

Social disturbances influence on the social reintegration chances

Gabriel Pricină, Ph.D.

Lecturer, University of Craiova, Faculty of Social Sciences,
Romania
gabrielpricina@gmail.com

Abstract

This study is based on a field research in the summer of 2012 in one of the major prisons in Romania. The main purpose of this research was the analysis of the social reintegration opportunities for the inmates. The data analyses indicates the person's disorientation that has served their sentence and are force to return in a society that hardly provides the necessary support even to those who do not suffer this stigma. Romania's case is a special one. Although the offenses do not outnumber those of other European Union countries, the country's image is affected by the Romanians offenses committed in other states. The low living standards and the inefficient social support after incarcerations are the most important factors in adopting an undesirable system values for any civilized society. This study outlines an optimistic group of people in detention, but that are in a difficult situation when asked about designing their future. The inability to project their future creates a continuous present and makes them ignore the consequences of their actions.

Key words: social reintegration.

Introduction

This article is an effort to describe the obstacles that arise in the process of the persons social reintegration that have performed imprisonment.

In the specialized literature we find many papers focused on identifying the most effective ways for social reintegration trying to

avoid obstacles that's blocking the efforts to instigate some processes that caused opposite effects that determinate delinquent behavior. The research based of this study revealed a major risk to relapse during the post detention. The prison's specialist's efforts have significant results during detention for prisoners, especially those of young age. Most respondents proved a state of optimism and self-confidence. However, research data showed that adapting and accepting the rules of the prison, assuming a set of values, identical social behavior accepted by most people are valid during detention and been put up in doubt in the time of the

1. General Considerations

The research was conducted at Craiova penitentiary on a sample of 340 people, representing a rate of 30.9% of the total of approximately 1,100 inmates at the time of the research in July 2012.

The secondary analysis of data revealed a difference between the living conditions and how prisoners could build the future. Thus, most respondents felt that the future will be with their family and friends. But the sources of the revenue needed have divided the respondents into two main categories: the first was made up of people who have learned a trade during detention (using the time spent in prison effectively) and those who said that after liberation they wish to acquire a job. The second category was made up of people who didn't cover getting a job in the future and most do not have any qualifications at the detention's start and during detention they didn't concern obtaining one.

The first categories of respondents project their future on three dimensions: family, friends and job, a correct view in terms of the objectives of social reintegration. The second category was made up of those who didn't have a future projection, despite the optimism; the risk of relapse is significant.

The second category of people is the target group of this article by performing a secondary analysis of the data relating to them.

The data collected revealed the existence of four scenarios for the future of these respondents:

1. The first is the return to the family. In the absence of a qualification the inclusion becomes difficult. The labor market in Romania is quite restrictive; there is a bigger demand for jobs than supply. Such a person becomes a burden for the family in a state of poor economic conditions. The material needs will affect the family

members, and the work expectations from each family member will be relatively high. The inability to participate in ensuring the livelihood of the family is a source of conflict in the family. Financial difficulties will contribute to the feeling of less family support. Possible conflicts caused by poverty and subsistence needs can influence the decision of committing new criminal acts.

2. The second scenario refers to their group of friends (entourage). Most respondents in this category have invoked as the cause of their crimes their entourage. Returning to the group of friends who have contributed to the commission of offenses is actually reconstituting the existing context prior involvement in illegal acts. This finding is supported by a significant percentage (54.7%) of respondents who had friends with criminal records before being sentenced themselves. The immediate no integration at in work of these people will become a risk factor for relapse.

3. The third scenario is the rejection situations by family and friends. Social marginalization can be a sufficient ground for antisocial attitudes and behavior. Moreover, we expect that there will be a tendency of association with persons in the same situation in terms of opportunity's lack for social integration.

4. The fourth scenario, the most problematic in my view, is that of belonging to a criminal group with its own system of values and hierarchy models. Social reintegration is actually preceded by the group integration.

Given these scenarios we propose an analysis based on the following dimensions: social dynamics (understood through the dysfunction) and the risk factors.

2. Social malfunctions

By malfunction we understand the totality of social phenomena and processes that determine social exclusion of groups or individuals. Coverage of social dysfunctions, generate exclusion beyond the scope of negative consequences of poverty.

