

Editorial

The inspiration for this Special Issue of *EuroVista* was the work of the STREAM Project. STREAM was a major European research project, funded by the EU and involving criminal justice agencies, Ministries and universities in several European countries. It was led by the National Offender Management Service in England and Wales. The broad aim of the project was to support the development of effective practice across Europe in working with offenders in the community and to facilitate the sharing of evidence-based good practice.

One of the work packages in the project, led by Jean Hine at De Montfort University, Leicester, UK, tried to encourage and develop processes of *evaluation*. An earlier project (STARR) had found that there was a great deal of excellent practice taking place across Europe, but that evaluation was uneven: there has been substantial variation in both the extent and expectations of evaluation. Yet evaluation is necessary to show that projects and agencies are achieving their aims and to highlight how they may be able to improve their practice. So this component of STREAM was an attempt to develop guidance on evaluation to help member states learn from each other and to evaluate their own work. Among the questions to be addressed were: to what extent can agencies and organisations demonstrate the effectiveness of their work with offenders? how is evaluation undertaken? who funds and undertakes evaluations? how are findings used to enhance practice?

A great deal of probation research in recent years has attended to the question of *what works?* This has typically involved an analysis of the effects of various offending behaviour programmes. For example, how does the subsequent offending record of people who had completed a programme compare with a matched group of others who had not? But to undertake evaluative studies of this kind requires access to large sets of data and much of these data are not easy to obtain in many countries. Reconviction data (already no more than a proxy measure for reoffending) are difficult to obtain reliably, even in those countries that record diligently. We have wondered whether these demands have been daunting and sometimes discouraged probation practitioners from undertaking studies of their own and/or in partnership with a university. But there are other methods of evaluation that can and should be used in attempts to enhance practice. How evaluation is undertaken depends on what practitioners and researchers need to find out and it is this that ought to determine the methods they deploy.

Even if a programme can be shown to be effective, its achievements will only be replicated if the right conditions can be established. This depends not only on ‘programme integrity’, but on a range of organisational considerations, notably management, adequate staff training and resourcing to deliver the programmes. Indeed an authoritative review of what has been learnt since the introduction in the UK of *what works* places particular emphasis on ‘the importance of the broader service context in supporting effective intervention’ (Raynor and Robinson 2009: 109). Both practice and its evaluation, then, depend upon a *context* – of culture, organisation and infrastructure, of scholarship and research - and in these respects too there are wide variations across the continent that affect member states’ capabilities to implement and to test their work.

While the sharing of knowledge from evaluation can assist in the spread of best practice across Europe, ways of working identified as successful in one location cannot be exported/

imported indiscriminately because of these differences of judicial, social, organisational and economic context. The introduction of such imported practice needs to be evaluated to check its implementation and impacts, both intended and unintended. But with due regard to that caution, we are confident that we have a great deal to learn from one another.

Among the activities of the project was a seminar that took place in The Hague in September 2014. Several countries were represented and worked hard with members of the STREAM research team to consider how they might undertake evaluation and learn from one another. It was at this event that the idea was formed of compiling a special issue of *EuroVista* to offer a series of descriptive but also reflective accounts of specific research projects. Many of the papers in this collection were written by participants at that seminar.

The main ‘output’ of this component of STREAM has been a web-based ‘tool kit’ of evaluation methods, including examples of experience and good practice, which could be used to develop policy and practice across Europe. This special issue may be considered another output. The papers in this collection are intended to show that it is possible to undertake small-scale studies that illuminate the achievements of a programme or project and enable it to develop and improve. Authors were asked to include a detailed description of the aims of their evaluation; explain how these aims were translated into an evaluation design and then implemented; give some account of any difficulties in undertaking the evaluation and how they were addressed; outline how the results of the evaluation have been used; critically reflect on the evaluation in design and practice; and identify key learning points for anyone wishing to undertake a similar process. We hope that readers will be inspired by the contributions to this issue to undertake their own evaluations to enhance their work and to demonstrate their achievements to others.

The editors are extremely grateful to our contributors who have worked hard and responded to our requests and the comments of our reviewers with patience, courtesy and efficiency. We also wish to express our thanks to members of the STREAM research team: Jean Hine, Nick Flynn, Charlotte Knight, Jane Dominey, Joe Woods and Ross Little.

Rob Canton
Co-Editor
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References

Raynor, P. and Robinson, G. (2009). *Rehabilitation, Crime and Justice*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

STARR Project - http://www.starr-probation.org/default.asp?page_id=101

STREAM Project - (Strategic Targeting of Recidivism through Evaluation And Monitoring [JUST/2011/JPEN/AG/2892]) http://www.stream-probation.eu/default.asp?page_id=101

Evaluating Improving Practice

The Probation Dashboard; linking contact journals, case management and professional development

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It is often assumed that ‘evaluation’ is about judging or assessing a particular piece of practice or intervention, for example after an initial pilot stage to determine whether to continue, or at the end of a programme of work to determine the impact on client behaviour and recidivism. What may be considered less frequently is the importance of integrating evaluation within the ongoing process of offender supervision, or indeed any form of supervision or therapeutic work with people. It is common in pre-qualifying training programmes for students to be required to reflect on their practice as it develops, to be aware of ways in which they could have worked differently, and to be open to supervision and scrutiny by their supervisor or trainer. This could be described as a case-based qualitative approach to learning and evaluation. Once qualified it is less likely that this will be a requirement of ongoing practice and more likely that the practitioner will be asked to submit ‘returns’ or statistics on the ‘outcomes’ of their work with clients, from which judgments are formed about the meeting of overall, quantitative agency aims, objectives and targets.

In the Netherlands, Bas Vogelvang, Professor of Probation, Parole and Safety Policy at Avans University has, together with colleagues, developed a blueprint of an application that can be used by practitioners in a wide range of settings, to simultaneously record their work and to collate data that can be used to evaluate and reflect on the effectiveness of their day to day practice with offenders. This application has been named ‘Dashboard’, in recognition of the advantages of having key information instantly available to the worker on a mobile phone, notebook or laptop as a compass, to guide both their future practice and ongoing professionalization. The application has been designed to offer both the facility to track the progress of the offender and to monitor and evaluate the interventions of the worker. This article offers an overview of the key features of Dashboard with the suggestion that it can provide practitioners with the means to take ownership of, and responsibility for, the development of their own professional practice.

DASHBOARD

Dashboard has been constructed with reference to some of the current models of an evaluative process including the ASPIRE model (Sutton and Herbert, 1992) and the Plan-Do-Check-Act, model. Dashboard takes account of each stage of these models, which comprise:

Assessment
Planning
Implementation
Review
Evaluation

The recording of basic information that addresses each of these stages is generally a non-negotiable feature of all probation practice, although the means of doing this, and the amount of detail recorded, will vary considerably between different probation jurisdictions and between individual workers. The developers of Dashboard recognized that workers are frequently under considerable pressure when supervising offenders and may be inclined to prioritise face-to-face contact with offenders over the less rewarding, although important, bureaucratic demands of the job (Vogelvang, 2015). Frequently these bureaucratic demands can overwhelm the worker, and the purpose of these demands may lack clarity or fail to persuade the worker of their value. The developers of Dashboard wanted to design a piece of software that would minimize these demands, as far as possible, and make the data immediately accessible and useful to the worker. In addition, the developers have included the option to upload the factual information concerning the management of the contact of the client with the agency, into the data-base of the agency, to meet the requirements of a target driven culture, including monitoring, management and policy development.

