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MENTORING ON LEAVING PRISON

NEWSLETTER DISSEMINATION OF RESEARCH

INVEsbREU

Introduction

The purposes of the Centre for Legal Studies and Specialised Training (CEJFE in its Catalan acronym) include promoting and publicising the latest scientific developments in justice and criminology. One of the ways in which it does this is its *Invesbreu* newsletter for disseminating research. In this number 76 it presents two papers which address the issue of support for people when they leave prison as this is a critical time for ensuring their reintegration.

Both studies received financial support from the CEJFE in the annual public call for research grants in 2017. By promoting these papers the Centre fosters lines of research and action aimed at introducing improvements into the work processes of practitioners in the field of criminal enforcement.

The first paper, *The Role of Families in the Reintegration of People Coming out of Prison*, provides descriptive data about what the families are like, what kind of support they can provide to inmates when they leave prison and what strategies they use to help them. The authors provide a gender perspective which is extremely relevant when dealing with this issue since it is women, mainly mothers and daughters, who bear the family burden in these cases. Families offer financial and emotional support, yet at the same time this means extra effort for them which they cannot always make and they receive little by way of resources to help them cope.

The second paper, *Professional Post-Prison Mentoring: a Support Tool for Returning to the Community*, explains how the Post-Prison Mentoring Service was set up in 2015 to care for vulnerable people who have gained final release. The authors studied these people's needs and risk factors and the most appropriate intervention for their reintegration. The results explain for the first time the profile of people who need professional post-prison mentoring and what these needs are.

The Role of Families in the Reintegration of People Coming out of Prison

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Introduction

This paper explores the difficulties families face when supporting their relatives once the latter leave prison and how they can foster their reintegration process. Using quantitative data (which make it possible to describe and contextualise the distribution of the phenomenon) and in-depth interviews with relatives we seek to understand the obstacles and difficulties experienced by families in establishing themselves as a key support factor in the reintegration process, whether they receive any help in doing so and which strategies they adopt to address this process.

Objectives

Much of the criminological literature argues that the family unit can have a very positive impact on the reintegration of ex-prisoners who return to the community. Nevertheless, how their incarceration and return can impact stability, family development and the reintegration process as a whole has often been left unexplored. These aspects are addressed in this research. We begin with a definition of the concept of family from a relational perspective which moves away from more traditional approaches to describe it with features not much different from the prisoner it supports while introducing the leading role played by women (mothers, partners and daughters). We also need to take into consideration the *familialism* model which is typical of our context in which the family institution is crucially important in delivering tangible and intangible wellbeing and how this is translated into legislation and regulations for criminal enforcement and community reintegration.

Hence our general objective is to learn what the role of families in ex-prisoner reintegration is. We do this through the following specific objectives:

1. What the family units which people who leave prison return to are like and whether imprisonment impacts previous family relationships.
2. Explore what types of support families provide and how they rationalise it.
3. Learn whether this process has resulted in burdens for families, what they need to tackle it and what help they have received.
4. Learn which strategies families use to encourage reintegration.
5. Explore the role of gender in the provision of support.

Method

We devised a mixed strategy which uses quantitative data drawn from a previous sample of prisoners and qualitative data taken from in-depth interviews with relatives of these prisoners.

Our quantitative analysis is based on a representative sample of individuals who have gained final release drawn from the data obtained in the “Imprisonment and Recidivism” project (carried out by researchers from the Autonomous University of Barcelona) out of a total of 538 individuals. This makes it possible to contextualise the phenomenon we are addressing as we know the composition of the family units from which the prisoners come and to which they return. We can also explore the support the families afford and how this support affects the journey of the individuals concerned.

Our qualitative analysis starts with the relatives of these people who have been imprisoned based on a subsample of participants who were on probation (n=101) at the time of the research. We obtained the

participation of 13 relatives of these people with a range of profiles: mothers (4), partners (5), children (1) and siblings (3).

Results and conclusions

In terms of the family units to which the ex-prisoners return, we found that most people come from affectionate environments yet ones which are disadvantaged at different levels. There are few variations in the family units during imprisonment. In spite of a weakening of ties with partners and children, the effort made by families to maintain contact during imprisonment and afterwards is evident.

