

THE IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL ORGANIZATIONS IN LAW ENFORCEMENT FOR PROMOTING THE REINTEGRATION OF INMATES

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Abstract

The penitentiary system is a hermetically sealed world in many senses, which is reflected in the organizations' mechanisms designed for management, operation, and control, as well as their organizational culture. This is why it is practical to examine the appearance of external, non-state-controlled actors within the prison walls. In the professional debates of the past decades the question of non-state-controlled actors' gaining ground primarily focused on market actors entering penitentiary systems. The other focus on non-state-related actors has to do with social organizations active in the penitentiary system. The role and activity of social organizations encompass a much wider range than those of market players, and they have several hundreds of years of history. In the past decades, however, there has been a serious change in the financial background of organizations and in the significance of roles filled by the different types of organizations. To ensure the reintegration of inmates, penitentiary organizations perform several activities that go beyond the framework of classic jurisdiction. During the implementation of imprisonment, it must be ensured that the convicts' self-esteem, personality, sense of responsibility are developed, and thus they can prepare for an individual life after their release meeting the requirements of society. To reach these objectives the penitentiary system must "map" outside reality and organize imprisonment so that by carrying out tasks the system may get closer to the declared objectives: the fair and humane treatment of the inmates and via this the promotion of reintegration.

Keywords: reintegration of prisoners; NGOs in prison; effects of imprisonment

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The importance of social organizations in law enforcement for promoting the reintegration of inmates

The society is often susceptible to forget those physically closed places, total institutions, where the power puts those people who are deprived of their entire liberty. These people's value and norm systems change radically in those institutions because these media are characteristically different from free life, but we have little sociological knowledge of the prison's inner world (Crewe, 2012; Goffman, 1961).

The effect of the entirely closed world on the personality is not irreversible though, but *“it is indispensable at the same time that imprisonment, confinement and the socialization of the special value and norm systems of the prison world can damage them in several fronts”* (Csáki & Mészáros, 2005, p. 111). The experts agree that the order of total institutions only increases deviance and strengthens segregation. If the society confines the convicts without supervision and control and condemns them to passivity, those kinds of events can take place which result in the increase of criminal attitude. On the other side, penitentiary facilities are designed with punishment, correction and reintegration to the community in mind and these goals may conflict with the purposes of health care (Watson, Stimpson, & Hostick, 2004).

The negative effects of law enforcement on the personality

The characteristic feature of a closed institution means not only a safety category, but *“it refers to pressure which restricts the prisoners' certain civil rights (eg., free movement, the selection of place of residence, freedom of speech) and it makes the satisfaction of some of the basic needs (eg., sexuality) impossible or difficult”* (Ruzsonyi, 2008, p. 17). Sykes dealt with this question in details, according to his deprivation model the prisoners are deprived of freedom, convenience, heterosexuality, safety and autonomy (Sykes, 1958). The origin of deprivation is quite complex, it is the result of three factors, the sanction mediated by the society, the side-effect deriving from the organization of the prison and the collective group processes of the prison society. These withdrawals have negative effects on the convicts' self-estimation, they destroy their self-image, they suffer being locked up from the outside world.

The deprivations force the prisoners to form informal groups - these are the subcultures of prisons - in which they have a chance to ease the torments

connected to the withdrawals. The notion connected to this is prisonization created by Clemmer, which is a factor reacting against rehabilitation, resocialization, reintegration. It can be defined as an adaptation mechanism, because the people always interpret the normative point of reference of their behaviour as the participants of some situations. Prisonization is a process in which the person takes up the values and moral norms of the prison, as the prison cannot only deter but can spur people on crime (Clemmer, 1940). Prison socialization, informal group integration and the decline of deprivation create a change in the person's value and norm system which facilitates the perpetration of a crime again.

Detrimentalization is the central core of immanent prison harms, the latent function of prisons gathers around it. It means personality deterioration and its perception, which is caused by other harmful effects of prisons. It is not identical with prisonization because personality is criminalized from some viewpoints, in this case it does not happen, but the personality deteriorates because of the feeling of imprisonment, the mates' brutality, the negligence of the staff, the monotonous nature of the daily routine and other special circumstances. *"It affects mainly those persons who are criminals for the first time, who have not been criminalized and who are in common and social security"* (Fliegauf, 2007, pp. 80-81).

