THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY IN REINTEGRATION

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INTRODUCTION

Research in Southern Europe shows that family plays a main role in the process of desistance. Family support reinforces the motivation to change and the feeling of being able to carry out a conventional life.
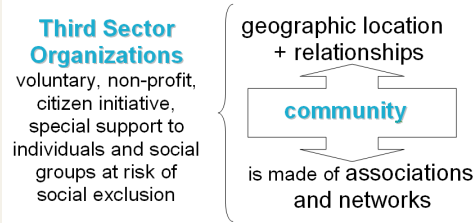
The present study aims to understand if community organizations –like **third sector organizations**, **churches** and **volunteers**– plays a similar role through **social support**, **social bonds**, lessening **labelling** and increasing **social capital.**

THEORY

originally:
religious motivation
voluntary organizations

reintegration process

basic needs + attitudes

strength-based

CONTINUITY
- treatment in prison
- released process
- supervision in release

The **reintegration process** consist of improving the prospects of reentry of incarcerated people through policies and programs aimed at improving: social and economic disadvantage, level of education, work experience, physical and mental health problems, alcohol and drugs abuse and their own attitudes to reintegration (Rossman, 2003; Solomon et al., 2006; Hedderman, 2007; Visher et al., 2010 , Garland et al., 2011; Visher & Travis, 2011; Myers and Olson , 2013). These successful policies consit of reparation, reconciliation and community collaboration, in which the person takes responsibility for their actions (Maruna & Lebel, 2003). These programs should start at prison and have a continuation in the community (Maguire and Raynor, 2006; Hucklesby and Wincup, 2007).

In **Catalonia, third sector organizations** are a relevant agent in the rehabilitation of incarcerated people. Prisons and reentry are open to all kinds of organizations and programs. Most of this organizations are state-funded. As a result, the role of the welfare state with respect to punishment has changed.

Third Sector Organizations
voluntary, non-profit, citizen initiative, special support to individuals and social groups at risk of social exclusion

geographic location + relationships

community

is made of associations and networks

OBJECTIVES & RESEARCH DESIGN

1 To explore which **elements** (**social support**, **social bonds**, **labeling**, **social capital** and **social context**, and the relation between them) perform community agents in the community intervention

2 To look for **differences** in those elements depending on whether the contact between the organization and the person starts : **inside** prison or at **release**.

3 To look for **differences** in those elements depending on the kind of staff: **paid staff** or **volunteers**.

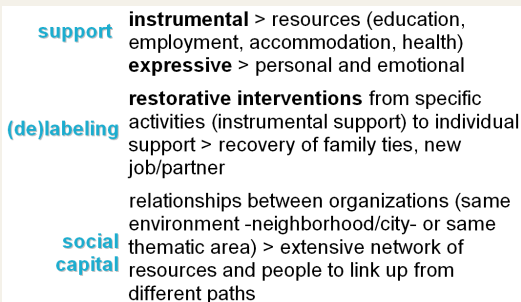| Typology of organizations		Where start relation with organization	
		Inside	Release
Staff	Paid staff	A	B
	Volunteers	C	D

qualitative **research design** > **case study** > intentional sample of **4 organizations** in the community network working with incarcerated people and/or ex-prisoners in the area of Barcelona > **semi-structured interviews** > content analysis

Conclusions

Communities, through third sector organizations, have the potential to help to reintegrate imprisoned persons. However, in Catalonia, it seems that the main aspect that shuold be improved is to ensure that programs that start in prison may continue at release. In the future we are going to start a research focused on the vision of the user of the programs. One point that deserves a further analisys is to know the impact of volunteers in reintegration.

RESULTS

first objective ☑ elements such care and access to resources (**support**), the assumption of liabilities (**bonds**), removing the stigma (**labeling**), generating social collaboration between different individuals and/or groups (**social capital**) and its relation to the **social context** are present in the community intervention.

support
instrumental > resources (education, employment, accommodation, health)
expressive > personal and emotional

(de)labeling
restorative interventions from specific activities (instrumental support) to individual support > recovery of family ties, new job/partner

social capital
relationships between organizations (same environment -neighborhood/city- or same thematic area) > extensive network of resources and people to link up from different paths

The organizations work with people with the following goals: **a) Autonomy**: the persons should be capable of managing their own life. **b) Temporary limited intervention**: the aim of the intervention is not to engage the person permanently with the organization but to manage the transition to an autonomous life. **c) Promote the bonds** of the person to society: recovering ties with family and promote job insertion. **d) Promote agency**: persons should decide by themselves which are the aims they want to follow and the organizations will help the person to achieve these objectives. **e) Accountability**: persons should see themselves as a responsible agents of their deeds.

The aims of the organizations observed in this research are completely coherent with those defined by the **desistance literature as key aspects of the dessitance process.**

second objective ☒ there is **no difference** in the use of elements that are theoretically relevant for reintegration between organizations that start the relation with persons in prison with those that work only with persons after release (where they are in open regime or in parole)

third objective ☑ the relationship between the staff of the organization and the user **differs** depending on whether the staff is paid or volunteer. Organizations with **paid staff** give mainly an **instrumental help** and organizations based on **voluntary** members provide **emotional support**. The explanation of the different kind of support is based on the kind of relation between the user and the staff. The emotional support depends on the kind of relation between the people involved. **Volunteers** tend to **befriend** with users and professionals limit the relation to the provision of services. All the organizations interviewed have emphasized that volunteers enhance the value of the organization and the positive impact on the users. It should be mentioned that the three organizations interviewed that work with volunteers are **religious** or have closed relations with churches, which underlines the known relation between religion and rehabilitation.

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