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CRIMINAL BEHAVIOUR AS A LIFE STYLE

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Imbedded characterized by a peculiar lack of responsibility, particularly in relation to the acts committed. Respondents clearly put the pleasure in life, but sometimes it would seem that the hierarchy of values has slightly changed (but not in all presented cases). All subjects come from pathological environments that used corporal punishment against them, so their interactions with the environment are disturbed from their earliest years of life. Many respondents adopt their own scripts of a life of a loser, often refusing to accept this state of affairs and blaming elements of the outside world for it: their environment, harsh conditions, lack of family warmth and of adequate emotional ties. Respondents evinced emotional hyperactivity (restlessness, aggression) from early age. They cause educational problems at school (truancy, drugs, minor offenses), grow to crime often in reformatories or correctional institutions and increasingly identify with criminal lifestyle.

Key words: socialization, anti-social behavior, character, criminal behavior, life, criminal lifestyle, rehabilitation, gender, education, relationship, family life, occupation, social belonging, drug, prison, neurotic depressive syndrome

*Health of the collectivity determines individual health and vice versa.
We need to understand the distinctness of others
but also defend our own autonomy in a human, civilized way,
without undue savagery or aggression which begins with us.
Leslaw Pytka, Pedagogika resocjalizacyjna...¹*

The concept of socialization vs. social maladjustment and anti-social behaviour

The concept of “socialisation” is attributed with a variety of contents and scopes, depending on, for example, anthropological, sociological, educational, or psychological orientation². In sociological terms

¹ L. Pytka, *Pedagogika resocjalizacyjna. Wybrane zagadnienia teoretyczne, diagnostyczne i metodyczne*, [Rehabilitation pedagogy. Selected theoretical, diagnostic and methodological issues], Warszawa 2001, p. 72.

² Cf. M. Ciosek, *Psychologia sądowa i penitencjarna*, [Correctional and forensic psychology], 2nd Ed., Warszawa, 2003, p. 38.

socialisation is a process of emergence, formation and development of human personality. On the one hand, this process updates depending on the individual organism and interactions with it, on the other hand, depending on interactions with the social and environmental living conditions that exist in a particular, historically defined society³.

Numerous psychological approaches define the process of socialisation as

the process of internalization of values and norms, the process of the parents' superego introjection, the formation of positive qualities of the character, the formation of the proper self-esteem and realistic levels of aspiration, the process of shaping pro-social attitudes (...), the formation of cognitive, mainly moral structures⁴.

Given the above approach, it can be concluded that socialisation is the process of adapting the individual to the society, which M. Ciosek defines as

the collection of social experience, consisting of the individual knowledge of what society – and more specifically social groups and institutions – expect from individuals in certain situations, and what individuals can expect from other people and society⁵.

Particular components of the socialisation process would be (according to the author): social knowledge (values, norms and social attitudes), means of knowledge transfer, that is mechanisms of socialisation (mechanism of external pressure, imitation and internal pressure), senders of social content and recipients of transmitted social knowledge⁶.

Social content that a person assimilates in the process of socialisation is intended to facilitate their life in a social group and personality development. But rarely are social requirements implemented in a standard dimension, hence the society sets a level of disparity – the border, “the crossing of which is considered a more or less dangerous symptom of social maladjustment and impaired socialisation process”⁷.

If (...) the individuals co-creating the structure of the social system – writes J. Modrzewski – reveal behaviours indicating delusiveness of these expectations [in terms of social and approved expectations⁸], or find themselves in a situation

³ K. Hurrelman, *Struktura społeczna a rozwój osobowości*, [Social structure and personality development], Poznań 1994, p. 16.

⁴ M. Ciosek, *Psychologia*, p. 38.

⁵ Ibidem, p. 39.

⁶ Cf. Ibidem, p. 40-52.

⁷ Ibidem, p. 59.

⁸ The author's note.

making it impossible to continue their social biography according to the standard pattern of its updating, then these processes take the form of selection to eliminate and degrade the individuals as such, as their social participation threatens the existence and the functioning of the defined social system of cultural values⁹.

Undoubtedly, criminals – individuals with maladaptive and therefore improper and socially harmful behaviour – threaten the proper functioning of the social system with their social participation.

Social maladjustment and anti-social behaviour are two terms applied in the classification of disorders of the socialisation process.

L. Pytka¹⁰ suggests four definitions of social maladjustment found in the literature:

1. Symptom-based definitions in which social maladjustment is determined by reference to its basic and specific symptoms or elementary behavioural indicators.

2. Theoretical definitions which, in addition to the symptomatological characteristics, involve some theoretical concepts arising from the general theory of adaptation or normal social functioning of individuals (i.e., motivation, attitudes, social roles, rules of social roles, norms, ideal standards, internalization of values and norms, level of fear, conscience).

3. Operational definitions which indicate not only the symptoms of the phenomenon (maladjustment), but mainly the ways of its measurement.

4. Utilitarian definitions (common-sense, administrative) which show social maladjustment from the perspective of the helplessness of the educational environment towards an individual with educational problems.

The register of the proposed approaches is very wide and – as seen above – multidirectional. However, it is worth referring to the definitions proposed by the authors who deal with the issues of rehabilitation. O. Lipkowski believes that

social maladjustment is a characterological disorder with heterogeneous symptoms caused by adverse external or internal conditions of development, and expressed as increased and long-term difficulties in the adjustment to the normal social conditions and individual life tasks¹¹.

⁹ J. Modrzewski, *Biograficzny wymiar procesu socjalizacji*, [Biographical dimension of the socialisation process], *Studia Edukacyjne*, [Educational studies], 1997, 3, p. 36.

¹⁰ L. Pytka, *Pedagogika*, p. 89-90.

¹¹ O. Lipkowski, *Dziecko społecznie niedostosowane i jego resocjalizacja*, [A socially maladjusted child and his rehabilitation], Warszawa 1971, p. 37.

A. Lewicki, J. Paryzek, B. Waligóra define social maladjustment as a sociological fact of

incompatibility between the system of norms and values of a specific person and norms and values of these groups he or she is a member and society as a whole. Thus, a predisposition to act contrary to the group or society interests manifested for example in unfriendliness toward others, hostility, aggression or crime is called anti-social behaviour – internal human tendency to the above-mentioned behaviours and the like¹².

The concept of anti-social behaviour (as an anti-social personality disorder) that appeared in the quoted definition is essentially separated from the concept of social maladjustment (as a manifestation of harmful behaviour) in psychological research. J.M. Stanik explains the concept of anti-social behaviours treating them as behaviours characterized by

social harmfulness of the purposes at which they are often aimed (e.g., truancy, causing harm to someone, committing crimes) – or (...) defects in their structure (loitering (...) and aggressive enforcement of order, etc.), or (...) – the occurrence of both the first and the second component (e.g., frequent violence of hooligan groups or members of criminal gangs)¹³.

Later in the argument the author combines anti-social behaviour with fixed "everyday" functioning of the individual characterized by properties that determine its social harmfulness, not so much in individual cases, as in the wider area. Can we therefore treat criminal behaviour as a lifestyle?

Criminal lifestyle according to Glenn D. Walters's concept¹⁴

In 1997, one of the most famous contemporary criminologists representing the psycho-sociological trend – Glenn D. Walters formulated an

¹² A. Lewicki, L. Paryzek, B. Waligóra, *Podstawy psychologii penitencjarnej*, [Foundations of correctional psychology], [in:] *Psychologia kliniczna*, [Clinical psychology], ed. A. Lewicki, Warszawa 1972; as cited in M. Ciosek, *Psychologia sądowa*, p. 60-61.

