

# CONSEQUENCES OF FAMILY ENVIRONMENT DEPRIVATION ON DELINQUENT BEHAVIOR

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**Abstract:** The topic treats the way in which family, in its organization and functioning, determines the delinquent behaviors of minors, significantly influencing the growth of juvenile criminality. This thesis has as main goal, both theoretically and practically, to explain the way in which family, in its organization and functioning, determines the delinquent behaviors of minors. The growing tendencies of juvenile criminality, for the last decades, represent a real phenomenon, whose effects cannot be ignored either by prosecutors, criminologists, sociologists and psychologists, or by the specialists who are responsible with applying the laws, as well as with preventing the antisocial manifestations of minors.

**Key words:** deprived of liberty person, imprisoning, detention.

## Introduction

Penitentiaries, specific psychosocial interaction environments, are the cause of several secondary psychological phenomena, sensitively compared to the general phenomenon of hospitalism.

The principle of working with delinquent minors is mainly recuperative and it is based on moving on from understanding the act-delinquency to personality-delinquency: although for the judge the criminal act has a major importance, this is nonetheless the manifestation of a bad structured personality characteristics, in an improper living environment; knowing that, only by changing this perspective, the justice's tutelary function can be applied, to transform it from the classical

authority representative into a method of creating social ties. Teenagers' custodial institutions follow the quality of accommodation, schooling and professional forming, as well as the contents of moral and social recovery programs.

The National Administration of Penitentiaries is in charge with minors who with different juridical cases: minors that are inpatient for executing an educational charge, jailed minors and minors that are placed into custody. The re-education center is a subordinate institution to the National Administration of Penitentiaries whose main goal is the psychosocial recovery of delinquent teenagers, which are executing an educational correction, depriving of liberty.

### **The purpose of the thesis/study**

This study focuses on analyzing the following objectives: highlighting the effects on delinquent behavior, that are caused by the separation from the family and broadly, the separation from the environmental origin, as environment of support.

### **Research methods**

The research of a phenomenon/process or the relationships between several phenomena was based on choosing the appropriate methodology (methods, techniques, procedures and instruments) in the treated subject. The tools that have been used for this research are: psychological interview, structured interview, (5 items, "Autobiography"), as well as statistical methods: start statistical indices, correlational analysis, the frequency analysis.

By conducting the psychological interview, the following tasks are accomplished: the identification and analysis of life events, past and present, authentic subjects with psychological significance that can be treated from complex perspectives. The identification of the following aspects was taken into consideration: the disruption of family relationships: in the family of origin: conflicts between parents, divorce, adoptive parents, physical aggression, material privations, the child being abandoned by his/her parents; in the new formed family: conflicts between spouses (physical aggression, indifference, jealousy, alcohol, adultery), disease, lack of shelter, inappropriate living conditions.

#### ***1. Sampling***

The research was conducted inside the Hospital Penitentiary "Poarta Alba" Constanta, during January – May 2013 on an intentionality type sampling group of 60 subjects, divided into two subgroups: 30 subjects are deprived of liberty individuals, recidivists; they are all men, aged between 23 and 48 years old; 30 subjects are deprived of liberty persons who are executing the the ongoing first liberty depriving punishment, aged between 26 and 52 years old.

#### ***2. Working premise***

It is assumed that the separation from the family results into changing the perspective on the family.

### ***3. Data analysis***

The qualitative analysis is based on the idea that the family has a fundamental role in the persons that are deprived of liberty, regardless if they are during execution or after the execution period.

Taking into consideration the fact that social relationships of the imprisoned, deprived of liberty persons are deteriorating once they are jailed, their relationship with their family (the wife, concubine) could represent for the former one of the major resources they have when dealing with different social situations, typical to each specific period of time.

For those imprisoned persons who have made their own family before being jailed, family could be the fundamental dimension that can help them push through the whole time, while they are being incarcerated.

It is important the material, spiritual, emotional support that family can offer to the imprisoned, throughout the period of serving the sentence, on one hand, but also once the deprived of liberty persons return to the community's social space, on the other. Baumeister (1989), along with Naser and La Vigne (2006) favor the importance of the social support during the process of tracing, representing a protective factor for the ex-jailed.

Relatively recent studies conducted by La Vigne and Debus (2009), on discharging the imprisoned and the role of the family support in the process of reinstatement show that a percentage of 88 % of the studied population of imprisoned say that, although they are not at the first conviction, they did have a support from their families, both material and moral and emotional, although according to the quoted researchers, the support was not defining in giving up crimes. Thus, undeniably, the family and community support receives a fundamental dimension when we refer to jailed persons.

According to the specialty literature, the qualitative research is interested in the complexity of social interactions that are expressed in daily life and the meanings given by the participants to these interactions. (Băban A., 1998)

We considered relevant the use of qualitative research and of its specific methods, because we explored the reality of some of the subjects of the sampling group in regards to the family relationships, by the use of the interviews.

