correlations, he determines which internal voices are opposite in the sense that one of them appears with certain exterior voices, while the other voice almost never appears with those exterior voices. Correlations between I-positions can be presented graphically using concentric circles. Based on the mutual proximity of the positions in the space defined by the circles, we can visually identify the exterior and internal I-positions that appear together.

The Self-Confrontation Method (SCM) is integrated into the DST and used to elaborate the meaning systems that are characteristic of some of the most prominent I-positions. After selecting an I-position, the researcher asks the participant to identify important life events and recount them from the perspective of the selected position. The researcher then maps valuations as specific interpretations of the life events provided by the given position. Each I-position can be described as a subset of these valuations. The participant then ascribes affective values (from a set of predefined affects) to each valuation, thus constructing a set that represents a unique synthesis of the participant's personal narrative about his/her history from the perspective of the selected I-position. Afterwards, the researcher asks the participant to comment on the valuations belonging to the first position from the perspective of another prominent I-position that has a positive or negative link with the starting position.

Most DST authors have employed various modifications of the PPR and the SCM to identify repertoires of voices and their dyadic interactions. For example, Monereo (2019) used a modified PPR as a technique for examining critical events, while Puchalska-Wasył, Chmielnicka-Kuter and Oles (2008) created The Figure's Emotional Climate Inventory as a modification of the SCM. Hermans and Hermans-Konopka (2010) proposed the Composition Work Method as a useful technique for externalizing and exploring the previously mentioned compositions of voices. Konopka, Neimeyer and Jacobs-Lentz (2018) showed how this technique can be applied in constructivist therapy, which involves the identification of supportive and tensive relations within the self. Modifications introduced in later studies primarily pertain to data gathering, while the process of data analysis mainly mirrors Hermans's initial procedure.



Still, strides have been made in developing new ways of mapping patterns of voices and analyzing their interrelations. One of the most prominent solutions is Raggatt's (2000) *Personality Web*. Personality Web is a semi-structured interview that allows the researcher and the participant to identify voices in a few steps, without the use of the standard list. Together with the researcher, the participant first elicits important life attachments (persons, real world objects, life events, and bodily orientations) based on the personal life narrative. The next step is determining the strength of the links (similarity) between attachment-related *thoughts, feelings, and actions* for each identified attachment pair. Then, the participant is asked to isolate and name wider clusters based on similarities between attachments. In the Personality Web methodology, these wider clusters are treated as voices. Finally, the participant estimates the strength of the links each cluster shares with the remaining clusters, as well as with the originally identified attachments. Based on this data, a network of links between all attachments is generated through the process of multidimensional scaling. The graphical outcome of the process is the representation of relations between clusters and attachments within a coordinate system, which serves to extract the dimensions of oppositions between the clusters. The interpretation of voices initiated in the qualitative segment of the process is thus continued and elaborated based on the obtained statistical data. Raggatt's unique contribution lies in embedding the theoretical idea of power relations (domination-submission dimension), which are operationalized as the opposition between voices (where statistically calculates the strength of association-distance) within the analytical procedure. Also, he posits that moral positioning is reflected in the dynamics of the self through opposing narratives.

Aveling, Gillespie and Cornish (2015) offer a rather different methodological approach, in which the researcher independently, without the participant's validation, identifies I-positions based on the analysis of participant statements in the interview, guided by questions aimed at identifying internal and internalized voices. The researcher then moves on to the identification of relations between voices, which can include close interaction, resistance, hurt, and praise, as well as dominance and subjection. Likewise, relations between voices are analyzed through the evaluative meanings voices ascribe to one another, such as ridicule, admonishment or endorsement. This procedure also allows for the analysis of the cultural context in which certain voices appear, along with the harmonious or tense relations between them.

### ***Why Offer Another Method?***

### ***Critical Review of the existing methodological approaches***

Even though we certainly acknowledge the research value as well as the practical potential of the aforementioned approaches, we also identified what we consider to be downsides that inspired us to develop the MAS-M. Namely, at the theoretical level, power is recognized as one of the key characteristics of the dynamics of the multivoiced self. Nonetheless, the methodological approaches we discussed previously lack the analytical procedures and categories that would allow

for a *systematic description of the role of power relations in the formation of one's multiple and contextualized sense of self*. This problem was likewise pointed out by authors including Raggatt and Weatherly (2015) and Gonçalves and Salgado (2001). Since we emphasize on the constitutive role of power struggle, we have directed our efforts towards encompassing the questions of power relations and power distribution in the processes of data gathering and analysis of multiple self.

Secondly, although all aforementioned approaches offer methods for identifying voice repertoires, they do not provide detailed differentiations and systematic descriptions of *dyadic relations* between voices. Rather, their descriptions are limited to sorting voices along a single bipolar dimension: closeness (cooperation) versus opposition (tension), or they rely on everyday terms with their loose meanings, without giving them concrete operationalizations and definitions.

The same flaws can be found in attempts to identify *patterns of relations between a multitude of voices*, either through qualitative composition mapping (Hermans & Hermans-Konopka, 2010) or by establishing statistical links between voices and determining their mutual proximity in the semantic space (Raggatt, 2000). While the authors recognize the tense relations between voices and regard relations between them as changeable, these models focused more on the single case study and on the instructions for data gathering than on qualitative data analysis and interpretation. Thus, we argue that the previous models have failed to provide *a detailed and systematic description of the categories for analyzing and interpreting dynamics of wider patterns* of relations between voices in the temporal dimension that would be applicable to a large number of individuals. While the obtained results may be useful in further therapeutic work with the participant/client in question, *the developed analytical categories are not easy to operationalize, embed in a qualitative methodological procedure, and apply in new research* conducted by independent researchers.

Finally, we believe that participants should have the key role in the process of identifying, naming, and elaborating I-positions, that this should not be the researcher's task (as it was in the research of Aveling, Gillespie and Cornish (2015)), nor should it be done based on an a priori, standardized list of positions. This is in line with our constructivist orientation, which insists on methodological recognition of idiosyncratic meanings offered by participants themselves as authors of these meanings (Caputi, Viney, Walker, & Crittenden, 2012; Kelly, 1955; Winter & Procter, 2013). We believe that a nomothetic approach can be realized through the comparison and generalization of the *patterns* that characterize the dynamics of the self-in-context, that is, at the formal level, not at the level of voices and their concrete narratives. In our previous paper, we offered such generalizations by describing interactions between voice dyads, using formal categories of functions and relations between voices (Džinović, Grbić, & Vesić, 2023). In this paper, we will offer formalizations at the constellation level. For the purpose of development and application of the MAS-M, we have devised a specific data gathering procedure, the Agonistic Self Interview, which we will present in the Methodology section.

## Research Aim

The principal aim of this paper is to present the Model of Agonistic Self Methodology as a qualitative procedure for data gathering and analysis that represents the operationalization of the idea of agonistic dynamics of the multiple self. Having in mind that the MAS-M is based on the analysis of patterns of relations between a multitude of voices, this paper will present the identified constellations as categories for the formal analysis of the dynamics of the self. We will particularly focus on the key characteristics of the constellations that allow for their differential identification.

## Methodology

### *The Context of the Study*

The sample included teachers from two elementary schools in central **Capital city**<sup>4</sup>, with both schools being partner institutions on a research project aimed at encouraging the implementation of innovative teaching practices. The project was led by the research institute to which the authors of this paper are affiliated. Over two years of intensive activities in the schools, an atmosphere of support to a modern approach to teaching was created. According to teachers' own evaluations, this led them to start implementing research and cooperative work in the classroom much more frequently than before (Džinović & Marušić, 2016; Vujačić, Đević, & Stanišić, 2017; Šefer, 2018). According to our data, researchers appeared as exterior or internalized voices personifying the contemporary education discourse and thus strongly legitimized teachers' efforts to modernize their practice. However, the wider education context partially evaluates student achievement and the functioning of a school using criteria based on traditional education, which encourage frontal instruction and fact memorization (OECD, 2020). Therefore, the teachers were exposed to contradictory messages regarding their teaching roles and practices. From the perspective of our model, this could lead to the internalization of the conflict between opposing professional values. It was the recognition of this tension between the discourses to which the teachers were exposed that inspired us to develop a methodological approach that would be sensitive to the ways such tensions refract and manifest at the level of an individual.

### *Participants*

Teachers from aforementioned schools were invited to participate voluntarily in our research, as one of the project activities encompassing in-depth conversations about professional experiences of the teachers and their old and new professional roles. Nine female teachers applied to take part in the research. Most of them taught humanities subjects. Three of them had between one and ten years of work experience, four of them had between ten and twenty years of work experience, while two teachers had more than 20 years of teaching experience. We found the number of

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<sup>4</sup> The name of the city is removed in order not to disclose the identity of authors.

participants satisfactory, having in mind that we performed in-depth analysis and posed theory and methodology building as our primary aim. Moreover, the teachers differed in terms of the subjects they taught and their work experience, ensuring we would have a wide data set, which is a prerequisite for theory building (Willig, 2008).

### *Data Gathering*

We employed the Agonistic Self Interview (ASI), which we developed for the purpose of examining the role of power in the organization of the multivoiced self (Džinović, Grbić, & Vesić, 2021; Džinović, Grbić, & Vesić, 2023). The ASI is based on a semi-structured guide, with questions selected in accordance with the goal of exploring the structure and dynamics of the agonistic self. When mapping voices and their relations, we used an auxiliary graphical representation, since visual representations of voice relations accompanied by brief narrative descriptions encourage participants to produce richer content and provide a clear view of patterns of relations between a multitude of voices. The concept of voice seems to be unusual for common sense thinking or even associated with a mental disorder. Nevertheless, our experience shows that the participants readily accepted to describe their perceptions in terms of voices and their mutual relations. Moreover, this approach has been shown to help them structure different and changing thoughts about the conversation subject. To bring the voice metaphor closer to them, we used instructions such as: 'Can you recall a situation in which you had not one, but two or more different, maybe even opposing point of views regarding the same matter?' Participants would say: 'Of course, I often think about the same thing from different perspectives' and proceed with telling us about one particular situation. We would then tell them: "Yes, and we could say that those different perspectives could belong to different voices, or beliefs that you hold. You could also imagine them as if these were some characters on the stage in your head'. Another explanation that we used for prompting participants' responses is: 'You probably had the experience of talking to yourself, having an internal dialogue, which is normal and all people experience it'. Sometimes, during participants' description of a situation from her professional practice, we would ask: 'Who says that?'. Some of the participants would reply: 'Me, it's all me!' In that case, our instruction would be: 'Of course it's all you, but we want to specifically determine which of your voices represents this point of view'. Most of them are then easily able to respond, e.g. 'I don't know, maybe this is some new voice, an emotional one. We could call it the Emotional'. If the participant has troubles with connecting her statement with the voice, we would ask her: 'Is this something which the Motivator (or any other voice) would say?', which would trigger reflection on the part of the participants', and would in turn lead us to better mapping of each of her voices. In general, we found out that the closer the explanation to the person's experience is, the easier it is for a person to adopt it, so the adjustment of the instructions for different groups of participants should go in this direction.