Reflective or subjective data recorded by the worker is designed to be available only to them or their supervisor/trainer if they chose to share it. This is not considered to be performance management information. This allows workers to feel safe enough to record, and reflect on, their good practice and also any mistakes or gaps they might discover in their practice, without fearing reprisals from surveillance by managers, or for potential performance management issues to arise. A worker is unlikely to choose to voluntarily 'expose' any indications of potentially poor or less than good practice, if they fear they may be negatively judged on this honesty, in recording their subjective thoughts and feelings about their practice.

DASHBOARD HAS FOUR SECTIONS:

A: Contact. This relates to the key requirements and elements of the order to which the offender is subject, and the record of all contacts with the service for the duration of that order. The contact records are linked with the different needs that have been identified within the sentence plan and risk assessment, and how they are to be addressed. The person on probation can be given a copy of the information in section A by e-mail or print, including an updated agenda with goals, tasks and agreements, as a reminder to them of the contract to which they are subject.

B: Process. This section records the case-based progress of the working alliance of the worker and the offender, the individual professional functioning of the worker, and the functioning of the worker in the context of his organization and wider professional network.

C: Results. This section records the outcomes of what has been achieved by the worker and the client during the process of the supervision contract.

D: Summaries. This section does not *require* input, but is used by the worker to collate summaries and analyses of the results of their inputs with a number of different clients, what themes have occurred and what interventions they have used. This section allows the worker to consider and reflect on the outcomes of their practice and to plan how they might develop and what training or learning needs they may have.

SECTION A

Section A is the mandatory part of Dashboard, which the worker must complete after every meeting with the client and/or others involved in the supervision process. It is judged this will take between five and ten minutes for every contact.

In Section A1 the worker is asked to input data on the themes during the contact. After selecting the client from the total caseload and filling in the ‘usual’ required information about date, time, location and the person(s) that have been met, the full screen on the app will look like this:

A1. Contact: thema's									
	T	PVA	WP	RISc		T	PVA	WP	RISc
TOEZICHT:									
Geen inhoudelijk thema / meldplicht		●			Rollen / ervaring toezicht			●	
Bijzondere voorwaarden en controlemiddelen	★	●			Inzet hulpbronnen				
Terug-/vooruitblik op doelen en werkpunten			●						
CRIMINOGENE en BESCHERMENDE FACTOREN:									
Delictgeschiedenis					Vrienden/vrije tijd	★			
Huidig delict/ delictpatroon / risico's	★		● ⁹		Drugsgebruik		● ⁸		D
Huisvesting en wonen		● ⁴			Alcoholgebruik				
Opleiding / leren / werk / dagbesteding		● ²			Emotioneel welzijn	★		● ⁷	D
Inkomen en omgaan met geld	★	● ⁹		D	Denkpatronen, gedrag, vaardigheden		● ⁹		D
Relaties met partner/gezin/familie			● ³		Houding / Motivatie		● ⁹		D
ZORG / AANDACHTSPUNTEN:									
Gezondheid (ziekte / handicap / zwangerschap / medicatie)		● ¹			Zaken van belang bij keuze (gedrags-) interventie/behandeling				

The themes during contact have been divided in three parts:

- themes concerning the supervision process itself (top orange section, e.g. the conditions, or goal planning),
- themes concerning risks, needs and protective factors, or factors relating to their offending history and behaviour (blue section, e.g. thinking patterns, or housing), and
- themes that warrant special attention but are not related to (desisting) offending behaviour (lower orange section, e.g. health, pregnancy).

For each theme, information in four adjacent columns can be provided: T, PVA, WP and RISc. After every contact, the worker will only input data in the first T-column: s/he has to select every theme that was a conversation subject during the contact. After selecting a theme, a green star appears and the theme itself is highlighted in bold. The dots in the adjacent columns are highlighted as red when they already are being actively addressed and grey when they have been met and/or are no longer active. The numbers report the times, the number of weeks and the theme that has been active. For example, during the latest contact a conversation with the client's housing and living arrangement needs took place (green star in T); the worker is already actively addressing this with the client as part of the supervision plan (PVA) (red dot) or they have obtained appropriate housing and it is no longer a need within the order (grey dot). The aim here is to record key facts with minimum information using the software. Red dots recorded in column WP identify a new working point for the client that the worker has flagged up and is promoting for attention. The next time the worker goes into the screen it will appear as an active working point. Finished new working points also appear in grey.

In the blue section, the results of the most recent structured risk assessment will automatically appear (RISc). Colours will signal the low, medium or high contribution to the overall risk of reoffending, and D will appear if the factor has been identified as directly linked to recent offending behaviour.

- The first orange section records contact details including information about the duration and nature of the supervision order, the contact between the worker and the client, their family and other relevant people or agencies in their network. In this example the line in bold refers to policies and controls that are required within the order. The green star under the column 'T' indicates that this theme was discussed during the last contact, and the red dot under PVA (supervision plan) indicates that it is in the sentence plan to be worked on.
- The blue section identifies the criminogenic needs or factors relating to their offending history and behaviour, and the line in bold refers to the current offence and pattern of offending. The green star indicates it is recorded and the red dot under the column WP indicates that within this there is a new working point for the offender that needs to be addressed. The second line highlighted in bold in the blue section refers to income and money, which is logged in the supervision plan for intervention. On the right hand side of the matrix there are two other factors identified with green stars: the first one relates to friends and leisure time and is recorded from the assessment plan, and the second one; emotional needs is marked with a red dot in the WP column, which indicates that it is a new working point that the worker has identified since commencing supervision.
- The final orange section identifies issues that might need particular care or caution within the supervisory process, for example the client might have a disability or be on particular medication. The green dot in the PVA column, indicates that this has been noted in the supervision plan.
- Care or health needs including medical requirements, pregnancy, etc. It will also include the key themes of the order including any mandatory aspects set out by the court. These goals of the order, determined through the risk assessment and sentence planning process will be recorded here.

Moving on to section A2 the worker is asked to report the actions or interventions for every theme that was selected in A1. For example, if three themes were discussed during the contact the A2 screen will appear three times, once for every theme. The worker can quickly flag the used actions in the first adjacent column.