The further harmful effect of isolation is hospitalization, which decreases the prisoner's social latitude. The convict loses his/her independence due to the continuous care. As everything is regulated by the instructions of the guards, the daily routine, rules of the house in prison, it is difficult to find a segment which could not be worn out by „prison machinery”. *"On the cognitive map outside this there is the prison medium, which is usually detrimental"* (Fliegauf, 2007, p. 91).

The residents can meet several negative effects though, which deform the personality in an institution, where the task is the positive forming of the personality (Viggiani, 2006). Although the criminal has to be punished but not in a way that his/her mental and social relations are damaged. Imprisonment applied in itself can do that. Because of loneliness his/her social connections (family, friends, connections at the workplace) can get damaged and can go loony. The most burning want is emotional unsatisfaction - the lack of social, human relationships coming from outside -, which is of vital importance on one hand in the maintenance of mental balance, on the other hand from the point of view of reintegration. *"The direct consequences of deprivation and frustration*

are introversion - the sinking into daily routine, „vegetation” -, dependence, the incapability of making decisions, the decrease of self-estimation” (Csáki & Mészáros, 2005, p. 111).

It is appropriate to apply confinement, separation to a certain point of time and to the extent until it can be replaced by other tools which decrease isolation, substitute for isolation and help the healthy development of the personality. The convict's autonomy of action is a much greater power to discipline in several cases than outer pressure. Most of the convicts realize that it is more favourable to stay in a relatively free environment than to be transferred into a closed regime. That is why every class, organized effect on the convicts, besides realizing different educational tasks in the interest of reaching the direct aim, helps directly or indirectly the successful integration after release.

“Having prisoners participate in education programs addresses two possible causes of incarceration and recidivism, lack of job skills and lack of education” (Sedgley, Scott, Williams, & Derrick, 2010, p. 497). Punishment, deprivation and restriction do not lead to the expected behavior in themselves. That is why the closed nature of law enforcement institutions, the circumstances inducing opposition must be loosened so that they could fulfil their task of making the convicts capable of social integration. The social organizations play a central role in the loosening of the rigidity of the prisons, which the second part of our study deals with.

Facilitating resocialization, reintegration in society

Organizations cooperating in the resocialization activity of penitentiary institutions represent and lend credibility to requirements and moral demands that provide the basis of coexistence between the individuals of a free society.

Domestic and international sources agree that church programs and opportunities in prison provide great help for inmates who are receptive to those. They contribute to the inmates' coping with the harsh and sometimes inhumane environment of the penitentiary institution, and give them strength (Dammer, 2002; Sundt, 1997; Thomas & Zaitzow, 2006).

Resocialization commences in the penitentiary institution and is continued after discharge. Devoid of this there is a great chance that resocialization focuses on prison socialization and not social integration, as the tasks of the inmate are related to the specific world of the penitentiary system, its

system of values and norms, and less to the civilian world outside (Csáki et al., 2006).

In the past decades there has been an increasing demand toward penitentiary institutions to develop penitentiary programs that facilitate the retention and development of physical and mental skills via which inmates can have a chance of self-knowledge and can realize a life more in conformance with society's requirements. The goal of education within the prison setting is to ensure that inmates are given the skills to enable them to pursue further training on release in order to live a "*good and useful life*". (Walkin, 2000, p. 206).

Inmates in the prison are surrounded by a deprived environment during their term, an artificial world in which the rules are different to those in the outside world. Due to this, their perspectives and problems tend to be specific and narrowly defined, focusing mostly on the passage of time. Due to permanent exclusion from society the inmates' self-esteem and self-worth, living skills, and communication skills decrease. "*Many prisoners are emotionally and mentally unstable with low self-esteem and negative, defensive attitudes*" (Watts, 2010, p. 62).

To help prisoners coping these problems the presence of non-governmental organizations, churches, and helpers provides assistance with these skills.

