Editorial: A Personalist Orientation to School-based Counseling Policy Research

Christopher A. Sink
Robert T. Dice
Old Dominion University

Introduction

"The challenge of becoming a person…is for man, given the realities and complexities of human emotions, relations, knowledge, and action, to transform this first and abiding egocentrism into his service as *a life and value affirming person*" (Amato, 1975, p. 16; italics added)

School-based counseling policy researchers often address their epistemological orientation (e.g., empiricism, scientific method, phenomenology) supporting their investigations. Curiously, however, the literature rarely speaks to the metaphysical issues grounding this research. In our view, advocating for and conducting rigorous policy research and evaluation without taking time a priori to reflect on the "deeper" issues involved indicates a shallow approach to this endeavor. More plainly, how often do scholars intentionally deliberate individually and collaboratively on their philosophical orientation guiding their work? What values, worldviews, and philosophical orientations inspire their theory selections, research aims, methodology, and interpretations? One cannot assume that academics are researching for noble ends, such as, to improve the welfare of children and their families. Similar to Creswell and Cresswell (2018), we suggest in this article that these weighty issues necessitate a meaningful response, namely, policy researchers should be guided by a well-thought out philosophical worldview. Of the four viable options (post-positivist, constructivist, transformative, and pragmatic) presented in Creswell and Creswell, we add another—personalism—a philosophical orientation that ultimately places human well-being at center of all investigations (Ryff & Singer, 2008). Personalism is a viable alternative to establish student counseling services and concomitant policy and evaluation research. This approach undergirds in many respects various strengths-based perspectives of human functioning (e.g., person-centered humanistic and positive psychology; see, e.g., Lopez, Pedrotti, & Snyder, 2019). It is our hope that future school-based policy and evaluation research will be guided by the tenets of personalism and its correlates. These ideas are further explicated next.

A Call for Philosophically-Informed Policy Research

Researchers benefit from possessing a philosophy of inquiry and action, one that guides the trajectory and applications of their scholarship. In fact, the question may not be whether one needs a philosophy, for it is a forgone conclusion. It could be argued that everyone holds some sort of philosophy (narrowly or broadly focused), even if it has never been articulated; one's underlying approach to life influences emotions, thoughts, and actions. Unwittingly perhaps, researchers adhere to utilitarianism or pragmatism, while others are existentialists seeking meaning and purpose to inform their inquiries. Still others take a purely naturalist point of view, rigidly adhering to the philosophical principles situating the scientific method. Regrettably, some scholars are motivated by self-interest, pursuing recognition and self-importance, with little regard for the others' concerns or the practical impacts of their work on their "target population." In any case, humans are stirred by basic principles or beliefs that consciously or unconsciously affect their attitudes, actions, interpersonal relationships, research aspirations, and so on. More generally, humans demonstrate a philosophical stance—"a way of being." This way of being influences how they interface with others and the world around them. The feedback loop from these connections affects their experiences of human dynamics, as well as their personal emotions, cognitions, and actions occurring in the present and the future.

From infancy onwards, depending on one's environment and genetic makeup, the trajectory of functioning, and ultimately one's philosophy, is shaped. However, persons have social agency (i.e., "capacity to act is then represented by the capacity to move" [freedom] in ethical ways within the social milieu). This agency allows individuals to divert their egocentric whims, goals, and ambitions to nobler, altruistic ends (Macmurray, 1957). For most, a positive and hopeful homelife pilots a largely healthy view of self and others, as well as positive functioning (Seligman, 2011). Individuals who consistently experience unhealthful environmental and negative input may find themselves in uncomfortable cycles of functioning that undermine personal growth and flourishing. Over time, their worldview or philosophy may become rather unstable and self-defeating. For others who face similar challenges, psychological resilience can lead to subtle positive changes in philosophy propelling them forward in life. They can cope with adversity and bounce back

more quickly (Cohn, Fredrickson, Brown, Mikels, & Conway, 2009; Faulconbridge, Hunt, Laffan, Fatimilehin, & Law, 2019).

