

## Models of Resocialization of Convicted Individuals\*

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Attempt is made to re-educate persons who violated legally defined social norms in prison conditions, an artificial social environment where it is difficult to establish normal social relations. Achievement of the purpose of the prison sentence i.e., resocialization of prisoners is attempted in adverse conditions and in the situation of an unfavourable criminal policy. The resocialization of convicted individuals implies a series of activities, whose aim is to re-integrate into society those individuals who, due to various reasons, have "lost" their place within it or who are, due to some of their characteristics or activities, rejected by said society. Resocialization is, therefore, a process of gradual reintegration of offenders from the criminal subgroup into the social community as a group. This goal is achieved through re-education, as a planned and systematic action aimed at personality of the offender. The idea of resocialization of prisoners has developed and evolved throughout history into various different models. Four models can be distinguished: the penal model, the therapeutic model, the social learning model and the model of resocialization as a prisoner's right. The models have complemented each other, they have been upgraded and preserved in a more or less changed form. In the paper, we will point out some of the basic characteristics of these models, as well as the role and importance of the resocialization of convicted individuals during the serving of their prison sentences.

**KEYWORDS:** resocialization models / convicted individuals / re-education treatment / social norms

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## Conceptual Discourse of Penological Theory and Practice

Resocialization has a long history and its beginnings were somewhat different than what we know and apply today in penology practice and in work with convicted individuals. At the start of the 20th century, resocialization became the dominant paradigm in the field of punishment and penal policy. The period up to the 1960s is characterized by discrepancies between theory, where resocialization dominated, and practice, which up until then did not apply the idea of resocialization.

In the early 1960s, resocialization started to be used in practice and became a generally accepted orientation in the treatment of prisoners. Regardless of the criticism that this idea suffered in the 1970s, resocialization is still the purpose, goal, method, and model of punishing criminal offenders. Resocialization is derived from the Latin words *re*-again, and *socius* – friend, sociable, which is usually translated as re-socialize (Macanović, 2011).

This still does not tell us anything about the resocialization process itself, its characteristics, subject and goal. Specifically, the object of interest in resocialization are persons who, according to Godina-Vuk (1986), are included in society in a "significantly different way", i.e., who, according to Bauman (Bauman, 1966), are in "social niches". We are therefore talking about individuals who are part of a society (often referred to as a subculture), who are undoubtedly socialized, meaning their instinctive biological potentials are "subordinated" to certain social requirements, however whose behaviour is unacceptable for a specific social community. That is, their "personality type" deviates from the "common personality type" of a given social community. Here we do not believe that all members of the community who deviate "from the average" should be resocialized, uniformed, conformed... on the contrary. We refer here to destructive behaviours that undoubtedly threaten the very survival of the community. Therefore, when we talk about the resocialization of prisoners, we expect to prevent the collapse of the (social) system (however big it may be) and ultimately cause a change in behaviour, as well as personality development.

Milutinović (1988) claims that a new structuring of the personality is done in such a way that the personality becomes socially acceptable (positive) and, consequently, society thereby ensures its survival. However, when we talk about structural changes in personality, we must be careful and not delude ourselves into thinking that we can achieve this exclusively during the resocialization process (more on this in Knežević, 1989, Uzelac, 1995).

With social-pedagogical methods and resources, primarily education, we only change the attitudes, habits, interests, and values of prisoners. Even here the possibilities and success are quite limited. In addition, and this will be discussed later in more detail, we must be aware of the specific features of the environment

in which resocialization takes place – prisons are, as a rule, total institutions, frustrating and depriving environments, they even go so far as to call them dysfunctional and counterproductive institutions, "crime colleges" (Kanduč, 2003, p. 50). Precisely because of this, the resocialization task would be, first of all, to prevent the "side effects" of punishment and preserve the prisoners' mental health, preserve their dignity and enable their proper return to society, even if that means returning to an environment that motivated them to commit a criminal offence (Macanović & Nadarević, 2014).

Resocialization activities should be aimed at increasing confidence, tolerance to frustration and comprehensive development of the prisoner, developing the ability to start thinking constructively, build one's own personality structure, and to mature (Javornik, 1990).