¹³ J.M. Stanik, *Diagnozowanie niedostosowania społecznego i asocjalności*, [Diagnosing social maladjustment and anti-social behaviour], [in:] *Resocjalizacja. Teoria i praktyka pedagogiczna*, [Rehabilitation. Pedagogical theory and practice], eds B. Urban, J.M. Stanik, vol. I, Warszawa 2008, p. 177.

¹⁴ Elaborated on the basis of: M. Ciosek, *Kryminologiczne teorie przyczyn przestępczości*, [Criminological theories of the causes of crime], [in:] M. Ciosek, *Psychologia sądowa*, p. 69-84 and J.M. Stanik, *Wybrane koncepcje i wyniki badań kryminologicznych a perspektywy resocjalizacji*, [Selected concepts and results of criminological research versus the prospects for rehabilitation], [in:] B. Urban, J.M. Stanik, *Resocjalizacja*, p. 116-135.

interesting theory of crime as a lifestyle. The starting point was to determine the attitude towards four fundamental aspects of any theory of behaviour, namely: the nature of man, the problem of development, understanding the concept of deviance and understanding the process of self-change. With regard to the nature of man Walters claims that the man is neither bad nor good by nature, and therefore the involvement in anti-or pro-social activity is not a matter of human nature (from the beginning of his life the man relates everything to his own destiny and has a tendency to an immediate gratification of some of his biological needs. However, socialisation allows the child to learn how to make socially appropriate decisions). It is worth noticing that, according to the criminological and psychoanalytic orientation theory the difference between the offender and non-offender lies in the abilities or the lack of abilities of reserved behaviour, self-control or sublimation (directing an aggressive energy to positive purposes, such as sport or work) of instincts and antisocial impulses.

As a result of faulty socialisation the offender's malformed ego and superego bring about an unconscious conflict between the innate antisocial id tendencies and norms and social expectations contained within the superego¹⁵.

Human development, according to Walters, is associated with the implementation of the following three tasks: the formation of social bonds with relatives, determination of one's own level of stimulation and formation of self-image. Deviance, in turn, is a development disorder (the child performs the development tasks in the improper way resulting in his first criminal behaviour that engenders positive or negative effects which may increase further criminal behaviour). A person breaking social norms can shape their own way of thinking and evaluating in order to "justify" their illegal actions, and thus, to enable them to create a positive image of themselves in spite of the crime.

Changing oneself, according to G. Walters, involves responsibility for one's actions which includes various techniques for evaluating one's own choice of anti-social acts.

Walters presented basic concepts, statements and legal premises of his theory in the form of ten principles.

1) The criminal lifestyle is characterized by the simultaneous presence of four basic properties of the individual:

a) lack of responsibility (it is a trait more learned than innate);

b) self-indulgence and a tendency to immediately satisfy one's own needs (impaired socialisation makes the offender unable to postpone gratification, and he or she is oriented mainly on pleasure);

¹⁵ M. Ciosek, *Psychologia sądowa*, p. 74.

c) wrong attitude to other people (manifested in aggressive behaviour, violent activities, hostility, unfriendliness, curses addressed to others);

d) chronic violation of social norms, both legal and moral (the sooner they appear the stronger predictor of later crime they are).

2) Conditions belonging to the three spheres: physical (biological), social and psychological affect the development of crime as a lifestyle (G. Walters assumes that the individual's interactions with the environment, especially in the first four – five years of life, determine his or her behaviour in the future).

3) Circumstances may restrict or encourage certain choices, but do not determine them completely. The crime is a function of choice of tasks in the physical, social and psychological sphere, incompatible with the norms of society in which the important role is played by four factors: risk, protection (of the individual and their own activity), antisocial functioning and improvement.

4) The behaviour of the person leading a criminal lifestyle tends eventually towards their personal disaster (a scenario of the loser life and destruction is already formed during childhood and adolescence). Self-destructive nature of the criminal lifestyle is a reflection of the individuals' opinions about themselves as they agree to lose, and what is more, they spend a lot of time and calculating activity explaining their own failures that, in their opinion, occur under the influence of external factors (the lack of personal responsibility).

5) There is a specific criminal style of thinking of the offender which derives both from the conditions existing in the physical, social and psychological area as well as from the offender's own choice of the living space – the criminal lifestyle (this way of thinking seeks to justify and strengthen the tasks undertaken in the field of criminal activities and it also seeks to justify the attitudes such as irresponsibility or self-indulgence; the result of this style of thinking is to make sure of the profitability and positive dimension of the action taken).

6) The essence of the criminal way of thinking is reflected in eight cognitive patterns, such as justification combined with an attempt to shift the blame for one's own irresponsibility or wrong attitude to various external sources, or a sense of "otherness" that allows the behaviours different from those that are obligatory for other society members.

7) If the opportunity arises (e.g., an open room, an unlocked car), crime occurs. Criminals' cognitive processes and mechanisms are characterised by a very high degree of readiness to use a lot of emerging opportunities to commit a crime.

8) Motivational mechanism (in particular its activation) consists of dialectically united personality stimulators: anger – rebellion, power – control, excitement – pleasure and greed – laziness.

9) The offense is an association of thoughts, motives, and antisocial behaviours interacting with each other. The relationship between these three elements can be explored in clinical trials.

10) Individual readiness to commit crimes cannot be changed, if the person does not change the elements (mental and evaluation processes, attitudes and motivation) responsible for their lifestyle.

A necessary condition for rehabilitation is therefore to abandon criminal lifestyle by the individual.

At this point, a question of methodological nature emerges: whether and how to investigate criminal lifestyle?

Biographical method – a case study

As D. Lalak states, the XXth century methodological reflection came full circle (from a simple observation of social life to complex measurement techniques) and led investigators to the starting point. “Now” claims the author,

we are increasingly returning to the experience of an ordinary man as a unit of enquiry in social research. Each man’s inherent feature (...) is giving an account of oneself (...). Science picked up and used this primary need. It probably explains further development of the biographical method¹⁶.

Biographical method is used in qualitative studies which cause much controversy (the most common complaint is apparently the lack of objectivity) and are opposed to more widespread quantitative data analysis in social research. Qualitative analysis, as E. Babbie¹⁷ explains, “is the method of data analysis from social research, without reducing them to a number format” and assumes “a permanent relationship between the collection of data and the theory”.

A biography is a detailed description or account of someone’s life, which results from the etymology of this word: gr. bios – life and gráphō – I write.

¹⁶ D. Lalak, *Emigracja jako doświadczenie biograficzne – uwagi metodologiczne*, [Emigration as a biographical experience – methodological notes], [in:] *Dom i ojczyzna. Dylematy wielokulturowości*, [Home and homeland. Dilemmas of multiculturalism], ed. D. Lalak, Warszawa 2008, p. 61.

¹⁷ E. Babbie, *Badania społeczne w praktyce*, [The Practice of Social Research], Warszawa 2007, p. 400.

(...) The traditions of sociological interest in the course of human life or its social aspect” as J. Modrzewski points out¹⁸, “date back to the early practice of this discipline, and the authors of “The Polish peasant (...)” – W. Thomas and F. Znaniecki – are unambiguously recognized as precursors of sociological methods studying the social aspect of the life course (social biography). The following argument proving the usefulness of the biographical method in research appears in the work of these authors: "If we want to detect real causes of a social event, nothing is more certain and more effective to do so than analyzing the past of the individuals whose action has led to this event"¹⁹.