As for the type of support families afford and how they rationalise it, we established the central role of the family as a provider of support before, during and after the prison sentence. This includes *emotional support* aimed at making time in prison more bearable and *instrumental support* at their own expense and especially from the reception of the person once they have been released from prison. Families consider this support to be a duty and rationalise it through the previous experience and relationship of affection and the very conception of family and the responsibilities it entails.

Turning to how this provision of support entails burdens for families, they point out that they suffer from emotional exhaustion, loneliness, financial problems, the need to create new routines and the requirement to adapt at the time of release, yet also resignation about these burdens and a certain feeling of strength when they are able to cope with these barriers. Likewise, families call for particular needs to be met, especially in terms of emotional and instrumental support: they demand to be heard, mentored and informed throughout the process, especially at the beginning of the prison sentence. To address these issues, some seek help in the extended family and other informal support networks, and are grateful when they find it, and they further call for more attention from the public authorities which usually deal with them infrequently, coldly and bureaucratically.

In terms of learning which strategies families use to promote reintegration, they say they play an active role and take on functions traditionally seen as pertaining to reintegration agencies: informal supervision and control by family members. They also try to set limits and new routines and isolate the person from sources which they identify and define as criminogenic. They unknowingly seek to foster a new law-abiding identity for their imprisoned relative. Furthermore, they do this without receiving any assistance or accessing any support resources.

As for the role of gender in the provision of support, it is viewed as a key factor for analysis of support in the reintegration process. In many cases “families” actually means “women” as the latter play a crucial role in delivering support and are the key individuals for ex-prisoners.

Given our objectives and the results set out above we can conclude that:

- The family plays a central role as a continuous provider of support to the convicted person: this support was afforded before incarceration, maintained during it and continues once the person has been released.
- This support is offered without being questioned by families, especially by a small and intimate circle, which accepts it as something they have to do and of course based on the previous relationship and their own understanding of family.
- When we talk about families providing support, what we are really talking about are women: mothers, partners and daughters who play this role due to position or choice. These women are responsible for the burdens and responsibilities theoretically associated with the family.
- The burdens which families bear due to this provision of support are emotionally and materially diverse and are tackled without any help from the public authorities. Accordingly they demand

to be heard, mentored and informed throughout the process and call for more institutional and community resources to help them.

- Nevertheless, while families play an active role in the process of reintegration of ex-prisoners by operating as a reintegration agency would, they do not receive any resources or help and are not recognised by the prison system as such.

Professional Post-Prison Mentoring: a Support Tool for Returning to the Community

Authors: Núria Iturbe Ferré and Ana Martínez Catena

Introduction

Since its appearance in 1990, the prevailing approach in setting up and assessing rehabilitation programmes has been the 'What Works' paradigm, whereby the personal reasons of individuals have to be addressed in order to reduce crime. Hence the rehabilitative point lies in reinforcing punishment and risk management. Rehabilitation intervention is considered as a mandatory re-education process whose main objectives are to help the individual acquire the skills they need to exercise their rights and duties as a citizen and redirect their shortcomings while taking on full personal responsibility for their actions (Andrews and Bonta, 2016; Andrews, Bonta, and Wormith, 2011). By contrast, in recent years and with the emergence of desistance theories, special emphasis has been placed on the community response as an essential element for the social reintegration of offenders. Thus the key to desistance might be found in the interrelation between the individual's potential for change and the options for integrating in social structures as a member of civil society (Durnescu, 2017; Maruna, Porter, and Carvalho, 2014; Farrall, Shapland, and Bottoms, 2010).

Acceptance of these empirical approaches has given rise to community response programmes which seek to enhance the mechanisms for returning to the community for people released from prison. These programmes have in many cases emerged quite recently.

In this paper we examine the extent to which professional mentoring can support the process of returning to the community by vulnerable people released from prison through one of the schemes currently existing in Catalonia: the Post-Prison Mentoring Service (hereafter SAPP in its Catalan acronym). Based on this overall objective we look at the following aspects: 1) the profile of people who need post-prison mentoring; 2) the main needs and areas of intervention of these individuals; and 3) the operation of the Post-Prison Mentoring Service. We also pay special attention to describing the profile and needs of women users of the service.