A2. Contact: acties/interventies			
Thema: inkomen en omgaan met geld			
SIGNALEREN	Uitgevoerd	Naar B. Proces	Reden en verloop interventie?
Small talk / Vinger aan de pols	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
Informatie verkrijgen / navragen / checken / reconstrueren	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
Delictsscenario of ander risicoscenario maken / bespreken	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
CONTROLLEREN			
Voorwaarden/afspraken bespreken	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
Normeren: gedrag of gedachten ter discussie stellen	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
Corrigeren/aanspreken/confronteren met ongewenst gedrag	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	
Formele waarschuwing geven	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
Retour melden	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
EC of locatie gebod-verbod / drugtest / gedragsinterventie of therapie			
STIMULEREN/MOTIVEREN			
Toezihtsplan / werkpunten maken of aanpassen	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
Rollen en taken uitleggen / verhelderen	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
Reflecteren / feedback geven	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
Perspectief schetsen / bieden	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
Aanmoedigen / belonen	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
Motiverende gespreksvoering inzetten	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	
Certificeren, formeel afronden, promoveren	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
DRAAGKRACHT VERGROTEN			
Vergroten probleemoplossend vermogen: gedrag trainen, oefenen	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
Vergroten probleemoplossend vermogen: verbeteren denken / emoties	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
Psycho-educatie	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
Begeleiden bij gedragsinterventies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
DRAAGLAST VERMINDEREN			
Creëren materiële voorwaarden (huisvesting, financiën)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
Arrangeren / managen van hulp- en dienstverlening / Overleggen	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
DRAAGVLAK VERGROTEN			
Werken met partner en/of kind(eren)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
Werken met familie en/of vrienden/kennissen	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
Werken met leidinggevende/collega/opleider van cliënt	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
INTENSIEF / OUTREACHEND WERKEN			
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	

All actions/interventions in A2 are derived from the standard intervention set of the Dutch probation services, under the headings of:

- Signalling – or highlighting the issue to the client
- Control – if there are concerns about risk
- Motivation/stimulation – using motivational methods to help move the client forward or increase their human capital
- Lessening the burden – helping with material needs
- Working with partner, family or people in their network
- Talking with them about drug use and the particular aspects of this might be, for example:
 - Asking for information about drug use
 - Confronting the clients with the drug using behaviour and its consequences
 - Checking reasons for drug use and giving feedback
 - Using motivational skills to help the client think about change
 - Contact with the drug agency if the client has missed an appointment and seeking help in enabling him/her to keep the next appointment

In the second adjacent column, the worker can flag any intervention during the last contact that he thinks needs attention in section B, because the particular intervention highlighted went well, or did not go well. This column allows the worker to flag up a 'professional point' if they reflect there was something about how they intervened, or about their particular practice, that needs attention. These professional points are for the benefit of the worker, to enable them to gain an overview of how well they are functioning with this particular client and across a range of clients.

Information recorded in part A is generated automatically into the appropriate columns for the worker to see on subsequent occasions. The worker can then use this information to input data into sections B and C less frequently but as appropriate.

SECTION B

In Section B1 the worker records information about the quality of the working alliance between themselves and the client. This may only need to be updated every three or four weeks depending on how things are progressing in this relationship. This might cover issues such as; the building of trust, joint working towards agreed goals, focusing on agreed tasks, covering the mandated elements of the order and whether the nature of the relationship is facilitating this work being carried out. The quality of these elements would be indicated by a green dot to show it is fine, yellow if it needs attention, and red to indicate there are particular difficulties that need addressing. Again, the final column allows the worker to flag up a 'professional point' if they reflect there is something in the working alliance with this client that needs professional attention.

In B2, the quality of the worker's actions and interventions is addressed with a reference to the particular client. The number of all actions/interventions during all contacts is shown in the grey column (with an information screen showing the particular supervision goals or working points connected to the intervention). The worker is asked to judge the quality of all used actions/interventions as 'good', 'needs attention' or 'critical', and, to the far right, is again given the opportunity to flag a 'professional point'.

B2. Proces: methodisch handelen

SIGNALEREN	Melding contacten	Gaat goed / succes	Vereist aandacht	Knelpunt	Professie-punt
Small talk / Vinger aan de pols	○	●	○	○	○
Informatie verkrijgen / navragen / checken / reconstrueren	✓	●	○	○	✓
Delictscenario of ander risicoscenario maken / bespreken	○	●	○	○	○
CONTROLLEREN					
Voorwaarden/afspraken bespreken	○	○	○	○	○
Normeren: gedrag of gedachten ter discussie stellen	✓	●	○	○	○
Corrigeren/aanspreken/confronteren met ongewenst gedrag	✓✓	○	●	○	✓
Formele waarschuwing geven	○	○	○	○	○
Retour melden	○	○	○	○	○
EC of locatie gebod-verbod / drugtest / gedragsinterview	✓	●	○	○	○
STIMULEREN/MOTIVEREN					
Toezichtsplan / werkpunten maken of aanpassen	✓	●	○	○	○
Rollen en taken uitleggen / verhelderen	○	○	●	○	○
Reflecteren / feedback geven	○	○	○	○	○
Perspectief schetsen / bieden	○	○	○	○	○
Aanmoedigen / belonen	○	○	○	○	○
Motiverende gespreksvoering inzetten	✓✓	○	●	○	○
Certificeren, formeel afronden, promoveren	○	○	○	○	○
DRAAGKRACHT VERGROTEN					
Vergroten probleemoplossend vermogen: gedrag trainen, oefenen	○	○	○	○	○
Vergroten probleemoplossend vermogen: verbeteren denken / emoties	○	○	○	○	○
Psycho-educatie	✓	●	○	○	○
Begeleiden bij gedragsinterventies	○	○	○	○	○
DRAAGLAST VERMINDEREN					
Creëren materiële voorwaarden (huisvesting, financiën)	○	○	○	○	○
Arrangeren / managen van hulp- en dienstverlening / Overleggen	✓	○	○	●	✓
DRAAGVLAK VERGROTEN					
Werken met partner en/of kind(eren)	○	○	○	○	○
Werken met familie en/of vrienden/kennissen	○	○	○	○	○
Werken met leidinggevende/collega/opleider van cliënt	✓	○	●	○	✓
INTENSIEF / OUTREACHEND WERKEN					
	○	○	○	○	○

Infoscherm:
laat zien bij
welke thema's /
doelen /
werkpunten

Finally, in B3, and again related to this particular client, the same system as under B2 is used to ask the worker to judge his/her own functioning (e.g. energy level, balanced relationship building, agency, stress), his/her functioning in the professional network (e.g. the network being complete, other parties being active), and his/her function within the probation organization (e.g. possibilities to prioritize, procedural issues, team support).

SECTION C

Section C identifies the results of the supervision process for a given (adjustable) period, and will keep a tally for the worker of how many occasions they will have worked with the client on a particular theme for the duration of the order and how many times within the last three months. Section C has two component parts; the first relates to the development of the client, their working relationship, how motivated they have been, how well they have reached the goals set, and whether they have met the conditions of the order. Section two looks at the criminogenic and protective factors of the order; whether they have improved or not.