So what is the biographical method? According to M. Łobocki²⁰, it is a conglomeration of various research methods together with their techniques, especially involving the analysis of documents, observation, survey method and dialogue method. It is defined as a method consisting in the description and analysis of the course of human life considered in the context of a specific segment of social reality. “This method” as N.K. Denzin suggested,

(...) is based on the following assumptions:

1. The study of human actions should carefully take into account the knowledge of people’s subjective feelings, sensations and experiences determining all their activity.
2. Conducted analysis should include the environmental context because the background in which the individual lives and works determines the subjective interpretations and the meaning expressed by him or her.
3. The studies should use different sources of information because all kinds of biographical data allowing for understanding subjective aspects of social phenomena have a value for the researcher.
4. Research should reflect historical monograph (relating either to one person or to a group or social organisation) as the subjective interpretations and life events (...) can be fully understood only if referred to past experiences²¹.

Furthermore, N.K. Denzin argues that the individual’s behaviour should be studied and understood from the perspective of people affected, therefore he does not recommend the use of questionnaires made up of a series of closed questions. Instead, he suggests the use of voluntary, open and relatively spontaneous statements of the subjects (both written statements, such as biographies, diaries, letters, personal notes

¹⁸ J. Modrzewski, *Biograficzny*, p. 31.

¹⁹ W.I. Thomas, F. Znaniecki, *Chłop polski w Europie i Ameryce*, [The Polish Peasant in Europe and America], vol. 3 – *Pamiętnik emigranta*, [Monograph of an immigrant group], Warszawa 1976, p. 8.

²⁰ M. Łobocki, *Metody i techniki badań pedagogicznych*, [Methods and techniques of educational research], Kraków 2003, p. 293-294.

²¹ *Ibidem*, p. 294.

and oral statements – the material gathered through interviews and conversations). M. Łobocki does not deny the possibility of appeal to the sociometric tests²².

There are some inaccuracies in the monographic method and the method of individual cases. Sometimes they are treated separately, however, M. Łobocki, relying on certain common features, including qualitative description and analysis of biographical material, suggests treating these methods as a variety of biographical method.

The method of individual cases, also called “case study”, “case study analysis” or “clinical method”, and finally the “method of individual cases” is a method that involves the collection of data on the subjects’ development and their physical, mental and social life²³.

(...) this method is applied, in particular, to the people with impaired development and to those who do not respond to ordinary educational interactions. In addition to the diagnosis of various types of disorders, it is also intended to show their causes and the broader environmental or cultural context.

This method allows a better communication with the people tested, triggers greater willingness to speak out (unlike in the case of standardized tests).

This method has served me as a means of collecting data on offenders undergoing imprisonment in the environment of their social isolation – in Krzywaniec Prison.

The following techniques were used within the methodological procedure: interviews, analysis of content (also called content analysis method²⁴) – autobiographies, letters, other forms written in prisoners’ own handwriting (documented with their written consent to publication), conversation, elements of interview, document analysis and (alternatively) questionnaire for the candidates for psychological research.

The environmental context – Krzywaniec Prison

Krzywaniec is not classified as a settlement or village in terms of administrative division. It is located on the left bank of the river Bóbr, in the municipality of Nowogród Bobrzański in the Lubuskie Voivodship.

²² Ibidem, p. 295.

²³ Ibidem, p. 304.

²⁴ Cf. L. Sołoma, *Metody i techniki badań socjologicznych. Wybrane zagadnienia*, [Methods and techniques of sociological research. Selected issues], Olsztyn 2002, p. 96-99.

Krzywaniec Prison is situated in the woods, near the village of Krzywa (2 km away from the village) and the city of Nowogród Bobrzański (7 km away).

It was established in 1963 as a prison for women (convicted for the first time) after taking over the buildings of the Polish Army. During World War II, these objects were inhabited by the staff supervising (Germany) the workers – prisoners of war camps, employed in the explosives factory. About 20 thousand prisoners of war were employed in the construction of the factory and production. The factory was part of IG Farben. In total there were 11 slave labour camps in the area covering about 45 km². They were liberated by the Soviet army in 1945.

In the years 1963 – 1965 the objects were thoroughly renovated and military buildings were adapted to the needs of the penitentiary unit. Initially, the unit area covered the surface of 13 hectares, today it is a bit smaller and covers the area of 8.9 hectares (pavilion housing).

In December 1964, the first female prisoners came there. Since 1979 there has been a Ward for Mother and Child (35 seats) on the premises of the prison. It constitutes a separate and independent part of the unit and has playgrounds for kids.

In 1968 the prison clothing vocational school was established and gave the women the opportunity to acquire professional qualifications and a job in the prison Clothing Enterprise. The school was closed down in 1990, and four years later the company.

Since the early 1990s men have also been committed to prison in Krzywaniec.

In the years 2004 – 2007 the unit was enlarged. New pavilions were built and many of the existing buildings (boiler room, kitchen) were modernised. The accommodation also improved: the number of seats increased from 385 to 795 (and 35 in the Ward for Mother and Child).

People who serve a term of imprisonment in this unit are:

– convicted women – qualified for all kinds and types of correctional facilities,

– convicted men – qualified for a closed prison (undergoing imprisonment for the first time and penitentiary recidivists), half-open type prison (undergoing imprisonment for the first time) and open type prison (undergoing imprisonment for the first time).

Furthermore, a section for female preventive detainees was separated. A therapeutic ward (closed type) for men addicted to drugs and psychotropic substances is being organized.

On 29 July 2008 there were 542 men and 318 women, i.e. a total of 860 prisoners in 11 sections of Krzywaniec Prison (the jail is now overcrowded).

Table 1
 Statistics according to the classification of prisoners in Krzywaniec Prison

Classification	RP	SP	TS	PPA	PRP	Total
Total	16	834	4	6		860
J-1/p		1				1
J-2/p		2				2
J-3/p		2				2
F		2				2
F-1/p		106	1			107
F-1/t		29				29
F-1/c		118	1			119
F-1/c/U				2		2
F-2/p		142				142
F-2/t		3				3
F-2/c		73				73
F-2/c/U				1		1
F-3/p		117				117
F-3/c		10				10
R-1/p		101	1			102
R-1/p/U				1		1
R-1/t		3				3
R-1/c		81	1			82
R-1/c/U				2		2
R-2/p		23				23
R-2/c		11				11
R-3/p		9				9
R-3/c		1				1
TA	13					13
TA/F	2					2
TA/R	1					1

Source: Krzywaniec Prison statistics

Legend:

RP – remand prisoners
 SP – sentenced prisoners
 TS – temporarily sentenced
 PPA – punished, penalty applied
 PRP – punished, remand prisoner

J – juvenile offenders
 F – first offenders
 R – recidivists
 1 – closed prison
 2 – half-open prison
 3 – open prison
 p – system of programmed rehabilitation actions
 c – common system
 t – therapeutic system

During their stay in Krzywaniec prisoners can use library, dayrooms, recreation rooms, gym and sports field. Training courses and Alcoholics Anonymous meetings are organised. Churches and religious associations conduct religious activities and pastoral counseling giving the prisoners spiritual support.

Health care is provided by medical staff employed in the Department of Health Care of Krzywaniec Prison and, where necessary, prisoners are also directed to obtain a medical consultation in health care facilities situated outside the prison.