Knowing one's philosophy or what we might call a "way of being"—to borrow the notion from Carl Rogers (1980)—allows individuals to recognize and understand the patterns imbedded in past behavior and allows them to anticipate how they will respond to future experiences. This awareness of one's self can provide access to an understanding of personal beliefs, motivations, and convictions. When people can articulate this awareness, they position themselves in a space to take on the larger philosophical questions of life that will ultimately guide their life journey and better ensure that the direction is in line with personal truth.

Returning to the major theme of this commentary, clarifying one's philosophy should direct the course of scholarship (i.e., research agenda) and its long-term goals. Namely, one's philosophical orientation should positively contribute well-being of children and youth. In the next section, personalism and its key tenets are summarized. Later, we show that the values or principles underlying the ethical codes of the counseling profession are clearly aligned with the personalism. To close, sample psychological and counseling approaches that are consonant with personalism are briefly shared.

Introduction to Personalism

Although elements of personalism were evident over the millennia, for instance, in Graeco-Roman thought and various religious traditions, personalism as an articulated philosophy appears to have originated in the early in the early 20th century with the writings of various European and North American philosophers, including, for example, Mounier (1950; French), Macmurray (1957; 1961; Scottish), and Bowne (1908; N. America). Thus personalism, or perhaps more appropriately, personalisms, as the plural form, may better capture the sense that there were and continue to be different yet overlapping strands. In any case, they reflect similar characteristics and principles, but the weight of these characteristics can vary greatly between personalists (Williams & Bengtsson, 2018). Currently, the movement seems to have coalesced into two overarching strands, albeit this dichotomization is artificial and controversial.

One strand originating from Western perspectives highlights Judeo-Christian and other neo-religious convictions and values (e.g., the human is a unique person in God's creation) to ground human personhood. Loosely speaking, the other conceptual framework adopts a humanistic, secular view of personhood. A higher power(s) is not needed to establish a philosophy of persons. A historical and conceptual analysis of personalism in all its verities can be gleaned from extensive sources such as Williams and Bengtsson (2018). For our limited purposes here, we summarize the

major tenets common to the personalist movement next.

Core Tenets

1. The personalist asserts that there is an undeniable difference between human and other species.

The contention holds that this divergence is not just one of evolutionally steps, but rather, a difference in definition. The human being is first and foremost a *person* and other co-inhabitants are non-persons. This distinction is not to demean other species but to reiterate that humans have unique characteristics that allow them to consider the value and importance of their co-world inhabitants.

2. The personalist believes in the uniqueness and dignity of all persons.

Personalists with great resound echo a common understanding, yet oft-ignored ideal: there is only one *you* among all humans that exist and have ever existed; thus, *you* are of priceless value and you coexist in a community of priceless yous. The immeasurable worth ascribed to the individual promotes a reverence of ethics and morals that are needed to interact with others in caring and compassionate ways. By elevating the principle of human dignity, we fully honor who we were, who we are, and who we will become. In short, the incalculable importance of each person lends itself to a way of being neither above nor below the other species in an ecological sense, but in a spiritual (persons in search of greater meaning and self-transcendence) sense.

3. The personalist views persons as being the only true subject.

This assertion of "person as subject" speaks to the interiority of knowing that can be achieved through interpersonal dynamics and self-awareness of experience. Conversely, objects can only be viewed and examined, and the awareness of their experience eludes our grasp. Thus, personalists view others not as objects to be studied but individuals in community that should be understood in that context. Similarly, persons are not under investigation, nor are they to be viewed as passive contributors of an investigation.

4. The personalist believes in the power of self-determination and that persons act in more than mechanical ways.

The intellectual nature of the person allows for a sense of freedom and subjectivity that hoists their responses to the world around them beyond action and reaction. This characteristic, attributed only to persons, can distinguish right from wrong and good from evil and speaks to the self-authorship that forms the uniqueness of the individual. Creativity is also central to this discussion, where persons not only create their own actions they also generate their own morality in doing so. This rational action enables the person to be held responsible for one's self, character, identity, and live

choices.

