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ATTITUDES AND VALUES OF YOUNG INMATES PLACED IN CORRECTIONAL FACILITY

Criminal attitudes and values are important factors that affect deviant and criminal behaviour. When such values, beliefs and opinions support criminal behaviour, they are criminal attitudes. In this context, criminal attitudes are considered to be one of the four factors (besides friends, family, and antisocial personality) that increase the risk of recidivism. Young offenders often have a negative attitude towards the law and use neutralization techniques to avoid the criminal responsibility, In relation to the question: how the criminal attitudes and values are acquired, learned or recognized, within the criminology literature we can met several ways: through the techniques of neutralisation or rationalization of deviant behaviour; through identification with other offenders; and by rejecting the conventional norms. This paper examines the criminal attitudes of the young inmates placed in correctional facility located in Ohrid, North Macedonia. The analysis is based on qualitative data collected by using in depth interview with young inmates to capture their attitudes and experiences in relation to their criminal attitudes. The collected data was divided into three categories and several subcategories: (1) neutralization techniques: rejecting responsibility, rationalizing certain behaviours and condemning others, (2) rejecting conventional norms: a critique of the system and the law and (3) identification with perpetrators and acceptance of the criminal views from the peers.

Key words: criminal attitudes, values, young inmates, correctional facility.

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1. Introduction

Criminal attitudes and values are important factors that affect deviant and criminal behaviour. According to Allport (1935), attitudes are defined as a stable set of cognitive conditions that predispose the person to respond to external stimuli and influence his/her behaviour. On the other hand, according to Eysenck (1988) attitudes create dispositions to respond in a specific way (positive or negative) to particular object, person, institution or event. Thus, attitudes are a system of permanent dispositions acquired to consciously and emotionally react to objective reality (Suleimanov, 2003: 891). They are developing as a result of the experience and interaction of the person with the environment (Gavel W. David, 2017, p. 9) and are formed in the process of socialization. Also, their formation depends on the needs of the person, of his/her group affiliation and the quality of his/her personal traits. They become part of the personality and have a great influence on behaviour.

When such values, beliefs and opinions support criminal behaviour, they are criminal attitudes (Simourd, 1997, p. 53 cited in Cargill, 2004, p. 7). In this context, criminal attitudes are considered to be one of the four factors (besides friends, family, and antisocial personality) that increase the risk of recidivism (Meng Chu, Daffern, Thomas D.M. Stuart, Ang & Long, 2014). Young offenders often have a negative attitude towards the law and use neutralization techniques to avoid the criminal responsibility (cited in Cargill, 2004). For example, one study examining the attitudes of perpetrators of crime (Mylonas & Reckless (1963)) found that they had specific attitudes related to loyalty, self-justification, belief in happiness, and excessive perceptions of society's shortcomings (Gavel W. David, 2017). According to learning process theories, individuals learn criminal behaviour by adopting attitudes that endorse breaking the law. This assumes that individuals who have delinquent friends are being more likely to become similar, because their friendship is one of the strongest predictors of acceptance delinquent behaviour (Boduszek, Hyland, Pedziszczak & Kielkewicz, 2012, p. 20).

In relation to the question: how the criminal attitudes and values are acquired, learned or recognized, within the criminology literature we can meet several ways: through the techniques of neutralisation or rationalization of deviant behaviour, through identification with other offenders; and by rejecting the conventional norms (Banse, Oberlander, Koppehele - Gossei, Schmiot F. Alexander, 2013, p. 7).

1.1. Neutralization techniques

David Matza in his book *Delinquency and Drift* (1964) introduces the term drift in order to illustrate that young people drift between freedom and control,

between breaking and obeying the law. In other words, young people are in limbo between legality (how they should behave) and crime (how they should not act) (Taylor, Walton, & Young, 1973, p. 179). In fact, drift occurs when social control is weak, i.e. when external control is not exercised by the family, social services and school. At the same time, young people have an underdeveloped system of internal control or restraint, which implies positive moral and ethical values, awareness and conscience. In that sense, because of absence or weakened social control young people feel freer to commit crimes (Vold B. George, Bernard J. Thomas, Snipes B. Jeffrey, 1998, p. 205). They neutralize their deviant behaviour and reduce guilt and responsibility by means of certain justifications, i.e. neutralization techniques. When the sense of irresponsibility weakens the moral obligation to the law, young people are free to choose between various actions, some legal, and some illegal.