In the case of poverty we refer only to material deprivation, while social exclusion include all factors that lead to social rejection of any group or individual by limiting or blocking access to employment, political rights, culture, education etc. According to Strobel (1996: 262) social exclusion causes a person to be simply excluded from fundamental human rights.

Turning to crime, we find that poverty is not a firm cause of criminality, but in correlation with the constituent elements of an exclusive context creates the prerequisites decision exclusively criminal behavior. Material deprivation can be understood as the absence of goods, shortcomings related to food, clothing, heating (primary deprivation), the lack of goods that define individual comfort, such as car or telephone, the opportunity to spend time in a preferred way (secondary deprivation) poor quality of housing and housing facilities, the urban infrastructure and its facilities (Zamfir, Preda, Dan, 2007: 241). To this classification it is added, structural exclusion “produced by the system’s own configuration” (Zamfir Preda, Dan, 2007: 241), consisting of unemployment or non-occupation of a significant population's part, along with the lack of public policies, membership a group that would make him not satisfy certain needs due to lack of resources and auto-exclusion, represented by the individual option to rally to a certain cultural model unconcern for their own situation etc.

Of the 340 people surveyed, a major part falls within one or more categories listed above, as follows: a rate of 42.6% (145 people) had no profession, only 13.9% of respondents had jobs (47 people), a percentage of 54.7% (186 people) had friends who have been convicted. A percentage of 63.1% of those who came from families with criminal records also had friends that committed crimes. Regarding the influence of family and group of friends on criminal behavior, resulted in a significant relationship between crime and groups of friends superior to that of the family, supplemented by a powerful influence on the criminal behavior in the case of the friends and family members criminal behavior existence (Pricină, Nedelcu & Belulescu, 2013: 207-208).

The material properties of the respondents are largely made up of home ownership for 54.7% (186 people), 7.65% (26 people) owned a car and only 4.1% (14 people) have household goods. A percentage of 26.4% (90 people) of respondents had no income at the time of conviction.

However, a percentage of 71.8% of respondents said they were part of the middle income earners. In this category 17.2% (42 people) said they have no income. Regarding to the labor market inclusion, a percentage of 48.8% of respondents had a job before sentencing (166 people).

The above figures illustrates the context of the existing group of people in distress: a low level of ownership, the lack of qualifications,

low education, no income, from which it detaches a category of respondents that have a good opinion of themselves, considering themselves as part of the middle class. Detaching from the viewpoint of the opinions expressed a group of people who come from backgrounds with criminal records and who measure their social position based on individual criteria or group affiliation.

This structure highlights the heterogeneous value systems responses of the respondents. Another differentiation between the respondents is revealed by the attitudes towards work. A percentage of 13.5% (46 persons) mentioned that "work is for losers" and 27.1% (92 people) said they "do not like working even though they had to work." Such an attitude will rise in the establishment of a process of social integration regarding to people who do not believe that work can be a solution for the future. For these people the probability to relapse is very high.

By analyzing the expressed opinions we can fit the respondents into the above categories (primary, secondary and structural deprivation). The opinions collected and how the research participants declared their appreciation for the present and how they shape their future support the conclusions on the future influence of risk factors on the likelihood to relapse.

In this section of the study we wanted to highlight some aspects that are three consequences of the social dysfunction in the Romanian society. The lack of intervention in their correction will favor the reconstitution of everyday situations that will facilitate relapse and thus increasing the difficulty of the social reintegration measures.

2. Risk Factors

The Scientifics' explanation efforts of delinquent behaviors and also to identify the most effective means of the social reintegration have led to the risk factor research paradigm (RFR). Researchers who have adopted this paradigm are concerned about the antecedents associated with consequences, such as the associated behaviors (Kazdin et. all, 1997: 375-406).

By understanding the risk factors we can see the trajectories that lead to criminal behavior which would fundament some effective strategies to coordinate the efforts of prevention and intervention (Repucci et. Al, 2002: 12).

According to Farrington (2007: 605) the risk factors increase the occurrence potential, frequency, duration or persistence of criminal behavior.

In specialized literature we find a series of nuances as to how we understand the risk factors influence, for example, the distinction between the risk factors and the correlations (Kraemer et al, 1997: 337-343). The identified association between two variables provides relevant information in understanding the consequences but not in terms of causal relationships. By prioritizing the risk factors we can create a hierarchical structure according to the potential impact, prevention and social integration. The previous event occurrence and the risk factors are important in detecting the possible existence of a causal chain.