In the case of teachers, *the structure* includes voices that personify different thoughts, beliefs or experiences related to their professional roles. In the first step, internal voices were elicited using questions such as: 'Write down your views on what classes should look like, how

the teacher and students should behave, what learning is, and the like. How would you name each of these voices?’ In the next step, internalized voices were elicited using the following instruction: ‘Now think about the voices that you know come from other people but you can ‘hear them in your head’. The final step of the interview process concerning the structure focused on eliciting exterior voices, which are also present in the dynamics of the self.

*The dynamics* were examined using questions about relations between voices, with the questions being based on theoretical categories akin to the Model of Agonistic Self: dominance versus subjection and cooperation versus conflict (Džinović, 2020). Some examples of the questions include: ‘Can you name any voices that are particularly strong and more prominent than others? Which voices are their main opponents? What do they tell one another? Which voices cooperate, support, or help one another? Which voices are in a mutual conflict and why? Describe real-life situations from your professional practice in which these interactions can occur.’

### ***Procedure***

Each participant was initially interviewed at the school, after giving verbal informed consent<sup>5</sup> for audio-recording the conversations. The researchers wrote up individual reports that contained descriptions of relations between a large number of voices in different situations in the professional setting. Further, the researchers sent individual reports to the teachers for the purpose of participant validation, along with questions for theoretical sampling (Henwood & Pidgeon, 1992), as a part of the quality assurance procedure.

For five teachers whose individual reports involved more dilemmas and missing data, the processes of participant validation and theoretical sampling took place in the form of the second interview. The rest of the teachers sent their comments via email as their individual reports were less dilemmatic. In the second interview, we tested our original hypotheses and alternative interpretations, asking participants to verify the presence of newly elicited voices, as well as offer their own interpretations of the dynamics mapped in the initial interview. These new data were used to revise the initial individual reports. This process yielded significantly more elaborate individual reports that entered a cross-case analysis, during which they underwent multiple revisions.

Each initial and second interview lasted between 90 and 120 minutes. The initial interviews were conducted between April and June 2019, while the second interviews and the written exchange took place in January and February 2020.

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<sup>5</sup> Since the Institute to which the authors are affiliated already had an intensive long-term cooperation with the schools where our participants worked, we did not ask for written consent. The cooperation between institutions was formalized by contract between the Institute’s director and the principals of the involved schools.

## *Data Analysis*

*Step 1: Creating individual reports.* The first step in the data analysis process was to create individual reports. The individual reports served to systematize the descriptions according to situations and actors, since these descriptions were scattered in the conversations with the participants. In other words, they were created as analytical summaries of the contents of the interviews into shorter and concise descriptions of (a) the voices and their relationships, and (b) the situations from the teachers' professional practice in which those voices were operative. Aside from this practical relevance, generating individual reports reflects our theoretical and methodological interest in the wholeness of human beings as persons and how social meanings are refracted in individually unique ways. Therefore, we consider them as necessary steps as they enable one to convey a thick description of someone's unique story of the dynamics of the agonistic self and at the same time to generalize it for the purpose of theory building (Yin, 1994/2014).

The individual reports entailed two elements. The first one was the description of the repertoire of voices for the particular teacher and ideology of each of the mapped voices. The second element of each report comprised the descriptions of various situations from the teachers' professional practice, that were interpreted in terms of the functions of voices, dyadic relationships between them and their power relations (as reported in Džinović, Grbić, & Vesić, 2023), which could be compared across cases.

What follows is an example of an individual report by a teacher under the pseudonym Tea. The first part of her report consists of the list of the voices she elicited - the Educator, the Psychologist, the Actor, the Bogeyman, the Grumpy etc, - and offers brief descriptions of the viewpoints they personify. Here is an example of the voice that Tea named Grumpy which, in our model, has a function of the Antagonist:

Grumpy - asks the question "Why did I need all this?", questions the professional choice of being a teacher, and represents a voice reflecting the narrative of teachers' dissatisfaction with the state of the profession: "You stagnate and the system pulls you down, drowning in Dead Sea, you are where you are and you don't want to move... you are being suffocated by the system".

The second part of Tea's report contains descriptions of the relationship between the voices, which appear as actors in different situations of teaching, as well as the relationships with students, parents and colleagues. These descriptions use partly the terminology we developed during the analysis, and partly the expressions used by the participants, including the teachers' quotes. As such, these individual reports could be offered to participants for feedback. Here is an example of one of the descriptions of the relationship between several voices in Tea's case:

The main opponent of Tea's King, which she named the Educator, is Grumpy, who has a function of Antagonist. Grumpy comes to the fore in those situations when the exterior voices (those of colleagues, children, or the "situation in society"), challenge the positions of the Educator and Family voice, as dominant ideologue, on the importance of being fully engaged in the teaching and earning children's love and respect for the teacher. Therefore, the voice that Tea named the Actor, which has the function of the

King's Executor, has the task of "keeping" Grumpy away from the classroom so he can not interfere with the realization of the Educator's ideological position: *On Monday, I finished my classes at 12:20, but I left school at 3, because the children wanted to stay and sing. And even though I'm mourning my late father, I can't leave, I want to stay. So, I stayed and sang with them. I pretended that I felt like singing.*" Only after Tea leaves the classroom and the suppression of Grumpy weakens, Grumpy manages to react to the Actor's efforts: *"Why do you do that? How much are you paid? I mean... After 13 years on this job, I fulfill 100% of my quota and I get paid 75%."* The Educator responds to the Grumpy: *t I hate the proverb: "How much money, that much music", I will never say it. I do not want to lose this enthusiasm!"*

*Step 2: Performing thematic analysis.* The written and revised (through the second interview) individual reports were further treated as material for cross-case comparison, the aim of which was to map formal and general characteristics of the constellations. To that aim, we conducted thematic analysis. We opted for what Braun and Clarke termed "reflexive" approach, as we have seen it as best suited for our conceptual framework and theory and methodology-building research aim (Braun & Clarke, 2019; 2021; Braun, Clarke, Terry, & Hayfield, 2018). Given that our goal was to develop a framework for analyzing the relationship between any number of voices that take part in a given situation, i.e. framework for analyzing a strategic situation in its totality, coding was not performed line-by-line. Instead, our unit of analysis was the situation that teachers described from their professional context (that could also be when they were reflecting on their previous class or planning the next one). Each of the nine participants described between 4-6 different situations in the first interview that were further elaborated on and supplemented with the descriptions of the additional 2-3 situations in the second interview.

We initially coded each situation in terms of: (a) prominent function of voices that prevailed over other internal and/or external voices or appeared after being suppressed, and (b) main relation or a change in the main relation between the voices. Aggregating previously coded situations into themes, i.e. *constellations* rested upon mapping the specificities in the beginning, development and the end of the voices-related dynamics characteristic for each coded situation. For example, we have noticed that some patterns or scenarios typically commenced when the Illegitimate Facilitator appeared and took over the scene, with the aim to gain control over the exterior voices (i.e. the students). What followed is that voices of the King's coalition entered the conflict with the Illegitimate Facilitator in order to suppress it and regain prevailment over exterior voices (i.e. students). The success of King's coalition marked the end of that situation. Additional criterion for grouping categories and developing themes was psychosocial purpose of each of the mapped situations. For example, we noticed that the Illegitimate Facilitator always appeared in situations when participants failed to engage the students in the way they wanted or when students did not behave in accordance with the teachers' plan, but only after teachers already exhausted their usual strategies of engaging the students (for example, their Executors tried to motivate the students but failed). The outcome of this bottom-up approach was 6 clearly distinguished themes - i.e. constellations, so, for instance, we connected the situations where teachers needed to use additional capacities to resolve the interpersonal issue they encountered with the Crisis Intervention constellation.

However, even though situations belonging to the same theme, i.e. constellation were organized around central organizing concepts and captured the same aspects of psychosocial dynamics, which is the primary criterion for generating themes (Braun et al., 2018), there were some significant differences within the same constellation. For example, even though all situations pertaining to Crisis Intervention required employing additional means for overcoming the obstacle, not all situations included the appearance of Illegitimate Facilitator and its harsh means of restoring order in the classroom. These different patterns of development and resolution were the basis for distinguishing between sub-themes, i.e. variations of the same constellation.

The process of developing MAS-M involved multiple cross-case comparisons and repeated revisions of the obtained constellation descriptions. This process also resulted in the multiple revisions of the individual reports. In this paper, we present a methodological framework consisting of six constellations, and therefore the data are organized according to the results of the thematic analysis, and not according to the individual cases from which we started developing the model.

### ***Quality Assurance Procedure***

Apart from participant validation and theoretical sampling, we employed the hermeneutic circle (Schleiermacher, 1998), negotiation of meaning, and critical dialogue between researchers. Firstly, we applied a procedure of circular movement between the data and the interpretive categories, known as the hermeneutic circle (Schleiermacher, 1998), which involved multiple reinterpretations and yielded more precise descriptions of the obtained constellations.

Given that our approach to thematic analysis was reflexive, the data analysis process was collaborative and the developed system resulted not from the independent coding and reliability determining procedure, but from the intense negotiations of the meaning of data (Braun et al., 2018; Braun & Clarke, 2019). Authors belong to the Foucauldian, Kellyan, and sociocultural theoretical orientations, which allowed for fruitful dialogues that influenced data analysis and methodology building. The two main axes of confrontation between the authors pertained to the degree of emphasis on the role of struggle between voices as a principle for explaining the psychological dynamics and the implications of focusing on the social versus individual level of the manifestation of human subjectivity. This confrontation yielded what we consider to be a coherent epistemological and theoretical framework that made us particularly sensitive to the phenomena of tension, contradictoriness, and multilayeredness as well as the social embeddedness of the self.

Differences in data interpretation among researchers led to battles of arguments that allowed for precise and credible descriptions and the formulation of clear criteria for differentiating between constellations. The Value Conflict constellation was particularly challenging. Initially, it was highly heterogeneous. Over time, certain types that belonged to this constellation were incorporated into the Crisis Intervention constellation, while other types formed a new constellation named Defense of Purpose (see the Results section). The entire process of constellation mapping lasted nine months.