C. Resultaten

Periode: van ---- / ---- / ---- tot ---- / ---- / ---- (---- weken). Start toezicht: ---- / ---- / ---- (---- weken)	PVA / WP	Gaat goed / succes	Vereist aandacht	Knelpunt	Professionepunt
C1. Ontwikkeling bij de cliënt: samenwerken					
Meldplicht	WP 3/6	○	●	○	○
Voorwaarden en afspraken	PVA 8/22	●	○	○	✓
Terug-/voorblikken / doelen/werkpunten	PVA 3/6	○	○	○	○
Rolverheldering / ervaring toezicht	WP 2/4	○	○	●	✓
Inzet hulpbronnen	-	○	○	○	○
Motivatie:		○	○	○	○
Gevoel dat verandering nodig is		●	○	○	○
Overgave aan verandering		●	○	○	○
Veranderbewustzijn		○	○	○	○
Confrontatie met problemen		○	●	○	○
Inspanning en wil tot veranderen		●	○	○	○
Hoop op verandering		●	○	○	○
Steun in het netwerk		○	○	●	✓
C2. Ontwikkeling bij de cliënt: thema's					
Delictgeschiedenis	PVA 7/23	●	○	○	○
Huidig delict/ delictpatroon / risico's	PVA 2/11	●	○	○	✓
Huisvesting en wonen	WP 2/5	○	●	○	○
Opleiding/leren en werk/dagbesteding	-	○	○	○	○
Inkomen en omgaan met geld	PVA 12/31	○	○	●	✓
Relaties met partner/gezin/familie	-	○	○	○	○
Relaties met vrienden/vrije tijd	-	○	○	○	○
Drugsgebruik	D	○	●	○	✓
Alcoholgebruik	-	○	○	○	○
Emotioneel welzijn	D	○	○	○	○
Denkpatronen, gedrag, vaardigheden	D PVA 3/5	●	○	○	○
Houding	WP 4/6	○	○	○	○
Gezondheid	WP 2 /4	○	○	○	○
Certificaat gedragsinterventie	PVA 2/ 11	○	●	○	○

Aantal keren dat werkpunt in contacten in periode en in totaal aan de orde is geweest

DISCUSSION

There are two broad purposes of evaluation, the first is evaluation designed to inform the development of a piece of work, the results of which are primarily for internal use, this is often referred to as formative evaluation. The second is evaluation designed to inform an external audience about the worth or value of a project, sometimes for accountability reasons, or to support an application for funding and to add to the body of knowledge about effective ways of working with offenders, referred to as summative evaluation (Merrington and Hine, 2001). Dashboard clearly falls within the formative evaluation purpose, with the principle focus being to improve and develop the individual practice of the worker, whilst also meeting the data requirements of the agency. Within this broad heading evaluation can be process, impact or outcome related (Merrington and Hine, 2001). Dashboard has the potential to meet the criteria for process evaluation in particular, although some of the data recorded will assist with impact evaluation in terms of the worker's perceptions of impact and the views gained from the client. It also incorporates information about future offending by integrating the results of a structural risk analysis in section A.

Vogelvang argues that the core skills for good probation practice should include the notion of 'individual professional functioning', which includes the capacity for self-awareness, emotional literacy (Knight, 2014), and systematic reflection on personal values and their implications for practice (Vogelvang, 2015). He cites the work of Krober and Van Dongen (Krober and Van Dongen, 2011) on the skills required to enhance the notion of a support paradigm in which probation organization is viewed not as a machine but as a series of networks that design and establish supervision processes. Part of this support paradigm is the skills required for team-based professional reflection and the giving of constructive feedback

to fellow workers (Vogelvang, 2015). The Dashboard model of providing data relevant for this form of reflection and feedback can clearly be used for this process, for building staff as 'professional learners', and towards what he calls 'professional maturity', as opposed to workers in a 'product' or 'assembly line' perspective on practice.

Reflective practice is now viewed as a foundation for a wide range of professional practice, not just as part of initial training (Thompson and Thompson, 2008). Ideas around reflective practice were initially developed by Schon who was interested in how practitioners across a range of disciplines developed their knowledge base and used this knowledge in practice (Schon, 2003). The ability to step back and view your own behaviour, and the thinking and feeling that accompanies it, is a critical skill in learning and being able to incorporate feedback and self-evaluation. It is acknowledged that the context of ever increasing workloads and bureaucratic demands on practitioners can inhibit the time, and mental and emotional space necessary to allow for such reflection. Workers are generally encouraged to make their practice 'evidence-based', i.e. informed by the best available evidence on 'what works' in similar situations. However, in complex human situations, what may work best for one person may not be appropriate for another, or not at that particular time in their lives. A reflective practitioner will be aware of the need to weigh up alternatives, take into account emotional needs, and consider the current internal and external resources available to the client that may help or hinder change. There are no simple answers to many of these questions. However, a worker who has at their finger tips information about the range of interventions they have deployed with a particular client or across a number of clients, how and when it was used, and the quality of the relationship with that person, will be able to trace patterns and interventions most likely to be effective. This could enable them to make adjustments where appropriate, or seek out further training and development in areas where it is apparent they are not being as effective.

Reflective practice requires a degree of self-awareness, and a willingness to be open to critical feedback on potential mistakes or errors in practice. A defensive stance can block learning, although in order to learn practitioners also need to feel valued and supported by their agency. Workers at the sharp end of, for example, child protection, and in secure forensic settings, need to be able to examine their own values, prejudices, expectations, and assumptions if they are to engage openly and honestly with clients in distress and who may be a risk to themselves or others (Mackie, 2009). As identified by the STREAM project on evaluation ¹ there are great advantages to taking an integrated evaluative approach to work with people under supervision in the community.

CONCLUSION

This article has provided an overview of a new case-based qualitative approach to learning and evaluation for probation staff. It provides practitioners with a tool for developing and evaluating their own practice and for sharing their learning with others. Whilst it may initially appear to be very detailed, once the broad principles are understood, the software is user friendly and has the advantage of being accessible from both a mobile phone and a computer. The busy professional worker will be able to input data at a time and place most convenient to them, and access information and evaluative data when it is needed. The application allows for an easy way of uploading the core data required by their agency to meet its monitoring requirements and an opportunity to share their qualitative practice skills with colleagues and learn from others.

¹ http://www.stream-probation.eu/default.asp?page_id=150

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Judges' Perception on the Activity of Probation Services

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1. INTRODUCTORY CONSIDERATIONS

The introduction of probation in Romania was the result of processes that took place in the mid-1990s and involved economic factors, European institutions, ideologies, political figures or figures of the criminal justice system, etc. (Durnescu, 2008). After an experimental phase (1996-2001), according to the Government Ordinance no. 92/2000, social reintegration services for offenders and supervision of non-custodial sanctions were to be set up. These services were initially focused on psychosocial assessment of defendants and of persons under the supervision of such services, as well as on the monitoring of the way the supervised offenders complied with the measures and obligations imposed by the courts. Subsequently, over time, with a background of successive legislative changes, the role and visibility of these services within the criminal justice system increased and a range of responsibilities regarding the protection of victims, juvenile justice and the execution of punishments depriving people of their liberty were added to the probation service.