In the immediate vicinity of Krzywaniec Prison there are guest rooms (hotel) and the Prison Service camps²⁵.

Life behind prison walls – analysis of individual cases

Prison is an instrument of state policy. As H. Machel explains, “One of its main tasks is to prevent the persons who serve a term of imprisonment from re-offending”²⁶. The author remarks that the effectiveness of rehabilitation depends on factors of organisational and staff management nature, he points to the frequent disturbances of the process, but also argues that the penitentiary assistance based on rehabilitation (procedure according to the Executive Penal Code from 1997 – programmed rehabilitation and therapeutic systems) is necessary from the standpoint of psychology, pedagogy and secondary crime prevention.

Conducting research in Krzywaniec Prison, I turned attention to the cases of so-called prison recidivism, looking for both the reasons for entering a criminal way of life (including consecutive offences) and adaptation to prison conditions, and finally – I tried to answer the question whether the criminal behaviours of these people can be called a lifestyle.

CASE I

Gender and age: male, aged 52

Marital status: single

Education: elementary

Acquired profession: central heating stoker

Record of convictions: recidivist (first time conviction in 1975)

²⁵ The text was elaborated on the basis of Krzywaniec Prison documentation and the article of B. Augustowska-Urban (deputy director in Krzywaniec Prison) published on the official website of National Prison Service: <http://www.sw.gov.pl/index.php/jednostki/10/352> [accessed: 10 August 2008].

²⁶ H. Machel, *Więzienie jako instytucja karna i resocjalizacyjna*, [Prison as a penal institution and rehabilitation center], Gdańsk 2003, p. 227.

Mr. J. is now 52 years old and he has spent nearly half of his life (20 years) behind the prison walls, staying in the remand centers and prisons in different cities.

He comes from a large family (6 children, one died at the age of 3). The father – mason, the mother – weaver. He grew up in the countryside until he was 6, and later in a small town. He describes his childhood as “difficult”: poverty, fights, beatings (aggressive and domineering father using cruel corporal punishments, both to his son and wife). The parents worked in a three-shift system. J. was convicted as a juvenile for breaking into a kiosk. He used to run away from home.

At primary school his school performance was very poor (he described it as “bad”), he repeated the class when he was 14, played truant, joined a “bad company”, began to smoke cigarettes (9 years old) and drink alcohol (14 years old), but he did not use drugs. After completing primary school he enrolled in a 3-year Vocational School of Mines. As he himself admits, he occasionally turned up in class after drinking alcohol. He did not finish school. At the age of 18, he began working at the post office as a postman, he stole a large amount of money in the workplace, and then left “to have fun” at the seaside. The prisoner recalls his first time conviction in this way²⁷:

(...) I got the sentence and went to prison. I was in W. where I worked in the concrete plant. We did piece-work. If we didn't manage to do it, we were punished with a solitary confinement, a hard bed, and we were also deprived of food purchases.

After being released J. decides to commit a crime once again. This time it is an assault and robbery. The next verdict and the prison conditions even more difficult:

(...) There were about 8 meters in the cell, and 6 people stayed there. 4 people slept on beds, and 2 on the floor. We had a metal bowl and one bucket to wash and a john to relieve ourselves, it was covered with a lid, and was emptied only at lunchtime and at about 6 in the morning before the roll-call. (...) We were humiliated, beaten and punished by the so-called screws for not doing our job on time. They sent us to the solitary, punished us with a hard bed, took off our canteen fund (...), we were treated worse than animals. They did so under communism, just no one was interested in us because communists ruled, so it was very hard in prison. As someone went to the doctor's because he was sick, the doctor said that a convict could be sick only if he carried his own head under his arm. And if someone answered, he called the commander and several people came. They were wearing helmets, vests and had batons. They took you to the sound

²⁷ In order to make the text understandable a partial punctuation, spelling and grammar correction has been made (without changing the style of communication).

absorbing cell and only there they punched and kicked you. (...) That's how it was under communism.

A shocking confession to hear for somebody living in the free world. Difficult conditions of existence, humiliation, beating, depriving of dignity – the process of degradation. But the question of a different kind arises. Since this man came in contact with the prison reality, and since he felt treated like an animal, why commit the offense again?

M. Ciosek²⁸, writing about the causes of social deviation, lists a wide variety of factors, however, in individual cases we deal with the whole combination of interrelated subjective and situational variables. In our case we can point to the following subjective factors (they result from both the interview and the analysis of various documents): emotional instability – irritability (J. reacts with screaming in a state of intense nervousness), hyperactivity – explosiveness, low moral sensitivity, defectively formed inclinations and interests (so far J.'s life has been filled with: drinking alcohol, subsequent offenses often done while drunk, casual sex, especially with prostitutes, being in drinking dens, fights with police officers), lack of specific and desirable future plans from the social point of view (among his plans he mentions: good sex, alcohol, comfortable life, but also contact with the family, marriage). Non-subjective factors that could affect J.'s attitude are as follows: the impact of family environment, relationships with derailed young people, entering the world of criminals – negative models of behaviour and identification with them, consolidation of the attitude of rebellion against the staff employed in prisons, and finally, the model of life created by convicts behind the prison walls, such as mistreatment of weaker prisoners, sexual abuse – homosexuality. As we read in M. Ciosek's work,

The prolonged situation of sexual deprivation – the monotony of impressions and memories of one's past sexual experiences – contributes to the growth of sexual tension and pushes prisoners to seek alternative ways of its relief. (...) Homosexual rapes are a particular form of homosexual acts occurring in prisons (...). Sometimes it is hard to imagine the tragic fate of harassed, then raped prisoners, usually physically weaker or mentally retarded²⁹.

The respondent also gives account of homosexual rapes.

Neuroses, which are mental disorders caused by various types of trauma and social conflicts, are a common disorder occurring in prison (J. also admits in the interview that he is nervous and experiences nervous breakdown). Searching for a relevant term to determine deliberate

²⁸ M. Ciosek, *Psychologia sądowa*, p. 67.

²⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 226-227.

self-harm and suicide attempts occurring frequently in the prison environment, I came across the concept of depressive neurosis (neurotic depressive syndrome) – characterized by low mood, psychomotor slowing, a sense of hopelessness, a sense of injustice or guilt, and finally autoaggressive tendencies, including suicide. In addition to this variety, we distinguish the so-called hysterical neurosis occurring mostly in people with psychological disorders, however, it can also be found in the prison environment. Its symptoms are: abdominal pain, dizziness, vomiting, sensory system dysfunction, motor dysfunction and mental symptoms. The prisoners suffering from this neurosis also self-injure or commit suicide attacks (in this case these acts have an openly demonstrative and instrumental character)³⁰.

The respondent J. admits to “cut his forearms” and he confesses a suicide attempt. He recalls this attempt in this way:

I'd like to mention that if you go to the Director, he says only one word that if he hides a convict, his immediate family won't be able to find him. He said that to me, and that's why I swallowed chlorine, I did “the dusting” [T.N.: sprinkling a powdery substance into one's eyes.] and I cut myself. I just couldn't stand it anymore cause I was humiliated, an outcast of society (...).

In my opinion, the respondent's self-mutilation is the result of hysterical neurosis. In this way, he demonstrated his inner rebellion, fueled by the current situation and a sense of hopelessness of existence. In addition, J. reports that the following symptoms occurred to him: loss of consciousness, neurotic disorders, headaches, nightmares, persecution mania, sense of injustice.