The activities deployed by the institutions are closely related to everyday routine, with the goal of resolving tensions, developing character and self-knowledge, in addition to mitigating the prison's incarcerating and isolating effect. "*Their influence helps lower tensions within the institution and mitigate the prisonization impact, and a more direct and active relationship with the outside world promotes a more fruitful integration after discharge*" (Visher & Travis, 2003, p. 89).

An indirect goal of the prison is to protect the world outside it. As long as the inmate is in the prison, the institution can only address the task seemingly, and when they are released, very often the prison proves to be a dysfunctional place, not being able to perform this function. The vast majority of prison systems now define their mission as the "*warehousing*" of rapidly growing numbers of prisoners. "*Warehousing emphasizes rigid discipline and unvarying routine*" (Berkman, 1995, pp. 16-17).

During their punishment by incarceration the inmates' picture of society changes severely, they have little knowledge of events in society, even though

these have an impact on their life after release (Csáki & Mészáros, 2005). If the prison is not able to realize the principle of general protection, then the inmates are discharged from prison in a state morally, psychologically, and physically worse than what they had when they were incarcerated. Rehabilitation attempts to stop this process in prison and in addition to it, visitors' centers are also very useful (Woodall et al., 2013).

Inmates are usually insecure when they have to plan their life after release, their knowledge of the outside world is distorted and limited, they have meager and unreliable information (Csáki & Mészáros, 2005). After discharge the individual comes up against difficulties (community, housing, sustenance) which often make them inclined to repeat their offences. The effects of the prison education programs is mixed which can be attributed, at least in part, to the negative attitudes of employers toward ex-prisoners (Case & Fasenfest, 2004; Patzelt, Williams, & Shepherd, 2014; Wilson, Gallagher, & MacKenzie, 2000).

Therefore, *“decreasing the crisis of release, developing safe human relationships already in the penitentiary institution, winning and solidifying their trust, creating continuous emotional security, assistance by a welcoming community: these are all pillars of follow-up treatment and relapse prevention”* (Csáki & Mészáros, 2005, p. 99). Different mental hygiene programs can only succeed if the institution's management is aware of the normal developments they have to control: they have to be aware of group dynamics, the nature of formal and informal relationships, the process and outcomes of status hierarchies.

In order to reach positive goals, cooperation is very important, realized between the given penitentiary institution and its environment. The former mutual isolation is over, and the dominant perspective is that in order to prepare the education, training, treatment, and follow-up treatment of inmates, close relationships must be established with educational, vocational, community cultural, and information-providing institutions, health care and rehabilitation services, and occupational and family support centers working in the surroundings of the institution. By the time of the change of regime, the Hungarian penitentiary system became a professional organization. Professional groups were established to deal with inmates, for instance, educational service, inner supervision, reviving church-based, charitable and social organizations that assisted in realizing the goals of penitentiary activity inside and outside the institutions, thus implementing community culture, spiritual and mental care,

dealing with difficulties involved in integration after release (Ruzsonyi, 1999). Interaction and openness between penitentiary institutions and their environment were characteristic from the 1990s. This openness may be suitable for mitigating the belligerence towards inmates in the institution's environment, and delivering the penitentiary system from excessive and illusory requirements.

Lawmakers regarded it desirable to have a system where official and social organizations supplement one another's activity for the sake of society and the inmates. Owing to this there is a law prescribing, under the detailed rules of the obligation to cooperate and provide information and assistance, that the penitentiary institution shall cooperate with the prison missions and associations established to observe the conditions of detention, facilitate reintegration in society after release, to perform charitable activity, and to assist in other penitentiary tasks, as well as religious communities, foundations, educational institutions, and persons performing such activities (Penitentiary Organizations Act, 1995, § 13). The law declaring the professional and social importance of cooperation carries a significant change in perspective, as it draws attention to not only tolerating the assisting and facilitating activity of collaborating organizations and private individuals, but provides the obligation to cooperate with them. At the same time, cooperation is a bilateral agreement, and if such organizations or persons should fail to comply with the laws related to the order and security of the penitentiary organizations or the provisions in their agreement with the penitentiary organization, the organization can terminate the cooperation (Penitentiary Organizations Act, 1995, § 13).