We were sensitive to the issue of transferability of our findings, which is why we provided the descriptions of the context in which our participants yielded their responses and illuminated the role of the context in constellation dynamics. Additionally, what grants the transferability to the proposed constellation system is that it is defined in terms of formal characteristics of constellations. This allows for them to be applied to different meanings that individuals can use to devise their own subjectivity.

## **The Model of Agonistic Self: Methodological guidelines**

### ***Data Gathering Guidelines***

During the process of identifying and describing constellations, we were returning to the original version of the ASI and were revising it so it systematically encompasses all categories that constitute the conceptual and methodological framework of the MAS. This yielded a significantly more structured guide that mirrors the initial version in that it comprises two elements – the structure (repertoire of voices) and the dynamics of the mapped voices. The former is an auxiliary but an essential phase that aims to map the spectrum of voices that are operative in producing participant's sense of self. The latter is a central step, in which functions and dyadic relations between mapped voices are determined, and it is nested in constellations mapping procedure. Additionally, contextual variability of the mapped constellations is explored in the interview, which reflects our category system that underlies MAS. The revised version of the ASI is included in the Appendix 1. Here, we will list the key elements of the constellations mapping procedure:

1. *Mapping voice functions and dyadic relations within King's constellation* (see below). After mapping the repertoire of voices, the ASI allows researchers to go over different functions of voices and the types of dyadic relations between them. Namely, within the questions that pertain to the first, most common constellation, researchers can map the main Ideologues (the King and the Dominant Ideologue), along with the King's coalition, which includes Executors and Facilitators. Additionally, they can identify Advocates and Process Modifiers that modify King's coalition's performance. The process of identifying functions of voices is co-implicative with the process of determining their dyadic relations (e.g. identification, team work, cooperation, productive tension). Finally, this part of the guide contains questions about the functions of voices that are suppressed in the King's constellation: Illegitimate Facilitators and Protestors (including the Antagonist).

2. *Mapping other constellations and their types.* The revised version of the guide encompasses questions aimed at identifying each of the six types of constellations to be presented in this paper. Different questions regarding the same constellation are directed at mapping specific variations of the given constellation that we identified in our study and will present in the following sections.

3. *Mapping contextual variations.* Finally, the interview is sensitive to the context in the sense that the questions cover typical situations in which each constellation takes place as well as situations in which constellations follow unusual, atypical patterns.

As we noticed that our participants used typical words and formulations to describe real-life situations that we later classified as instances of specific constellations, in the revised guide we modified the questions to include these formulations. For example, in the question that aims to map the Crisis Intervention constellation (see the chapter on mapped constellations), we ask the participant to remember an interpersonal situation in which other people prevented her from doing something that was important to her. To identify the Illegitimate Facilitator, whose presence is one of the indicators of this constellation, we ask the participant to remember whether she felt angry in this situation, whether she thought about something or did something that she otherwise frowns upon in order to solve this interpersonal problem. Such formulations constitute “triggers” that encourage participants to talk about the constellation that the researcher wishes to explore in the given segment of the interview.

We should emphasize that while the revised version of the guide is highly structured with the goal of systematically mapping the relevant aspects of the self-in-context (from voice repertoire and functions to dyadic relations and constellations), we do not assume this process to be automatic since it is nearly impossible to obtain precise function of the voice, relation types or constellations based solely on the interview. For example, for questions aimed at mapping the Crisis Intervention constellation that pertain to resolving an interpersonal conflict, the participant can provide a response that would later be recognized as, for instance, the Value Conflict constellation. Having in mind that the guide is semi-structured, the interviewer should be flexible and adjust the order of questions related to different constellations in accordance with the natural flow of the participant’s narrative.

Since participants are involved in the process of eliciting and elaborating on constellations from the very beginning and since we propose at least a two-time interview procedure for each participant, with each consecutive interview serving as a form of participant validation, the ASI satisfies the quality criteria related to credibility. The ASI can be adapted to specific research aims of future researchers. In such cases, it would not be used in its entirety. While mapping the structure of voices and the King’s constellation represents an essential part of the interview, questions aimed at mapping other constellations can be included or excluded depending on the specific research aim.

### ***Analysis Guidelines: How to Identify Constellations for Each Participant?***

We will offer an overview of the key guidelines for the analysis of the data collected with ASI, which will be given in the form of questions that research poses to herself during the analysis process. Considering that the analysis begins during the interview, participants are treated as collaborators or co-authors and not mere sources of raw data. That means that the researcher should have in mind the following questions during the interview process and can direct the conversation

with the participants accordingly. Tentative answers to these questions based on which constellations can be identified are provided in Table 1.

### *I The Phenomenological Level of Constellation Manifestation*

Distinctive ways in which participants report on the phenomenological level of their experience can aid the identification of each of the constellations.

1. Do participants describe their functioning in this situation as smooth and normal or uneasy and tense? For example, smooth functioning is associated with the King's constellation.
2. Which terms and metaphors do they use to spontaneously describe relations between voices? For example, a metaphor such as "the King and his advisors" generally refers to the King's constellation; the negative naming of certain voices, such as the Boogeyman, the Shouter, the Grumpy or the Rebel is associated with the Illegitimate Facilitator or the Antagonist which are indicative for Crisis Intervention and Defense of Purpose constellations, respectively. The spontaneous use of the metaphor of internal conflict is linked to the Value Conflict constellation. The spontaneous use of the metaphor of self-reflection is associated with Evaluators and the Reflection constellation.
3. What kind of emotional state do participants report? For example, the feeling of anger is likely linked to the Illegitimate Facilitator, which points to the Crisis Intervention constellation. The feeling of exhaustion can be an indicator of the Protestor's presence, while the feeling of hopelessness and lack of purpose likely speaks of the presence of the Antagonist, that is, the Defense of Purpose constellation.

### *II The specific beginning, development, and outcome of a constellation*

1. What is a typical situation in which this constellation appears? What is the main trigger for the beginning of this constellation? What initial change in the strategic situation marks the onset of this constellation? For example, interpersonal issues are indicative of the beginning of the Crisis Intervention constellation.
2. How is the situation resolved? What happens to the order of power among voices and what is the outcome of the constellation? For example, when the King explicitly refers to his core beliefs and, hence, silences the Antagonist, that marks the end of the Defense of Purpose constellation.

### *III Specific voice functions that appear in the constellation or the change of the central relation*

1. Which specific functions do voices have in this constellation? Is there a function that does not appear in other constellations? For example, the Illegitimate Facilitator is an indicator of the Crisis Intervention constellation (Table 1).

2. Which relation is a key characteristic of the constellation? For example, team work is a key characteristic of the King's constellation. Alternatively, what change in voice relations is a key characteristic of the constellation? For example, the change of the relation of cooperation or productive tension into a conflict between the King and the Advocate is crucial for identifying the Value Conflict constellation.
3. What changes in relations between other voices arise as consequences of the key change? For example, in the Value Conflict constellation, the key change of the relation between the King and the Advocate, which turns from productive tension into conflict, could lead to the change of the relation between the Process Modifier and the King or the Advocate, likewise turning from productive tension into conflict.

#### *IV The psychological purpose of a constellation*

Which specific aspect of psychosocial functioning does this constellation describe? What is the psychological purpose of this constellation? For example, the Value Conflict constellation points to the identity dilemma, i.e. the struggle between different values or different answers to the question "Who am I?".

What follows is a table including the key differential features of each constellation. Characteristics of all constellations and their subtypes are described in detail in the section below, followed by a discussion on their psychological functions.

Table 1: Differential Characteristics of Constellations

	Triggers and Resolutions	The Appearance of a Specific Voice Function or the (Change of the) Habitual Relation	The Phenomenological Level	The Psychosocial Purpose of the Constellation
<b>The King and His Kingdom Constellation</b>	/ (default functioning)	<p>The coalition of the King and its assistants</p> <p>Team work and cooperation</p>	<p>The sense that everything is going smoothly and according to plan:</p> <p><i>When everything is going according to my plan, it looks like this...</i></p> <p>Highlighting the importance of a voice and its influence on other voices:</p> <p><i>When I'm doing something, it is (the most) important for me to be...</i></p> <p><i>This voice somehow controls others; it is the central voice and the others are its helpers.</i></p>	<p>Customary functioning guided by the core personal and professional values in the context of competing perspectives. This accounts for transsituational consistency of individual behavior</p>

<p><b>Crisis Intervention</b></p>	<p><i>Triggers:</i> An exterior voice undermines the Ideologue or the Process Modifier</p> <p><i>Resolution:</i> The reestablishment of the King's prevailment or productive tension between the Process Modifier and the King</p>	<p>The appearance of the Illegitimate Facilitator</p> <p>or the other voices that comprise intervention team</p>	<p>Frustration due to failure to control someone else's behavior or to find a way to adapt to other people's behavior</p> <p><i>When I notice that students are not paying attention or when they talk amongst themselves, the Boogeyman appears and starts screaming, demanding that they settle down.</i></p>	<p>Resolving interpersonal problems by engaging additional capacities</p>
<p><b>Defense of Purpose</b></p>	<p><i>Triggers:</i> The King is undermined by an exterior voice, the institutionalized context or an internal voice, most often the Antagonist, after switching the context</p> <p><i>Resolution:</i> The King once again prevails over the Antagonist or the Advocate prevails over the Antagonist.</p>	<p>The appearance of the Antagonist</p>	<p>The narrative about futility, helplessness, but also anger and frustration; thinking about making drastic life changes. Later, reverting focus to what is truly important to the individual.</p> <p><i>When someone says something or something happens that makes my efforts and hard work futile, I start questioning myself: Well, why do you try so hard? Why do you keep working there? I started thinking about quitting my job and becoming a dishwasher so that I can have some peace...</i></p>	<p>Maintaining a sense of meaning, purpose, self-worth and enthusiasm when they are challenged or undermined</p>

<p><b>Value Conflict</b></p>	<p><i>Triggers:</i> An exterior voice or the context legitimizes and thus reinforces the King or an Advocate or sabotages the implementation of its ideology, which changes the power relation between them</p> <p><i>Resolution:</i> The reestablishment of the relation of cooperation or productive tension between the King and the Advocate</p>	<p>Change from cooperation/productive tension to the conflict relation between two ideological perspectives that the person simultaneously actualized in previous situation</p>	<p>The simultaneous presence of a feeling of determination about the chosen course of action and a sense of insecurity or guilt because this choice results in the neglect of an equally important value and action orientation.</p> <p><i>I decide to be the Motivator and do everything in accordance with an innovative textbook, but then I ask myself – am I teaching them everything they need for the highschool entrance exam?</i></p>	<p>Identity dilemma - struggle between different values or competing answers to the question “Who am I?”</p>
<p><b>Temporary Inclusion of Sidelined Perspectives</b></p>	<p><i>Triggers:</i> An exterior voice or the context legitimizes the Protestor to modify the King’s actions in order to include Protestor’s goals</p> <p><i>Resolution:</i> The Protestor loses its legitimacy and returns to a position of resistance to the King</p>	<p>The appearance of the Protestor who then establishes productive tension with the King’s coalition</p>	<p>The sense that we have done something important or different than what we usually do. The sense that we have temporarily stepped out of our everyday functioning.</p> <p><i>I am generally known for being strict. But sometimes I am the Angel. At the end of the school year, especially if the child is good, I tend to be benevolent and give a better grade.</i></p>	<p>Exploring new identities and action orientations.</p>

