



FR. BOGDAN STAŃKOWSKI¹
ORCID ID: 0000-0003-2803-3085

Jesuit University Ignatianum in Krakow
EDYTA PINDEL²
ORCID ID: 0000-0003-1062-6608
Pedagogical University of Krakow

SALESIAN WORK WITH SOCIALLY-MALADJUSTED YOUTH PERCEIVED FROM THE VIEWPOINT OF PARADIGMATIC FOUNDATIONS OF CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL REHABILITATION³

Abstract

In this article, the authors tackle the issue of Salesian social rehabilitation perceived from the point of view of the paradigmatic foundations of contemporary social rehabilitation.. The article is based on the analysis of available literature on the subject. The analyzes undertaken allow to state that the Salesian preventive system fits into the paradigms of social rehabilitation in the Polish context. Therefore, the presented analyzes prove that this system correlates with paradigms functioning in contemporary social rehabilitation practiced in relation to socially maladjusted youth.

Keywords: Salesian preventive system, maladjusted young people, social rehabilitation, paradigms

PRACA SALEZJAŃSKA Z MŁODZIEŻĄ NIEDOSTOSOWANĄ SPOŁECZNIE
POSTRZEGANA PRZEZ PRYZMAT PARADYGMATYCZNYCH PODSTAW
WSPÓŁCZESNEJ RESOCJALIZACJI

¹ Bogdan Stańkowski, diocesan priest, associate professor at Jesuit University Ignatianum in Krakow. Graduated from the Salesian Pontifical University of Rome. Research fields: Don Bosco's preventive system, prevention, social rehabilitation, education in the pluralistic context. E-mail: stabopol@interia.pl.

² Edyta Pindel, PhD, employed at the Institute of Educational Sciences at the Pedagogical University of Cracow. Scientific interests: social rehabilitation, penitentiary services. E-mail: edytapindel@yahoo.com.

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Abstrakt

W niniejszym artykule autorzy podejmują zagadnienie resocjalizacji salezjańskiej postrzeganej przez pryzmat paradygmatycznych podstaw współczesnej resocjalizacji. Artykuł opiera się na analizie dostępnej literatury przedmiotu. Podjęte analizy pozwalają stwierdzić, że salezjański system prewencyjny wpisuje się w paradygmaty resocjalizacji w kontekście polskim. Ukazane analizy dowodzą zatem, że system ten koreluje z paradygmatami funkcjonującymi we współczesnej resocjalizacji praktykowanej w stosunku do młodzieży niedostosowanej społecznie.

Słowa kluczowe: salezjański system prewencyjny, młodzież niedostosowana społecznie, resocjalizacja, paradygmaty

INTRODUCTION

Social rehabilitation measures employed by the Salesian preventive system fit to a certain extent into the society-based rehabilitation agenda, the goal of which is to allow a socially-maladjusted young person establish a relationship with the local environment (develop bonds with the local community), thus creating certain goods or services that are beneficial for the society. At the same time, such a person gets engaged in the educational system, taking part in vocational training, organized leisure time (sports and recreation) as well as social and religion-related activities (Bałandynowicz 2012b, 18). Theoreticians of the prevention system claim that the concept of the Salesian prophylaxis is founded upon a well-defined philosophical background, characterised by adequate understanding of ontological, anthropological axiological and christianological issues (Marszałek 2005, 386-399).

This paper is intended to provide an analysis and demonstrate how eligible it is to perceive the Salesian preventive system, applied in social rehabilitation conditions, from the perspective of paradigmatic foundations noted in contemporary social rehabilitation. In connection with what has been said above, it is worth pointing out the position of A. Jaworska, who emphasizes the importance of contemporary paradigms in social rehabilitation (Jaworska 2009, 137-148). I would also like to mention that the above work by A. Jaworska provided an inspiration for this article and the paradigms developed by the author also found their expression in this article.

1. PARADIGM OF FILLING THE EXISTENTIAL VOID VS. ORIENTATION TOWARDS DISCOVERING THE MEANING OF LIFE

One can hardly disagree with the statement that social rehabilitation of socially maladjusted young people is a process of an individual's transformation (Kieszkowska 2010, 263-278). Such a process would mainly involve erasing the present contents from a person's consciousness and introducing new ones, thus transforming his or her perception of the world and environment, reconstructing one's own image and one's identity (Szacka 2003, 154-155). In this context, it is possible to refer to a specific existential/axiological void, which develops in the lives of young people

who violate laws and morals. Scholars suggest that this void may be filled with values. Consequently, social rehabilitation would be focused on encouraging young people to choose values and subordinate them to a specific hierarchy of values based on the social hierarchy of such values. An important element in this context would also be the process of the adjustment modification of the hierarchy of values to pupil's individual characteristic, that is, their subject (personality and character) as well as object (environment) specificities (Kuč 2005, 141-142).