The risk factors can be divided into five areas: individual, family, group (entourage), school and community (Loeber & Farrington, 2000: 737-762). For the purposes of this article we find that in all cases they can be integrated in some social dimensions whose malfunction generate or activate them.

Given the characteristics of the analyzed individuals by the research that is at the base of this study we believe that the main risk comes from high material deprivation of many of the respondents. Thus, to the previous typology, based on researches we can add another dimension, specific to the Romanian society, relating to the economic factors. These results out of the desire of goods accumulation and the impossibility of acquiring them by legally recognized means, paves the way for criminal behavior.

Conclusion

The association of the risk factors highlights the social dysfunctions, that there is a complex interplay that acts differently on individuals. The social dysfunctions predispose to delinquent behaviors a significant number of people, depending on the individual risk factors. In the case of liberty deprivation sentencing measures of social reintegration requires structuring possible depending on individual risk factors. In addition, the individual projections of the future provides meaningful information about the errors in the evaluation of the future social position of those concerned and the potential activation of existing risks.

In terms of a significant percentage of people who come from environments with people who have criminal records we considered

the release from prison will allow the reconstitution setting the initial context, which includes individuals with a criminal record in situations of material deprivation, with a low level of qualifications and low education. Relapse is a logical consequence of such a context in which people with criminal records add the ones released from prison. The explanation of such decisions can be made from the perspective of the rational agent, widely used in economic explanations. By this theory, the individual is "a selfish a calculated being, concerned only of optimal satisfaction of his interests" (Ogień 2002: 177-178).

Including the economic factors in the delinquent behavior of the causative risk factors opens a specific perspective of analysis of the social reintegration measures resulting from the combination of the two dimensions: the first, resulting from the general measures that require intervention, based on processing the statistical data and the second assessment individual capacity to change their lives. Following the model of rational agent theory, A. Ogień cites G. Becker who propose three analysis variables that suggests a realistic strategy "the suppression cost of crimes and misdemeanors, one of the penalties applied (imprisonment or fine) and the offenders reactions changes during the application of the punishment" (Ogień, 2002: 179). In the case of the Romanian society there is a need to develop a system of economic analysis and monitoring of the social costs implied by punishing those who have committed crimes or effects of investment in the prevention measures by developing some social inclusion policies, the social assistance and the investment in education and training the persons in conditions of severe material deprivation. A balance of costs and effects by comparing two possible solutions would be useful in the social policy architecture designed to reduce the criminal behavior.

References

1. Farrington, D.P., (2007), *Childhood risk factors and risk-focused prevention*, in Maguire, M., Morgan R., Renner, R. (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of criminology*, Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press
2. Kazdin, A., Kraemer, H.C., Kessler, R.C., Kupfer, D.J. & Offord, D.R. (1997), *Contributions of risk factor research to development psychopathology*, *Clinical Psychology Review*, No.17.

3. Kraemer, H.C., Kazdin, A.E., Offord, D.R., Kessler, R.C., Jensen, P.S., Kupfer, D.J. (1997), *Coming to terms with the terms of risk*, Archives of General Psychiatry, No 54.
4. Loeber, R., Farrington, D.P. (2000), *Young children who commit crime: Epidemiology, developmental origins, risk factors, early interventions, and policy implications*. Development and Psychopathology, No 12.
5. Ogien, A. (2002), *Sociology of deviance*, Editura Polirom, Iasi
6. Pricină, G., Nedelcu, P. & Belulescu, L. (2013), *Social Reintegration between hope and reality*, Editura Aius, Craiova.
7. Repucci, N.D., Fried, C.S. & Schimdt, M. G. (2002), *Youth violence: risk and protective factors*, in Corrado, R., Roesch, R., Hart, S.D., Gierowski, J.K. (Eds.), *Multi-problem violence youth*, Amsterdam: Kluwer.
8. Strobel, P. (1996), *From poverty to exclusion*, în Adrian Neculau si Gilles Ferréol (coord.), *Minority, Marginalized, Excluded*, Editura Polirom, Iasi.
9. Zamfir, E., Preda, M. & Dan, A. (2007), *Social exclusion*, în Zamfir C., si Stănescu, S., *Encyclopedia of Social Development* , Editura Polirom, Iasi.