1.2. Identification with other offenders

Social learning theories want to explain how criminal values, ideas, techniques and expressions are transferred from one person to another. For example, the theory of differential association, developed by Sutherland (1939) focuses on the relationships between persons and how normative definitions are learned. The basis of this theory is the thesis that criminal behaviour is learned from those with whom the offender is directly related because the person is susceptible to influences of different social values. Hence, criminal behaviour arises as a result of relationships with certain groups and individuals who have already adopted a pattern of criminal behaviour. The more permanent and stronger those relationships and influences are, the chances of becoming an offender is greater (Banse, Oberlander, Koppehele – Gossei, Schmiot F. Alexander, 2013, p. 8).

1.3. Rejecting generally accepted dominant norms of behaviour

Young people today rarely accept the generally accepted and dominant cultural norms and values in a society. They approve resistance, unconventional behaviour and desire to create another, unconventional identity that does not fit into the dominant culture (Banse, Oberlander, Koppehele - Gossei, Schmiot F. Alexander, 2013, p. 8). This thesis is in line with the theory of subculture, according to which young people adopt a criminal system of values and do not accept the dominant one that is generally accepted and imposed by the mainstream culture. Therefore,

subcultural behaviour is reflection of disagreement and disapproval of that culture and is an expression of dissatisfaction and frustration to realize the dominant values. These theoretical perspectives are developed in the second half of the 20th century, based on many studies related to the behaviour of young people, primarily of working class, who are unemployed, with limited educational opportunities, deprived and who lived in poor neighbourhoods. The results show that deviant behaviour is an escape of the problems they face; mainly because of their inability to meet the dominant cultural values (Martin, 2009, p. 126). It raises frustration and revolt, and the way out is to find another group, with other values. Albert Cohen (1955) explains this situation as the inability of young people to go along with their peers through transition processes that results in antisocial and criminal behaviour. In his book *Delinquent Boys: the Culture of Gangs*, he says that sub-cultural behaviours are response to problems experienced collectively and escape from conventional channels of authority and control (O'Brien & Yar, 2008, p. 48).

Bearing in mind the previous, the content, nature, impact and types of the criminal attitudes are subject of many studies. As part of them, it's interesting to determine whether the criminal system of values persist after condemnation and incarceration, especially among young inmates. In that sense, based on importation model, one issue for consideration is whether the young inmates bring with them their criminal attitudes and values and what is their impact on the behaviour during incarceration. Consequently, another issue is whether the institutional culture and norms succeed to replace them with positive ones. In fact, the behaviour of young inmates in correctional institutions is much more influenced by the system of values and beliefs adopted or acquired before incarceration. The same values and beliefs are imported, which means that inmate's culture is a reflection of their external (outside) culture. If young people form their own sub-cultural norms of behaviour that are opposed to the dominant mainstream culture, it would also mean that young inmates do not adopt the institutional culture (regime and rules of conduct), but rather their own. In addition, the conflict between the young inmates and the institutional values causes a revolt and disapproval, which are manifested by violent or other deviant behaviour in the institution (Tewksbury, R., Connor P. David, and Denney S. Andrew, 2014). The length of the sentence or the stay in the institution also affects the persistence of criminal attitudes and values. According to one study, young people who stay in the prison longer have more negative changes in their criminal attitudes than those who stay shorter (Jones D. Caitlin, 2012).

Certain aspects of criminal behaviour of young inmates sentenced to correctional facility were subject of analysis within *Marginalization and deviance*

of young offenders in conflict with the law in correctional institutions research project carried out by the Faculty of security – Skopje (2018).