While analysing the Salesian preventive system from the theoretical perspective and looking at its application in social rehabilitation conditions, it must be said that it fits perfectly into the paradigms of the contemporary social rehabilitation. The system regards and treats pupils and their social rehabilitation process in a highly integral manner. Constant emphasis on the meaning of existence and life in this system (the value of life and self-improvement), stressing the quality of interpersonal relations between young people and significant others (the tutor as a father, friend and master roles) – it all brings social rehabilitation efforts closer to modern rehabilitation trends. In the prevention system, that existential void felt by a young person is filled not only with strictly external actions (ergotherapy, doing sports, etc.) but most of all by integral therapy in the spirit of prevention, which affects various dimensions of a young person's development: somatic, moral (establishing own moral core and reference points), cognitive, interpersonal (assistant-pupil relations) as well as the spiritual dimension (Stańkowski 2015, 279-289).

2. RELIGIOUS ASPECT IN THE PARADIGM OF OPTIMISTIC THINKING

In the paradigm of optimistic thinking, a significant role in social rehabilitation is played by religion, which not only opens socially maladjusted young people or prisoners to the issue of reconciliation with God, thus becoming an impulse to undertake the process of transforming one's life, but also guarantees in a certain way the individual's sense of safety and reinforces people's belief that the victory of good over evil and life over death is possible (Makselon 1995, 255-281). As scholars assure, an optimistic view of one's own life through the lens of faith triggers the willingness in pupils to form the image of their own humanity, which helps them develop a mature personality in somatic, psychological, social and spiritual dimensions (Kalinowski 2005, 150).

B. Stańkowski's investigation in terms of using the prevention system in social rehabilitation conditions demonstrate that in the said system a pupil/Christian is perceived as an individual on his/her way to perfection in the moral, agathonistic and religious dimensions. In this context, religion provides moral notions which enable young people to build/ arrange and evaluate the world. Religion is the source of hope also in the Salesian context and it introduces young people to the soteriological dimension (my existence extends beyond the material dimension, which implies the possibility of looking with hope at one's own life as well as of

improving oneself following the example of spiritually-wealthy people). In addition, religion in the prevention system satisfies the human need of transcendence and following higher values as well as subjecting one's instincts to those higher values (optimistic thinking in the scope of moral, ethical and agathonistic issues) (Stańkowski 2012, 339-365).

3. OPTING FOR THE POSITIVE ASPECT OF PUPILS' FUNCTIONING IN THE SOCIAL REHABILITATION PROCESS

In paradigmatic foundations of the contemporary social rehabilitation, it is stressed that there is also a necessity for the pupil to do good. This necessity stems from the human need to do good for other people and it is, therefore, understandable that social rehabilitation efforts concentrate on capabilities and powers of young people, on their urge for the self-expression of the inner good. The optics of doing good for oneself and other people is consistent with the activities which comprise art therapy programmes aimed above all else at obtaining constructive changes of personality in the structures of self-assessment and positive reorganisation of perceiving the surroundings, which have so far remained in a falsified form. As stressed by scholars, therapy/rehabilitation through artistic creation is an important form of work oriented towards discovering good in oneself and attempting to express this good, as well as opening to changes that may occur in the sphere of values (Florczykiewicz 2011).

As it refers to the achievements of personalism, the Salesian pedagogy chooses to treat pupils subjectively so that they gradually become protagonists of their own lives. Thus, the activities based on the preventive system are focused on bringing out what is invisible in pupils since humans are born as human beings but they strive to develop their own transcendental nature and personality, which is ontologically inclined to the good (self-improvement) (Lemoyne 2020). The studies prove that pupils in the Salesian practice are approached as important and unique subjects, endowed with numerous positive features and equipped with internal dynamisms which allow for the externalisation of the good inherent in them. For that reason, it is not uncommon for the Salesian practice to promote charity or work of the socially maladjusted youth to the benefit of social community and educational institutions (e.g. pupils' participation in activities in kindergartens) (Stańkowski 2015, 213, 218-219).

