

Foreword

Why counsellogy?

The English title of the Journal reflects the editors' effort to find an adequate equivalent for the Polish term '*Poradownawstwo*', which in the Polish scholarly tradition denotes the 'theory of counselling'. While coining the term 'counsellogy', we used the definition by Thomas Wilson and Aaron B. Stills, who wrote that *the term multicultural counselogy refers to (...) the study of the process of counselling from cultural perspective* (Journal of Non-White Concerns in Personnel and Guidance, 9.3, July 1981, pp. 103-108). But our understanding of the term 'counsellogy' expands its meaning to include historical, social, cultural and also interpersonal perspectives. Parallel to the names of other sciences (anthropology, psychology, sociology, etc.), the coinage implies that the science of counselling is a distinctive, though admittedly inter-disciplinary, branch of scholarship. It has its own distinct research field, peculiar terminology, unique conceptions and specific, reliable methodology and procedures. According to Alicja Kargulowa, (re-)inventing the term 'counselogy' concludes the formative phase of the theory of counselling. With counsellogy crystallised as a science in its own right, researchers will be encouraged to expand their explorations and reflection.

Why Journal of Counsellogy?

The annually published journal was founded by Polish counsellogists assembled in the Naukowe Towarzystwo Poradownawcze (The Counsellogical Association). It aims to ensure high quality research and to increase the applicability of research results. Hence its primary function of a forum for the exchange of theoretical and practical findings and implications of Polish and international research. The journal engages with the current debates triggered by the noticeably increasing interest in the provision of help through counselling. The change is manifest in development of diverse counselling facilities, employment of counsellors in various institutions, proliferation of degrees and courses training 'help specialists' as well as abundance of publications on advice, guidance, consultations, therapy, psychological support and the like. This has mobilised both counsellogists and reflective practitioners to all the more insightfully probe into the multifarious and still diversifying 'spectrum' of counselling. This is a welcome development for, although counselling is by no means a new social phenomenon, the research on counselling is a relative scholarly novelty. Producing results whose theoretical merit sometimes falls short of desired

and expected standards, counsellogy needs joint efforts of academics and creative professionals to upgrade and mature.

The researchers of the Counsellogical Association invite a multidisciplinary group of authors to collaborate in the hope that enrichment of counsellogy will naturally ensue. They believe that counsellogical expertise cannot be restricted to the description of actual events only. At the same time, the developing theory of counselling, they insist, cannot be constrained by a single predetermined structure. This openness results from the fluid ramifications of knowledge, in which the place of theory is shifting. It can be a set of assumptions, a framework for reviewing and arranging descriptions of facts, processes and events, or an outcome of generalisations and predictions.

The editors of 'Studia Poradoznawcze'/'Journal of Counsellogy' envision the journal as a platform for various social actors and researchers to share viewpoints and observations, which will contribute to counsellogy evolving into an 'adaptive theory' grounded in the reliable research data. But they equally strongly believe that the journal will also 'work', i.e. facilitate predicting, explaining and comprehending the counselling-related phenomena. As such, it can serve and engage counselling professionals, especially reflective practitioners. The laws and theoretical depictions expounded in the journal will hopefully function as explanatory instruments in scientific pursuits and instructive instruments in practical application.

With such fusion of the theoretical and the practical in mind, the editors welcome contributions from various social scientists, whose diverse voices and approaches will nuance the counselling debate. Counsellogy will then extend its comprehensive grounding in fundamental premises about human nature and values. Yet, as a social theory focused on people and their intentionality in action, counsellogy can remain a vibrant science only if it generates its own unique representation of human agency in coping, help-seeking and advising. Counsellogy specifically strives to understand individuals' relations to themselves, other people and the environment, particularly when they cope, advise or use advice (human being as a *homo consultans*). These are patently dynamic processes. And counsellogy is a dynamically developing theory, constantly modified in the light of new findings, methodological innovations and changes in the social world. Therefore, it is crucial that it collaborate closely with other social sciences and keep up with their conceptual and methodological developments. Hence the editors place such value on state-of-the-art papers from related research fields.