2. Methodology

This paper examines the criminal attitudes of the young inmates placed in correctional facility located in Ohrid, North Macedonia. The analysis is based on qualitative data collected by using in depth interview with young inmates to capture their attitudes and experiences in relation to their criminal attitudes. Through content analysis of the statements of young inmates, the survey was intended to identify and articulate their criminal attitudes as one of the risk factors that influence criminal behaviour prior and during incarceration. The survey presumes that young inmates import their criminal value system into the correctional facility, and thus they create a culture that is a reflection of the world they experience prior to incarceration.

The survey aims to provide overview of the criminal attitudes and values, especially in terms of violence and property crimes and how they are manifested. We have identified them through the used techniques of neutralization and learned negative values from the delinquent peers, as well as through the attitudes of the young inmates about the conventional norms. For that purpose several research questions were posed: Do young inmates maintain the same attitudes, preferences and values in the correctional facility?, Has the already acquired value system undergo positive change?, What criminal tendencies are most often manifested in the institution?

An interview was conducted with 17 young inmate, out of 19 who were placed in the facility at the time of the interview (March-June, 2018). They were aged 17 to 21 years who have committed crimes (mostly property crimes: thefts and robberies) as juveniles and who were sentenced to correctional institution by the juvenile judge. An appropriate questionnaire for the interviewees was prepared which included partially adapted several scales. Those are: (1) *the Rehabilitation in Correctional Settings Attitude Scale (RICS)*, which is designed to assess the attitudes of prisoners and prison staff towards other prisoners, treatment, society, the legal system, law and their own competencies, (2) *Inmate perception of impact The Way I Look At Things scale* that measures the extent to which a juvenile is influenced by the correctional institutions and (2) *Criminal Attitude Scale (CAS)* designed to assess criminal attitudes of the inmates as well as their changes as a result of treatment or “criminalization” in penitentiary institutions (Brodsky L. Stanley & Smitherman H. O’Neal, 1983).

The collected data was divided into three categories and several subcategories:

- Neutralization techniques: rejecting responsibility, rationalizing certain behaviours and condemning others.
- Rejecting conventional norms: a critique of the system and the law.
- Identification with perpetrators and acceptance of the criminal views from the peers.

2.1. Access to data and ethical issues

Access to data and the timetable for conducting the interviews is supported by written and oral consent from the main stakeholders of the relevant departments within the Ministry of Justice, Prison system and courts system. During the survey, due attention is paid to certain ethical issues related to the protection of the respondents' identity as a specific category and to the guarantees of voluntary participation, informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality of the data collected. In this regard, all respondents expressed readiness to be interviewed and signed a statement of participation and consent that their statements might be analyzed and used. Apart from the consent of the young inmates, written consent was also given by the staff from the correctional facility. All transcripts of the interviews are confidential and only the research team has access to them. Also, the research team established an appropriate friendly attitude of trust, emphasizing that the participation of the young inmates in the interview is voluntary, with respect for the confidentiality of the data and their anonymity.

3. Findings and discussion

In general, for the most of the young inmates the criminal world is a world they live in the primary family or in their close social environment (peers, neighbourhood). It is a world of survival (some young people beg, prostitute, abuse drugs), a world of competition, a world to attract an attention or a world in which they are naively pushed and rejected by others.

3.1. Techniques of neutralization and rationalization

The young inmates use rationalizations or justifications for their crimes. They refer to the youth, to the bad peers influence and / or deny the negative consequences.

In the first case, they justify their crime claiming that “every child makes mistakes”, or “that time, as younger, I didn’t think”. In the second case, almost 90% of the inmates (except for three) attribute the responsibility for the offenses to their delinquent peers, as it led them to criminal behaviour or have committed crimes in solidarity with them. In this way they share responsibility with others and accept it more easily. As they state:

The friends drew me more into that.

Because I had deviant friends.

I was hanging out with a lot of kids who were stealing ... I had such a bad friends... I was hanging out with dishonest friends, they were cheating me, they were telling me a word to steal... I was going after them, they were some older.

The friends came together one day and said: we are going to make quite a number of thefts, are you ready to commit thefts with me and I say yes. I was always ready to commit thefts.