The Post-Prison Mentoring Service

The SAPP was set up based on several premises. The first is the finding in 2014 that three out of every five convicts were released from prison in Catalonia without having gone through a process of progressive transition to the community and therefore without previous professional supervision (Àrea d'Investigació i Formació Social i Criminològica, 2015). Secondly it is based on the successful experience of the psychosocial rehabilitation and social inclusion support service run by the INTRESS Association at Navalcarnero Prison for 15 years, whereby specific interventions are conducted to connect a person with mental health problems to the community network and where 80% of people involved remain connected to this network one year after leaving the prison.

The SAPP intervention model has been developed in its own way and is based on building life pathways with the ex-prisoner rooted in empowerment and respect for their decisions. The connection centred on mentoring in the process of returning to the community is designed to make the person themselves into an agent for change while facilitating their movement through formal itineraries and promoting the acquisition of their own social relationships which can afford informal support.

Materials and method

Participants

The sample in this study is made up of all the individuals who were referred to the SAPP by prisons between 22/01/2016 and 30/09/2017. A total of 73 people (5 women and 68 men) have been attended to by the Service.

Procedure

In order to carry out this exploratory and descriptive study we conducted extensive fieldwork consisting of collating all the sociodemographic, criminal and intervention data available in the SAPP. All the information gathered was systematised and entered into a statistical management database using the PASW 24 program.

Results

Profile of people who need professional post-prison mentoring

The main features of SAPP users can be summarised as follows:

- Spanish national (62%).
- They are young at the time of release (around 35-45).
- They come from traditional family units.
- The family unit at the time of the offence was the original (33%) or formed (25%) family.
- 83% of the sample has no family contact or the relationship is very poor at the time of release, even though 32% have family responsibilities.
- Significant social isolation (68.5%). No friends or family came to pick them up from prison on the day of release (89.8%).
- 67% have no fixed address on release from prison.
- Alcohol and drug-related problems (66%).
- Other personality disorders or mental disorders (72%).
- The most common basic offence is violent: robbery with violence, domestic violence, etc.
- High risk at the time of release (41%).
- Concentration of several difficulties at the same time (home, work, health, etc.) for addressing successful social reintegration

Main needs and intervention areas of the individuals attended to by the professional Post-Prison Mentoring Service

The four main areas of user needs which guide the SAPP's intervention objectives are family, health, training/employment and legal areas. Table 1 shows the five main objectives in each area, although many other objectives were also set.

Table 1. Family-related intervention objectives

	INTERVENTION OBJECTIVES	N (%)
Family intervention	Find somewhere to live and material resources	19 (27.9)
	Maintain or recover existing relationships	12 (17.6)
	Work on contact with network resources	11 (16.2)
	Establish peaceful community living patterns	9 (13.2)
	Start independent life project with the help of social network	9 (13.2)
Health intervention	Awareness about drug use	16 (23.5)
	Continue medical or pharmacological treatment	9 (13.2)
	Abstinence (drugs, gambling, etc.)	9 (13.2)
	Has no needs	7 (10.3)
	Preserve mood	5 (7.4)
Training/ employment intervention	Getting a job	14 (20.6)
	Getting a passport	9 (13.2)
	Find placement companies to drop off CV	7 (10.3)
	Prison release benefit	6 (8.8)
	Follow training/employment pathway	6 (8.8)
Legal intervention	Stay on the right side of the law	17 (25.0)
	Comply with a victim protection order	10 (14.7)
	None	9 (13.2)
	Comply with an alternative penal measure	7 (10.3)
	Contact specialised legal services	6 (8.8)