By no means universal laws, regularities that social sciences identify hold true only in particular social ramifications. We can, therefore, count on fresh and diversified views on such familiar, yet still pertinent issues as:

- ◆ What psychological and social process are involved in counselling?
- ◆ What facts, events and situations make up counselling?
- ◆ What values are achieved in/through counselling?

And:

- ◆ What meanings do people ascribe to counselling processes?
- ◆ What are the types, kinds and categories of counselling?
- ◆ What fields/areas of counselling are becoming most important today?
- ◆ How powerful/effective is counselling's impact?
- ◆ What means do counsellors have at their disposal and how can these be perfected or enriched?

But even now, counsellors do not think uniformly on these questions. The lack of critical consensus in the theory of counselling issues from its versatility: it engages, namely, with multifarious manifestations and methods of giving guidance, seeking advice and coping. Counselling in itself is approached either as an individual experience of participation in a relationship or as an institutionalised or everyday phenomenon of social life. Additionally, the theory of counselling already resorts to cross-disciplinary theories and observations concerning such diverse areas of social life as education, welfare, therapy, learning, organisation and management, social policy, mental health, the dynamics of social structures, cultural issues or liquidisation and globalisation of social life. In these, counselling acknowledges the role of human agency as well as its limits. Counsellors know that objectified cultural products (therein problems, solutions and arguments) depend on human inventiveness and attribution of meanings to certain phenomena, events and processes. Simultaneously, they also realise that some processes and events lie beyond human volition and consciousness. It is these that manifest themselves conspicuously in counselling.

The first debates regarding counselling's fundamental assumptions were held at the national academic seminars entitled *Counselling in Contemporary Society*, which were organised from 1979 to 1995 by the University of Wrocław's Institute of Pedagogy and Psychology and were continued as part of the *Counselling Seminars* at the University of Lower Silesia. The editorial staff of 'Studia Poradownicze' assume that the next important 'avenues' to host discussions aimed at the identification of counselling processes and facts and the uncovering of the laws and regularities governing them are the **Counselling Association** founded on the 24th February 2011 in Wrocław, whose publication is this journal, and the **European Society for Vocational Designing and Career Counseling**, which was created on the 10th November 2011 in Padua and whose founding members include Polish counsellors. Both organisations have set themselves the task of conducting research on counselling as one of their aims. This publication is, indeed, supposed to foster the development and popularisation of counselling by publishing seminal articles on the theory and practice of counselling by authors from Poland and abroad. Planned as a bilingual publication (Polish and English), the 'Studia Poradownicze'/'Journal of Counselling' is meant to facilitate a free discourse and reach a wide Polish readership, while at the same time, popularising Polish counselling throughout the world.

Aware of their responsibility and the actual impossibility to meet all the potential expectations, the journal's editors propose the following structure and requirements of the journal in anticipation of possible reservations and doubts:

- ▶ Section I. Studies and Dissertations
Papers discussing the counselling-related issues from the perspective of a more general theoretical or philosophical paradigm.
- ▶ Section II. Research Reports
Research reports in which research results are interpreted in-depth and the meticulously formulated research questions methodically answered.
- ▶ Section III. Recommendations for Counselling Practice
Accounts of creative practices as well as recommendations on working methods and tools designed and tested by authors who are reflective counselling practitioners.
- ▶ Section IV. Reviews
Reviews and critical discussions of significant Polish and international publications.
- ▶ Section V. News and Chronicle
Reports from important conferences on counselling in Poland and abroad; information on national and international events relevant to the development of counselling; bills, laws, acts and other documents regulating counselling practice; information on counsellors' achievements: academic degrees, awards or honours; notifications of new publications on counselling and upcoming conferences.

The academic quality, as well as high formal standards, is the editor's priority. The rigorous peer-reviewing procedures are to ensure that the texts published in the journal will be recognised as significant contributions to the counsellogical discourse.

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