These statements indicate that some of the inmates were aware of their delinquent friends, they knew about their thefts, and agreed to be part of them. They also know which actions are good and which are bad, but have not developed enough conscience and sense of responsibility. In fact, individual responsibility is attributed to friends who have dragged them into the criminal circle. But to get into it, they approve and accept crime as something normal, even as part of a family tradition. Joining delinquent friends reinforces the group’s affiliation. Therefore, certain inmates refer to loyalty and solidarity with them, saying:

I stayed because of friends. I have many friends. Some of them are still stealing.

In such circles, you enter “in the deep waters”, as we called.

On the basis of the above statements it can be concluded that the inmates strengthen their criminal tendencies and motives, which are difficult to overcome. They acquire status and position in the criminal group and become conscious that the deeper they get into the *criminal waters*, the harder is to get out of them. So, they attribute the crimes to loyalty to the group and to maintaining their already acquired status, which gives them satisfaction, security and support by the friends. In addition, such statements show that they do not sufficiently understand the seriousness of the offenses and their harmful consequences. Sometimes they blame the victims, by stating *they were looking for trouble*, which indicate that the young offenders deny the damage suffered by the victim.

3.2. Attitudes and motives for criminal behaviour

The inmates consider their criminal behaviour as necessity, as learned or normal behaviour and accept the stigma of deviants in their environment without shame and disguise. Namely, the majority of inmates are aware of their criminal behaviour and agree to take risks and to “go to the end”. As they say: *Yes, what I do is not okay, but now it is ... There’s a mafia bigger, so...*” In fact, there was nothing that could deter them, which means that the family, social services, and the criminal justice system failed to exert preventive influence. Because of the crime and the large number of risk factors (the lack of adequate support and control by both family and social services), they have been already condemned by the society. It was only a matter of time when they would be formally convicted and sentenced to a correctional facility.

With regard to property offenses, although the major motive is to obtain material benefit, the reason for such behaviour among inmates is different. According to their statements, some of the reasons for committing thefts can generally be divided into three categories: hedonistic needs, basic needs and naivety and irrationality.

a) *Hedonistic needs.* Certain adolescents want to gain independence from the family and to build identity and status in their peer group. Because the family cannot ensure appropriate material goods to satisfy certain needs such as money for disco, drinking, cigarettes etc., they try to obtain them illegally. The *taste of the forbidden*, which ensure easy earning and a “good life” increases appetites and hedonism. In fact, late modernism offers consumerism and hedonistic culture as dominant cultural values, and those who cannot meet those values and needs on a regular way, start to commit crimes. And as criminal motives and inclinations increase, in absence of proper internal and external control, or “brakes”, the youngsters continue to behave defiantly. As the inmates’ state:

*I used to spend on eating, discos, and so on... for a good life.
I’m not like a kid ... I want to have more, to dress for myself, to walk with a girl ...
I’ve done it ... for example ... to prove which is better, such things.
I have done it for myself, to have (a money), to have a plus. My (parents) gave me money, but they were not enough for me... To have, like other children that have.*

Most inmates, in fact, want to attract attention through their look and outfit. They experience money as a power that nourishes their self-confidence. In fact, some of them have a complex of high or low value, and by identifying with criminal individuals they wish to obtain a similar power status, which is usually

obtained primarily through the acquisition of money. Others, aware of their physical strength and attractive appearance, use criminal behaviour to emphasize those characteristics. The desire to look “more powerful,” “greater,” or “equal” to others stems from deep frustration due to lack of recognition, protection, love, attention, and identity. They fill the spiritual and intellectual emptiness with material pleasure and, when they cannot satisfy the material pleasure in a permissible way, they start to commit crimes. Crimes also bring them money, and more money means more power, more self-confidence, and more control and status in the group. Also, any “successful” crime increases their criminal abilities and inclinations, as they state:

It was interesting to me at the time, as if I was in a movie ... I was always successful and could never reach me as I did some things.

That gangster name suits for me, it's nice.