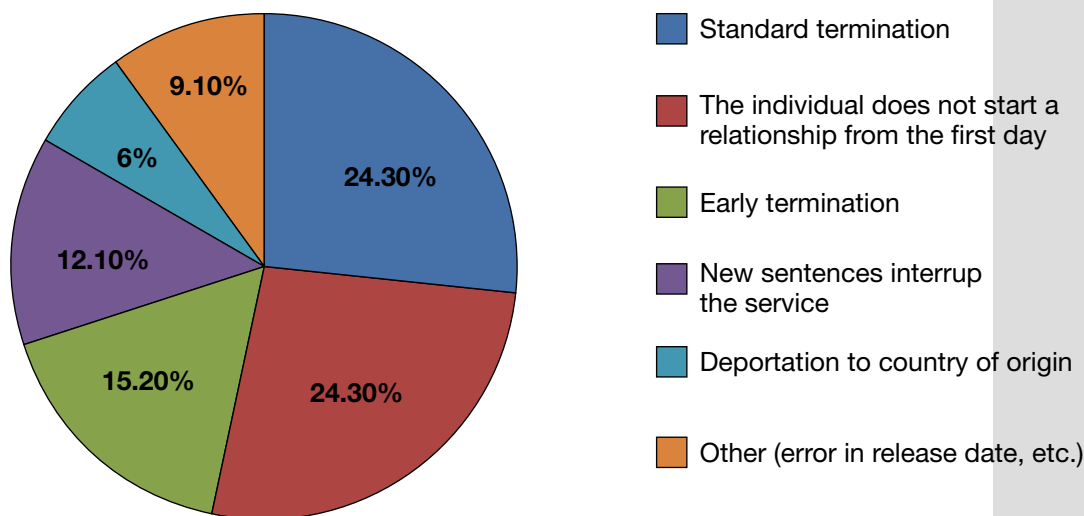
Operation of the Post-Prison Mentoring Service

As for the connection with the SAPP, in 60% of cases more than 10 contacts had to be made to meet the needs of the people concerned. In some cases there were over 30 procedures including face-to-face meetings with the person, interviews with family members and coordination with specific services. The bulk of these interventions concerned finding a job or doing training, helping with housing and attending to pending cases.

Assessment of the individuals' connection with the Service is generally positive since they themselves initiate numerous contacts with the Service's specialists and make fresh requests for help (55.9% of the sample initiates contacts with the Service).

Out of the sample as a whole at the time of writing this report, 54.8% are still connected with the Post-Prison Mentoring Service while 45.2% have left it. Table 2 shows the reasons for leaving the service.

Graphic 1. Reasons for leaving the service



As for recidivism, four individuals returned to prison in the short follow-up time set (an average of 143 days since the time of release). Analysis of repeat offenders shows that these are people with great needs and few positive points in each intervention area.

Women attended to by the Post-Prison Mentoring Service

The main features of the sociodemographic and criminal profile of women attended to by the SAPP are summarised below.

- Nationality: 3 Spanish, 1 Latin American and 1 European.
- Mean age of the sample 41.60 (SD = 18.34, min/max = 23-71 years).
- None of the parents are still alive.
- Three of the women have children (M=1.80, SD=1.30, min/max 0-3 children).
- One woman was pregnant when she was released.
- They come from traditional families (3 cases) and were wards (2 cases).
- At the time of committing the crime 3 were living with their formed family, 1 lived alone and 1 lived in a sheltered or ‘therapeutic’ flat.
- The five women have some kind of pathology: 1 woman has a serious mental disorder (frontal neuropsychological disorder), 2 suffer from drug addiction/alcoholism, and 2 a personality disorder.
- Only one had any form of disability.
- Three have a work permit, one is retired and the other does not have a permit.
- They all have a valid health card.
- They were all drug users, especially pills, followed by alcohol, hashish and cocaine. Four were abstinent at the time they left prison. One actively takes pills.
- Three did not have any family responsibilities when leaving prison although the other two did.

- Four women had no reference address on release
- None received visits when in prison.
- They did not have external support on release (only one said she had a little support).
- As for the basic offence: 2 public health offences, 1 property offence, 1 domestic violence offence and 1 breach of a restraining order.
- Only one had high recidivism risk on release.

Conclusions

By way of summary, this study's most significant conclusion is that this professional mentoring is indispensable in people with the following features:

- Extreme social isolation or meagre social support in terms of key individuals.
- People leaving prison who are young and women.
- People with high comorbidity in their criminogenic needs (history of usage, twin pathology, etc.) that call for specialised intervention.
- People who on release may pose a high risk to others or people with current protection orders.
- People who need special support to move through the public resources network.

We think that this mentoring should be provided at least until the main problems have stabilised and it can be ensured that basic needs are met and the person has connected to the community network.