It is worth noticing that J. shows claiming attitude, criticizes the conditions of the prison system and wants to improve them. We can get the impression that he somehow accepted the life behind the walls and only wants to improve the conditions of existence. However, he denies the existence of any rehabilitation activities.

CASE II

Gender and age: male, aged 36

Marital status: single

Education: National Vocational Qualification (he acquired the vocational qualifications in Voluntary Labour Corps)

Acquired profession: mason

Record of convictions: recidivist (first time conviction in 1989)

³⁰ Cf. *ibidem*, p. 225-226.

Mr. B. is a very effusive man who willingly talks and writes about himself. He has spent about 15 years in different prisons which is also about half of his life.

In his autobiography he writes:

I come from a pathological family where alcohol and violence dominated. As a child, along with my younger siblings, we were treated instrumentally by our parents. There weren't any love, hugging or care, but only hatred, violence, indifference. Often there was nothing to eat, there was dirt and the fear of drunk parents. When I was about ten, I decided to oppose my parents and I broke their bottles of alcohol. This situation made me run away from home because if I hadn't escaped, my supposedly loving parents would have killed me. I didn't know what to do, where to go and what would happen next. It was a shock for me, horror, panic. Since this event I lived in the streets more often than at home. (...) Any decisions, good or bad, I had to make them alone. This situation was the beginning of my life on the margins.

Difficult family conditions, pathology, lack of emotional bonds, parental alcoholism – these are just some of the negative factors of the family environment in which B. grows up. It should be noted that he comes from a large family (10 siblings). The alcoholic mother's parental rights are limited (she eventually abandoned her children in 1994), and siblings were raised by their grandparents. The father also served a sentence and was deprived of his parental rights. He was treated in a psychiatric hospital. B.'s uncle, who was imprisoned for 20 years, was his authority when B. was a child. The boy was proud of him because in the village where he lived everyone was afraid of his uncle.

At the age of 11 he goes to the Emergency Shelter Care. He recalls this period of his life in this way:

Another dramatic experience for me (...) – I was placed in the Emergency Shelter Care (...). I went through scary moments and sometimes I wanted to die. I was terribly worried about my siblings I really loved, I wanted to be with them so much. In the beginning, I rebelled, but when I was told that it would be possible to get a pass if I were polite, I decided to calm down. But they didn't do as they promised, I was sent to the Youth Educational Centre (...) and that was my "prize" for being polite.

B. clearly feels the harm done to him in childhood. He still remembers his childlike helplessness, fear and isolation:

(...) I bear a grudge against the people who treated me as someone who was already corrupt. But I was only about 10 years old. Why didn't anyone want to help me? I don't think about my parents because they just weren't interested, but officials who were supposed to wield guardianship and look after the families such as my "pathology". These people, I mean the officials, believed it was necessary to get rid of me (the easiest way) and put me in the Youth Educational Centre.

As a child B. first goes to the Youth Educational Centre, then to the Educational Centre in another city. He considers his stay in these institutions as highly demoralizing and representing the first degree initiation into crime. This is how he recalls this period in his life:

Through “the rehabilitation” in that centre I learned to take drugs, smoke, drink alcohol, and worst I “gained” aggression, rebellion, anger and hatred there. No one has ever explained anything, there were fine, humiliation, beatings, bans, or aggression for everything. Is this “rehabilitation”?

B. formulates judgments in a very logical way. In retrospect, he can assess the impact of external factors on his behaviour and development of anti-social feelings. Aggression triggers aggression – experienced educators know this perfectly well. Such educators were absent in the young man’s life.

I’m not an angel and I don’t blame anyone (...) – he writes in another passage of the account of his life, and he adds – I spent my childhood in the Centre but this “rehabilitation” made me go to prison when I was 18.

Before we go into details of B.’s criminal lifestyle I suggest tracing a significant episode in his life when he was in the Youth Educational Centre:

I did my best to see the siblings at least for a while. I learned well, I trained at the Military Sports Club (wrestling), I went to music school (guitar), and finally I got a legal pass – for as many as 5 days, I was very happy. So, I went home, I couldn’t wait till I see my beloved brothers and sisters. When I got there my parents had fun with alcohol as usual. After a while, my mother left and went to the school opposite our house. She called the police and told them she didn’t want me to be at home and she wanted them to come and take me or she’d throw me out. And it just happened, the police came and took me, I was really sorry (...). I broke down, I felt useless to anyone. I stopped to learn, broke up with everything: school, sport, guitar. I lost everything I had worked on so much. I came back to the street life and to rebel, to rebel against everything. As a result of my rebellion I was sent to prison.

The respondent is convinced that this unfortunate pass changed his life, but in my opinion, the word “pass” denotes disappointment, despair, desire to be needed, or to have a family. After all, he tried so hard and wanted to be rewarded. But once again, he was rejected, left alone. His needs were not met, and as a result, he cancelled everything and triggered self-destructive thoughts. He was aware that he was doing wrong, but he wanted revenge for the injustice. After all, he tried so hard...

He goes to the remand centre for the first time, and then in 1989 he is imprisoned for a period of 3.5 years for the battery (robbery). He remembers his stay in custody in the following manner:

On the first day I was beaten by two officers just to make me scared and show me where I was and who was the boss. (...) A few weeks after that I was so stressed and confused that I injured myself (...), I cut my hands and chest with a razor blade. (...) The administration ignored me, threatened me (...), humiliated. They laughed at me offering me a whole packet of razor blades. I didn't understand anything, I felt threatened, intimidated, so I made up my mind to fight for the position.

According to the classification proposed by M. Ciosek³¹, the prisoner remanded in custody used the tactics of rebellion, which resulted directly from the act of aggression that was used against him (in M. Ciosek's nomenclature, at this point, B. was subject to the degradation process). M. Ciosek acknowledges, "The tactics has the form (...) of the strong and explicit attitude of resistance and hostility toward the staff (typical of the first phase of imprisonment)"³². It should be emphasized that in the case study, this rebellion was directed rather to the prisoner himself, as evidenced by self-mutilation.

In his publication entitled "Correctional and forensic psychology" M. Ciosek tries to determine the personality causes of autoaggressive behaviour referring to D. Kubacki-Jasiecki's study of 1975 which showed that autoaggressive people are characterized by similar properties of their social functioning and personality. "The features include: impulsivity and hyperactivity, anxiety and tendency to suppress negative emotions and high emotional dependence on their relatives as well as the distance and lack of interest in further social environment"³³.

After this (let us call it) "act of desperation", B. changes his tactics gradually introducing "cold calculation" and the elements of the process of "prisonization"³⁴:

I rebelled and made a row. In the beginning I was losing, but over time, I carved out my position. They began to respect me, I was somebody among the inmates, and even the administration let it go. Then, I felt the strength and only worked on it, I felt somebody important.

We have clearly to do with the fact that is known in the prison psychology as adjustment or prison adaptation. "Z. Borucki (1996) is right", M. Ciosek argues in his book³⁵, "when he writes that the terms – adaptation and adjustment have different contexts, the former biological, the latter definitely socio-psychological. However, in practice, these two

³¹ Ibidem, p. 212.

³² Ibidem.

³³ Ibidem, p. 245.

³⁴ Cf. ibidem, p. 213-214.

³⁵ Ibidem, p. 211.

terms are used interchangeably. For instance, T. Tomaszewski (1967) does so, limiting the adaptation and adjustment to *a change of the subject according to the condition of the external situation*".