Those statements acknowledge that the majority accept and agree with criminal behaviour, because they receive reputation and status which strengthen their power, control and superiority.

b) *Basic needs.* Some inmates justify the thefts in order to gain economic independence from their parents and to meet certain basic needs, such as eating, drinking, and dressing. This category includes those inmates who are raised in extreme poverty or in homes for orphaned children. And, *the wheel starts to spin*, which presumes that “tasting” and satisfying individual needs and economic independence increase “the hunger” for even more material gain. The following conclusions are supported by the following statements:

In the houses I stole only 1000 denars, to eat, to drink, once I stole 200 Euros to buy clothes for my mother, because her sneakers were torn. I do not steal gold.

If I find 5000, I'll only steal 2000, as much as I need it. Handbags, I don't know how to steal it.

I did the crime for myself in order to have.

Regarding the attitudes about the violence, based on the interviews conducted, young inmates perceive the violence as a defence mechanism against attacks, both outside and inside the facility. They say:

I fought with the kids because they provoked me.

Two of them touched me, and I couldn't stand and beat them.

I attacked him, because he provoked me.

What do the above statements show? That the violence is justified when someone provokes them, so it is response and a mean of defence to provocations. They try to neutralize their individual responsibility, by blaming the victim for his provocative behaviour. As they state:

*Until they touch me, I don't touch them.
He's going to touch me a little, I'll give him more.*

But according to some statements, the violent physical response is over verbal attacks, which means that the level of tolerance is very low. Such attitudes show that young inmates lack control mechanisms for coping in conflict situations, and violence is more a reflection of powerlessness, low self-esteem, poor identity, behavioural problems and other risk factors. On the other hand, violent behaviour can also be viewed through the aspect of violent reactions by the security staff in the institution. Because security officers use physical force to prevent the violent behaviour among young inmates, it seems that violence is a way of responding to certain situations. As one inmate states:

For example, if you make a problem today you will be beaten by commanders ... beatings ... blows, hurts, hurts, I (got) 4-5 times...on the back, to my feet, not to make problems ... but they are right ... if you make problems at home ... at home, for example, they (the parents) will beat you.

The above statement shows that the inmates learn that violence is a legitimate response, or, that it is appropriate to respond to violence with violence. And vice versa, “they (security staff) behave well if you treat them well,” as they say. In that sense, when they behave inappropriately they expect to be treated inappropriately or to be treated in the same way. In fact, both, the young inmates and the security staff respond similarly to similar violent situations in the correctional facility. Even security officers are perceived as having the right to apply (legal) force because, as they (the inmates) argue, “*I am in their hands*”. According to the above, young inmates develop the view that the force can be legitimately applied over the incarcerated inmates which is silently accepted. But out of the “bars”, such an attitude is rejected because they say: *if I come outside, will I be afraid of him ... Outside I will behave with him on another way*. This view suggests that some young inmates consider the street as their territory, where they feel more safe and free, where survive the stronger, even with the use of violence. This, on the other hand, shows that they have negative attitudes towards the penal system, which

confirms the thesis that the repressive penal system, instead of being preventive and part of the process of re-socialization, reinforces the violent inclinations of young people in conflict with the law.

In terms of the property crimes, some of the inmates do not understand the consequences or the injury inflicted on the victim. The young offenders, as socially excluded and marginalized, perceive themselves more likely as victims, who take away something from those who are not endangered and therefore the victims are not perceived as damaged. The victim as personality is invisible and does not exist. Only money, gold, jewellery, material goods exist in their focus of interest. This means that the stolen things are not considered as someone's property, as something that is gained by lot of efforts or that has some meaning for the owner.

c) *Gullibility and naivety.* Some offenders commit property crimes because of recklessness, boredom, or a desire to take risks. They are socially disadvantaged individuals who have certain mental illnesses and because of that, the correctional institution, without appropriate treatment activities, is not an appropriate place for them.