- 1 Inmigrantes y criminalidad en Europa. Los ejemplos de Alemania y España. Enero 1995.
- 2 La cárcel pública de Barcelona durante la etapa isabelina / La casa de corrección de Barcelona (1836-1856). Enero 1998.
- 3 El coste de la justicia penal. Privación de libertad y alternativas. Febrero 1998.
- 4 El niño abusado sexualmente como testigo / Los delitos contra la libertad sexual relacionados con menores. Marzo 1998.
- 5 Inteligencia y personalidad en el proceso rehabilitador del delincuente. Mayo 1998.
- 6 Salud y prisión. Octubre 1998.
- 7 La prensa frente a la violencia juvenil y la cárcel. Noviembre 1998.
- 8 El tratamiento de los agresores sexuales. Febrero 1999.
- 9 La victimización en Cataluña en el año 1996. Abril 1999.
- 10 Programas aplicados de psicología comunitaria con personal penitenciario. Junio 1999.
- 11 Justicia juvenil: inserción laboral y medidas en medio abierto. Octubre 1999.
- 12 Reincidencia y delincuencia juvenil. Noviembre 1999.
- 13 Violencia doméstica. Diciembre 1999.
- 14 El estado de la adopción en Cataluña (1998-1999).
- 15 Maltratos infantiles en Cataluña. Junio 2000.
- 16 Prisión y mujeres. La incidencia de los programas motivacionales en la conducta social. Un estudio evolutivo (1988-2000) en la prisión de mujeres de Barcelona. Septiembre 2000.
- 17 Evaluación de un programa de tratamiento para jóvenes violentos. Noviembre 2000.
- 18 Evaluación de la efectividad de los programas de tratamiento con delincuentes en Europa. Enero 2001.
- 19 La victimización en Cataluña en el año 1999. Mayo 2001.
- 20 El arresto de fin de semana en Cataluña (1996-2000).
- 21 Adictos a las drogas y reincidencia en el delito.
- 22 Maltratos físicos graves a bebés y menores de cuatro años ingresados en centros de acogida.
- 23 Intervención institucional. Elementos para el análisis en menores infractores o en riesgo.
- 24 Los menores extranjeros indocumentados no acompañados (MEINA).
- 25 La mediación penal
- 26 La reincidencia.
- 27 Familia y conducta antisocial.
- 28 Presentación de dos investigaciones del ámbito penitenciario.
- 29 Intervención en centros de justicia juvenil.
- 30 La clasificación inicial en régimen abierto de los condenados a prisión.
- 31 La reincidencia en las penas alternativas a la prisión en Cataluña.
- 32 La asistencia religiosa y la libertad de culto en las prisiones de Cataluña.
- 33 Bullying - Violencia de género. Elementos para el análisis.
- 34 Violencia de los jóvenes en la familia.
- 35 Infractores y conducta violenta.
- 36 Drogas y tratamiento penitenciario.
- 37 Perfil profesional del juez de primera instancia e instrucción de Cataluña.
- 38 Violencia de género y justicia.
- 39 Delitos sexuales y reincidencia.
- 40 Intervención con infractores juveniles.
- 41 Mediación y resolución de conflictos en entornos penitenciarios.
- 42 Perfil profesional del Secretario Judicial de Cataluña.
- 43 Predicción del riesgo de violencia en contextos institucionales. Los sistemas de control monitorizado aplicado a penados adultos.
- 44 Drogas y prisión . Medidas de seguridad y salud mental.
- 45 Modelos de política criminal y penitenciaria internacional.
- 46 Mujer y violencia de género.
- 47 La formación de los funcionarios de seguridad de los centros penitenciarios en Cataluña y Francia.
- 48 Perfil de los penados por delitos contra la seguridad del tráfico.
- 49 Intervención con agresores de violencia de género.
- 50 Intervención con infractores condenados por delitos de tráfico a programas formativos.
- 51 Abuso sexual infantil: valoración psicosocial desde el ámbito de la justicia.
- 52 Agresores en violencia de pareja.
- 53 Inserción después de la cárcel.
- 54 Extranjeros en centros penitenciarios.
- 55 Victimología y ciberdelito en menores.
- 56 La reincidencia en el programa de mediación y reparación de menores.
- 57 Intervención penal con infractores de tráfico.
- 58 Evaluación de menores infractores: factores protectores y de riesgo..
- 59 El tiempo en la justicia de menores.

- 60 Intervention in the framework of penal measures in the community.
- 61 Community service orders and tasks to educate for life in society in juvenile justice.
- 62 Victimisation of children and adolescents in care and in juvenile justice.
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