Often in literature, instead of the term resocialization, we come across the term psychosocial rehabilitation. Hebar (2001) explains the concept of psychosocial rehabilitation as a group of activities that affect the prisoner's physical, psychological, emotional and intellectual development trying to transform him into a person able to live in balance with himself and the environment. It includes the cognitive, moral and socio-political development of prisoners, development of the ability to empathize, change of life goals and values, teaches them to act within the community, respect the needs of others, and to be tolerant (Hebar, 2001).

Re-education in prison practice is usually understood as "a process that includes activities of correcting socially unacceptable habits, attitudes, opinions and other characteristics and activities with the aim to improve and finally structure one's personality" (Pantelić, 1983, p. 55). The term re-education is often associated with the concepts of repair, improvement, correction. Such definitions are unacceptable because we do not speak about the structural changes of the personality that should be the basis of the mentioned concepts as a goal but as a consequence of re-education (Macanović & Nadarević, 2014).

However, coercion is a characteristic of all mentioned terms. Namely, educational institutions (schools, religious institutions, prisons, etc.) are, by their very nature, focused on repressive (but at the same time progressive) methods. Repressiveness is derived from their (socially) productive task, ".../... because man is a 'product' of precisely those institutions, which restrict and suppress his freedom, liveliness, spontaneity...", and "progressiveness" is derived from the fact that society (through its institutions) enables individuals to develop their potential at all (Močnik, 1984, as cited in Javornik & Šebart, 1991).

## Resocialization Models

The idea of resocialization of prisoners has developed and evolved throughout history into various different models. Kanduč (2003) distinguishes its four forms: the penal model, the therapeutic model, the social learning model and the model of resocialization as a prisoner's right.

The models have complemented each other, and have been upgraded and preserved in a more or less changed form. Their basic characteristics are as follows:

1. *The Penal Model* stems from the idea that the offender needs to be disciplined. There are two possible methods: the first one relies on forced discipline or isolation, the second on voluntary discipline. Isolating the prisoner would make him lonely and influence on him would be exerted through hard work and ideological indoctrination. With the voluntary method of discipline, we would achieve the improvement of prisoners through self-discipline and learning responsibility. This is a behavioural approach of positive reinforcement and expectation of reward.

2. *The Therapeutic Model* starts from the assumption that a criminal offence has pathological dispositions. It stems from biological and psychological explanations aimed at curing the criminal of his "criminality" by scientific methods. It uses medical terms: diagnosis, observation, prognosis, treatment and introduces individualized measures. It relies on the study of the prisoner's personality.

3. *The Social Learning Model* is conceived as re-education or resocialization, which would eliminate the errors of inadequate socialization. A criminal act is understood to be a consequence of inadequate learning in primary socialization. In that context, the idea has formed about a community that would replace the prison environment and in which the prisoners would solve the problem by interacting and cooperating with the staff. Such a method would contribute to strengthening self-responsibility, autonomy, self-respect, mutual trust and intensive communication between prisoners and staff.

4. *The Model of Rehabilitation as a Prisoner's Right* tries to avoid the shortcomings of the previous models and the criticism that resocialization delves into the prisoner's freedom, autonomy, and personal integrity without permission. It stems from the fact that the prisoner's rights are threatened both by coercive activities as well as by the harmful effects of imprisonment (stigmatization, depersonalization, desocialization, imprisonment...), therefore the goal of the new model is to reduce the negative effects of a prison sentence and offer prisoners the opportunity to join society as its useful members through various activities offered

such as social work, safe and healthy prison environment, removal of obstacles that hinder reintegration into society, education.