The involvement of such services in a wide range of activities also implies their interaction with a multitude of people and institutions, especially, though not only, from the field of criminal justice. Thus, probation services work together with, *inter alia*, criminal prosecution bodies, courts, public and private institutions that offer social, medical, educational services, and penal institutions, and the list could go on. The legislation on probation, as well as the speeches of the institutions from the Romanian probation system, amongst other things, refer constantly to the involvement of the community in the activities which probation carries out, because the community also benefits from the activities of surveillance and social reintegration of the probationers. Also, it should not be overlooked that the promotion of probation was always made by reference to the community or, as shown in a leaflet of the Probation Department from the Ministry of Justice, "probation exists for the community, it exists for each of us."

An important element in determining the beneficiaries of probation services is identifying the goals of their activities. Thus, depending on the objectives that they set, probation systems in Europe can be classified into one of the following four categories:

- probation services based on measures and sanctions aimed at promoting community-based sanctions,
- services focused on assistance to the institutions involved in criminal justice,
- services operating on the model of rehabilitation and public protection and
- probation services which base their work on the punishment model (Durnescu, 2008).

The Romanian Probation System is focused more on assistance to the judicial institutions, in particular by preparing assessment reports, taking also into account the fact that the supervision of non-custodial sanctions is playing an increasing role. In these circumstances, we can say that the main beneficiaries of the activities of these services belong more to the area of the institutions from the criminal justice system in general, and to that of judges in particular.

From this perspective we have found that some research focused on the perceptions of judges on the activities undertaken by the probation services, especially the Probation Service of the Bucharest Tribunal, is welcome, not only for the strictly utilitarian purpose of measuring the degree of their satisfaction and the benefits for community penalties, but also from the point of view of the creation of an analytical model, which can then be replicated with other probation services, or even nationally, especially considering that such an approach has not been initiated within the Romanian Probation System. In this sense, what we found were a series of insufficiently systematic initiatives of some local services.

2. RESEARCH DESIGN

The methodology behind this research respects the sociological research stages, as they were developed in the literature (Marginean, 2000). The overall objective of the research work was to highlight the perception that judges have of the activities carried out by The Bucharest Probation Service. Under this overall objective, the research aims to achieve particular objectives such as the evaluation of the impact the activities of the probation service have on the decisions of the judges and the assessment of the current legal framework regarding community sanctions, in relation to the expectations of judges.

The documentation phase confirmed to us that the subject in question had not been given much attention in the Romanian literature, although a number of bibliographical references have been identified. Although these references were not directly linked to the subject of our research, they have nonetheless been very useful for the formulation of a few hypotheses, for establishing adequate research instruments as well as for the assessment of the actual situation of probation services and their collaboration with the courts (Szabo, 2009).

The study was a cross-type, structured in two stages. The first stage was a quantitative research inquiry, based on the application of a questionnaire, which sought to quantify the perception of judges in relation to various activities carried out by the probation service. In

the second stage, the results previously obtained were further developed through qualitative research, by means of structured interviews with judges.

Given the theme of the research, but also the nature of the investigated subjects, namely judges, we considered it appropriate to develop and apply an opinion questionnaire, knowing that such a questionnaire evaluates not only opinions but also how firmly these views are held? (Chelcea, 2007).

In designing and administering the questionnaire, we found it useful to use closed questions (pre-coded). The result was a self-managed questionnaire that was distributed to all courts of Bucharest, except the High Court of Cassation and Justice. It has multiple dimensions:

- the first one refers to “the knowledge and assessment of the general issues related to the activity of the probation service (e.g. “How do you evaluate the effectiveness of the probation service in the following areas of intervention? The social reintegration of offenders, the protection of the public and the increase in community safety, the reduction of recidivism, the protection of victims of crime”).
- The next dimensions refer to the assessment report, to supervision in community, to the impact of the new Criminal Code provisions on the activities of the probation service and, finally, to the presentation of the probation service.

A total of 82 questionnaires were distributed to these courts, according to the estimated number of judges who hear criminal cases. Of the 82 questionnaires, a total of 49 completed questionnaires were returned, which means a response rate of 59.7%.

The high rate of the persons that answered the questionnaire can be explained by the preliminary report enclosed that reveals the importance of investigating judges' view over the activities of the probation services, where such an extensive survey is carried out in the Romanian penal justice system for the first time. Emphasis was laid on their part as holders of an expertise significant for the Romanian probation system, on one hand, and as direct beneficiaries of such probation services on the other. The relative ease to fill in the questionnaire was a factor that contributed to the judges' response rate.

Having in mind that judges are commonly people that have to manage, on a regular basis, a large number of case within a limited timeframe, we opted for the Likert scale as a research method, trying to avoid as much as possible the use of open questions where the risk of getting non-answers was high. At the same time the questionnaires were disseminated within every Court by the very author of the study.

The questionnaire responses were coded and their processing was performed with SPSS 17.01 software. Subsequently, the results of the questionnaire have been enhanced in the structured interviews which included five judges (one judge of the court and four district court judges). We also studied a series of documents prepared by the probation service, drawn up at regular meetings with judges, as well as some statistical and evaluation reports and monitoring records, which were corroborated with the results of the survey.

3. RESEARCH RESULTS

The main results of the survey indicated that judges appraise the activity of the probation service positively. They grade the evaluation reports as useful in the process of decision making and assess the activity of supervising convicted persons as being adequate and efficient. Co-operation with the probation service is far beyond the extent required by the law. At the same time, the survey revealed that judges do not take into consideration the impact of their decisions at an institutional level (prison overcrowding) having rather a non-systemic view about how the institutions of the penal system function. Last but not least, when judges impose a sanction they are keen to see its efficiency and effectiveness in the convict's rehabilitation.

Analyzing the knowledge and assessment of the general issues related to the activity of the probation service, we found that, firstly, 89.8% of judges answered affirmatively the question whether or not they have collaborated with the Bucharest Probation Service during their activity. Behind this significant result there is a series of explanations. For example, starting in 2007, the probation service has been making assessment reports for juvenile offenders, reports which, according to the provisions of the article no. 482 from the Romanian procedural penal code, are mandatory in all cases involving juvenile defendants. Also, another explanation is that the probation service has started to play an increasingly important role in the provision of prison sentences with suspension under probation.

Thus, in the early 2000s, the provisions of the Penal Code governing probation stipulated that the supervision of the convicted person must comply with the measures and obligations specified by the judge responsible for the execution of sentences or by other institutions. Subsequent amendments to this bill included the probation services in an explicit manner, as institutions involved in the supervision of convicted persons.

The analysis of the statistics of the Probation Service on the Bucharest Tribunal showed that courts' decisions to have convicted persons supervised were increasing and that the number of supervised persons was quite significant, which in turn shows an intense collaboration between the probation service and the courts. Thus, on 31.12.2008 there were 1187 supervised convicted persons in the records of the probation service and on 31.12.2009 their number was 1426. This means an increase of 20.13%.

3.1 Perception of judges on the utility and effectiveness of the probation service

The perception of judges on the effectiveness of the probation service in terms of social reintegration of offenders, protection of the public, increase in community safety and the reduction of recidivism was mostly positive. The causes identified by the judges interviewed on these results were found to be the highly professional standards of probation counsellors' activities, the seriousness shown in fulfilling their tasks and their professional integrity.