3.3. Rejection of conventional norms (criticism of law, criminal justice system, exaggeration of structural inequalities)

It is common for condemned person to have a negative and critical attitude towards the criminal justice system because that system has rejected, excluded, failed to provide them with equal opportunities in life, and placed them into the correctional facility. Also, the offenders, based on their own experiences according to which many of their crimes remain undetected, are aware that not all perpetrators are "caught and sentenced" to imprisonment.. Analysing the criminal careers of most young inmates (given that they are multiple perpetrators with previously imposed enhanced surveillance measures) they have come many times in conflict with the law. But, the professional offenders are skilled in committing the crime and in the relationship with the police. They don't leave traces on the crime place, reject the responsibility and use their right of silence during the criminal procedure. As they state:

They never caught me ... I didn't admit it.

They never caught me for theft, I was so prepared, and they couldn't see me.

Only two or three times they have caught me, for other robberies (they) have not caught me ...

Those statements show that some of the inmates not only reject the crime, but continue to commit crimes. This means that the police have no preventive influence and deterrent effect. On the contrary, the criminal career does not stop. Perhaps the success to avoid the sentence once encourages them to commit new thefts. Such attitudes among many young offenders mean that they neither respect the law nor the criminal justice system and other institutions. This confirms the thesis that the system that rejected them does not deserve to be respected. In addition, for example, regarding marijuana use, some inmates don't think that what they do is wrong, but are convinced that the marijuana help them to think and function better. They say:

I smoked marijuana outside, often... I get up in the morning, smoke a coffee with joint.

No one can ban me.... outside I am not afraid of police officers... I will smoke ... I have a place, for example, I will hide, I will make a cigarette, I will go somewhere behind.

I think its okay to smoke two or three days a week, but I get 20-30 joints a day. Now when I will go out I will smoke a little.

Such statements can also be analysed in terms of the wider social context and duality in Macedonian society for or against the legalization of marijuana, pro and cons positive and negative effects of its consumption. Young people are part of that public discourse and seem to be louder those who promote free use for their individual goals and needs. And young inmates, as specific category, are part of the social discourse, but more as its victims than as self-conscious, creative beings who can confront the current drug policy in our country.

However, after their current incarceration, some inmates become more aware that stealing leads to jail and because it is a bad experience, want to continue “on a normal path”. As some of them state:

When I get out of here ... I'll go first to social service, if I can get some scholarship from social to get financial help, if I succeed, that means I'll settle down, I'll pay rent. If I fail in that, I'll keep on stealing because, I tell you honestly ... if I have no help from anywhere I will steal, collect that money, which, from stealing I will make a house, I will be educated with that money, otherwise how can I find money, money don't fall from the sky.

At least something the state to give me ... If it doesn't, I'll manage by myself.

These statements show that some of the inmates feel capable of committing theft again, have no fear, and are willing to risk. The stay in the correctional facility

does not change the value system and does not “frighten” them. The young inmates refer the responsibility to the state, which means little is learned from their own mistakes and there is no genuine remorse for the crimes committed.

3.4. Learning negative peer values and techniques, glorifying crime and perpetrators

Criminal attitudes and values are learned from both, the delinquent peers and the family. Most inmates accept thefts and other deviant behaviours (drug abuse, wandering, escape from home) as inherent elements of their lives. Because crimes are often committed in a group, they gradually become part of group code of conduct and grow into sub-cultural behaviour. In regards to their delinquent friends, they state:

To drink, steal, make troubles with friends. I wanted to get some things but I couldn't, and finally got there.

When we go to steal, we go, when we go to enjoy, we go to enjoy, when we have money.

I explain to them - we can do this, we can do it, and they agree because they see that I know ... At first, there was only one I worked with, I only listened to him, he would tell me, you would go in here and empty the apartment.

Actually, some of the inmates cannot fit into the mainstream of the society since they were neither part of it nor their families. The development of their personality and their socialization goes astray. They are raised without a parent, especially without a mother or proper parental love, in institutions or in poverty. Aside from some “petty” thieves, those inmates who have more money slowly begin to recognize that money are making them more powerful and (falsely) increase their self-esteem at that time. That shows that, for some inmates money is a power that can be easily and quickly gained through criminal activity. Such thinking is an introduction to the further adoption of criminal attitudes and values, which gradually become part of their personality.