<p><b>Reflection</b></p>	<p><i>Triggers:</i> A change of context and reexamination of a previous situation from the perspective of the prevailing or sidelined voice</p> <p><i>Resolution:</i> The modification of the King's performance in case of reflection in favor of the dominant ideology; the strengthening of resistance but without the modification of the King in case of reflection in favor of sidelined perspectives</p>	<p>The appearance of the Subsequent Evaluator and/or the Protestor (performing the function of the Subsequent Evaluator)</p>	<p>Reexamination, self-evaluation, and asking questions about the moral, practical, emotional, and physical consequences of previous events for the purpose of future orientation of action</p> <p><i>I reflect on what I did well, what I did not do well, and what I could have done differently. For example, I let someone talk longer than others. I think about the way the role of somebody who teaches kids manners often leaves me exhausted and how that should not be my job...</i></p>	<p>Self-evaluation with the goal of future alignment with the core values or shedding the light on sidelined perspectives</p>
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## Results: The identified types of Constellations

What follows is a detailed overview of the six mapped constellations, together with their types, in an example of teacher identity. We will offer examples of constellations in the form of excerpts from individual reports consisting of participants' statements (in *italics*) accompanied by our analytic descriptions of the dynamics. Participants' names have been altered for anonymity purposes.

### ***1. The King and His Kingdom Constellation (Short: The King's Constellation)***

This constellation is characterized by the presence of a prevailing Ideologue, i.e. the King, who is the center of the constellation, and, often, by the presence of a dominant Ideologue. Their ideology constitutes the fulcrum of purpose for the individual.<sup>6</sup> If a person has a dominant Ideologue, it is a strong source of purpose, moral orientation and legitimation of other voices. The constellation also includes voices that assist in implementation of the Ideologues' standpoints: the Executors and Facilitators, which are in the team work relation with the King and together with the King constitute *King's coalition* (analogously to Herman's notion of coalition; Hermans & Hermans-Konopka, 2010). However, in order to ensure the smooth functioning of this constellation and the implementation of core values, King's coalition regularly suppresses voices of resistance - the Protestors (especially the Antagonist) and the Illegitimate Facilitators, with whom it is in permanent conflict relation (Džinović, Grbić, & Vesić, 2023). Finally, the constellation also includes exterior voices, over which the King's coalition prevails.

Based on the intensity of the tensic relations, we can distinguish between two types of King's constellation:

#### *1.1. Smooth functioning King's constellation*

This type of King's constellation includes the voices of the King's coalition and exterior voices. Sometimes, there is also the Advocate, an influential standpoint which, through a relation of *cooperation*, modifies King's performance so that the King implements both his own and the Advocate's values. This type is characterized by high compatibility between the encompassed voices, which is phenomenologically experienced as smooth functioning.

#### *1.2. Tensic King's constellation*

The dynamic of this type is more complex due to the presence of *productive tension* between the voices of the King's coalition on the one hand, and the Process Modifier or the Advocate, on the other hand. Likewise, in some situations, the Process Modifier can enter a productive tension or

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<sup>6</sup> The term "ideology of purpose" refers to the values shared by the voices comprising King's coalition and the dominant Ideologue. This is in line with our theoretical propositions that each voice is defined by its distinctive ideological stance, but relations between the voices rest on their compatibility, i.e. common parts of their ideology (Džinović, Grbić, & Vesić, 2023).

conflict with the Advocates cooperating with the King, which manifests the dynamics of the conflict over influence on the King. This type shows how sometimes the King's will is carried out through tense and not only harmonious relations. However, this type differs from constellations characteristic of states of crisis and transition in that it allows for different ideological standpoints to be simultaneously implemented in behavior controlled by the King. Alexandra's case is an example of this type of the King's constellation:

Alexandra is a young class teacher who is trying to balance her preference towards modern style of teaching and the need to set appropriate boundaries. Her King is the Lecturer, which personifies the values of interactive teaching and closeness to children: *The Lecturer is happy when the children are participating.* He relies on the Friend, its Facilitator, in order to become close to the children, build trust, and discover their interests: *When the Lecturer sees that the child is sad, he uses the Friend to try and connect to him. The Friend would try to find out what bothers the kid during the play time, in such a way that the child does not notice it.* The Pedagogue is an Advocate personifying the narrative on the importance of socialization and manners: *It wants students to learn the school rules, to adjust to the new environment, to befriend other students.. It also protects the students and shows them empathy.* The outcome of the cooperation between the Pedagogue and the Lecturer is partial modification of the Lecturer's performance in accordance with the Pedagogue's values. The constellation also includes the Adult as the Process Modifier. Through productive tension, the Adult reminds the Lecturer, the Friend and the Pedagogue that *...it is necessary to set boundaries to maintain the teacher's authority. They [children] do not take me seriously and they think we can be buddies... They need to know that we are the grown up ones, we organize the teaching process. The Adult actually monitors these roles and it goes hand in hand with them all the time. That is why there is this tension between them and the Adult. The Adult controls the rest of them, reminds them of that.* (Alexandra)

In the psychological sense, this constellation allows us to understand *the core values that guide them and the ways they normally implement them in the context of value pluralism and the permanent openness of the self to new perspectives.* The King's constellation is the most common constellation in the given context and it is responsible for relatively stable and individually distinctive behavior.

Due to the complex relations it encompasses, the King's constellation is characterized by frailty. Common dysregulations of its dynamics lead to the appearance of other constellations that are phenomenologically experienced as more tense and demand greater regulatory capacities<sup>7</sup>. Likewise, they represent the struggle to realize core values in the context of pluralism, and in the social situations that challenge these values. After a brief dysregulation, the King's constellation is usually established, while we pose that a prolonged continuation of one of the remaining five constellations<sup>8</sup> could be a sign of maladaptive functioning.

## **2. Crisis Intervention**

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<sup>7</sup> These transitory constellations can help us analyze and understand the process background of diverse psychological phenomena related to motivation, cognition, and personality.

<sup>8</sup> Which can themselves become a new, dysfunctional form of the King's constellation.

Maintaining our core beliefs manifested in the King's constellation necessarily include influencing other people in order to make them compliant with our wishes. When the exterior voices resist and manage to undermine the King's Constellation, this marks the beginning of the Crisis Intervention Constellation. We identified two scenarios in which the undermining of the King's Constellation leads to Crisis Intervention. In the first scenario, exterior voices directly undermine the King's coalition, and the function of the Crisis Intervention constellation is reestablishing the prevailment of the King's ideology. In the second scenario, the Process Modifier is indirectly undermined, and the constellation serves to reestablish the relation of productive tension between the King and the Process Modifier. Both scenarios include *Crisis Intervention coalition* comprised of voices that personify interpersonal and conflict resolution competences, and are capable of solving the issue and providing the conditions for the reestablishment of the King's constellation.

### *2.1. The Crisis Intervention coalition restates the King*

#### *A. With the appearance of the Illegitimate Facilitator*

When the King's coalition is directly undermined, the first "defense" of its core values includes the appearance of the Illegitimate Facilitator, which takes over the scene and manages to establish prevailment over exterior voices using undesirable means. The prevailment of the Illegitimate Facilitator is temporary due to the delegitimizing influence of other voices, especially the King and the Dominant Ideologue. However, the result of its influence is that the King's coalition can regain prevailment over exterior voices. Sometimes the Illegitimate Facilitator tries to take over the behavior but fails to exert influence, either because it is met with strong resistance from exterior voices or from the interior or internal voices (because 'the methods' of Illegitimate Facilitator are highly controversial). Then, the King's Facilitator or an Executor can prevail over exterior voices, which allows for the establishment of the previous King's Constellation.

### *2.1. The Crisis Intervention coalition restates the King*

#### *B. Without the appearance of the Illegitimate Facilitator*

However, in some cases when the King is undermined, Crisis Intervention does not include the Illegitimate Facilitator, but the King's coalition takes over the role of the intervention team. If they fail because of overwhelming resistance, the King itself resorts to suitable tactics, such as the change of argumentation, thus prevailing over exterior voices. The final outcome is the reestablishment of the previous King's constellation through a network of the King's allies. What follows is an example of the appearance of the Illegitimate Facilitator, that quickly becomes suppressed by other voices that manage to solve the interpersonal crisis:

Tea's King's coalition comprises the Educator, the Actor and the Psychologist. The Educator personifies a modern teaching practice: *I mainly teach through discussion and guide students to discover the answers themselves... I teach culture. My classes should be pleasant, creative, and interesting.* For that, it uses the Actor as the King's Executor: *The classroom is a kind of a stage, and I have to adjust to my public.* The Psychologist is a Facilitator: *Every student group is different. ... She takes into consideration their needs and wishes.* When the exterior voice of children undermines the Actor and thus weakens the position of the

Educator, the results include disorder and indolence. Then, the Boogeyman as the Illegitimate Facilitator temporarily prevails: *Then the Boogeyman needs to shout and issue threats... I was not aware of my behavior... It was like a volcano eruption... It lasted for two minutes and then they went back to chatting.* Other voices consider Boogeyman's methods problematic: *He creates negativity, a bad atmosphere... I would kick him out of the classroom.* Also, since the children manage to thwart the Boogeyman's maneuver, the Psychologist takes over the scene and starts interacting with the students.: *When it's hellishly hot ... I say to them: "Maybe I have to go to the bathroom too; I am nervous too, maybe I am hungry. ... But let's endure until we finish the job." ... I can scream, but sometimes I want to get through them. ... I want to show them that I am not a Boogeyman, that I care about them. ... And then they sometimes stop fussing and settle down.* The Psychologist is interacting with the students in a way that makes it possible for the Educator to later take the stage. Here, the preferred intervention involves the use of harsh means, while the more refined methods personified in the Psychologist are employed only if the Illegitimate Facilitator fails. (Tea)

## *2.2. The Crisis Intervention coalition reestates productive tension between the Process Modifier and the King*

### *A. With the appearance of the Illegitimate Facilitator*

The other scenario involves the indirect subversion of the Process Modifier. At first, the King is in a relation of productive tension with the Process Modifier, it is legitimized by an exterior voice and sometimes cooperates with an Advocate. However, the King can become strongly legitimized by the exterior voice or more strongly influenced by the Advocate, and these relations can overpower the influence of the Process Modifier. That is when the King no longer needs to tolerate the influence of the Process Modifier in order to retain prevailment over exterior voices. Therefore, the relation of productive tension between the Process Modifier and the King turns into a conflict. This conflict is resolved through the intervention of voices, which results in the strengthening of the Process Modifier. Although this scenario initially does not resemble a crisis situation, since it starts with the strengthening of the prevailing ideology, a long-term absence of process modification would eventually make it impossible to implement it (see example below).

