

Effects of Imprisonment on Romanian Offenders' Lives

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Activity Report

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ACTIVITY REPORT

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According to the objectives outlined in the working plan, in the period between January 2015 and May 2015, two activities were carried out: 1) developing explanations for prison effects; and 2) elaboration of a theoretical and empirical model of researching prison effects in Romania. Both activities were conducted under the broader objective: explaining prison impact. The next six months of the project (June 2015–October 2014) were devoted to two others specific activities carried out under the generic objective: policy recommendation. All are briefly discussed below.

First activity. Explanations provided to prison effects

The results of the quantitative and qualitative analyses conducted in the previous stages of the research (see the activity report on 2014) were explained with reference to several criminological and sociological theories relevant to each of the offender's life-domain under investigation. For example, especially the deprivation model of adaptation to imprisonment (Sykes, 1958) and the procedural justice theory (Tylor, 2003) were used to explain violence and misconduct in Romanian prisons (see also: Damboeanu and Nieuwbeerta (forthcoming) "Importation and deprivation correlates of misconduct among Romanian inmates". *European Journal of Criminology*). Human capital (Becker, 1962) and self-stigma (Corrigan et al., 2009) theories framed the explanations related to prison influences on prisoners' human capital and their perceptions of various post-release employment outcomes. Prisoners' separation from life-partners and children were further interpreted under the psychosocial perspective focused on the negative effects of non-cohabitation (e.g. low levels of spousal commitment and attachment) (Hill, 1988; Rindfuss and Stephen, 1990). Also, the sociological explanations were employed focused on the multiple problems caused by imprisonment to prisoners' wives and life-partners left behind, including stigma. Theories of marital investment and preparation for marriage were accounted, on the other hand, for their protective role against family dissolution. The contraction of social relations with friends was explained via the mechanisms of social withdrawal and estrangement due to time spent in prison. The full range of explanations is

presented in detail in the scientific report (in Romanian), as well as in the book: *Prisons in Romania. Effects of Offenders' Lives*.

Second activity. Elaboration of a theoretical and empirical model of researching prison effects in Romanian prisons

Based on the current research findings, an analytical model of investigating prison effects in Romania was developed. The model incorporates the individual characteristics (basic demographics, social bonding, employment history, criminal antecedents, as much as prisoner's institutional status – e.g. time served and length of sentence), but also prison characteristics (e.g. the visits received, participation in work and prison programs, relationships with prison staff), taking also into account the macro indicators gauging the prison deprivations and prison climate. The model is based on a combination of official and self-reported data and can and should be tested in future research on larger samples of Romanian prisoners, using a longitudinal approach.

Third activity. Documentation stage at the University of Cambridge Library and Radzinowicz Library of Cambridge Institute of Criminology, UK, 24 May – 12 July 2015.

The stage implied individual study at the abovementioned libraries where I had free access to the shelf, but also to the electronic resources. This gave me the opportunity to consult a large number of volumes and articles published in international journals and to adequately prepare several chapters/ subchapters of my authored books. In addition, on 12 June, I have visited two English prisons. The first one was Norwich Prison, a multifunctional correctional facility housing men on pre-trial detention and/or convicted to shorter prison penalties. The second one was Bure Prison, which accommodates sexual offenders only. Also, I have attended four of the seminars held under the Penology Program at Cambridge Institute of Criminology: 29 June: *Penal Power and Penal Pains* (Dr. Ben Crewe); 03 July: *Prisoners' Families* (Dr. Caroline Lanskey); 06 July: *Prisoner Adaptation, Social Life and Culture* (Dr. Ben Crewe); 9 July: *Political Economy, Penal Policy and Prison Population* (Dr. Ben Crewe).

Fourth activity. Policy recommendations

The report contains suggestions for supporting and improving the efforts of Romanian prison administrations to ameliorate prison negative effects and improve instead prisoners'

chances of desisting from crime and successfully reintegrate into community after release. As such, the set of recommendations is structured around three categories of measures: a) those aimed to tackle prison violence and prison victimization; b) measures planned to improve prisoners' human capital and their perceptions on post-release employment outcomes; c) measures intended to decrease the risk of family dissolution during men's imprisonment.

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