For this, we followed: the identification of family relationships' nature of the imprisoned, during the previous detention period; the way the detention changed the perception of the imprisoned in relation to their own families; the perception they have on family life, from the perspective of deprived of liberty persons, after being set free.

The interview was structured following the items:

1. Describe the family you come from (in which you were born or in which you grew up).
2. How do you think that the family you come from influenced your life?
3. What do you think that your family members should do, so that your family would be perfect? What do you think you should do so that the family would be perfect?
4. Did your parents, brothers or sisters execute depriving of liberty punishments? If *yes*, describe the case and explain *why*.
5. What do you think you should do so that your life could be called “perfect”?
6. Who would you consider responsible for the worse in your life? In which way is the family responsible?

After the conducted interviews, we concluded that detention has changed the way of relating to their own families (wife, concubine, children) of the deprived of liberty persons, as well as the perception they had on their family life, before being incarcerated. Detention, along with the inevitable changes that it brings in the life of a deprived of liberty person, have brought positive changes as well, at least declaratively.

The majority of subjects describe the family in terms of “*good*”, with healthy moral values, shortly idealized. Only one single deprived of liberty person declares that for him, family does not represent anything: “*For me, family is not something stable, I never gave any importance to it, and also now, since I’ve been imprisoned, I do not miss it; I talk on the phone with the last concubine, she visits sometimes, it is just that now I do not like her anymore because she keeps on nagging about her waiting for me outside, me getting a job and giving money to the kids, that if I won’t she would report me for not paying alimony, she puts pressure on me and I do not like pressure. I told her that is she doesn’t leave me alone, I will leave her and maybe this way I will have a new relationship with the concubine from the penitentiary, who has been there for me in here*”. (A. S. aged 39, sentenced to 7 years in prison for drug trafficking, 4 months before being discharged).

Briefly, we will present relevant fragments of the answers given by the jailed persons, regarding different aspects of their lives, such as:

1) the attitude of the imprisoned towards the extended family, prior the incarceration; 2) the nature of the relationship between the imprisoned and the nuclear family before and after the incarceration, in order to see if there are any changes in the couple relationship and which are the modifications that occurred after the incarceration of the sentenced person; 3) the way the deprived of liberty persons relate themselves to family life after being discharged, from the position of persons deprived of liberty.

*1) The attitude against the family of origin before incarceration*

The first thematic unit from the interview guide aimed, through the opened relevant questions, the identification of the attitude of the deprived of liberty person towards the family, before incarceration: the attitude towards parents before incarceration: the nature of the relationship that the former had with the latter.

The relationship with the parents was tensioned, conflicting, characterized by fights and violence. These conflicts were mainly caused by the lack of material resources, by the parents' deviant behavior (alcohol addiction, crimes, etc.). We present, briefly, few relevant fragments of the recorded answers: *"When I started to steal, my life turned upside down, my parents didn't let me come back home, even before we didn't get along with each other; my father was beating my mother on daily basis, after a while they divorced, my mother re-married, then she divorced again, all sort of such problems. I was fired from the job because I caused losses for the company, and suddenly I was alone and then disaster followed"*. (D. V. aged 38, sentenced to 8 years in prison for theft. He still has to serve 3 months sentence).

2) *The relationship with their own families before and after the incarceration*

The second important direction was the identification of the nature of the relationship between the deprived of liberty person and his wife/concubine, before and after the incarceration.

After analyzing the results, we paradoxically noticed that the relationships between the former and the wives/concubines improved and stabilized, after the incarceration of the former.

*"We broke up twice, we used to fight often, either because we didn't have enough money, or because I didn't work enough... we were not a very united family, I was more violent, I wasn't beating her but I was cursing and breaking objects around the house, but since I have been imprisoned, she has always been next to me, we had some arguments, we split up for a year, but I wrote her and then we got back together and now we are getting along well"* (F.A. aged 34, sentenced 10 years to prison for murder. He still has to serve 4 months sentence).

It seems that, paradoxically, the detention did not destroy family relationships, couple relationships of persons deprived of liberty, on the contrary, these relationships stabilized during detention period, they learned how to appreciate more the support of the family. Unfortunately, the penitentiary system does not offer the possibility of keeping a relationship with the family (wife, concubine, children) as natural as possible, the connection with them being only possible through phone, visits that cannot always ensure a proper communication environment.

3) *The deprived of liberty person's perception of his own family, after incarceration*

The third dimension of interest aimed the identification of the deprived of liberty persons' perception of their own family, formed long after incarceration, in order to observe whether this perception changed due to incarceration.

Due to incarceration, the imprisoned changed their perception of the family and claim that after being discharged, they will change their behavior against their wife or concubine.

*“After I get out, I won’t argue with her, I won’t curse on her like I used to, I don’t know how I would have managed to get through this period without her, I might have turned into a worse person, because I wouldn’t have cared, I wouldn’t have had anyone outside anyways, but she helped my physically and financially as much as she could, poor thing, she used to borrow money to send me”* (F. S. aged 35, sentenced to 8 years in prison for theft. He still has to serve 3 months sentence.)

