

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DETENTION AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

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Summary

This essay is trying to show the importance of physical activity in detention. We support the idea of practicing any kind of physical activity, its main purpose being socialization, tolerating detention better and preparing for release.

Key words: socialization, physical activity, reintegration.

Some individuals become a social danger through their facts of breaking the penal law or trespassing the penal law, facts which are penalized by the law according to their gravity – infringements, those persons being delinquents.

The delinquents can commit actions with the appropriate knowledge or from a lack of judgement, which means that they have a state of physical or psychical state established by a certain institution.

The deprivation of freedom does not necessarily mean the cancellation of man's fundamental rights, but only a restriction of his right to travel freely.

The detention – freedom deprivation must assure a set of minimum rules for convicts' treatment - U. O. nr. 56 from 2003 regarding rights of persons exercising no freedom punishments; law nr. 294 from 2004 regarding the execution of punishments and the judicial bodies' measures during the penal process (see resolution 633 C XXIV / 31 July 1957 – The United Nations' Congress for crime prevention and delinquents' treatment – 1956).

This is important because in Romania few people understand that to be a convict does not mean to give up living or social integration. We must show to citizens that we need their help and understanding to make delinquents' reintegration possible. The punishment they get for their infringement is enough for them to have learnt their lesson, a second punishment after the end of detention is not necessary. If the society keeps punishing them after release, then we just push them to become recidivists. However, we must show delinquents that they also have the chance to reintegrate, that they can have a social life both in prison and after release, that they can learn new things, that they can learn to trust themselves and the others, that they can "escape" by sport which influences them positively, i.e. they learn to communicate, to socialize.

In this paper we are trying to show the importance of physical activities in detention and their positive effect on convicts according to different sociologists' studies. The first hypothesis is that physical activity facilitates socialization. The second one represents the importance of participation to sports which helps to the acceptance of detention. The third one refers to the preparation for life of people in prison after release.

With no social identity, the imprisoned considers his usual, normal benefits to be withdrawn. According to G. M. Skyes there can be defined 5 major deprivations: deprivation of physical liberty, heterosexuality, goods and services, organizing the quotidian schedule and timetable's availability, deprivation of safety. Yet, this enumeration

does not end all aspects of detention deprivation. Creating a break from the outer world, detention means equally the end of relationship with the family and friends.

Looking at detention as a break from the outer world, it is tempting if we consider that convicts' deprivations are important. Still, the study of the prison shock and of the first weeks of detention proves that it is difficult to make abstraction of the important life stories and their influence on everyday management in detention. The detention environment must not be considered as one which lacks any exterior influences because; at any rate it will not diminish the individual experiences or convicts' cultural properties. Even more, it seems that in a few years these attributions will be the object of a private interest in the prison institution, proving the idea that detention is separated from everything.

Dealing with these activities, the convict has the possibility to express several faces which make up his social identity. The convict takes advantage of a more and more consequent method in making up his role as a convict. For a couple of hours he can become a musician, a chess player, a judo player, a painter, a computer worker, a mime or an actor. This model of importing subculture reduces in fact Goffman's approach to this process of de-totalising which affects the institution in a study about sporting practices in prison; he tries to combine these two models in order to appreciate the meaning that convicts give to their practices.

However, to set friendship relationships in prison is not a choice. The convict has reactivated some traits of his social personality in prison; we can suppose the other way, that the permission to choose reactivates certain aspects of his prison institutionalization. Thus, he reintegrates common social spaces even in the daytime; the convict faces a lot of difficulties in dealing with social situations because he has lost the ability to deal with them.

The inner restricted spaces in a prison are one of the most sensible points of the process of social disadaptation. Several convicts declared that it was difficult for them to learn, to know the social space, which is frightening.

The excessive unaware impregnation of cell spaces and prison yards was mentioned by several sport monitors. If one convict asks for permission, he does not try to adopt the best behavior or to make a good impression, but first of all to try to detach from his peer identity. In a general manner he commits a mistake if he considers these permissions a total release where the convict is out of the blue released from all constraints.

In prisons, the integration of gym and physical exercises reach first of all the rehabilitation of young delinquents, dates since 5 August 1850 and stipulates their educational aspect, of life in collectivity, liberty, movement, labor.

The development of sporting practices in prison rehabilitation is brought by a double process: the spring of physical and sporting activities in our society and the beginning in the development of prison rehabilitation on the outer world. This double movement is translated into the accessibility which grows towards the sporting spaces of minority and the progressive integration of exterior interventions and the good of consuming inside the prison.

Sport is a factor of balance and game, a fundamental role in improving the prison conditions and maintains them in a good climate I prison rehabilitation. It enforces to accept the rules, to have responsibilities and to invest in a collective activity. The fusion of these two institutions allows seeing the image of the body's organs, the independence of their mechanisms and their objectives.

In fact, the beneficial contribution of physical and sporting activities on health comes from making gestures and movements which prison conditions do not allow. They add a function of pain prevention and in most cases a compensatory function for detention.

But the negative effects of detention are far from being limited to deficiencies caused by an excessive sedentarism, the body becoming the place of numerous physical disfunctions: digestive and respiratory difficulties, pains, oppressions, somatic manifestations. These pathologies are equally connected to the digestive system, skin, and toxicity. To a certain extent, the practice of physical and sporting activities can limit the appearance and development of these disfunctions leaving to convicts a space to know their own bodies.