In our case, we can easily see the negative process of socialization consisting in "acculturation", that is adopting by the prisoners the values, attitudes and behaviour models provided by the prison subculture"³⁶, for this reason, our respondent writes:

Today I know the administration was to blame, because unfortunately for me, it's through the fault of their "pseudo rehabilitation" I lost my life, I became embroiled in the life of bandits, thieves, criminals, and because of that I'm in jail today.

And again, the researcher is surprised with the extraordinary accuracy of the detainee's assessment and self-assessment, an attempt to reflect and look for the causes of his life situation, and the painful conclusion of these arguments:

In prison, I was taught how to become somebody I didn't want to be – a RECIDIVIST³⁷.

After serving his first sentence B. regains freedom. But this is not his return home [(...) *because there was no place for me (...)*]. He lives, as he puts it, "in the street", he is involved in the environment of vagrants, the homeless:

(...) friends, alcohol, lack of shelter: all of this led me to the conflict with the law. I wasn't arrested, but I was released pending trial.

Time spent at liberty is also a time of love. The parents of the girl, whom he met, helped B. to get out of alcoholism, gave him a shelter:

I broke off contact with pseudo friends just because I loved Mariola. In her home there was order, love, you could feel the family warmth, respect, support. So I was happy that I had a beloved family. They showed me what it meant to have a family. It was wonderful until the time when previously mentioned matters occurred when I was released pending trial.

B. had a choice – as he writes – two options: either to escape to France (along with his friend they planned to enlist in the Foreign Legion), or serve a sentence of imprisonment. Under the influence of the girl and her parents B. decides to serve the sentence voluntarily.

³⁶ Ibidem, p. 216.

³⁷ This word is written in capital letters in the manuscript.

After serving the sentence I received a pass, then another and another one. Mariola and her parents always waited for me.

After some time B. got to know that he would be a father:

I nearly fainted and I went speechless, I was shocked and very happy. I wanted to live, the world belonged to me.

The reader would certainly like to see the story of B. end in this way, but it is not a typical American movie with a happy end. We are witnesses of the life that goes on behind the walls, the walls that change people...

(...) My happiness didn't last long, 46 days before leaving prison it turned out that Mariola had no strength to wait for me any longer, actually she waited for three years. I broke down, the world turned away from me, I lost everything I hoped for, everything I loved. I came out of prison just to live in the street but I didn't want to live, I felt disgusted with myself [and again the vicious circle repeats³⁸], I started drinking, I didn't care about anything, I had nowhere to go. I was so aggressive after drinking alcohol that once again they put me in the dock. But they didn't lock me up in jail right away, I committed further crimes. I couldn't come to terms with the loss of beloved people and I decided to kill myself (...).

Is the reader asking questions at this point: what would have happened if Mariola had not rejected B.? Would he be able to adapt to the role of a husband or a father. Would he be able to live (in our view) normally? Rhetorical questions ... And reality?

B. gets into more and more trouble due to addiction. A friend urges him to take drugs (heroin).

(...) I smoked every day until my pain (heartbreak) increased to the point that I decided to finish this miserable life. I sped up my car (...) and I hit a tree. After three days I regained consciousness in hospital.

Once again we deal with a suicide attempt. B. cannot cope with difficult situations if he feels rejected, he directs rebellion and anger at himself. [*I was furious (...), I can't even blow my brains out*], there is a tendency to self-destruction and depression:

For several years I loathed women running away from them. I only loved drugs. I smoked, sniffed and injected them.

In 2000, B. attempted suicide by a drug overdose – heroin and amphetamine.

³⁸ The author's note.

His relationship with Sylvia is another attempt to overcome “himself” and a chance to return to normality. He decides to give up drugs for her, and moves into his friend’s basement for a month to overcome addiction alone:

After a month I went back to Sylvia very exhausted, but without pain, I had chills, sweats, I suffered from insomnia, but Sylvia was happy and proud of me, it gave me strength (...). But I made a mistake, I had no money and I listened to my buddies.

After another robbery B. returns to prison where he receives the news that Sylvia is pregnant and that she holds a grudge against the father of her child and hates him for what he has done. Another nervous breakdown:

I’m fed up with fellows, jails, drugs and the “bloody” life. I don’t know what to do and how to live and whether it is still worth living.

There is a mention in his documents that he went through a drug treatment in a psychiatric hospital (2000-2001). He says in the interview that now he is not addicted.

For a more complete picture of the respondent's personality, let us take a closer look at some B.'s answers to the questionnaire for candidates for psychological tests. The respondent had learning problems, repeated class IV and V, he acquired vocational qualifications in Voluntary Labour Corps, he caused educational problems. When he had nervous breakdown, he started taking various types of drugs. B. also has suicidal tendencies. He was already convicted as a minor at the age of 12 for breaking into a military warehouse and stealing . He describes his character emphasizing the following characteristics: nervous, very sensitive, explosive, energetic, solitary, sincere, exuberant, friendly, impatient, tolerant (but not in relation to homosexuals), modest, sociable, reckless. These features interact with the characteristics of what emerges from the autobiography.

Does B. have (in spite of intrusive suicidal thoughts) any plans for the future? When asked: "Would you like and what would you like to change?" he replies: "Myself and my life". The list of his life plans is as follows:

1. Give the joy of life and provide for my son.
2. End the criminal career.
3. Have a job suitable to my skills.
4. A person I can fully trust.
5. A modest flat.

6. In brief, to live modestly, but enjoy life with my children that I love.

It would seem that B.'s desires are ordinary and realistic, but his life so far has denied the possibility of their implementation, even a single fact that B. has never worked, and is (let us recall) 36 years old.

At the end of the presentation of B.'s biography let us return again to his written comments, we can find a lot of confessions and information there (certainly not only caused by regret and demanding attitude) that may interest educators and sociologists:

Rehabilitation, which is supposed to be implemented in prisons, doesn't really exist. (...) Honestly, I never felt anything that politicians and prison staff say. They talk about rehabilitation in various newspaper or television reports, they say that prisons function properly and have educational influence. (...) In their opinion, there is no other option but to place naughty young people in such units for minor crimes. In fact, it departs from the truth because in prisons, instead of "rehabilitation" they talk about so loudly, there is fear, anger, violence and hatred. In short, the young people who aren't really "corrupt" yet, are made into bandits, gangsters, perverts, and in the end – recidivists.

According to the respondent, we have to deal with a phenomenon that experts refer to as negative socialization process (Peretti, 1970; Baratta, 1977)³⁹ that occurs in prisons.

Ordinary people, the taxpayers pay big money not to fight crime, but to maintain overcrowded cells, to "produce" recidivists, build prisons. The money also goes to officials who are supposed to introduce "rehabilitation". In my opinion, the money should be invested in young people at large, in sports halls, football pitches, and this would reduce "the production" of recidivists.

How do these arguments relate to the scientific approaches of definition? In L. Pytka's article we read that: rehabilitation is a behaviour modification, elimination of disturbances in behaviour, change of the "social belonging" by rejecting "subcultural" roles, emotional rebuilding, growing into a "culture" to meet first- and second- order needs in accordance with moral and legal standards, shaping of proper social attitudes, a peculiar kind of "conversion" to the higher values associated with the implementation of the ideals, etc⁴⁰.

Certainly, formulated definitions are correct but it seems that they still remain in the sphere of wishful thinking and are something that a man leading a criminal lifestyle would no doubt call utopia.