4. PARADIGM OF SELF-REALISATION

In modern intellectual trends in the scope of humanistic and transpersonal psychology, scholars accentuate subjectivity to emphasise that if human beings have their own sense of subjectivity, i.e. when they gradually become a subject, thus gaining an impact on the events and at the same time causing and receiving everyday experiences, then such people also develop in themselves an inclination

to take responsibility for their own life (making active decisions about taking responsibility for one's failures) (Maslow 1977; Rogers 1970). A philosophical trend of personalism contributes significantly to the understanding of subjectivity, emphasising human dignity and the right to self-determination of oneself while also objecting to the instrumentalization of the human being. Such emphasis on the personalisation process is important in social rehabilitation; following the thought of John Paul II – development of people and their upbringing is to be a process of becoming a human being (Iwański 2020).

The issues of self-realisation and subjectivity in the preventive system should also be understood in the spirit of personalism. The mere upbringing practice of Giovanni Bosco itself proves that the focus of upbringing had always been the pupil perceived in the categories of protagonism (Cian 1985, 199). Therefore, pupils' active engagement is required as a condition of their advancement and upbringing. It is worth noting that the entire educational activity of Giovanni Bosco was intended to awaken empowerment in pupils, thereby making them the first responsible one and the first cause of their development. Thus, the perceived self-realisation of an individual required a complete cooperation between the tutor and the pupil and it was an element of a holistic vision of pupils with orientation towards their moral, intellectual and physical development (Ricaldone 1953, 144). Hence, self-realisation on the part of the pupil in the Salesian perspective relied on cooperation transforming into a complete self-education that comprised inspiring, motivating, supporting and reinforcing pupils on the way towards self-upbringing (Braido 1967, 190).

5. RESPECTING THE OTHERNESS OF PUPILS

The authors dealing with social rehabilitation of prisoners and socially maladjusted young people emphasise the need to differentiate the approach towards both groups (Lipkowski 1976, 282-285). The paradigm of overcoming the routine and respecting the otherness of pupils is therefore becoming a practice resulting from obtained diagnoses concerning life trajectories of the law-conflicted individuals, from analyses of the previous legal offences or mental states of the youth as well as behaviours of juveniles and prisoners during various activities (sports, therapeutic, recreational, etc.). In this context, the authors refer to the principle of individualisation in social rehabilitation measures (Siemionow 2014, 44). The authors also emphasize the need to respect the pupil's subjectivity in social rehabilitation (Fidelus 2008, 219-220). The principle stems from the complexity and uniqueness of bio-social characteristics of each pupil. Consequently, the differences pertaining to personality features or social circumstances of the pupil should discourage from taking a "one-size-fits-all" approach (Górecki and Stachowiak 2002, 23). Also, the Polish legal system provides social rehabilitation measures on the basis of subjective, objective and environmental criteria of individualisation (*Ustawa* 2020).

The priority in the prevention system is getting to know pupils in terms of their character, disposition, aspirations, as well as in the aspect of upbringing-related efficiency of the family (financial situation, pathologies, etc.) (Marszałek 2010, 535-539). Theoreticians of preventive systems emphasise the very role of the principle of individualisation in the upbringing process. An individualised concept of upbringing provided in the Salesian preventive system promotes above all the pupils' subjectivity, the level of their development and the need to tailor their upbringing efforts to the specific character of individual pupils (Marszałek 2010, 611-620). Other studies confirm the involvement of Salesian upbringing communities in respecting the broadly-understood uniqueness of pupils, demonstrated in applying drama therapies, arts therapies, etc., in which pupils experience an individual approach to the process or social rehabilitation (Stańkowski 2015, 212-214).

6. PARADIGM OF RESPECTING PERSONAL DIGNITY OF PUPILS/ PRISONERS

According to scholars, a society pursuing to respect democracy and principles of cohabitation should follow the principle of respecting dignity of the human being and objecting to any forms of criticism (Marzec-Holka 2000a, 9). It is also assumed in the context of social rehabilitation that this process should concentrate not only on organising education for pupils and creating possibilities of preparing for professional work, but also on respecting dignity of young people living in upbringing centres and opting for the dimensions of cultural, sports or relational activity in undertaken efforts (Ostrowska 2008).