As in the first scenario, the interpersonal crisis could help previously suppressed Illegitimate Facilitator to surface and to prevail over exterior voices. What happens is similar to the first scenario (2.1.A): other voices that comprise the Crisis Intervention Team delegitimize and suppress Illegitimate Facilitator (because its methods of resolving the issue are unacceptable) and the Team resolves the interpersonal crisis. The difference is that the team is comprised of Facilitators or Executors of the *Process Modifier* (and not the King), with the goal of reestablishing the relation of productive tension between the King and the Process Modifier (and not the King's prevailment).

## *2.2. The Crisis Intervention coalition reestates productive tension between the Process Modifier and the King*

### *B. Without the appearance if the Illegitimate Facilitator*

As in the first scenario (2.1. B), Sometimes even before the Illegitimate Facilitator appears the Crisis Intervention Team comprised of Facilitators or Executors of the *Process Modifier* takes over the scene. Through influence on exterior voices, the Team sets the stage for the reestablishment of the relation of productive tension between the King and the Process Modifier. The example below show the situation in which the first response to the interpersonal crisis is the appearance of the Illegitimate Facilitator, who is then suppressed by the Crisis Intervention Team:

Alexandra, as a young class teacher, developed two Process Modifiers who control her teaching practice. Aside from the Adult, who takes care of setting appropriate boundaries with the students, she also has a voice of Controller, the Process Modifier who: *...is the one that makes sure there is order in the classroom, so that it does not turn into chaos. He reminds me to always keep track of everyone and make sure that all students are safe.* The Controller establishes productive tension with the Lecturer so that it modifies its performance in accordance with the Controller's demands and thus retains prevailment in relation to the exterior voices of children. However: *the Lecturer is happy that the children are participating. That's why the Lecturer at that point dismisses the Controller. He starts thinking that he is better and smarter than him.* This marks the dysfunctionality of the King's constellation and triggers the Crisis Intervention constellation. Firstly, as the Controller is weakened, its suppression of the Screamer, the Illegitimate Facilitator, also weakens, which then takes over: *The Controller doesn't have any special power, and then the Screamer appears. The Screamer wants to outvoice the students and uses shouting to make them understand...* The short-term prevailment of the Screamer is met with resistance from numerous voices, including the Controller: *The Controller quickly musters the strength to overpower the Screamer...." They are children. You should not shout. You may scare a child". The Controller attacks the Screamer and literally forces it to stop.* This weakens Screamer and enables the second intervening voice - Calming voice - to take over and to resolve the crisis in the interaction with the students in a legitimized way: *If she starts shouting, she gradually lowers her voice, becoming quieter. She does not even speak in a normal tone but almost whispers, thus letting them know that they all need to lower their voices.* The Calming voice is Controller's Facilitator and reestablishes order, which allows for the Controller to once again exert influence on the Lecturer through the original relation of productive tension. (Alexandra)

This constellation can show how an individual goes through the process of struggle to *maintain a dominant sense of self and core values in the face of interpersonal problems*, for which she engages additional resources because the capacities manifested through the King's constellation are exhausted. One additional resource is Illegitimate Facilitator, as it can personify "healthy" aggressiveness. However, it can also signify oversimplifying the problem situation and loss of control, which represents the dynamic of impulsive behavior and can cause social conflicts or self-criticism. Therefore, other resources are employed through the activity of the Crisis Intervention Team, which could include, for example, new relations between old actors (e.g. the Ideologue and the Protestor from the previous King's constellation may enter a temporary relation of cooperation, which is effective in overcoming students' disobedience).

### ***3. Defense of Purpose***

When exterior voices or the context exhibits strong or lasting resistance to core values, a temporary monologue regarding the futility and pointlessness of efforts appears, which marks the Defense of Purpose constellation. In this constellation, the actors include the King's coalition, the Dominant Ideologue, the Antagonist, exterior voices, and the legitimizing context. The key characteristic is that the voice of Antagonist, which is usually suppressed, manages to undermine the relatively stable prevailment of the ideology of purpose, and Antagonist's narrative temporarily prevails<sup>9</sup>. This coup in the strategic situation occurs when the voices personifying the ideology of purpose are undermined by an exterior voice (e.g., unenthusiastic students), the institutionalized context (e.g., the school administration), or an internal voice, most often the Protestor (e.g. the voice of Tired or Weak). It is enabled by leaving the context that previously legitimized the position of the Ideologue of purpose (specifically, when the teacher leaves the classroom, arguments such as: "Why do I even do this?" become louder).

This situation greatly mirrors the dynamics of crisis, since the Antagonist resembles the Illegitimate Facilitator in that it is met with strong resistance from a multitude of voices, including not only the King's coalition and the Dominant Ideologue, but also Advocates, which would also be threatened in case of long-term prevailment of the Antagonist. However, there are three key differences in relation to the Crisis Intervention constellation. Firstly, this constellation is characterized by the presence of Antagonist which, unlike the Illegitimate Facilitator, addresses exclusively the internal voices of the King's Constellation and it never includes the Illegitimate Facilitator, while the reverse is true for the Crisis Intervention constellation. Secondly, the dynamics of this constellation have an additional, dysfunctional quality, which involves the Antagonist's monologue that results in this voice becoming omnipresent and virtually compulsive in the individual's consciousness. The form of self-consciousness characteristic of the Antagonist's prevailment can be understood as a manifestation of self-rumination, a repetitive self-focus on negative aspects of the self or the world (Trapnell & Campbell, 1999). Thirdly, while Crisis Intervention occurs and it is resolved within the same ongoing interpersonal situation, Defense of purpose starts after the end of the social situation in which the King is undermined and continues to last for some time (in the case of teachers, several lessons or days). The newly established order of power in the strategic situation can further take one of the two main directions.

### *3.1. The defense via the reestablishment of the ideology of purpose*

The King's prevailment is reestablished and the ideology that constitutes the fulcrum of purpose is restored: a) via the King's own act of referring to its own core argumentation and thus manages to regain legitimacy; b) via legitimization of its standpoint by an exterior voice, or c) via the influence of one of the King's Facilitators. We offer an example of the Type 3.1a. Defense of Purpose constellation:

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<sup>9</sup>The Antagonist is a form of Protestor that personifies an immense frustration, feelings of helplessness, personal worthlessness or futility of someone's efforts (Džinović, Grbić, & Vesić, 2023).

In Olga's case there is a constant struggle between the true enjoyment in her professional practice and desperation that stems from the fallacies of being a teacher. Even though her King, which she named I Without the Mask, bears a strong sense of professional purpose (*I really love to teach... I sincerely enjoy the vocation I chose*), once she leaves the classroom in which students were disinterested or acted inappropriately, the Antagonist's legitimacy is enhanced. Then, her Antagonist, which she named the Real Life, temporarily prevails and the dominant narrative becomes that of dissatisfaction with the state of the profession, administration, and lack of motivation among students. This strongly undermines the purpose of being a teacher: *I feel good, this is who I am, in the classroom, this is where I am happy and satisfied. But when I go out, I start thinking about whether I should stay or give up and get a different job.* The empowered Real Life offers the following argument to the I Without a Mask: *Alright, Olga, they keep misbehaving, so why not just quit? You are young, find a better-paying job, somewhere where you will be valued and respected.* However, I Without a Mask refers to its core argumentation in order to regain prevailment: *I love my job so much that I am not sure I would do any other job half as well. I would not be interested in the work I do, not really, not from the heart.* This enables the I Without the Mask to suppress the dangerous Antagonist and to maintain dominance. (Olga)

### 3.2. The defense via the establishment of the ideology of responsibility

The key difference in relation to Type 3.1. is that, after the ideology of purpose is undermined, it is not reestablished immediately, but in two separate steps. In the first step, when the Antagonist prevails over the voice that personifies a sense of purpose, the voice personifying the ideology of professionalism, work ethics or social responsibility enters conflict with the Antagonist and prevails over it. The voice of responsibility argues for the importance of "getting the job done" in the given setting, and, thus, prevails over exterior voice, even though the Antagonist's narrative could still be heard through increased resistance. Long-term prevailment of the voice of professionalism over the Antagonist sets the stage for the second step, in which an exterior voice re-legitimizes the ideology of enthusiasm and purpose (for example, handling lessons professionally allows for positive interactions with students). Over time, this situation leads to the reestablishment of the King's constellation, in which the relation of productive tension or cooperation is restored between the ideology of enthusiasm and purpose and the ideology of professionalism. Together, they manage to again completely suppress the Antagonist.

Mina's King is the Teacher, which personifies the narrative about the importance of imparting knowledge and maintaining discipline. Her Advocate, the Enlightener, personifies the narrative about the importance of encouraging critical thinking, freedom of expression, and creativity. The Teacher and the Enlightener are in productive tension: *The Teacher is learning that he needs to be creative... but at the same time, he maintains order despite Enlightener's beliefs that the freedom of thought is important. I try to stay balanced that way.* When students' positive feedback reinforces the position of the Enlightener, it temporarily pushes the Teacher off the stage and manages to assert its own values and to completely neglect the Teacher: *Then the greatest achievement of the Enlightener is when he uses its creativity and children actually learn something.* This means that the relation of productive tension between the stronger Enlightener and the weakened Teacher is changed to temporary conflict.<sup>10</sup> However, when the Enlightener, after taking over the

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<sup>10</sup> This marks the change from the King's constellation to the Value Conflict constellation.

stage, is undermined, either by the children who use their creativity in order to play instead of learn or the school context, Mina's Antagonist, which she named the Rebel appears. The Rebel personifies thoughts about pointlessness of the teaching profession: *Then I do not care at all... I am angry and I do not want to do anything... I give up.* The temporary prevailment of the Antagonist not just threatens the sense of professional purpose but the ruling institutional value of imparting knowledge to the younger generation which is personified in Mina's King. In those circumstances, the King struggles and manages to reestablish prevailment over both the already weakened Enlightener and the Antagonist itself, which leads to: *...boring lessons, where I tell them to write something down or give them something to practice.* However, when the Teacher implements its ideology, various interactions with children that ensue allow for the re-legitimization of the Enlightener: *[The Enlightener] retreats for a while and then tries again. Because that is who I am, if something fails, I want to try again.* The strengthening of the Enlightener allows for this voice to once again exert influence on the Teacher through a relation of productive tension. (Mina)

Defense of Purpose constellation illuminates *the mechanisms that underlie the maintenance of intrinsic motivation*, that is, the sense of meaning and enthusiasm. Personal perseverance and ambition can be understood as lasting success in the defense of the ideology that represents the fulcrum of purpose. The loop of reexamination and confirmation of what the person believes in is resolved through two distinct mechanisms. The first, quicker one presupposes that King gives a motivational speech about the reasons why it is worth being a teacher and fighting for something. If this is ineffective, the Ideologue that personifies the value of adherence to social norms argues: "You should do what is expected of you, not ponder the question of purpose!". The longer prevailment of the Antagonist can result in an identity crisis, which can lead to fruitful private and professional transitions. However, this could also yield an instrumental, dispassionate approach in a particular field. If the sense of purpose is not achieved in other ways or alternative life contexts and the Antagonist's narrative becomes too prominent, the person can experience depression symptoms: A sense of helplessness and compulsive thoughts about personal worthlessness.