The perception of judges was not so favourable when the issue of the protection of victims of crime by the probation service was brought into question. Thus, 36.73% of the

interviewed judges consider that the service is somewhat effective and only 20.40% feel that the service is effective or very effective. Also 22.44% said they did not know the efficiency of the service, and 20(40%) did not respond.

We must point out that the protection of victims of crime became a task of the probation service as a result of Law no. 211/2004. The Probation Service statistics of the Bucharest Tribunal shows that victims are an almost non-existent category among the categories of persons from the service record. Thus, if in 2008 there were two applications for providing psychological counselling and other forms of victim assistance, in 2009, the service records no longer included any specific victim. In accordance with the above-mentioned normative act, victim protection is a task that pertains to all institutions involved in criminal justice administration (agencies of police, prosecution or courts) that have certain obligations towards the victims. In these circumstances, we can assume that the apparent absence of victims from the records of the probation service may be the effect of a lack of active involvement of the police, prosecutors or judges in informing the victims about their legal rights.

The study also highlighted the fact that the activities performed by the probation service have proven useful, by responding to the professional needs of district judges. These professional needs are represented mostly by the support offered by the service in the process of individualizing punishment, but also by the assurance the service gives to magistrates about the effectiveness of the enforcement of community penalties.

Regarding the perception that judges have on the work of the probation service in preparing pre-sentence reports, the study showed that for most judges, cooperation with the service is routine in their professional activities. Thus, 69.4% of respondents had worked with the probation service requesting an evaluation report. The importance of the legal basis for collaboration with the probation service is given by the requirement of seeing whether this cooperation is a mandatory one, required by law, or a manifestation of the judge's willingness to cooperate with the probation service, in order to obtain more personal information regarding the offender.

In the case of judges who responded that they worked with the probation service (69.4% of respondents) 24.5% said they had requested reports under one mandatory penal procedural code, 12.2 under the voluntary code and 32.7% have worked with both legal provisions. These responses show us that what motivates the collaboration between judges and the probation service in relation to pre-sentence reports are not the mandatory provisions of the law, but rather the utility the report has offered in responding to the professional needs of the judges. On the other hand, higher levels of collaboration are registered among judges and in the tribunal, which is explainable if we take into consideration the fact that these are the most important courts in terms of functional competence and number of cases.

Starting from a series of observations, found both in the activity of judges and in the literature, which claimed that when applying for a pre-sentence report, the judges are particularly interested in the conclusions of the report about the prospects for reintegration into society, we introduced in the questionnaire a few questions about the importance of each section of the report. The results did not confirm this hypothesis. Thus, the majority of judges considered that each section of the pre-sentence report is important and we did not identify any tendency to give more importance to the section related to reintegration into society. Moreover, there was a predisposition of judges to value more the section

regarding the information on the person accused, and the subsequent interviews highlighted this issue.

In this study we found that judges prefer to give their own interpretation of the information related to the accused person and his/her background and, in making their decisions, they rely even more on this interpretation than on the conclusions reached by the probation service, because they correlate the information derived from the assessment report with the information they have obtained from the criminal file. Judges consider that the view of the probation counsellor on the possibilities for reintegration into society is limited because he/she does not have access to all the information held by the judge. The subsequent interviews highlighted that the judges granted a limited importance to the facts mentioned in the report, being more interested in some subjective matters like the attitude manifested by the offender in relation to the offence. From this perspective, there is a convergence between the expectations of judges and probation practice, which, in the process of offence analysis, takes into account issues such as thoughts, feelings and motivation of the offender to commit the crime, the determining factors of the decision to commit the crime and the exploration of the offender's ability to think differently (Boboş, Drăgoteiu and Puşcaşu, 2002).

Related to the aim of the pre-sentence report (namely to give support to judges in the individualization of punishment), we found it useful to quantify how the judges appreciate the usefulness of the report in the process of individualization. Thus, 64.9% of judges were in total agreement with the statement that the reports have proved useful in the process of individualization of punishment, and 24.5% of them partially agreed. It should be noted that no judge *disagreed* that they were of use in the process of individualization of punishment.

3.2. Judges' opinion on the recommendations contained in the assessment report on the types of sanctions

Pre-sentence reports often make recommendations about the type of sanctions appropriate for the offenders and the degree of risk that the offender presents; for example, in the UK, (Dad, Burns, Halliday, Hutton and McNeill, 2008). We therefore explored during the interviews held with the judges the extent to which they agree with the adoption of such practices into the activities of probation services, as under the current Romanian legislation on probation such recommendations are not allowed. This is allowed only for the reports requested for persons under supervision.

Post-survey interviews revealed a number of interesting aspects related to the introduction of recommendations on the most appropriate type of penal treatment of the accused into the pre-sentence report. Thus, there were judges who were totally against such a possibility, justifying their position with the statement that "when a probation counsellor makes a number of recommendations to the court, he has a limited perspective on the case because the counsellors don't have enough information". Moreover, the judge considers that he has absolute jurisdiction on the assessment of guilt and the sentence, aspects which should not be interfered with by external sources, not even with recommendations from the probation service.

There were, however, a number of opinions in favour of including recommendations, based on the premise that their formulation does not in any way diminish the authority of a judge, because he/she may or may not take into account these recommendations when the

decision is taken. The formulation of recommendations by the probation counsellor could make decision-making more efficient. However, it was considered that the possibility of increasing the role of the probation service by means of such recommendations could be an additional pressure factor for the counsellor who prepares the assessment report. In such circumstances the counsellor could be vulnerable to attempts of corruption. In these circumstances, if the judge found discrepancies between the information about the investigated person and the prospects for reintegration into society, the judges might suspect the probation counselor of corruption; even if the inconsistency was based on the latter's error of evaluation. This diversity of opinions demonstrates the importance and sensitivity of this subject, but also the difficulty of any attempt to harmonize the different views and to adopt a policy which allows for recommendations.

3.3 Judges' Opinions on probation supervision

As far as supervision is concerned, the activities of the probation service consist of supervising a person sentenced to imprisonment with suspension under supervision or a juvenile to whom the court applied the educational measure of supervised liberty. Probation has a duty to ensure that the measures and the obligations imposed by the court are appropriately respected.

Our research centered strictly on the issue of the persons sentenced to imprisonment with suspension under supervision. The reason why juveniles to whom the court applied the aforementioned educational measure were left out is the fact that, in the statistics of the Probation Service, this category hardly exists.

As in the investigation on the problem of pre-sentence reports, the judges were initially asked if, in the last six months prior to completing the questionnaire, they had worked with the probation service by entrusting it with the supervision of persons to whom the court imposed a non-custodial sanction. Positive responses were given by 63.3% of judges, and negative by 20.4%, which indicates that judges were accustomed to collaboration with the probation service.

Also, given that judges completed a section of the questionnaire which was closely connected with the enforcement of a sentence, we inserted a series of questions about the influences that factors such as the pre-sentence report, the judge's personal experiences, and information from mass media or their concern about the overcrowding of prisons might have on the sentencing process. In connection with this last aspect, the research has revealed that a large proportion of judges do not take into account the issue of prison overcrowding in the process of applying a penalty.