At the same time, it is important to differentiate between civil and social control. Civil control is a narrow bottleneck, but social control involves activities based on a broader set of criteria. Yet it can be established that we all must take part in providing social control for prisons. Elements of these are, naturally, the parliamentary democracy operated by the actors of society and the picture created in us by us about implementing penitentiary activity. The objective creation of this picture may be assisted by all of the occasions when laymen pass through the gates of penitentiary institutions to familiarize themselves with the isolated system of prisons. The practice of reintegration cannot spare organizations present, active, and effective in society joining in the treatment of inmates as representatives of social control. The representatives of social control denominate social organizations that perform their activities by practically representing society and undertaking its controlling function.

“Social organizations” is an umbrella term including NGOs (also an umbrella term in its own right), meaning classic civil organizations, private foundations, associations, various federations such as trade unions, professional employers’ organizations, as well as public foundations and non-profit business entities. But in a broader sense the term social organizations also include churches, prison missions, church and legal entities, subsidizers and political parties. From the perspective of their role in penitentiary activity, *“the most relevant are the organizations of social control, churches, trade unions, and classic NGOs”* (Somogyvári, 2014, p. 203).

These organizations play an important part in operating the system in spite of the fact that penitentiary institutions as state-owned organizations have the staff, infrastructure, and budget to meet their own legal responsibilities. This has two reasons. Firstly, the staff is insufficient, and often professionals with the necessary qualifications and experience are in short supply, therefore, cooperating organizations provide supplementary resources. The other reason is that even in the case of an ideal situation there are some tasks that organizations not bound by administrative obligations and professional routine can do better. These organizations can serve a social function that builds a bridge between political decision-makers and social groups of professional policies. Social organizations are able to counterbalance administrative dysfunctions, in many cases acting more effectively, because they can profit from their social capital and experience. A further benefit is that these organizations are not bound by limits related to scope and jurisdiction, which are characteristic of the public sector. In addition, they are more efficient and flexible than bureaucratic state organizations with regard to time management, professional matters, as well as being able to provide alternatives to state policy (Somogyvári, 2014). We may establish that the state expects non-state-related actors to assume roles that the network of professional institutions cannot expend appropriately upon or cost-efficiently intervene in.

Harmonizing the activities of the parties in the cooperation

The three parties of the cooperation, the penitentiary institution, the convict, and the social organization, work by different interests and rules, thus it is important to harmonize their activities. The prison provides the conditions, the organization attempts to meet its goals set in its articles of association, and the inmate utilizes the opportunities according to their own decisions.

As regards organizing activities there are several differences between penitentiary organizations and NGOs. Civil organizations carry out the objectives set in their own articles, of which only one specifies the management of inmates; if, however, they wish to deal with inmates, then the scope of activities is predefined. In contrast, the responsibilities of penitentiary institutions are prescribed by laws, and they are not limited to partial tasks. The penitentiary system has tasks with all inmates, and it cannot choose between persons. The organizations' articles of association in general provide that they intend to deal with inmates and not assist the prison, even if that indirectly influences the penitentiary work, too.

Apart from the religious needs of inmates, the organizations also meet cultural and learning demands, as well as carrying out charitable activities, not to mention the activities of some organizations defending human rights.

1. The aim of several national civil organizations is quite complex, it goes beyond the education and training of prisoners, they have a more complex mission. These organizations are normally voluntary-based institutions which develop social and vocational programs inside the prison, such as educational classes, workshops and professional skills development. In Hungary the Change-Lanes Foundation is a non-governmental organization supporting the social and labour market reintegration of all people involved in criminality in any ways, *i.e.* people under or after detention, criminals and their relatives. The essence of the activities can best be described as continuous aftercare and throughcare (they are contacting their clients already in the punishment institution and later follow up by providing help in the traumatic period just before, under or after their discharge). They also operate a civil support system. The Foundation is convinced and the experience supports that by establishing a safe human/supporting/civil relationship already inside the punishment institution, by gaining and stabilising trust, by providing ongoing emotional safety and by receiving help from a concerned community, they can build the corner stones of mitigating pre-, and post-discharge crisis and of recidivism prevention (Change-Lanes Foundation, 2016).