Therefore, the fundamental change in the understanding of the concept of resocialization is that it is understood exclusively as an activity that makes serving of a prison sentence easier for the prisoner. Numerous deprivations make serving of a prison sentence difficult and unpleasant, which also reflects on the psychological atmosphere in prison, as well as on resocialization in general (Jovanić et al., 2020). Resocialization is the prisoner's right to serve a more humane sentence, not the right and obligation of society, the state, and the goal of punishment. The purpose of the sentence is punishment for the committed crime, and resocialization is the content of the execution of the sentence. Resocialization activities, most often imposed by the institution, must be understood by prisoners as self-socialization and personal improvement. This is the only way staff activities can have an any effect. Additionally, resocialization must be undertaken as a "side effect" of punishment, as an effect of striving for some other goals, for example education, comportment of staff members towards prisoners, and comportment of the wider social community (Macanović & Nadarević, 2014).

Violence in prisons, the availability of intoxicants, the prison code, and deprivations have a negative impact on the implementation of re-education treatments and resocialization (Radonjić & Vuković, 2024). One of the most frequent issues which complicates the implementation of re-education treatment and consequently the process of resocialization itself, is the criminogenic infection of prisoners. This problem is particularly serious in closed penitentiary institutions, where, due to pavilion-type accommodation and the impossibility of categorization by criminal offence and the length of punishment, as well as due to the large fluctuation of prisoners, often multiple returnees, foreign nationals, persons who are serving sentences for traffic violations and persons imprisoned for murder, drug addicts, etc. stay in the same dormitory. In addition to the problems mentioned, there are numerous deprivations in closed institutions. Quite often, younger prisoners find role models and identify themselves with recidivists or local "bosses", trying that way to draw attention to themselves and ensure the best possible status within the group. They are the ones who most often refuse re-education treatment and consistently adhere to the prison code principles. Unfortunately, with such prisoners, socialization deficits are the most obvious and re-education and resocialization are the most necessary (Macanović, 2023).

Often, the concept of resocialization is criticized and its success is called into question due to the increasing number of returnees to prison institutions. (Nadarević & Macanović, 2023). Milojević (1984) points out that a part of the returnees is increasingly mired in crime, specializes in a certain type of crime, acquires special knowledge and techniques, cooperates with other criminals, having crime become the source of their material income. The way of life and social relations take on a special character. Social parasitism and underestimation

of useful work and numerous negative habits accompany and seriously complicate the process of re-education of returnees, making it almost impossible. Because of all this, when developing resocialization programmes for prisoners, one should take into account the limitations that very often cause failure, namely (Macanović & Nadarević, 2014, pp. 103–104):

- respecting the differences between prisoners, individualized programmes,
- many prisoners cannot be resocialized due to personality disorders,
- that is, they are not suitable or capable,
- they are not interested in improvement, they are not motivated to live without crime,
- some do not need resocialization,
- inappropriate environment which the prisoners come from and where they will return,
- the organisation of penal institutions, which sometimes act in a too totalitarian way,
- isolated social conditions, prisons deprive prisoners of too many basic human rights and thus take much more from prisoners than they give them in return,
- professional staff members do not have professional treatment methods available that would fully ensure success, inappropriate approaches and resocialization methods,
- there is no re-education programme that would achieve all the theoretically and practically intended goals of punishment and prison sentences,
- in case of returnees, the ability to resocialize should be used at the time of the first sentence, not later, since after each time the possibilities are decreasing (Brinc, 2007).

Therefore, the resocialization models are interconnected and supplemented, and upgraded with more effective re-education work programmes so that the effects of resocialization of convicted individuals are as effective as possible.

## **Conclusion**

The main purpose of resocialization is educating prisoners to respect social values and to re-join society based on those values. They should become useful members of the community, although it should be known that this education process is not simple and without difficulties. On the contrary, numerous obstacles and hindrances are encountered. It is not possible to "teach" a prisoner to accept the behaviour of man as a cultural being, to behave in the spirit of the social environment demands. Apart from that, during the resocialization process, there are also negative influences that hinder its successful implementation. During the

serving of the prison sentence, the values and norms of the prison society, which we have talked about and which are contrary to the prevalent system of values, and therefore intensify the existing deviant tendencies and work against the goal of re-education treatment, very often come to light. Thus, the personality of prisoners can deteriorate and their resocialization become more difficult, if they do not manage to overcome their social level by the end of the execution of the criminal sanction.

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