3.5. Criminal inclinations and criminal career

Except for three inmates, among the others the criminal career begins early. They have first made problems at school, and then, at 12-13 years of age, start to commit thefts more intensely. During their criminal path no one manages to

deter them, neither the family, nor the social services, nor the police. Even the experience of their delinquent peer, who was previously sentenced to correctional facility or juvenile prison didn't exert any deterrent effect on them. On contrary, such institutional sentence was an expected consequence that will inevitably come. We support the above statements with the following statements:

From age of 7 years I was not obedient.

I'm here for thefts ... I started from 12 to 16 years ... I was caught many times ... they had some spying on me ... they came home and took me.

For thefts, for more thefts. I can't count, many. I started from 13 years. From Stip, Strumica, Radovis, Kocani, everywhere ... Cash, gold, apartments, houses. With three friends ... one was 19 and the other 18, but they are in jail.

For cars, I used to steal cars... I'll take her (car) and go on ... Stip ... and then I'll leave her in place.

I started stealing from a small age, but then I started to steal (very little). I was happy about it, but when I saw that I could do more than that, I start to go on the road where there was more.

I've been stealing for a year, but not stealing steadily ... I know people who steal every day.

Many, I can't count them, I've stolen many times.

What do the above statements show? That the inmates easily perceive themselves as thieves and accept theft as part of their lives, that several years of stealing has changed their identity and that few compared to many thefts are nothing, and one compared to many years criminal career is nothing. Such attitudes show that there is no awareness about the gravity of the offense as such, about the consequence and about the injury inflicted on the victim. The moral binding function of criminal law is unknown and “don't steal” parole has no meaning. So the question arises: was there any end to such behaviour? According to the inmates statements:

Sometimes I think it's better that I came here, if I was out now someone would kill me.

He (the judge) had to judge me to calm me down.

I didn't stop until I came here.

The statements above show that many inmates are aware that only the correctional measure have prevented or “disabled” them from committing thefts. In this sense, we ask whether the social services and the system should have left

them on the street long enough, without timely and appropriate intervention. Where to look for early intervention and prevention knowing that children are without parental supervision? Namely, the social services need to show a much greater understanding of such inmates who are without parental care, to strengthen the human and material capacities and resources in order to respond appropriately and timely to the problems related to their deviant behaviour. In contrary, the consequences are more severe and behavioural improvements difficult to achieve.

3.6. Criminal attitudes as subject of reconsideration by the inmates during incarceration

As there is a close link between the criminal value system and delinquent behaviour, some of the treatment activities in the correctional facility should also be directed towards changing that value system. This changing starts with accepting responsibility for the crimes committed, understanding the negative consequences and harm inflicted on the victim, as well as rejecting illegitimate ways for gaining material goods. All of that also requires support from family, friends, school, and the neighbourhood because apart of the desire for change, additional support is needed to get out of the previous criminal circle. In criminological theory there is a thesis that the earlier young people engages in deviant behaviour, the longer and more serious the criminal career is. At the same time is more difficult to deter from crime (Farrington, 2004: 6). In this regards, we raise several question within our survey: about the relation of young inmates to conventional values in society, the degree of personal responsibility for their own deviant behaviour, their attitudes towards law, deviant peer friends or their crime, their feelings of remorse etc.

Although, most inmates did not show fear of the penal system and a desire to deter crime after being imprisoned and, in current conditions of imprisonment, they change their previous attitudes and show signs of remorse, acceptance of responsibility and a desire to withdraw. They claim that have understood the crime and its consequences, which makes them no longer willing to commit thefts. As they state:

*I had enough time to think about my consequences ... I'm sorry I did.
I thought that route was interesting, nicer, but I realized that wasn't it.
This is not interesting to me anymore. I realized when I came back from
escape
The state is right, we were hurting the state, we were hurting the people ...
yes, yes, I'm so sorry,*

I think I deserved the measure, because I made a lot of problems out of it, for example I did a lot of damage.