2. It is a decisive aim besides education, training and reintegration, to prevent disintegration of family relationships and the weakening of parent-child relations as a consequence of law enforcement. The family is a highly restorative medium, which plays a basic role in the reduction of condemnation, it helps to prevent relapse, to facilitate the prisoner's reintegration into society after release. The

purpose of Tévelygőkért Foundation is to increase the chances of reintegration of convicts and reduce juvenile crime by strengthening family relationships through different projects. About 1 million children in Europe grow up with one or both parents serving time in a correctional facility. Their predicament is traumatic, leaving them financially and emotionally vulnerable. However, the severity of this trauma can be lessened through careful management of the treatment they receive at the time of arrest, communication at school and the setting during visitations. There are effective practices that can enable children to maintain a sense of dignity and help their imprisoned parents continue parenting. Maintaining strong family ties plays a crucial role in reducing reoffending rates and lessens the chances of children becoming offenders themselves in later life (Tévelygőkért Foundation, 2016).

3. The third main direction of NGOs is the prevention of prisoners' human rights, the prevention of their infringement. Some civil organizations (*e.g.*, Amnesty International, Helsinki Committees for Human Rights) would like to take steps against torture inside the prison or other cruel, inhuman, humiliating treatment. Some NGOs would like to reach their aims with taking legal actions on national and international levels as well. According to critics, work facilitating the social integration and developing the mental hygiene of persons sentenced to penitentiary time is not of standard quality in Hungary. Some civil organizations struggle heroically but there is no real tradition of the cooperation of civil communities and state bodies.

Social involvement in critical questions such as criminality, prisons, criminals is rather low (Csáki & Mészáros, 2005). Deep prejudice and intolerance may increase after release, and it is difficult for society to accept those having done their time. When looking for jobs they meet prejudices that make it near impossible for them to consummate their reintegration efforts. The majority of society keeps their distance from felons, and this lack of trust derives primarily from the lack of information. Therefore, reintegration of those discharged is necessary, and their treatment must be reinforced through the state, church, civil social institutional network. In this, a highly important role is played by socio-educational instructors as experts of social education, teaching, personality development, and recreational management.

According to critics, due to all these, the penitentiary system exclusively operates with the function suggested by its name that is, sanctioning. The state

of inmates sentenced to incarceration, originally struggling with defective socialization, is really hard upon release: as a result of prison socialization, they lose their routine for managing everyday life situations, and attempt to succeed in the civil world in accordance with prison norms (Csáki & Mészáros, 2005, p. 99).

Closing thoughts

Since the penitentiary system is a closed world, it is crucial to examine the appearance of external, non-state controlled actors within the prison walls. In my article I have examined the harmful effects of law enforcement on the personality as the inmate's mental and social relations are damaged during the incarceration. Resocialization programs can help prisoners to cope with the harsh environment of the penitentiary institution.

Law enforcement and the civilian persons act in the care of all the aims presented above with the intention to help separately, which decreases efficiency a lot. It is of vital importance that the experts, colleagues get to know each other mutually, as a consequence of which continuous presence and communication can lead to a change of attitude in the case of both parties. The programs organized by civil organizations are target-oriented interventions which aim at the improvement of the prisoners' physical, emotional, social and cognitive functions in all cases.

In my article I have summarized how the legal background of inmate's reintegration in Hungary works and introduced the main types of NGO's working in Hungary in this field to help inmates surviving the incarceration period.

If the prisoner is released, the protection of the society is provided in the best way if he/she leaves prison as a person who adapts to wishes and is able to meet the conditions of civil life. We can get closer to that with socialization necessary for the conditions of social life – and conscious educational work -, which supposes the convicts' activity, aim at cooperation, proper judgement and power of disposal, its central participants are the socially sensitive social organizations.

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