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Introduction

The central theme of this issue is “An individual in a crisis in educational and social support institutions”. This description of the discussed problems may seem too general. “A crisis” experienced by an individual has, after all, various faces and dimensions. It may occur on many stages, in interpersonal or intergroup relationships or in the space between a group and an individual. It is visible or hidden, well diagnosed or still under examination. Sometimes it is temporary and sometimes it is permanent. A crisis may consist in “a failure to cope” in certain situations and with certain risks; it may also be a consequence of a great loss or the bad influence of social groups and institutions. Finally, a crisis may also happen to institutions responsible for supporting individuals in difficult situations. A crisis or, in fact, “crises” understood in this manner are described in the papers published in this issue.

In the first part (*Studies and Dissertations*), we offer four works. The main character of the first paper by Mirosława Nowak-Dziemianowicz is an individual who comes from two “feuding tribes” which differ in their attitude to the past and to history. He experiences a crisis of individual identity and community identity and “demands” recognition. Beata Maria Nowak, on the other hand, focuses on the fundamental life environment of an individual, i.e. the family. The author looks at the family through the prism of a crisis, in particular a multi-problem crisis. Edyta Zierkiewicz analyses the phenomenon of mutual help among women in the crisis caused by breast cancer and describes the conditions of changes which take place in that area. And Barbara Jankowiak shows that the issues of adolescents experiencing crises related to the age of puberty and problems with relationships with adults, in particular in the family, have not been studied sufficiently.

The subsequent part of this issue consists of papers which focus on institutions with the task of protecting an individual from a crisis or creating conditions for overcoming a crisis.

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The notion of “an institution” combines many meanings, depending on the adopted viewpoint, i.e. the scientific discipline and social practice. It sometimes happens that the meanings overlap in some approaches. It also happens that the scope of issues in one scientific discipline differs from the scope of analyses in a different discipline and from the colloquial understanding of “an institution”, which is deeply rooted in everyday life. For example, legal institutions are not the same as institutions within the meaning of the material-social organization of a space, ones which gather specialists in a specific discipline. “Institutional education”, on the other hand, is associated with growing up outside a family, which is, after all, also defined as an institution, depending on the adopted theoretical perspective (e.g. in sociology). Of course, various examples may be provided of meeting points and differences in meanings conferred on “institutions” depending on who defines them, to what purpose, what is the subject of the analyses, and what is their theoretical context.

These comments, though obvious, have to be presented because the papers published in this issue speak about institutions within various meanings and scopes of social life organisation. And, therefore, analyses include institutions such as the state (understood as a space of organizing conditions for expressing the feeling of national community), the family (and its dysfunctions), and groups associating people with the same crisis (e.g. creating the environment of mutual support for those suffering from a disease). The authors of the papers referred to above analyse the situation of an individual against the background of operations conducted by those institutions. In the second group of papers (*Research Reports*), on the other hand, those institutions take different forms.

The papers presented here are written by representatives of such scientific disciplines as pedagogy, sociology, anthropology, and law. Thus, those works are an exemplary illustration of the interdisciplinary nature of issues related to an institution and the multitude of its meanings. That being so, Inga B. Kuźma and Alicja Piotrowska adopted the anthropological perspective and described institutions as specific places with a specific architecture, which defines the social climate and creates specific conditions of support for homeless people. The issue taken up by them is continued in another paper prepared by Angelika Cieślikowska-Ryczko and Gabriela Dobińska. These authors describe the operations of a non-governmental organization supporting the process of gaining independence by adolescents who have left resocialization centres. These are young people in the crisis of independence. The described “institution” of training flats as a social-educational place and a space for preventing the crisis of homelessness of young adults closely corresponds with the topic of the next paper (by Maciej Bernasiewicz and Monika Noszczyk-Bernasiewicz), in two different manners. Firstly, the idea of training flats is somehow a response to the institutional negligence of resocialization centres. Secondly, the review of resocialization programmes realised nowadays in Polish resocialization centres, which has been conducted by Bernasiewicz and Noszczyk-Bernasiewicz, shows that the issue of gaining independence and

preventing the homelessness of young people does not occupy a vast space there. The next paper, written by Małgorzata Dziewanowska, also pertains to issues of young people with the diagnosis of demoralization and experiencing the crisis of independence. This means the early motherhood of girl-residents of resocialization centres, an issue in the face of which the Polish legislator was, in fact, helpless for many years. As a consequence, there is a real risk (and a practice) of separating a young mother from her child. Dziewanowska describes that phenomenon and defines it as a challenge both for the legislator and for the whole society.

A discussion of a different nature may be found in the paper by Małgorzata Michel and Iwona Miksa. The main characters of their work are young people for whom a specific understanding of patriotism becomes (or may become) a justification for deviant behaviour. The authors believe that the crisis of the institution of upbringing is responsible for the dualism of the standards and values of young people showing radicalization of behaviour. On the other hand, a probation officer is an institution aimed at preventing the consequences and development of deviant behaviour as well as at supporting other institutions (educational and resocialization institutions, the family) in overcoming situations of crisis. The multitude and types of problems encountered by probation officers are analysed by Katarzyna Okólska in her paper which is a review of studies in that area. The second section ends with the work of Klaudia Wos which describes possibilities created by projects for the development of the cultural competences of the disabled.

In the section entitled *Discussions/Polemics*, we offer three papers. What they have in common is a reflection on the public space and the communication activities taking place there. Magda Pieczka refers in her paper directly to the theory of communication activities by Jürgen Habermas. Barbara Czarniawska, on the other hand, looks in her essay at a specific change of narration or, more precisely, a “replacement” of expressions and notions used to describe the problems of modern societies. The author asks a question about the results of the tendencies she has observed. And the paper by Sabina Siebert and Stephanie Schreven raises the issue of trust in an institution which watches over the reliability of research. Do “scientific hoaxes” played on journals increase trust in the peer review process or, to the contrary, do they prove that trust is impossible there?

The last part of this issue contains two reports on events which raised the issues of an individual in a crisis in (and of) educational institutions and social support. Those were scientific conferences which gathered scientists and specialists from all over Poland in Łódź (report by Magdalena Staniaszek) and in Kazimierz nad Wisłą (report by Weronika Zaród). During those events, issues of establishing and improving the existing institutions operating to help people experiencing the crisis resulting from problems with alcohol and/or homelessness were discussed.

We hope that the problems discussed in the papers we present in the latest issue reflect the multitude of aspects of “an individual in a crisis” and prove the diversity of phenomena accompanying the organization and functioning of educational institutions and institutions of social support.