5.   The personalist asserts that persons are inextricably linked to the social world.

When humans are left in isolation, they are hard pressed to move beyond themselves and to be genuinely empathetic and love others.   The personalist also recognizes that persons strive for independence or autonomy as humanistic psychologists might proffer. The difference here is that the personalist privileges the human need for others to enhance, for example, survival, purpose-in-life and meaning, sense of belonging, and personal growth. This need for others extends beyond that of society and into the person's ability to authentically commune with others.   At this level, persons mutually confirm and affirm each other in genuine relationships that are both personally fulfilling and socially nurturing (Macmurray, 1961).   The self-deterministic qualities of individuals allow them a sense of self-ownership of which they can "give-of-themselves" to others. This self-sacrifice or altruism is the highest form of communion with another, as this behavior often reflects a sense of unmerited love. The personalist further contends that only a person can give and receive this type of *agape* love (benevolence**,** impartial love for others without the need for reciprocity) (Carter, 2006; Wilson, 2006).

From these principles, school-based counseling policy researchers can evaluate the ultimate goals and foci of their scholarly work. For example, from a personalist point of view, these types of questions related to one's research agenda, deserve serious reflection: Is the elevation of personhood a central concern of my policy-related investigation? How does my research emphasize the value of the person in her social world? In what ways does the research encourage children and youth to be participants (collaborators) in the study? Does the researcher avoid overemphasizing objectivity, in a way distancing himself from participants? Do the outcomes of the study reaffirm the student-participant as a self-determining person, one who is appreciated, honored, and her welfare protected and nurtured? Does the study and potential impacts focus on enhancing children's personhood and human dignity?   Do the research outcomes promote the well-being of all participants and do policy recommendations ultimately focus on bringing justice, equality, and social welfare to all schoolchildren? Obviously, it is our hope that school-based counseling policy researchers can affirm the principles embodied in these questions.

Connections

Ethical codes of counseling. Personalism is also, by its very nature, a broad ethical framework to base one's research.   Its key tenets are consistent with the foundational values of most professional codes of ethics in counseling (e.g., American Counseling Association, 2014; American School Counselor Association, 2016; Fisher, 2009).   Table 1 summarizes this alignment of values.   Thus, this philosophical orientation is not external to professional ethics but perhaps in some ways "authoring principles."

Existing counseling/psychological frameworks. To reiterate, from a personalist standpoint, the goals of all policy research in school-based counseling ought to be oriented toward the enhancement of students' sense of self/personhood within their social milieus or communities.   Auspiciously, there are multiple theoretical/conceptual orientations in counseling and psychology that are, at some level, aligned with this overall focus and can be used to ground investigations that honor students' personhood. In this final section, we summarize some of these.

1.   Humanistic, existential, and person-centered psychology and counseling approaches

The principles of these conceptual or therapeutic frameworks focus on individuals in and of themselves and their ability to self-manage and self-actualize (Schneider, Pierson, & Bugental, 2014). They recognize and respect the inherent self-worth, autonomy, and personhood of all humans. Any attempt to "study" and counsel individuals should be highly supportive, nondirective, and empathetic.   Obviously, Rogerian-related constructs, including person-centeredness and unconditional positive regard (Kirschenbaum & Jourdan, 2005; Rogers, 1980), reflect personalists' affirmation of human dignity and the concern for the person's uniqueness, subjectivity, social relations, and self-determination.

Similarly, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Maslow, 1943), a framework describing human functioning, is in several ways consonant with personalism. The tiered model of human development posits that individuals progress from dependence on others toward an interdependence with others and in the process self-actualize (Maslow, 1971). This self-society mutuality underscores a personalist's view that interdependence is the hallmark of human existence.   Thus, policy and evaluation researchers who adopt Maslow's conceptual framework should reaffirm the importance of children and youth to govern their own lives.

Existential psychology and psychotherapy (e.g., Yalom, 1980) are also congruent with personalist ideals and intentions. For example, the research and therapeutic undercurrents of existentialism (e.g., installation of hope, universality, imparting information, altruism, development of socializing techniques, interpersonal learning, group cohesiveness, catharsis, and love) are congruent with a personalist's views on the affirmation of human dignity and interdependence and the concern for the person's subjectivity and self-determination (Wong, 2010).