Thus, 57.1% of the judges said that they never take account of problem of prison overcrowding in the decision process. For 14.3% this happens rarely and for ten (2%) this happens sometimes. The negative responses revealed a strong fragmentation within the criminal justice system, which is further demonstrated by the interviews, which showed that the issue of prison overcrowding is one that is caused by a series of administrative problems for which only the National Administration of Prisons is responsible and in relation to which judges do not assume any responsibility.

Another interesting aspect revealed by this research was that, when applying a penalty, judges take into account the problems faced by the accused. 28.6% of judges said that this always happens, and 30.6% considered that this happens sometimes. The result is somewhat

surprising given the fact that judges tend to consider that the main criterion of the judge when determining a sentence seems to be the social danger or seriousness of the offence, a result which was reiterated during the interview. Although the question was formulated at a general level, subsequent interviews revealed a number of important nuances to our approach. Thus, solving the problems facing the accused person is particularly taken into consideration when the person is sentenced to imprisonment with suspension under supervision and the supervision assigned to the probation service, because when the judge gives an imprisonment sentence, his reason is to exclude the offender from society for a certain period in order to prevent another crime. On the other hand, the judges are forced in some other cases to give an imprisonment sentence, because the law requires it, even if they do not find it appropriate.

Regarding the way in which the judge contributes through the sentence that he/she gives to the solving of the problems faced by the defendant, in the interviews, reference was made to the possibility provided by the criminal law of imposing to the persons assigned to probation supervision a series of obligations that must be complied with or fulfilled during the probation period.

Given that in the questionnaire on which we based our study we focused on the assessment of the perception of judges on the performance of the probation service in the enforcement of the sentence to imprisonment with suspension under supervision we included a series of questions concerning the perception that judges have on the possible aims of this sentence. In this sense judges were asked to give their opinions on a series of statements about the sentence to imprisonment with suspension under supervision. Such a statement was that the sentence to imprisonment with suspension under supervision is a *punishment* for offenders. At this point a few preliminary clarifications are required. According to the doctrine of the criminal law, the sentence to imprisonment with suspension under supervision is not a punishment, it is a means of individualizing the main sentence: imprisonment (Boroi, 2006). When we raised this question obviously judges did not refer to this strict sense of the concept of legal punishment, but to a broader sense. We tried to see to what extent judges associated the concept of suspension of sentence to punishment functions described in legal studies (for example, repression, rehabilitation and an exemplary function) (Boroi, 2006).

The answers given by judges to this question were in most cases "total agreement" (26.5%) and "partial agreement" (30.6%). Subsequent interviews demonstrated that the basis for this perception is that primarily, although not so much as in the case of imprisonment, the suspension of imprisonment under supervision implies a restraining function which consists in limitations imposed on the convicted person (regular visits to the probation office, according with a schedule established by the probation counsellor, restrictions that may be imposed on meeting certain people or going to certain places, restrictions on freedom of movement, the trespassing of which may trigger the revocation of the suspension by the court and the enforcement of the sentence of imprisonment).

The judges held strong opinions about the effect of the sentence to imprisonment with suspension under supervision on the rehabilitation of the sentenced person. Thus, 38.8% of judges expressed "complete agreement" with the statement that "suspension of sentence under supervision, is an aid for those who break the law, because it helps them to solve the problems they are facing and which brought them in conflict with the criminal law." Partial agreement was expressed by 32.7% of the judges.

We also formulated some questions regarding the individualization of punishment through the sentence to imprisonment with suspension under supervision, taking as a starting point the purposes identified in the literature and in the regulatory framework governing the activities of the probation service. This refers to the fact that the application of non-custodial sanctions contributes to the protection of the public, deters crime, helps to reduce recidivism and has a positive long term impact on the community.

When we raised these questions, our goal was to explain a paradox, or rather to check if judges have an accurate perception on the approach of the probation service in terms of the promotion of non-custodial sanctions. The paradox in question can be summarized as follows: how is it possible to ensure the protection of the public and to deter crime while also allowing the freedom of persons who commit offences, given the fact that, traditionally, community protection was provided precisely by eliminating from the social body those in conflict with the criminal law? Without going into details, the answer of the probation service to this apparent paradox is that, by avoiding incarceration, a number of negative consequences associated with it (such as the adoption of the negative behaviour present in a prison environment) are avoided, and the involvement of community institutions during the probation period can reduce the risk of relapse and thus increase community safety.

The questionnaire results showed that most judges show a total or partial agreement with the effect the sentence to imprisonment with suspension under supervision has in terms of increasing community safety by reducing the risk of relapse.

In our approach we also considered it useful to explore some general issues related to the perception of judges on the efficiency of the service in monitoring the convicted persons' compliance with the measures and obligations imposed by the court and the efficiency of the social reintegration of such persons by means of assistance and counselling services. In this situation, the total or partial agreement of the majority of judges shows an adequate collaboration between the courts and the Probation Service, whereas a disagreement with these aspects might indicate certain misgivings or doubts on the part of the judges, which might lead to a new analysis of the message conveyed by the probation service.

The starting point of this investigation was a series of findings in the literature (Farrow, 2004), according to which the relation between the counsellors and the supervised persons consists of both control and assistance and counselling activities. A phenomenon that might occur due to the increase in the number of cases a probation counsellor is in charge of is that of centering the relationship between counsellor and beneficiary on just one of these dimensions: control or assistance. The results are as follows: in terms of monitoring the way the convicted person complies with the measures and obligations imposed by the court (control function), 26.5% of judges have expressed their total agreement with the fact that the monitoring is conducted by the probation service in a rigorous manner, and 34.7% of them partially agreed. A significant proportion - 57.1% - of judges, however, expressed their complete agreement with the fact that the probation service is involved in assistance and counselling, while 20.4% of the judges expressed a partial agreement. Although the judges' perceptions of the involvement of the probation service in surveillance, assistance and counselling activities are different, at the level of judicial discourse these two dimensions are considered to be in a close interdependence, as social reintegration is seen as a natural result of rigorous surveillance.

Another aspect that we wanted to highlight in our study was the judges' perception of the current legal framework on community sanctions – whether or not it is sufficient. The

reason why we included this question was the international recommendations related to non-custodial sanctions which constantly refer to the fact that states should use a system of community sanctions which should include a varied range of sanctions. Our question was also motivated by the situation of the Romanian criminal law system, in which the judges' possibilities of applying community sanctions is considered to be limited.

Thus, with the claim that the current legislative framework is sufficient in terms of community penalties, 42.9% of judges partially disagreed, while 16.3% of them expressed their total disagreement. On the one hand, this shows the dissatisfaction of the judges with the current framework of legal dispositions related to such sanctions. On the other hand, these figures also express the judges' concern with the possibility of giving community sanctions and with the need for an extension of such sanctions. Subsequent interviews demonstrated that the current legal framework restricts the magistrate's possibilities to impose community penalties, but on the other hand, we noted that judges are interested not only in a greater diversity of community penalties, but also in the effectiveness of such sanctions. Thus, the judges are also interested in having an institutional framework which can ensure that their dispositions are respected.