#### **4. Value Conflict**

When exterior voices or the institutionalized context does not allow for the simultaneous implementation of two personally or socially legitimized ideologies, an internal conflict arises with the goal of fully implementing or defending the perspective with which the person identifies to a greater extent. This marks the Value Conflict constellation. This constellation is preceded by the King's Constellation, whose key part is the relation of productive tension or cooperation between two voices that personify important ideological standpoints. One of them is the King, which enjoys significantly greater legitimacy granted by the sociocultural context (e.g., the voice of the Traditional Teacher) and is modified by the Advocate. The other, modifying Advocate is the one the person identifies with to a greater extent (e.g., the voice of the Children's Motivator). The first central feature of the dynamics of the Value Conflict constellation is that the initial relation between the King and the Advocate turns into a conflict.

There are two scenarios through which this could happen, which differ in their beginning:

##### **4.1. Conflict stems from the additional legitimation of the Advocate**



In the first scenario, an exterior voice or the context additionally legitimizes the Advocate, making it powerful enough to take over the scene and thus temporarily silence the King.

#### 4.2. Conflict stems from the temporary delegitimation of the Advocate

In the second scenario, the conflict arises when resistance from exterior voices or the context makes it impossible for the Advocate, the modifying voice, to implement its ideology through a relation of cooperation or productive tension with the King. In those circumstances, the Advocate is forced to start the conflict with the King in order to assure the realization of its own ideology.

In both scenarios, the Advocate succeeds in weakening the King, often to the point of suppression (sometimes with the help of other internal voices who legitimize the Advocate), which enables it to prevail over the exterior voices<sup>11</sup>. Also, in both scenarios this situation is temporary and involves a response from the King and a conflict between other important voices of the self and the prevailing Advocate. This brings us to the second central feature of the dynamics of this constellation, which pertains to the return to the original power balance, that is, the King's constellation. Whenever a monologue is imposed, even if it is held by the voice that personifies core values, it is usually short-lived, as this threat to pluralism is met with the intervention of voices (and context), in order to reestablish the previous pluralistic environment. Below is the example of the second scenario:

The key part of Ruth's King's constellation is the relation of productive tension between the Lecturer, the King which personifies a traditional teacher, and its Advocate, the Motivator, which personifies the values of a modern teaching approach: *It is important for them to learn some facts, but for me it is very important that they think... just like in sports - you love it, it's hard but you overcome obstacles, not everything is beautiful and interesting, you discipline yourself, you find your own motivation.* [The Lecturer] *provides an outline, a framework, and [the Motivator] is like a spice, but highly important.* Their relationship turns into a conflict when students' disinterest undermines the implementation of the ideological position of the Motivator, rendering the Lecturer unable to meet the Motivator's minimum demands. The Motivator temporarily becomes prevalent in relation to exterior voices and Ruth then gets creative and motivates students: *... so [students] would realize that they can do it... and learn that life is about trying... I am there to be a wind beneath their wings.* However, the Motivator's solo performance leads to resistance from other voices. The loudest among them are the exterior voices of Parents: *There are no definitions, the content could barely fill a page. Only rarely the parents said - good, we are teaching them to think!* Then the Subsequent Evaluator, Reflection, speaks up: *Students will not receive the necessary amount and quality of knowledge.* The Motivator was further weakened by the teacher's narrative about the contradictory demands of the educational system. Due to multiple conflicts with other voices, the Motivator loses its legitimacy. Consequently, the Lecturer's position is strengthened and the original King's constellation is reestablished: *The Lecturer realized that it underestimated itself and overestimated others. That made it regain its strength again.* (Ruth)

If we compare the Crisis Intervention constellation and the Value Conflict constellation, we perceive two important distinctions. Firstly, Crisis Intervention concerns a crisis of the main ideology or a crucial relation of productive tension within the King's constellation, which is caused

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<sup>11</sup> Mina's example in the previous chapter has shown how her Advocate, the Enlightener, temporarily completely suppressed her King, the Teacher, and took over the interaction with the exterior voices, i.e. the students.

by the conflict between the voices of the King's constellation and the *exterior* voices. On the other hand, the Value Conflict constellation concerns an *internal* conflict between two opposing values, which results from the legitimizing effect of the context or exterior voices on one of the voices. Secondly, while Crisis Intervention is resolved by the *intervention team*, the Value Conflict constellation is resolved solely by those voices that entered the conflict in the first place.

This constellation enables us to better understand *ambivalences and discontinuities in behavior and one's sense of self*, which, from our perspective, do not represent measurement errors. Likewise, the examination of this constellation can help us understand *more permanent identity changes*, since the constellation involves reflection about who the person is and who could become, which may lead to the creation of a new King's constellation. However, findings suggest that this process is conditioned by changes in the social context. This means that it is highly unlikely for a short-term personal change to be socially and institutionally supported, having in mind that the context itself is characterized by the strict regime of dominance of certain discourses. If prolonged, fluctuation between alternative, potentially mutually exclusive value systems without a final choice being made (especially if combined with frequent emergence of the Reflection constellation) could produce psychological discomfort. This shows the importance of power relations for the constitution of a sense of self.

### **5. Temporary Inclusion of Sidelined Perspectives**

One of the constellations allows for the engagement of the Protestor's resources, which are less commonly used, so that this voice could temporarily influence the King, by virtue of social and institutional legitimization. This constellation is established after the fall of the King's constellation that was characterized by a conflict between the King and its Protestor. Since the Protestor was in a position of resistance, its voice was heard, but it was unable to exert influence on the performance of the King's Coalition. In this novel situation, due to the influence of the context or the legitimizing action of an exterior voice, the Protestor enjoys greater legitimacy and becomes powerful enough to modify the King's performance through productive tension. The Protestor may be additionally empowered by Advocates or Process Modifiers, lending legitimacy to its arguments. Still, this dynamic is temporary. A new context or a change in the exterior voice's attitude towards the Protestor leads to this voice's loss of legitimacy. Thus, it once again finds itself in a position of resistance to the King. What follows is an example of this constellation:

Ivonne's King is the Pedagogue: *He is objective and realistic, he holds everything in his hands. But most importantly - he is very just, he will be the most fair when grading the students.* The Pedagogue is strongly influenced by her Process Modifier, the Psychologist: *The Psychologist knows that every child is a different story and that they all should be approached differently. He can get through every child's soul and he knows how I should treat each of them.* Aside from these three voices, a regularly suppressed part of King's constellation is the Protestor which Ivonne named the Angel, which argues for rewarding children with better grades and encouraging them to show their qualities: *But I am sometimes an Angel, only rarely, when I give children slightly better grades than they deserve.* In special situations in which that is socially expected - *only at the end of the school year, never at the end of semester* - Angel gets legitimized not only by social context but also by internal voices. The Psychologist legitimizes the Angel by putting forward the

following argument: *It happens that children get nervous and do poorly on a test. But they usually actively participate in class or answer my questions knowledgeably. These are the children that will amount to something and they are almost always well-behaved. But they need to overcome certain mental blocks, which means that they need a bit of encouragement to engage.* Widely legitimized, Angel manages to enter a relation of productive tension with the Pedagogue, and the Pedagogue has no other way but to change its interaction with the exterior voices in order to actualize Angel's insistence on rewarding the good students. This enables the Pedagogue to retain prevalence over exterior voices, and Ivonne to sometimes look less strict than usual. (Ivonne)

This constellation allows us to *conceive inconsistencies in one's behavior and experience* along with *the exploration of alternative identity positions*. However, the constellation represents a rather rudimentary way of achieving pluralism of important values. The long-term purpose of this constellation is a potential for the identity change: the inclusion of the Protestor's ideology in a new King's constellation and permanent modification of the main ideology through productive tension between the former Protestor and the King. This constellation, thus, constitutes a form of triage of new ideologies that could be visible in the King's constellation in the future. The encouragement of inclusion of sidelined perspectives can be considered as one of the main strategies in psychotherapy or professional development facilitation, as suggested by the authors of the DST when discussing Challengers, or power redistribution - positions that are less dominant but important to the individual should become stronger (Hermans, 2018; Hermans & Hermans-Jansen, 2004; Honos-Webb, Surko, Stiles, & Greenberg, 1999).

## **6. Reflection**

The Reflection constellation allows for a more efficient adoption of the values personified in the Dominant Ideologues, empowerment of sidelined voices, and greater awareness of the affective and bodily states. Actors in this constellation are the voices of the King's constellation and the Subsequent Evaluator. The functioning of this constellation hinges on the change of context in which some previous constellation took place (for teachers, the context changes when the class ends). Reflection focuses on the outcomes of this previous constellation, with the Subsequent Evaluator offering a wider reflexive look at situations with similar outcomes. Hence, this constellation is phenomenologically experienced as reexamination, reflection, or guilt. Another important feature of the constellation is that it exclusively includes interactions among the voices of the self, whether internal or internalized. It can involve continued reflection on everyday functioning or reexamination of consequences of a crisis in interpersonal relations. We identified two types of this constellation.