³⁹ Cf. M. Ciosek, *Psychologia sądowa*, p. 215.

⁴⁰ Cf. L. Pytka, *Różne ujęcia definicji resocjalizacji*, [Different approaches to define rehabilitation], [in:] *Resocjalizacja*, p. 73-77.

CASE III

Gender and age: male, aged 36

Marital status: single

Education: elementary

Acquired profession: none

Record of convictions: recidivist (first time conviction in 1991)

Mr. A. comes from a large family (8 children). He starts giving account of his life with a presentation of the family situation. He describes his home as "good", but at the same time he mentions that there was poverty, alcoholism and domineering father who made a fuss. The mother, whom the respondent holds dear, was a housewife [(...) *the parents took care of us (...), especially my mother, we didn't lack anything, but I bear a grudge against my dad (...)*]. A. says that his father's occupation is a "stoker". As he admits, he feels resentment towards him:

(...) he was too severe and too aggressive towards me. (...) Of all children only I was humiliated, beaten and repelled by him. Why this hatred? I don't understand to this day. [Nevertheless, he states:] (...) after all I love him because it's my father.

At the age of 12 (according to the interview) A. stood up for his mother when his father was beating her (then he beat up his own father). A.'s school performance was not satisfactory, he got poor marks and his conduct was reprehensible, he repeated the class V and VII. He finished class VIII in VLC (Voluntary Labour Corps) where he first came into contact with the criminal environment (theft of food, beer, cigarettes). After finishing school he took up a job, fell into a bad company, and began to drink. At age of 17 he was hit in the head by a stone thrown by his girlfriend's father – he remained in a coma for 14 days.

A. also used to run away from home. He recalls it in this way:

(...) I felt useless and I lived in a strange fear, fear that decided for me – I did things because of fear and panic but I didn't know why. I was afraid of beating, screams, fights, and thus I escaped from home. (...) Once I decided not to return (...), I felt a terrible anxiety, I didn't know where to go and what I would do but I kept going until I came to Świebodzin. I didn't know anybody in this town, I had nothing to eat or where to sleep. I went to the park and decided to live there.

It is another case of disrupted family life, helplessness in the face of aggression and an attempt to "escape" from the evil world. The respondent A. is not as effusive as the previous one, is not quite able to name his feelings, he is characterized by a low intellectual level (it may be a consequence of injuries and alcohol abuse).

Another sad thing is a situation that bothers me, it's an accident after which my life has changed 180 degrees. I hit a tree on my motorcycle and then I lost consciousness. A trepanation of the skull was required. This unfortunate accident had a serious effect on my health, not physical, but mental one. To this day I have had serious problems with my personality, I'm getting lost in my life, I'm losing control of my life.

A. was first arrested and imprisoned for theft. He talks reluctantly about his crimes. Instead, he writes a lot about his love life, though one gets the impression that he finds it difficult to get involved in relationships with women (although he remembers each relationship as a happy time for himself).

I RELATIONSHIP

And now a wonderful moment of my life which made me happy. It was love named Dorota, the mother of my beloved daughter Agnieszka. It was a joy of life, happiness, and home, it was wonderful. It's true that it didn't last long but it was happiness in my life. Today I don't have my love Dorota but I have my beloved daughter.

II RELATIONSHIP

One more happiness I won't forget. Another love whose name was Wioletta. I felt happy too and she also gave birth to a daughter – Kamila. It's also a beautiful moment in my life I'll never forget. It's true that I have no Wioletta anymore, but I have my daughter Kamila.

III RELATIONSHIP

The next and very important situation that happened in my life is a relationship with my current intimate partner Maria. This is the woman from the park, from this unfortunate bench, she gave me a shelter. (...) And one day, love was born and it lasts until today. I'm happy and proud that at last I have someone who understands me a little, loves me and there's no beating or humiliating.

He attributes all his life's failures to the health problems and the partial disability, he feels marked:

I'd love to be a happy man but I'm treated like an idiot because of my personality problems, it's very painful, but anyway, apparently there are people who are supposed to be sensible, but in fact, they are indifferent.

The respondent has spent about 12 years in prison. He dreams about having his own farm.

CASE IV

Gender and age: male, aged 32

Marital status: single

Education: elementary

Acquired profession: none

Record of convictions: recidivist (first time conviction in 1992)

Mr. S. comes from a poor family, the father is a driver, the mother – a weaver, he also has a younger sister. He went to kindergarten until he was 7, then, to primary school until the age of 10. He describes his father as a violent alcoholic who used corporal punishment against children, he beat his son until he bleeds (as a child S. had a forensic examination performed a few times). His father was convicted and spent three years in prison for assault.

Later on (...) when I was in year 5 or 6 of primary school he tortured me terribly. He made me lie down on the bed and hit me many times with a belt or cable on the back until I almost felt nothing, but at night I couldn't lie on my back, and ran away from PE lessons because I was ashamed of bruises. All this took place in the absence of my mother who was at work (...), because only the mother worked.

This situation in the family home was the cause of truancy at primary school when he was 10. The respondent states that he had no problems with learning, and he repeated the fifth year only because of truancy and conflict with the law. He began to smoke cigarettes, drink cheap wine, break into cellars and shops. After the theft at a kiosk he was put on probation. He was also sent to the Psychological and Pedagogical Counselling Centre where psychologists stated psychomotor hyperactivity and emotional disorders. Then he went to the Emergency Shelter Care where he developed his smoking addiction and tried intoxicants such as glue or solvents. His older friends made him steal (cigarettes, alcohol) and he was sexually abused by them. During this period, he also had his first sexual intercourse with his older girlfriend. He used to escape from the Emergency Shelter Care as well.

After the first court hearing he was qualified for juvenile detention center, but this was a suspended sentence and S. was sent to the juvenile shelter where he finished year VI. The stay in this center brought about further negative experiences: sexual abuse, rape by older friends, compulsion to serve them (for example, washing their underwear, doing duty for them, doing jobs for them at the workshop).

After leaving the juvenile shelter S. takes up criminal activity – he steals bikes. Again, he returns to the shelter and VLC. The next place of residence is the Youth Educational Center where he completes the year

VIII. He receives a pass and keeps stealing (motorbikes, car radios). As a result, he is sent to the juvenile detention center. But when he is on a pass he decides not to return. He hides at his foster aunt's, he also visits his mother. He says:

Once I stole a car, there was a lot of meat inside. So, I gave it to my mom, and I sold the car for parts.

He starts stealing cars to order. At the age of 18 he receives eight-month penal sanction, of which he serves four months and returns to his former activities – car theft. Another trial for theft ends with a two-year sentence. S. also completes his school year IX. After leaving prison he comes back to stealing and is imprisoned for the next time. After serving another sentence he is employed on the construction site (working there for 1 year). Then he goes to the dermatology clinic where the detailed medical examination shows that he got infected with AIDS (1994). He takes up treatment (finished in 2002) and is granted a disability pension (as a severely disabled; disability benefits are suspended now due to the fact that S. is serving a term of imprisonment). His criminal nature continues to be revealed. He goes to the remand centre and then is jailed for one year and seven months for passing bad checks. At that time, he has psychological tests and neurological examination through which central nervous system damage is identified. During the prison leave he returns to his profession and his criminal lifestyle – stealing cars. This time (2005) the court imposes a harsh sentence: 9.5 years in prison. He puts it this way:

(...) The penalty I'm serving now, when it comes to my health, is too heavy and not fair because this is a life sentence! And I didn't commit a crime of rape! Anyway, I know that the acts I've done require punishment, but isn't it too harsh?