On a related point, most non-directive therapeutic

A PERSONALIST ORIENTATION TO SCHOOL-BASED COUNSELING POLICY RESEARCH
Journal of School-Based Counseling Policy and Evaluation

Volume 1(2)

orientations (e.g., humanistic-existential, Rogerian), whether be utilized in schools or clinics, elevate the importance of the client/practitioner relationship, reflecting personalism's alignment with authentic interpersonal dynamics. In fact, research consistently reports a moderate effect size between positive client outcomes and a strong therapist/client alliance (Lambert & Barley, 2001). To this end, it would befit practitioners to adopt a personalist philosophy, for it highly values the unconditional acceptance of clients and the uniqueness of their experiences. Genuine dignity is assigned to clients regardless of their circumstances, actions, emotions, or beliefs. Counselors meet clients on level ground un-judged, neither above nor below their self-ascribed "position" in the counseling relationship. This inherent dignity ascribed to the client from the onset gives rise to other attributes (e.g., trust, openness, genuineness, hope, autonomy) that aid in furthering the therapeutic relationship. Thus, as school-based counseling policy researchers formulate their investigations, these humanistic/personalist therapeutic dynamics should be considered.

2. Glasser's Choice Theory and Reality Therapy

Glasser's (1998) approach to counseling and human functioning, overlapping in many respects with the humanistic orientation, avers that persons are responsible for their own life decisions and should be, at some level, inner-directed. In fact, Choice Theory suggests that the goal of human functioning is to satisfy five basic needs: survival, love and belonging, power (self-direction), freedom, and fun. Several of these needs are what personalists advance as core "higher" human values and motivations. Additionally, of the ten axioms associated with Choice Theory, these unmistakably reflect a personalist's belief in the inherent right of self-determination and the value of meaningful communion with others and social interdependence: (a) the only behavior we can control is our own; (b) all enduring psychological problems are relational problems; (c) the problem relationship is always part of our present life; and (d) all total behavior is chosen. Finally, Glasser's (1998) seven caring behaviors reflect how a personalist researcher and counselor might approach their work. Counselors are to support, encourage, listen, accept, trust, respect, and negotiate differences (see Wubbolding, 2013, for an overview of Reality Therapy).

3. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

CBT is a widely deployed counseling method that focuses on the thoughts of clients and the ways they affect behavior and emotionality (see Dobson, 2009, for an extensive discussion). This orientation to mental health assumes that personal introspection is key to quality communication and understanding one's belief system. CBT is consonant with personalism's principles of dignity, self-determination, personal value, and that the human person should be the ontological starting point of philosophical reflection. Additionally, CBT assumes that that persons are more capable than therapists at discovering personal meaning and solving their own challenges.

4. Constructivist psychology and related therapies (e.g., narrative therapy)

Human beings are not determined by their genes and environment but emerge out of a complex constellation of influences. They are not a product of mechanistic forces. From the constructivist point of view, humans live in a world with a confluence of mediating factors. These are other- and self-shaped so that persons in a way "own" their own existence and worldview. Persons construct their choices, experiences, morals, aspirations, and so forth (Neimeyer, 2009). Narrative approaches to counseling such as narrative therapy emphasize the constructed nature of human existence. Children and youth construct their own stories and use them to guide their functioning. The therapist recognizing this reality, focuses on listening with an open mind and demonstrating respectful curiosity (Vetere & Dowling, 2016). The person is *not the problem* to be *treated* but, instead viewed as a co-collaborator in the process of self-healing. The notion of separating the person from the problem is consonant with personalism's affirmation of dignity and its concern for the person's subjectivity and self-determination. Narratives that are also created at the social level mirror a personalist's emphasis on the relational nature of persons.

5. Positive psychology and related therapies

(see Lopez, Pedrotti, & Snyder, 2019, for a comprehensive presentation). A more recent movement in scientific psychology originating largely with the work of Seligman and colleagues focuses on the healthy side of human functioning. This approach specifically examines the major dimensions of human well-being (e.g., self-acceptance, purpose in life, personal growth, positive relations with others, environmental mastery, and autonomy) that clearly coincide with key foci of personalism (Park, Peterson, & Seligman, 2004). More recently, Seligman's (2011) theoretical model of happiness called PERMA[1], updates this research, providing the essential elements for humans to maximize their healthy functioning. Kern, Waters, Adler, and White (2015) demonstrated how this framework can be used to increase the well-being in students.