### *6.1. Reflection in service of the dominant ideology*

The ultimate effect of Reflection is the reinforcement of the influence of the dominant ideology<sup>12</sup>. In this constellation type, the Subsequent Evaluator and the King enter a relation of cooperation or

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<sup>12</sup> Based on the data available, we can only conclude that the reinforced ideology is that of the Dominant Ideologue, but we assume that Reflection can also reinforce the ideology of the Advocate.

productive tension, due to the compatibility of the ideologies of the King and the voices supported by the Subsequent Evaluator. What follows is an example of this constellation type:

The Subsequent Evaluator, which the teacher named the Evaluator, hears the ideological position of the dominant Ideologue, the Family voice, which says that it is never good enough, and reinforces it by asking the Educator, the King, what could have been done more properly or differently: *I am extremely self-critical, I am never satisfied, and I always think that I could do better... I always look for flaws...it is who I am. My mother is like that and so am I. I am not sure, but maybe my grandmother was like that as well. My grandmother was a teacher* [mother and grandmother are personified in the Family voice]. Due to the compatibility of the ideologies of the Educator and the Family voice, the relation between the Evaluator and the Educator can be described as that of cooperation. In order to retain prevailment, the Educator listens to the Evaluator and modifies its performance: *It turned out to be very interesting, and, even though I was praised for it, and everyone said that it was great, I was not satisfied afterwards.... On my way home, I think about what I did in class and wonder whether I could add something that would make it more interesting.* Apart from the Family voice, the context of the education system additionally legitimizes the Evaluator: *They actually require us to evaluate lessons so we could improve the outcomes of the teaching process. I mean, we have to prepare it in our plans.* (Tea)

## 6.2. Reflection in service of the ideology of resistance

This type is characterized by a conflict between the Subsequent Evaluator and the King, with the purpose of the conflict being the reinforcement of the ideologies of resistance. This form of Reflection does not result in a modification of the King's ideology, but the King may be temporarily sidelined. This type of Reflection could be conducted in two ways. The first one presupposes that, after the change of context that legitimized the powerful voices of the King's constellation, the Subsequent Evaluator ventriloquizes the arguments of the sidelined ideologies, thus allowing them to be heard. The second way is more unique: the voices that act as Protestors in most of the other constellations now appear as Subsequent Evaluators. They take advantage of the change of context and offer their own counter-arguments, becoming louder in their opposition to the powerful ideology of the King's constellation. These voices usually personify tiredness and emotional and bodily states. Reflection in service of the ideology of resistance is characterized by significantly less legitimacy (both from the context and from the internal voices that partially mirror it), and, unlike in the Temporary Inclusion of Sidelined Perspectives constellation, the amplification of the resistant voices does not generally lead to a more permanent change in power balance. What follows is an example of Reflection where the Protestor assumes the function of Subsequent Evaluator:

In Jane's case, The Teacher is the King, which personifies the narrative about learning based on experience and critical thinking: *I mean, (it's important) that they not just memorize the facts, but to learn things that they will use later in life and things that will make them think.* Tutor is the Advocate that cooperated with the Teacher: *It is important to use the materials to teach children certain life lessons. The Teacher interacts with the students, but it also starts using the materials for character-building purposes.* However, after a class in which the Tutor temporarily took over and completely suppressed the Teacher... *when I saw something that is unacceptable to me, for the culture of dialogue, I admit that I waste the whole class just talking to students...*, Jane later reflects negatively on that situation. During the Reflection constellation, her

Protestor, the Tired, temporarily assumes the role of Subsequent Evaluator: *I'm never that tired when I focus on the subject matter, but Tutor's role leaves me exhausted because I have to do the work that is actually a job of the parents.* Also, the Teacher complains: *I have failed to complete the lesson.* However, her other Advocate, The Ambitiousness, contradicts the Tired: *I ask for the maximum dedication, preparation. It means full investment... To the point that you can feel the sweat dripping down your back.* It thus argues: *Do not give up!* Supported by the Ambitiousness, the Tutor manages to defend its position by highlighting its core values: *It is not time lost if it is something that is truly important for the students.* Thus, even though in the Reflection constellation the Protestor managed to express its dissatisfaction, it was eventually overpowered by more powerful voices that personify Jane's core beliefs. (Jane)

Reflection in service of the dominant ideology echoes the socio-cognitivist concept of *self-evaluation*, which helps determine the way a specific form of behavior should be altered to be more in line with personal standards and experience positive emotional self-evaluation (Bandura, 1977; Caprara & Cervone, 2000). However, social cognitivists overlook the formative effect of the context (Džinović, Grbić, & Vesić, 2023): this type of Reflection constellation mirrors cultural imperative of constant self-improvement (Verhaeghe, 2014), which is continuously reinforced in various institutionalized contexts. Frequent and intense reflection that reinforces the dominant values emphasized by the feeling that it is never good enough is at the very core of perfectionism, and can lead to insecurity, rumination about one's own value, insecurity, and/or guilt. Additionally, procrastination can be seen as a dynamic of avoiding situations in which the Subsequent Evaluator could determine whether the outcomes of an activity are in accordance with a dominant value system.

Another addition to social cognitivists' ideas is that *self-evaluation could also lend a stronger voice to alternative (and not only dominant) values and beliefs.* Therefore, Reflection in service of the ideology of resistance can support the principle of maintaining pluralism in the agonistic self, rather than domination only. When the Reflection constellation performs this function, its Subsequent Evaluator is most similar to Hermans's *meta-position* (Hermans, 2018). If too frequent, this type of Reflexion can help us understand indecisiveness and endless reconsiderations of previous life choices.

### **Discussion: Why Use Constellations When Studying the Self? Methodological Advantages of the Proposed Framework**

In this paper, we have offered a differentiated category system for mapping complex patterns of the dynamics of the agonistic self. Detailed descriptions of the categories at the formal level facilitate their application in work with different participants and in different research projects. Our model conceives these complex relation patterns as constellations. In the following paragraphs, we will offer arguments that support our belief that constellations constitute an adequate framework that other researchers can apply in future studies.

For the past 20 years, authors have emphasized the need for the dynamics of the multiple self to be described at a more complex level, encompassing relations between a multitude of voices (e.g., Hermans & Hermans-Konopka, 2010). Some useful concepts and analytical procedures have been devised, as previously discussed. Our analysis of the agonistic dynamics represents a

validation of these assumptions and efforts. We have empirically shown it to be possible to identify constellations – specific and stable patterns of relations between multiple characters within the strategic situation that follow a specific scenario. We argue that the identified constellations represent the optimal level of analysis of the dynamics of mental functioning, in the sense that they constitute sufficiently comprehensive “sequences” of psychosocial dynamics that surpass the atomism of individual components and dyadic relations and enable us to understand the complexities of behavior in a specific context. At the same time, constellations are limited in terms of the type and number of components and the time interval. Their comprehensiveness and temporal limitedness allow us to identify them and determine their psychological functions.

We treat constellations as concepts which have dual function. On the one hand, our 6-partite system is conceived as a methodological framework that guides data gathering, analysis and interpretation in a systematic and disciplined fashion. On the other hand, constellations are hypothetical constructs that aim to explain the psychosocial dynamics that underlie personal dispositions and different psychological outcomes.

We believe in external social reality which is socially constructed and, thus, not fixed or immutable, but which, in a historically and culturally specific way, shapes us as psychological subjects, and that a variety of personal, idiosyncratic and content dependent categories with which one describes his or her own experience will have a common denominator. Our work represents an attempt to grasp that common denominator - that is why we have developed and defined a system of formalized, content independent categories that could be applied to a variety of individual dynamics. For instance, “Reflection” is a constellation that mirrors previously mentioned cultural imperative of self-monitoring and self-improvement at all times. By implication, we would not argue that the same constellations would be relevant in some radically different cultural and historical circumstances (on the contrary). Additionally, although we would expect some context-relevant specificities (e.g. some variations might appear in personal compared to professional settings etc.), the categories we developed in our analysis are descriptions of the formal characteristics of the dynamics of the agonistic self. We did this by modeling Kelly's (1955) professional or diagnostic constructs. A description of the relationship between voices within a constellation that does not enter into the content of their ideologies increases the likelihood of transferability, i.e. that our analytical categories can be applied to describe the experience of many persons in different contexts. After testing our framework in different contexts, we are open and even expect that subsequent research will point to the adequacy of developing new categories or reconceptualizing the existing ones.

Utilizing constellations in psychological research enables us to do what proponents of the trait approach insist on (Costa & McCrae, 1992), and that is to describe stable and individually distinctive behavior. At the same time, constellations take into account the human potential for alternative, inconsistent courses of action, whose realization depends on the specificities of the social context, which is in line with the ideas of social cognitivists (Shoda, Mischel, & Wright, 1994). In our previous paper, we highlighted the fact that constellations have the potential to

simultaneously describe the stability and socially conditioned mutability of identity (Vesić, Džinović, & Grbić, 2022).

Apart from shedding light on the multiplicity of the domain of subjectivity, constellations offer a suitable framework for mapping the hierarchical organization of multiple ideologies within a certain strategic situation as well as mapping how these strategic relations change over time. A unique contribution of constellations lies in the fact that they present this organization of meaning as a result of the struggle of certain perspectives to retain dominance while subjugating or suppressing alternative perspectives.

By analyzing psychosocial dynamics using constellations, we are able to recognize different mental pathways that can lead to the same outcomes at the intrapsychic (e.g., guilt) and behavioral (e.g., social withdrawal) levels. This clashes with the assumption that lies in the very foundation of the psychometric approach, and that is the idea that there is a relatively invariable disposition underlying a specific psychosocial outcome.

Moreover, constellations are sensitive to both social relations and the influence of the institutionalized context on the dynamics of the agonistic self, as exterior voices and the context are included as constellation constituents. Therefore, being aware of the formative and legitimizing influence of the context is a prerequisite for forming a critical attitude towards dominant social discourses and practices. This further allows for a more radical change in power relations, both within the self and in society. Likewise, the promotion of personal development can be based on possibilities that constellations offer in terms of recognizing the values that are currently marginalized and represent untapped potential.

The described qualities of the proposed methodological framework are in accordance with the methodological demands outlined in the constructivist paradigm (Caputi et al., 2012; Denzin & Lincoln, 2018), which opposes the pathologizing biomedical approach and highlights the importance of searching for the potentials of an individual and the facilitation of processes of personal and social emancipation through qualitative research practice.

### ***Limitations and Directions for Future Research***

Finally, we will consider the limitations of our paper and directions for future research. Since we mapped constellations based on our analysis of the professional identity of elementary school teachers, it is necessary to additionally verify their validity both in research and in practice, for example, in the context of mental health, career development, and learning. Furthermore, as the data originated from participants' reflexive statements, future research should incorporate social interaction and context analysis as additional sources of information on constellations. Likewise, since our sample exclusively included women, it is possible that our descriptions did not shed light on the aspects of constellation dynamics that could be sensitive to gender differences. Also, it is possible that the ASI procedure would be demanding for those individuals who were offered a semantic framework far from their usual way of thinking about themselves. Finally, we feel that we did not devote enough attention to the conceptualization of hazy, diffuse bodily states, such as fatigue or pain, and their role in our model of subjectivity and behavior.