I've been wrong a lot in life.

In fact, the thought of every inmate is how to get on with life: to work honestly, to form a family, to finish an education. All that was missing in life, young people dream to have and achieve. One of the inmates especially feels the weight of the criminal life, for which he shows sincere intentions that he wants to stop the crime: *I will get away from all the suffering and lead a normal life ... I tell them not to steal, not to make troubles, because I endure suffering, I know on my back.* His statement reveals the saturation of the deviant path which at the same time leads to greater problems in life. While some inmates admit to being wrong, most of them refer to poor institutional conditions, for which they would not want to be sentenced to prison again. The question remains whether they will find own strength to withstand the temptations they will face after release. The reintegration process will require systemic approach, post-penal treatment, support and control by the community and the institutions of the system. Otherwise, the percentage of recidivists will increase. They may have, at the time of conducting the interviews, the best and most sincere intentions not to steal anymore, but that depends on support of the family, of their own strengths and capacities to complete their education, as well as of the opportunity to be employed. But deterring crime will mostly depend on braking up the ties with the previous criminal friends as it has proven to be one of the most risky factors. In that sense, every risk factor should be opposed to a protective factor or the development of new positive social relationships because the inmates themselves say that their delinquent peers have led them to crime.

4. Concluding remarks

Young inmates have built a criminal system of values and attitudes toward crime. Thefts are seen as a way to satisfy their hedonistic and other needs, without understanding the seriousness of the crime and the harmful consequences over the victim. Violence is also a behaviour they have learned, a legitimate way of defending themselves from attacks on their personality or a way to gain identity or status in the group. Actually, young inmates develop criminal tendencies because of the large number of risk factors they face in their social and intellectual development. Their rich criminal careers were so developed that there was no force that could deter them except deprivation of liberty.

For the penitentiary system, after the already imposed educational measures, the pronouncement of the correctional institutional measure is a consequential measure. Having in mind the rich criminal careers of most inmates, it seems as if they are predestined to cross that path: to grow up in the criminal world and spend part of their lives in institutions. Even the possibility of being later sentenced to prison for a possible extension of a criminal career is an expected punishment against which they do not rebel and accept it.

Also, those inmates who were in institutions as children, abandoned from their family who lack full educational upbringing because of the delinquent peers perceive thefts as normal and accepted behaviour. Without own home and feeling alone, struggling and caring for their lives, they learn that thefts are one way to make money. The feeling that they can have money that allows them to buy whatever they want replaces the feeling of being socially excluded and without love and support. That short-lived pleasure is a substitute for all that is missing from the family and home. Taking the “forbidden” under conditions of weaker social control is a great opportunity to do so. Correctional facility as a continuation of institutionalization, orphaned children perceive it as a necessary consequence of their actions. Because of crimes and based on the experience of other friends and children in the home they know that they can be convicted and referred to the correctional institution. But they do not perceive the measure as educational because life and growing up in similar homes tells them that there is no rehabilitation and re-socialization process. Probably, the loss of family and family care refuses to be replaced by the care of institution’s staff. Therefore, they perceive them as “bad”, who cannot restore the loss, reject them as persons who can help, and do not accept them as positive behaviour patterns. Most of the young inmates have started their criminal careers in a group. The success in stealing increases the desire for even greater success. In this way, criminal behaviour captures them, and in some situations increases adrenaline as they engage in risky situations. Some of the inmates identify themselves with those persons who have involved them into the criminal world. But neither their tragic fate (drug overdose death) nor the repeated prison sentence deter them from committing crimes again. Theft and risk-taking are their lifestyles, and although they are aware that can be caught and punished, that do not have a preventative and frightening effect.

At the end, most inmates show resistance and disobedience to the penal system or to the state system in general, including social services. Some perceive them as “enemies”, who not only persecute them, but do not provide them with legal means to fulfil their basic needs. However, most inmates exhibit a low level

of awareness of the role and function of the system. It shows insufficient maturity to understand the meaning of their behaviour, the seriousness of the offenses and the harmfulness of the consequences.

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