There are numerous approaches to counseling and therapy based on the work of positive psychology (Seligman, Rashid, & Parks, 2006). These methods emphasize and reinforce the good side of human functioning and client's developmental assets or strengths. Healthy development and well-being are ultimately the goal. The person in therapy is honored and her autonomy is respected. For example, one approach to positive psychotherapy is Well-being Therapy (WBT;

Fava, 1999). WBT borrows heavily from Ryff's (Ryff, & Singer, 2008) multidimensional model of psychological well-being, comprising environmental mastery, personal growth, purpose in life, autonomy, self- acceptance, and positive relations with others. Recall these areas resonate with a personalist orientation to optimal human functioning.

Concluding Remarks

With this editorial, we attempted to briefly convey the need for school-based policy researchers to revisit their philosophical orientation to their scholarship. It was suggested that personalism is an exemplar philosophy to develop a research agenda upon, for it emphasizes the inherent worth of all persons. Personalism denies all attempts to reduce human beings to mechanistic forces, with their behavior largely determined by factors outside of their control. Instead, personalism takes a holistic view of humans, ascribing positive attributes to all persons, such as freedom, interdependence with others (community-seeking), spirituality, dignity, autonomy (self- determination), genuine relationships, personal agency, and so on (Bowne, 1908; Macmurray, 1961). Finally, this way of being is a strengths-based approach and student-focused to guide school-based policy research. We hope that research leading to school-based counseling policies will assist all children and youth to ultimately become a life and value affirming person.

Author Note

Christopher Sink, Professor and Batten Chair, Department of Counseling and Human Services, Old Dominion University. Robert Tony Dice, PhD student, Department of Counseling and Human Services, Old Dominion University Correspondence regarding this article should be addressed Christopher Sink, Old Dominion University, Email: csink@odu.edu

---

[1] PERMA is an acronym for P – Positive Emotions (e.g., "feeling joyful, content, and cheerful"); E – Engagement (finding flow; "psychological connection to activities or organizations such as feeling absorbed, interested, and engaged in life"); R – Relationships (authentic connections; "feeling socially integrated, cared about and supported by others, and satisfied with one's social connection"); M – Meaning (purposeful existence; "believing that one's life is valuable and feeling connected to something greater than oneself"); and A – Accomplishments; "involves making progress toward goals, feeling capable to do daily activities, and having a sense of achievement") (see Kern et al., 2015, this practical descriptions).

References

Amato, J. (1975). *Mounier & Maritain: A French Catholic understanding of the modern world.* Ypsilanti, MI: Sapientia Press

American Counseling Association. (2014). *ACA code of ethics*. Alexandria, VA: Author.

American School Counselor Association. (2016). *ASCA ethical standards for school counselors*. Alexandria, VA: Author.

Bowne, B. P. (1908). *Personalism*. Boston, MA: Houghton, Mifflin, and Co.

Carter, L. E. (2006). The African American personalist perspective on person as embodied in the life and thought of Martin Luther King Jr. *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy, 20*(3), 219-223.

Cohn, M. A., Fredrickson, B. L., Brown, S. L., Mikels, J. A., & Conway, A. M. (2009). Happiness unpacked: Positive emotions increase life satisfaction by building resilience. *Emotion, 9*(3), 361-369. doi: 0.1037/a0015952

Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (5th ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Dobson, K. S. (Ed.). (2009). *Handbook of cognitive-behavioral therapies*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Fava, G. A. (1999). Well-being therapy: Conceptual and technical issues. *Psychotherapy and psychosomatics, 68*(4), 171-179.

Fisher, C. B. (2009). *Decoding the ethics code: A practical guide for psychologists* (2nd ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Glasser, W. (1996). *Choice theory: A new psychology of personal freedom*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.

Faulconbridge, J., Hunt, K., Laffan, A., Fatimilehin, I., & Law, D. (2019). Risk factors, protective factors and resilience: How we can nurture psychological wellbeing in children and young people. In Faulconbridge, J., Hunt, K., & Laffan, A. (Eds.), *Promoting the mental health of children and young people: Evidence, theory, and practice for effective integrated care* (pp. 13-50). London, UK: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Kern, M. L., Waters, L. E., Adler, A., & White, M. A. (2015). A multidimensional approach to measuring well-being in students: Application of the PERMA framework. *The Journal of Positive Psychology, 10*(3), 262-271.