S. has a sense of injustice, he says he was "wronged by the court" and by fate – the despotic and alcoholic father and incurable disease. In his complicated biography we can also find suicide attempts: at the age of 22 he tried to slash his wrists, at the age of 24 – an attempt to hang himself, when he was 25 years old he attempted to cause an accident. The respondent also confesses to smoking marijuana and drinking alcohol (he stayed twice in the sobering-up station). Describing his character he indicates the following characteristics: nervous, very sensitive, introverted, honest, outgoing, friendly, impatient, tolerant, modest, sociable, cheerful and reckless. He states that he is often sad but tries not to show it. He is worried about the state of his mother's health (Post-Myocardial Infarction) and his own poor test results.

It may be worth noting that the respondent is artistically gifted – he plays the organ, paints, and although he is HIV positive he makes tattoos in prison, which is strictly prohibited.

And his dreams for the future? He describes them as follows:

As for my future, it's basically hard to say because of my health situation I've never expected to happen. But anyway, apparently it was meant to be. But if God allowed me to live a little bit longer, I'd like to find a soul mate, sick like me or not, who would accept me as I am (in terms of disease!). I'd like to have a family, I could even have a relationship with a woman who already has a child. But above all, I'll limit my contact with the criminal element because I'm tired of staying behind bars, waste of time because my days are numbered. I'd like some more work if my health permits, but above all, to get a driving license – absolutely because I love driving (...). And I'd like to have my birds, "parakeets" and always at least two kittens because they're really lovely and their friendship is truly reciprocal. And if I managed, I'd like to have something to learn. And help someone, for example, someone older because I really pity old people, they're as clumsy as small children.

The particular sensitivity interferes with the criminal lifestyle lived by S. from the earliest years of his life.

According to the respondent, there is no rehabilitation in prisons. The inmates continue their criminal lifestyle, identify with the prison subculture, abuse the weaker (sexual abuse (rape) as well), establish the order of priority.

Summary

In order to make some generalizations (although each of the mentioned cases is different and the application of biographical method requires an individual approach), let us return to previously presented G. Walters's assumptions. We should agree with the fact that the prisoners are characterized by a specific lack of responsibility, particularly in relation to offenses they have committed. Having fun is the most crucial for the respondents, although sometimes it would seem that their hierarchy of values slightly changed (but not in all presented cases). I find it hard to judge their wrong attitude towards other people because the studies (interviews, documents) do not allow the formulation of such conclusions. However, I can state that in the case of the surveyed recidivists there was a chronic violation of social norms, therefore their socialization is highly disturbed, and almost all respondents deny the effectiveness (or even existence) of the process of rehabilitation.

All respondents come from pathological families where corporal punishment was used towards them, and thus their interactions with the background were disturbed from an early age.

Many of the respondents implement their own loser life scenario, often accepting this state of affairs and putting the blame on different factors of external world such as: the background to which they came, harsh conditions, lack of human warmth or appropriate emotional ties.

The respondents have manifested emotional hyperactivity (irritability, aggression) from the earliest years of their life. They caused educational problems at school (truancy, drugs, minor offenses), often grew up to crime in educational institutions or youth detention centers more and more identifying with criminal lifestyle.

They unanimously express unfavourable opinions about rehabilitation, do not always show willingness to improve or plan a "normal" (from the point of view of a free man) future. They have suicidal tendencies and their rebellion is directed to themselves (self-destruction) or environment (robbery).

J. Rejman, describing the pathogenic elements of the prison organization, clearly states that,

The modern penitentiary institution needs reforms, the stability of which is essential to the transformation of the whole prison system. (...) A thorough change in the philosophy of the application of punitive measures and custodial sentence is necessary and possible together with statewide transformations simultaneously implemented in terms of: social prevention system, crime prevention (criminal and penitentiary policy) and changes in legal and educational culture of society⁴¹.

With regard to the recommended and planned tasks of rehabilitation we should pay attention to the value of work (this subject was brought up by: Wierzbicki, 1977, Górny, 1979; Popławski, 1984; Szymanowski, 1984)⁴². Work is a source of fulfillment for every individual and it should bring satisfaction not only from the economic point of view, but also may positively influence the way of thinking and man's self-esteem. The question of work in prisons remains a controversial issue (some people even identify it with slavery), although such controversies are not confirmed in research carried out among the unemployed for whom the lack of fixed occupation (not only the means of livelihood) is the lack of moti-

⁴¹ J. Rejman, *Patogenne elementy organizacji i struktury instytucji więziennej*, [Pathogenic elements of organization and structure of the prison institution], [in:] *Zagadnienia marginalizacji i patologizacji życia społecznego*, [Issues of marginalization and pathologization of social life], ed. F. Kozaczuk, Rzeszów 2005, p. 77.

⁴² Cf. M. Ciosek, *Psychologia sądowa*, p. 268-269.

vation, disorganised emotional life and a tendency to depression. It is therefore important at this point to refer to M. Ciosek,

(...) the work of prisoners is often associated with a silent compulsion, supervision (which is obvious), a small possibility to choose both the type and place of work and, unfortunately, far lower pay for their work than at large. But regardless of all these factors, even this kind of work fills the time of the prisoner's isolation, separates them from intrusive thoughts, provides stimulation, promotes new social contacts and emotional discharge, develops interests, and also brings some tangible benefits⁴³.

This way of thinking seems to coincide with the Human Capital Operational Programme for Poland 2007-2013, within which the Prison Service Management Board is a system beneficiary in the sphere of activities aimed at inmates in prison⁴⁴.

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⁴³ Ibidem, p. 269.

⁴⁴ More on this topic at: <http://www.sw.gov.pl/index.php/aktualnosci/more/2450>, [accessed: 10 August 2008].

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Zachowania przestępcze jako styl życia

Streszczenie

Osadzonych charakteryzuje swoisty brak odpowiedzialności, szczególnie w odniesieniu do popełnianych czynów. Badani wyraźnie stawiają na przyjemności w życiu, choć niekiedy mogłoby się wydawać, iż ich hierarchia wartości nieco się zmieniła (jednak nie we wszystkich prezentowanych przypadkach). Wszyscy badani pochodzą ze środowisk patologicznych, w których stosowano wobec nich kary cielesne, a więc ich interakcje ze środowiskiem były zaburzone już od najwcześniejszych lat życia. Wielu badanych realizuje własny scenariusz przegranego życia, nierzadko godząc się z takim stanem rzeczy i obarczając winą za to elementy świata zewnętrznego: środowisko, do jakiego trafili, trudne warunki, brak ciepła rodzinnego i poprawnych więzi emocjonalnych. Badani przejawiali nadpobudliwość emocjonalną (nerwowość, agresję) już od najwcześniejszych lat życia. Sprawiali trudności wychowawcze w szkole (wagary, używki, drobne przestępstwa), dorastali do przestępczości często w zakładach wychowawczych czy poprawczych, coraz bardziej identyfikując się z przestępczym stylem życia.

Słowa kluczowe: socjalizacja, błędna socjalizacja, charakter, zachowanie kryminalne, życie, kryminalny styl życia, resocjalizacja, płęć, edukacja, relacje, życie rodzinne, okupacja, przynależność społeczna, narkotyki, więzienie, syndrom choroby nerwowej