The contribution of sporting activities regarding the improvement of the general state of health is rendered firstly in a stop of risky habits (smoking mainly) and the consume of tranquilizers, the change of diet and a grown sensibility to the general hygiene of the body and the different modes that affect it. Equally, the state of wellness felt by all sportsmen after a physical effort contributes to the psychological balance of convicts and because of this it helps to a better endurance of the negative effects of detention. The physical exercises diminish anxiety, emotional instability and stress, a better existence with oneself and the others.

The physical and technical progress recorded in the practice of meetings, places equally the convicts in a dynamic of personal re evaluating which goes back on the peer's considerations. In this process, setting the objectives allows the protection in time and learning the personal administration of the corporal resources knowing progressively about their attitudes and limits.

That is why the practice of physical and sporting activities allows individuals to improve knowledge about their body. The pleasure felt when making an effort, making progress, collective participation, the happiness of meeting again, and the feelings felt are points that convicts can consider in order to endure detention better and distract specially and temporally from the prison environment.

Written in a frame of mutual exigencies, the teacher – “pupil” relationship can be a means and on long term a point of meeting between institution and convicts. The sport attributes a large number of moral values that contribute to the promotion of its practice.

Sport also refers to courage, loyalty, oneself improvement, work value, effort moral and team spirit. A strong argument to legitimate sport in prison is the relation that sporting practice allows the instauration between the transmitting of these techniques and certain moral values and their transfer in everyday life. This transfer of self-controlled conduits is in fact frequently advanced in the operations of sports coming back and reintegration.

In the modern society the satisfaction that the individuals progress in their private relationships or in their professional activities render through a constant craftsmanship of their own emotional and affective pulsations. Nowadays a high degree of excitement is considered as abnormal being taken by the hospital or the prison. According to Elias and Dunning, the self-control of violent feelings generates pressures that find a release in social activities of spending free time, sports as assign of the stade in the process of civilization in our society, the routine activities in everyday life are distinguished from the activities in the spare time and do not allow to manifest these feelings and the expression of these excitements. Thus sports constitutes a frame image in which individuals project themselves and re-feel in a phase of slow pressure the danger, fear and pleasure sadness and joy, soul comfort.

The authors underline that only sporting practices in the free time keep certain autonomy and a certain degree of difference in relation to pressures that characterize the situations from the real life. The sporting activities are opposed to work; they look for finding pleasure that individuals feel when they express strong emotions. The excitement

produced reanimates the soul. It releases pressures and increases the moral tonus after a vague temporal mental excitement.

The existence of this physical and emotional release represents major arguments of prison administration to legitimate sports in prison. It participates to keeping the internal balance of detention offering a fixed space of physical release well set which compensates the effort made by the convicts to look after the multiple institutional constraints imposed to them.

For satisfaction it is necessary a collective excitement that can manifest differently by organizing revolts or aggressions, the prison institution consider sports to be a strategic means of balancing pressures. The sporting practices allow the reduction of possible violence flows offering a zone of expression adapted and most of all tolerated by the evacuation of collective exaltations.

For every individual the prison administration is devoted to making available the necessary means to allow convicts to have a good hygiene and a good health during their detention. One of the missions of this institution is to rehabilitate the commitment of the punishment in a good state. One of the punishment objectives must theoretically orient to a functional improvement of the body and of the physical capacities or at least a minimum improvement of motricity.

To this effect the period of prison must not emphasize a regression of these dispositions, which will only hinder the way of the one who is released. Practising any physical or sporting activity during the period of punishment may prove extremely useful. The idea that sport has a benefic influence on health is well implemented. For the Health World Organization, health is physically, mentally and socially a state of wellness and it is not made up of a lack of disease or infirmity.

From an institutional point of view, the objective of release preparation is to favor or help the convict to integrate into the society and surpass all difficulties caused by the break of release. This release preparation involves many forms up to the integration of the set of social devices referring to health, the administrative course, accommodation, instruction, work and family. These are major criteria which actively contribute to the reintegration process, the precise appreciation of the difficulties that instruction presupposes in prison and the social integration devices.

Detention in safe units or prisons does not create a better attitude or a better behavior for the release since 70% of them commit infringements afterwards. Indeed the youth involved frequently develop a real history of the crime.

The purposes of non-custody measures are to offer the opportunities of making, avoiding the occasions to make mistakes, to set better physical and social situations, to learn constructive attitudes and behaviors, and in some cases to identify vandalism and theft. The interventions may include community centers, assistance centers, and orders to supervise.

The increased interest for sport as an intervention in the juvenile delinquent:

- sport and probably the outdoor activities increase self-respect, the state and perception of competence and authority, especially due to the recreation outside (Sullivan 1998);
- the reduction of self-destructive behavior (smoking, drugs, suicide, abuse of substances) ;
- the schemes lead to a better socialization both for groups and grown-ups;
- in most cases where investigation has been made, participants enjoy a better school assistance and performance;

According to the offer of sports in the detention centers, the convicts discover the possibility to choose one or more sporting practices.

Practice means you don't have to fight against physical regression but also a way of specific investment. Thus, certain institutions propose amazing sportive courses that convicts can consider. The originality of this proposition is to consider the participation to a sportive activity as a process constituted of several phases: learning a couple of sports, selecting and continuing practicing them.

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