Kirschenbaum, H., & Jourdan, A. (2005). The current status of Carl Rogers and the person-centered approach. *Psychotherapy: Theory, Research, Practice, Training, 42*(1), 37-51.

Lambert, M. J., & Barley, D. E. (2001). Research summary on the therapeutic relationship and psychotherapy outcome. *Psychotherapy: Theory,*

Research, Practice, Training, *38*(4), 357-361.

Lopez, S. J., Pedrotti, J. T., & Snyder, C. R. (2019). *Positive psychology: The scientific and practical explorations of human strengths* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Macmurray, J. (1957). *Self as agent.* London, UK: Faber and Faber. Retrieved from https://www.giffordlectures.org/books/self-agent

Macmurray, J. (1961). *Persons in relation*. London, UK: Faber and Faber. Retrieved from https://www.giffordlectures.org/lectures/form-person

Maslow, A. H. (1943). A theory of human motivation. *Psychological Review, 50*, 370-396

Maslow, A. H. (1971). *The farther reaches of human nature.* New York, NY: Viking Press.

Mounier, E. (1950). *Le personnalisme* (*Personalism*), Philip Mairet (trans.). Notre Dame, ID: University of Notre Dame Press.

Neimeyer, R. A. (2009). *Constructivist psychotherapy: Distinctive features*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Park, N., Peterson, C., & Seligman, M. E. (2004). Strengths of character and well-being. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology, 23*(5), 603-619.

Rogers, C. R. (1980). *A way of being.* Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.

Ryff, C. D., & Singer, B. H. (2008). Know thyself and become what you are: A eudaimonic approach to psychological well-being. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, *9*(1), 13-39.

Schneider, K. J., Pierson, J. F., & Bugental, J. F. (Eds.). (2014). *The handbook of humanistic psychology: Theory, research, and practice*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications.

Seligman, M. E. P. (2011). *Flourish: A visionary new understanding of happiness and well-being*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.

Seligman, M. E. P., Rashid, T., & Parks, A. C. (2006). Positive psychotherapy. *American Psychologist, 61*(8), 774-788. Retrieved from http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.61.8.774

Vetere, A., & Dowling, E. (Eds.). (2016). *Narrative therapies with children and their families: A practitioner's guide to concepts and approaches*. New York, NY: Taylor & Francis.

Williams, T. D., & Bengtsson, J. O. (2018). Personalism. *The Stanford encyclopedia of philosophy.* Retrieved from https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2018/entries/personalism/

Wilson Jr, L. T. (2006). The beloved community: The influence and legacy of personalism in the quest for housing and tenants' rights. *Journal of Marshall Law Review*, *40*, 513.

Wong, P. T. (2010). Meaning therapy: An integrative and positive existential psychotherapy. *Journal of Contemporary Psychotherapy*, *40*(2), 85-93.

Wubbolding, R. E. (2013). *Reality therapy for the 21st century*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Yalom, I. D. (1980). *Existential psychotherapy* (Vol. 1). New York: Basic Books.

Table 1

Alignment of Foundational Values Underlying Counseling Codes of Ethics and Personalism

Foundational Values Related to Professional Codes of Ethics in Counseling (Fisher, 2009)	Principles of Personalism
Autonomy—fostering the right to control the direction of one's life	Subjectivity and self-determination
Fidelity—honoring commitments and keeping promises, including fulfilling one's responsibilities of trust in professional relationships	Sense of dignity and refers to the inherent value placed on all persons that gives rise for the need of specific moral requirements
Justice—treating individuals equitably and fostering fairness and equality	
Nonmaleficence—avoiding actions that cause harm	
Beneficence—working for the good of the individual and society by promoting mental health and well-being	Sense of dignity and view that society is a basic human value that is not only a matter of convenience but an essential part of personal development
Veracity—dealing truthfully with individuals with whom counselors come into professional contact	Sense of dignity of the person and emphasizes the significance, uniqueness and inviolability of the person, as well as the person's essentially relational dimension