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Pathways

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Project

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Thesis for Masters Degree in
Criminology 2012

Removing the Barriers to Prisoner
Reintegration

Issues such as employment, access to education courses, housing, addiction issues and general areas mainstream society take for granted, such as ability to access insurance have been found to play a major role in the ability of offenders to remain outside of the prison system.

Supervisor Dr. Mary Rogan

Aims & Objectives

This thesis has attempted to assess what lessons can be learned from the experiences of former prisoners that would allow for better, more suitable and also cost effective services to be provided.

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In depth qualitative interviews the perspective of ex prisoners was utilised to gain a better understanding of the issues faced and what works when attempting to overcome them.

The theoretical framework which guided this research were desistence theory, life course theory and also labelling theory.

49 % Recidivism in Republic of Ireland (O'Donnell et al. 2008)

This study, the first such study of its kind in the Republic of Ireland, seeks to learn about the lived experiences of former prisoners and their attempts at cessation from crime, by engaging with education. This research was conducted by a former prisoner who also has personal experience of the Irish penal system.

Theoretical Framework

- Labelling Theory
- Life Course Theory
- Desistance Theory
- Role of Education
- Socio – Economic Factors
- Practitioners Perspective
- Openness to Change

Methodology

- 10 former prisoners (9 male & 1 female)
- Open ended semi- structured interviews
- Purposive sampling
- Insider research
- Ethical considerations

Findings

- Informal Assistance
- Recidivism
- Life Course
- Addiction
- Primary & secondary desistance
- Ability to give back to society
- Self Narrative

Quotes – Family Supports

“I don't have a relationship with my family, I don't speak to none of them, I don't speak to none of them, I don't speak to my brothers or sisters and my mam and dad are dead. I don't have any contact with my family, none what so ever. I'm on my own” (Cathal, 7 months since release).

Quotes- Garda Vetting

“I never got to do my placements because of my Garda clearance, it was never returned back, it took literally 20 months, the course had finished. And I know everyone on the course knew why I never finished” (Barry, 20 years since release).

Quotes – Self Narrative

“I mean my friends would of changed a lot, changed in the way that I no longer find myself sitting in a pub with alcoholics and players” (Adam, 1 year and 4 months since release).

“I don't see them anymore, they don't bother me and I don't bother with them anymore..... this suited me fine as a lot of them would of been begrudging.... I don't wish them any harm; I just have a new circle of friends” (Ivor, 8 years since release).

Quotes - Labelling

“Stigma in the community, I mean old people walking on the other side of the road because they thought I would of robbed them, and shop owners following you around the shop, cause you would of robbed the shop when you were using” (Henry, 14 years since release).

Quotes – Spent Convictions

“I used to get stopped by the Guards on a regular basis, although not as much now. There is always the issues relating to previous (convictions)(sic) and that always causes grief, because the conviction stays with you for the rest of your life” (Gerry, 13 years since release).

Quotes – Funding cuts

“I would go on a do the diploma in Addiction studies but to be honest it is just the funding, I simply can't afford it, no work and also no funding. Its 7000 this year and 7000 next year, if I had of got the grant I would have scraped up the rest, there's just no funding. Unless I get a full time job and get them to pay, but what's the chances of that?” (John, 3 years since release).

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