The Salesian preventive system also fits well into the paradigm of respecting pupils' dignity. As noted by B. Matyjas, the issue of bringing up a human being was the fundamental one to Giovanni Bosco, which is why the said system was deeply rooted in human experience and tradition of the Church (Matyjas 1996, 9). We have already mentioned that the Salesian upbringing is founded on a personalistic approach to a human being, putting pupils in the centre along with their dignity and freedom to self-realisation. A starting point in the preventive system is the conviction that pupils are children of God, have dignity, the respecting of which is a prerequisite to reach pupils' hearts. Respecting pupil's dignity in the Salesian educational/rehabilitation practice reveals itself mainly through understanding pupils (episodes from their lives, which determined a form of life and interactions), in a profound familiarity of pupils in various situations of their lives (family, school, sports field, relation with others) as well as looking at pupils as if with their own eyes.

7. PREVENTING STIGMATISATION/ DE-STIGMATISATION OF PUPILS

A social stigmatisation process may begin after young person's return to his natural environment, and thus become a source of new exclusion and continuation of social maladjustment from the past (see more in: Baładynowicz 2012a, 37-

63). Assuming that people create their identity on a continuous basis (Gałdowa 2010, 130), we must acknowledge that deviational identity of socially maladjusted individuals may also be subject to a conversion (Kubiak-Krzywicka 2008, 154-156). In this perspective, scholars postulate the necessity of minimal intervention linked with avoiding stigmatisation of adolescents (Düinkel and Junger-Tass 2009, 144-146). De-stigmatisation is referred to as the process of cancelling people's deviational identity and transforming its dimensions into parameters acceptable in the social sphere. This process is carried out through an individual's realization of the wrong in the current life, emergence of doubts about the legitimacy and usefulness of performing the current role (e.g. the role of hooligans, criminals) (Pindel 2009, 101-102). The process of de-stigmatisation would, therefore, be linked with transforming one's "individual Self and social deviational Self" into the normative Self (Konopczyński 2009, 61-62). M. Konopczyński refers to this process as dressing new identity costumes, created by temporal and interpersonal factors, the source of which are unconventional methods of creative social rehabilitation (see more in: Konopczyński 2006). E. Pindel indicates that this process is not an act of a one-time decision or incidental action, neither is it carried out in a vacuum but it depends on many factors, both favourable ones, arising from unpredictable coincidences or intentionally introduced (Pindel 2010, 121).

The pedagogical message of Giovanni Bosco is also important in the Polish context of social rehabilitation, where - as stressed by numerous authors - one has to deal with "false social rehabilitation - the rehabilitation of appearances" (Marzec-Holka 2000b, 375-389). However, B. Stańkowski's investigations in this area have led him to the following conclusions: a) thus far, no theoretical considerations have been developed with regard to preventing stigmatisation in the spirit of preventive systems in Polish deliberations on such a system; b) at the present stage of development and the existing papers on preventive systems, the emphasised elements are mainly those of the role of practical influences, the strategy in reducing the process of youth stigmatisation (Stańkowski 2015, 200-206). Recent studies confirm that the need that socially maladjusted young people initiate contact with an external world, develop their own initiative and escape potential stigmatisation is not common. In many situations, it depends not only on pupils' difficult past (staying in other centres, escaping, pathological situation in family homes) but is also related to personality determinants of pupils (Stańkowski 2018, 48-49).

CONCLUSIONS

The considerations proposed in this article led me to the following conclusions:

1) Having been analysing theoretically the Salesian preventive system and looking at its application in the context of social rehabilitation, I conclude that it significantly fits into the paradigms of the contemporary social rehabilitation.

2) The said system also points to the person-centrism that grants subjectivity to pupils. It also demonstrates clear references to Christian values and intentional environment creating optimal environment of promoting the person.

3) The emphasis in the Salesian social rehabilitation on the meaning of existence as well as on the value of life and quality of interpersonal relations prove that social rehabilitation efforts using the preventive system are consistent with the current trends in social rehabilitation of Polish socially maladjusted youth.

4) This consistency is also visible in the way that pupils are treated: opting for positive aspects of their functioning, opportunities for a complete self-realisation on the part of a young person (supporting the process of upbringing), respecting pupils' uniqueness demonstrated by an individual approach to every pupil. The last two paradigms, functioning in Polish social rehabilitation, are also reflected in the Salesian upbringing efforts for socially maladjusted adolescents. On one hand, it is showing respect to pupil's personal dignity, not encapsulated in only theoretical considerations but mainly aimed at encouraging young people to discover and personally experience their own dignity. On the other hand, these are efforts to the benefit of adolescents, aimed at their de-stigmatisation.

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