In order to monitor long-term changes in the dynamics of the agonistic self, it is necessary to conduct longitudinal studies in the future. Such studies, especially in the context of therapy, could verify some of Herman's concepts, such as his notions of *third position* and *promoter position*. Our research data support the need for examining the patterns of switches between constellations, which should likewise be explored within a longitudinal research project. Moreover, it is necessary to further elaborate the Model of Agonistic Self Methodology so it could be used to better understand and describe developmental psychological phenomena, which is a line of research we have started pursuing (Grbić, Vesić, & Džinović, 2021). Finally, the outcomes of the aforementioned research endeavors would make it possible for the model to be practically applied in the form of psychological facilitation programs directed at achieving personal and professional wellbeing. Džinović, Vesić, & Grbić (2021) and Džinović (2021) offer examples of practical model application, which requires further development.

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## Supplementary material

### *The Agonistic Self Interview - ASI*

I would like us to talk about your identity [personal, peer, professional, and national] from an unusual perspective that is actually close to everyday experience. If you were asked to discuss the topic of “I as a [person, friend, teacher, citizen, member of a nation]“, the description would probably include a multitude of different characteristics that would comprise the collage of your identity. This representation of your identity could be observed as a set of various roles that have different characteristics and advocate different perspectives on what values are important to you [in

life, social relations, career, and nation], how you should think about yourself, how you should act under various circumstances, and so forth. These roles can be seen as different aspects of your identity, which act as characters on an imagined stage, entering into diverse relations and engaging in dialogue with one another. We witness this when we become aware that we quarrel with ourselves, embolden ourselves or internally respond to messages we receive from other people. I would like us to talk about the characters that are present on the stage of your [personal, peer, professional, national] identity, their interrelations, and their imaginary dialogues.

### Structure

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<b>Mapping Internal Voices</b>	When you think about different aspects of your personality, which can be imagined as different characters, which characters come to mind? What was your first thought, what you are like? How else would you describe yourself?
<i>Questions for the Elaboration of the Voice's Ideology</i>	Who is this character? What is it like? What is important to this character? What does it appreciate and value? How does it see the world around it? Can you concisely formulate the general idea or thought that this character epitomizes? Now use the paper to write down this thought. How would you name this character? Write down its name above the text. In which situation does this character appear? How does it happen?  <i>[Interviewer instructions: Questions for the elaboration of the voice's ideology should be repeated for every internal, internalized, and exterior voice that is elicited. If more voices appear later on during the interview, they should be written down as well!]</i>
<b>Mapping Internalized Voices</b>	Now add the thoughts, ideas and messages of other people who are important to you, as if they were "voices" with whom you engage in dialogue from time to time. These are perspectives that you know originate from others, but you still feel that you have adopted them and "hear" them even when these people are not present.
<b>Mapping Exterior Voices</b>	Finally, add the thoughts, ideas, and messages of other people that are relevant to your sense of self. These are the people in your private or professional life with whom you often engage in meaningful dialogue on topics that relate to the sense of self, values, and worldviews. Present these people and conversations with them as if they were characters that also appear on the stage of your sense of self.

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### Dynamics

We will now explore the interrelations between the characters on which we have previously focused. Have in mind that they can agree with one another, help one another, engage in conflict, dominate over one another, show resistance, and so forth.

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## Mapping the King's Constellation

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- 1. The King** 1.1 Which character is dominant in the sense that it has strong ideas about what needs to be done and how? Who is the leader who influences some of the other characters? Who among them most commonly enters into relations with other people and is most observable in behavior?  
What are the manifestations of this influence? How do you know that these voices look up to the King?

*[Interviewer instructions: From now on, use the name for the King that the participant has chosen.]*

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- 1. The King's Coalition** Which characters help the main character most often, act as its advisors, and most readily fall under its influence? Which situations make this relationship conspicuous?
- Executors 2.1 Which characters only serve to implement [the King's] ideas and values and act as "contractors"? Can you explain how they perform this function, using an example of a typical situation?
- Facilitators 2.2 Which characters direct their actions towards making it easier [for the King] to implement its ideas and set the stage for its appearance or return to power? How do they perform this function?  
2.3 Are there any situations in which other characters implement [the King's] ideas? What are these situations and characters?
- Context-Sensitive Changes 2.4 Are there any situations in which other characters set the stage for [the King's] appearance? What are these situations and characters?
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- 3. The Dominant Ideologue** 3.1 Is there a voice on which even the King relies? Who does it see as an authority figure? Who has an influence on this voice? This voice can personify the same values as the King, but may also be somewhat different. Do you remember someone from your past whose words and actions are still important to you to this day?
-

**4. Advocates** 4.1 Which characters cooperate with [the King] to the greatest extent?

Cooperation 4.2 Which characters have a perfectly smooth cooperation with [the King] and share [the King's] ideas? What does this cooperation look like?

Productive Tension 4.3 Which characters show a certain degree of disagreement, incompatibility or even conflicting interests, but [the King] still cooperates with them? What does this cooperation look like?

Context-Sensitive Changes 4.4 Are there any situations in which other characters cooperate with [the King], regardless of whether the cooperation is smooth or fraught with tension?

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#### **5. Evaluator Voices**

Process Modifier 5.1 Which character reexamines other characters' actions, above all, [the King's]? What does it say to [the King]? How does this take place in a concrete situation? Who do you associate with situations in which you wonder whether you should have done something differently or whether you should have done more or less?

Context-Sensitive Changes 5.2 Are there any situations in which another character supervises the behavior of [the King]? What are these situations? What does this character say to [the King]?

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#### **Mapping the Suppressed Voices in the King's Constellation**

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#### **6. Mapping Protestors**

Antagonist 6.1 Which character most strongly opposes [the King]? What does this character say to [the King]? Is there a character that believes that efforts in favor of the King or the dominant voice are futile and meaningless or tells you that you are worthless?

Protestors 6.2 Which characters are ignored, sidelined or silenced? Who silences them and why?  
Are there any characters that rebel against some of the King's actions but get silenced?

Context-Sensitive 6.3. Are there any situations in which other characters oppose [the King] in the manner  
Changes we discussed earlier? What are these situations and characters?

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**7. Mapping** 7.1 Which characters do the dirty work for [the Dominant Ideologue] or [the King]?  
**Illegitimate** Which characters do you associate with undesirable actions, but represent the last  
**Facilitators** resort in dealing with certain problems in interpersonal relations? In which situations  
do they appear? How do they do that?

*[Interviewer instructions: Make it specific: "For example, when you get angry at someone or when you get abrasive in a certain situation."]*

Context-Sensitive 7.2. Are there any situations in which some other undesirable characters become  
Changes prominent in the manner we previously discussed? What are these situations and  
characters?

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### Mapping Other Constellations

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*[Interviewer instructions: Give the participant a general instruction at the beginning of each constellation. Let the participant independently remember a situation based on experience. Based on a conversation about the development of the given situation, the interviewer determines the type (e.g., whether in the case of the Crisis Intervention constellation the participant said that 8.1 – The Illegitimate Facilitator solved the problem, 8.2. The King's team solved the problem, or 8.3 The Modifier was threatened). When the researcher and the participant together complete the elaboration of the situation, the following questions should encourage the participant to remember situations in which other types of the given constellation are present.]*

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**8. Crisis Intervention** *Try to remember a situation in which you, that is, your King, wanted to do something that is important to you, but other people prevented it from happening (e.g., you wanted to use interactive teaching methods but your students were not cooperative and did not want to participate). What do such situations look like? How are they resolved?*

8.1 Did you notice the appearance of the character you mentioned before, the one who does the dirty work for [the dominant character or the King]? What does he do? How does the situation unfold? How is it resolved?

8.2 Is there a similar situation in which there are characters that cooperate with the King and facilitate its return to power? How does the situation develop? How is it resolved?

8.3 Does it sometimes happen that the King ignores the character that supervises and controls it? What does the ignored character do then? How does the situation unfold? How is it resolved?

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**9. Defense of Purpose** *Describe a situation in which you start to think that your efforts have been in vain, that your endeavor is meaningless.*

9.1 When does this happen? What else do you think then? How does the situation unfold? How is it resolved?

9.2 Do you sometimes decide to stop thinking about purpose or lack thereof and act in accordance with the belief that you simply need to go through the situation any way you can? What does that look like and what happens then?

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**10. Value Conflict** *Try to remember a situation in which you were torn between two choices. You temporarily leaned towards one choice (e.g., what the King or some other voice believed in), but you realized that if you had picked this option, it would have been at the expense of the other. You became indecisive and wondered what to do next. What happened then?*

10.1 Does it sometimes happen that a character that used to cooperate with the King usurps power and decides to do what it finds important, thus ignoring the King? What does this situation look like and how does it unfold? How is it resolved?

10.2 Are there any situations in which the King starts to throw its weight about and stops acknowledging characters that are important to you, characters with which it used to cooperate? How does this situation progress? How is it resolved?

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**11. Temporary Inclusion of Sidelined Perspectives** *Now try to remember a situation in which you acted in a way that is not characteristic of you. Perhaps, your King may sometimes act in an unusual way and include a sidelined character it usually ignores.*

11.1 What do such situations look like? How are they resolved? Try to remember another situation in which another character managed to influence the King. How was this situation resolved?

*[Interviewer instructions: Make it specific – “For example, if you normally do not acknowledge that you are tired, do you sometimes let yourself feel tired and get some rest? If you are otherwise lenient, do you sometimes decide to be unusually strict?”]*

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**12. Reflection** *What does it look like when you reflect on your previous actions? How do you reexamine yourself? Try to remember one such situation.*

12.1 How do you verify that you have accomplished what your King or Dominant Ideologue would have wanted you to do? What do you do then?

12.2 Sometimes we manage to achieve what is important to us, what our King believes in, and only later become aware of the price of our actions. For example, sidelined voices/characters may appear and reexamine or criticize what the King insisted on. What does this reexamination look like? How does it end?

*[Interviewer instructions: Make it specific – “For example, people can sometimes be too harsh on others in order to realize their own ideals of justness and professionalism, but they later feel sorry for not being more sensitive.”]*

12.3 What does it look like when a character tells [the Dominant Ideologue or the King] that it is tired and exhausted due to the actions of these stronger characters, pointing to the negative consequences of their actions for a person’s body or (mental) health? What happens when a character says that it is scared, sad or depressed because of what [the Dominant Ideologue or the King] insists on? How does the situation progress? How is it resolved?

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