### Results an discussions

Through the qualitative analysis we highlighted: the nature of the family relationships of the persons deprived of liberty, before incarceration, the way the detention has changed their perspective related to their own families (the relationship between husband and wife, concubine, children), as well as the perception these persons have form the perspective of “imprisoned” on the family life after being discharged.

Without being a well determined objective, we noticed that the deprived of liberty persons manifest uncertainty in regards to their future related to the family life, finding a job, etc. although they claim they want to reward their family for being next to them. Yet, their speech is dominated by verbs expressing desire “I hope”, “I would like to”, “I wish”. This can be explained by the fact that these people are not physically, morally, socially ready to be responsible, the fear of the failure that they think they would inevitably face once discharged. These convicts hide behind their own projection, as well as the projection of “the outside life”, which is mostly totally different and in disagreement reality.

The qualitative analysis reveals the obvious presence of difficulties in adaptability, of negative feelings towards the family and towards themselves, the need of protection, identity disorders, hyper-emotiveness. The persons deprived of liberty see these conditions, feelings as being inevitable after being discharged, they believe that all these will deprive them from reestablishing their relationships with the family (wife, concubine and children), after being discharged.

**Table 1: Correlation between the frequencies of C factor and the relapse**

FACTOR C			
Life style	„I” weak	„I” strong	Notes in the zone with no significance
„primaries”	5	7	18
„recidivists”	15	7	8

$$r = 0,753 \quad p < 0,01$$

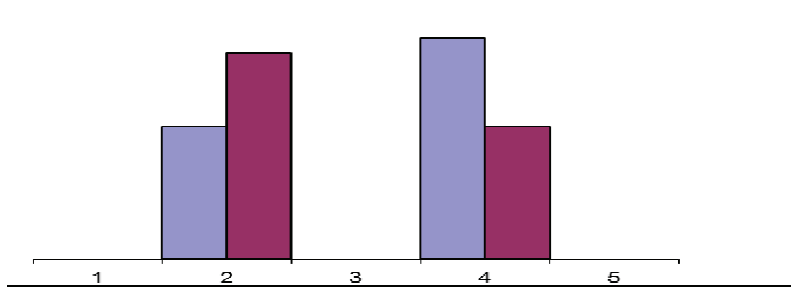


Figure 1. Self Evolution

Figure 1 highlights the growing frequency of low scores – the pole characterized by instability that represents the characteristics of a weak I: emotiveness, affective immaturity, instability. The subject reacts on frustration, in an emotional manner, he is inconstant in his attitudes and interests, runs away from responsibilities, abandons easily. He has the feeling of family dissatisfaction and gets easily discouraged.

The social environment associates significantly: *negatively* with the level of education of the imprisoned (*low* – 62,9%), correlation coefficient “ – ” 0,98; the school frequency of the imprisoned (normal – 49,8%; occasional – 22,7%; frequent absence – 9,4%; abandonment of courses – 13,4%; expelling – 1,1%; no school – 2,7%; not answering – 0,8%); *positively* with their level of school performance (*weak and very weak* – 20,4%; *mediocre* 54%) – correlation coefficient „-” 0,111;

The analysis of the frequencies of items of these variables show the absence of significant differences between the level of education of the parents (*the father* – 73,9% *low*; *the mother* – 70,1% *low*) and of the person deprived of liberty (*low* – 62,9 %), they are coming from families with low level of education, hence the explanation for the carelessness for school and the lack of education.

The variables – the type of relationships between parents and the type of relationships between the person deprived of liberty and his parents (the family climate from the subjects’ families) – significantly associate with the variables belonging to dimension – the formed family of the person deprived of liberty: - the frequency of conflicts between the person deprived of liberty and wife/concubine/husband in the new formed family (*occasional conflicts* – 62,1%) – correlation coefficient 0,080.

The interdependence of these variables, the insignificant percentage differences between the values of the component items show that the jailed people under the influence of the social environment (family environment, school, social



context) in which he/she was formed, took the parental model and promoted it in his/her own family, the manifestation of family solidarity and union starting in the family of origin of partners, through the way they were prepared and oriented towards understanding each other, through the primary and anticipatory socialization.

## **Conclusions**

After consulting the specialty research in this domain and after making the correlation in our own research, we can conclude that separating the prisoner from his family several years leads to changing his perception of the family. Although it is relatively independent in relation to the society in which it is formed, the family is conditioned, in its organization and evolution, by the economic, social, religious and moral particularities of the society that it reflects. Representing the most important and dynamic structure of social life, the family is determined by the general rules of society development and by the entire historical process, that transform it, make it develop in particular forms (historical types of families), but do not modify its essence. The evolution of society and family highlights the historical nature of family's forms, their addiction of the action field of the general rules of social development.

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