4. DIFFICULTIES IN CARRYING OUT THE RESEARCH

Circumscribing the contents of the questionnaire handed over with the multitude activities performed by the probation services was the first among the difficulties in carrying out this research. The questionnaire had to be sufficiently broad to cover the judges' perception on these activities and also prepared to facilitate filling in, due to the time constraint.

Secondly, increased attention had to be paid when we prepared the questionnaire in order to have clear questions and avoid inaccuracies that could prove ignorance of the legal framework we referred to and make us less credible before the judges.

However, the most difficult part of our endeavor was interviewing the judges in order to clarify answers given to the questionnaire.

As a conclusion we may say that the answers we got were relevant for the study and the experience gained through repeated interaction with the judges was of great help. This interaction showed several aspects that need not be neglected when relating with judges even in a sociological research. Respect and solid knowledge of the research area, of the legal terminology and of the conditions of their work are key elements for a positive professional relation with the judges.

Having in mind that judges are subject to high ethical and professional standards that come along with several restrictions regarding expressing their personal views, we avoided to refer to any particular case from our activity.

5. CONCLUSIONS

As a general conclusion, we can say that the research revealed that the method chosen to assess the judges' perceptions on the effectiveness of probation services has proven useful and may be extended to a national level or for other probation services. Also, the results were relevant in terms of the general and particular objectives that we have aimed at. Taking into account that under the provisions of the New Penal Code, probation services are to occupy a central role in the criminal justice system, we consider that such a research should become a priority, as the relation between the courts and the probation services includes many unknown aspects on both sides.

A larger study would highlight the possible discrepancies between the vision and the practice of the probation system and the expectations of judges, who, in the Romanian legal context, are the main beneficiaries of the activity of the probation services.

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Outcome Evaluations of Offender Programs in Sweden

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ABSTRACT

The Research and Evaluation unit of Swedish Prison and Probation Service published its first outcome evaluation of a program in 2008. To this date, reports on eleven evaluations have been published in Swedish. In this article, we will describe how these evaluations are conducted and the context in which they take place. The primary aim of the studies is to investigate whether offender programs seem to reduce criminal recidivism. This is achieved by comparing participants in a specific program with clients who have not participated in the program, but who otherwise may be considered equal based on baseline characteristics handled in the study.

INTRODUCTION

Like several other West European countries, Sweden has a long history of probation, with early precursors beginning in the 19th century in the form of volunteer organizations helping prisoners prepare for release. Probation has been a state matter in the country since the early 20th century (Svensson, 2010). Unlike in many other countries, the prison and probation system belong to the same government agency. The Swedish Prison and Probation Service has been a single national authority since 2006, but used to consist of many local government authorities (Swedish Ministry of Justice, 2005). On an average day 13,000 clients are on probation in one of 34 probation offices, where about 1,200 employees work. There are also around 7,500 volunteers who work with probation clients. This may be compared with 46 prisons and 31 remand centres, where there are 4,000 prison inmates and 1,500 pre-trial detainees on an average day, and around 5,000 corrections officers work (Swedish Prison and Probation Service, 2014).

Most treatment programs in Swedish Prison and Probation Service are based on cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) and many originate from the U.K. (e.g. One-to-One) or Canada (e.g. Moderate Intensity National Substance Abuse Program). However, some programs were also created in the Nordic countries (e.g. Vinn). Most of the programs are focused on preventing general reoffending or substance misuse. There are also specific programs for clients convicted of violent crime, sexual crime, domestic violence, as well as a gender-specific program for female offenders, a motivational interviewing program, and a problematic gambling program. Besides treatment programs, there are other interventions, for example a community-based employment program.

Most treatment programs are offered to both prison inmates and probationers. Participation in treatment programs is voluntary for prison inmates, but community sentences may be combined with a requirement to participate in treatment. If a probationer with a requirement to go to a program fails to do so, the sentence may be converted to prison by the court. Based on the risk principle (Andrews and Dowden, 2006; Lowenkamp, Latessa, and Holsinger, 2006), the policy within Swedish correctional service is to offer medium and high intensity programs to clients with at least a medium risk of reoffending (Swedish Prison and Probation Service, 2008). But even though the risk of criminal recidivism is assessed for all clients, structured risk assessment instruments are currently only used in some circumstances, such as for clients with a prison sentence of four years or more. Selection into treatment is therefore currently not systematically based on structured risk assessment instruments.

All program deliverers receive education in the specific program. In order to be allowed to continue delivering a program, one must become certified after giving two rounds of the program (or after one year in the case of individual programs). To achieve certification, one must fully attend the education in the program and deliver two rounds of the program that are approved by a supervisor according to criteria for the program. Program deliverers also receive regular guidance by an advisor.

Evaluations of correctional programs were sporadically initiated in the 1990s and early 2000s, often by external researchers or other governmental agencies. Several outcome evaluations of programs for driving under influence offenders were conducted by external researchers (Andrén, Bergman, Schlyter, and Laurell, 2002; Törnros, 1992, 1993, 1998). The National Council for Crime Prevention conducted an evaluation of a solution-focused network therapy and another on the Reasoning and Rehabilitation program (RandR) (Berman, 2004; Lindforss and Magnusson, 1997). External researchers also began an evaluation of a Swedish program for Motivational Interviewing in 2004 (Forsberg, 2006). Because these studies were initiated by different organizations, they differ in terms of both study aim and design. A few of the evaluations used a randomized controlled trial design, where study participants are randomly allocated to either the program or a control group (Forsberg, 2006; Lindforss and Magnusson, 1997). However, most of the evaluations were observational, meaning that the evaluators had no influence over which clients the programs were provided to.

In 2002, an accreditation system was created based on criteria used by the Correctional Service Accreditation Panel in England and Wales (Lipton, Thornton, McGuire, Porporino, and Hollin, 2000). One of the criteria for accredited programs is that there are routines for evaluating the program. Among other things, this means that their effect on criminal recidivism shall eventually be evaluated (Swedish Prison and Probation Service, 2007). So when the Research and Evaluation (RandE) unit² was created, one of its prioritized missions was to evaluate the effect of programs on reoffending. To this day, reports only eleven outcome evaluations have been published, and more are on their way. However, because the reports are published in Swedish, information on the evaluations seldom reach other countries. In this article, we will describe how these outcome evaluations are conducted.

² Originally, it went under the name of Research and Development (RandD) and consisted of several units.

INITIAL OUTCOME EVALUATIONS

The first outcome evaluation conducted by the R and E unit was published by Danielsson, Dahlin, and Grann (2008). Participants in a specific treatment program were compared with clients who did not start any treatment. To merely compare treated and non-treated clients straight-off would probably lead to biased results, because they differ on important baseline characteristics. Perhaps clients who did not participate in any treatment did not have need of treatment, were unmotivated or did not have a long enough sentence to complete treatment, factors that could all be associated with the risk of reoffending. Confounding factors that are associated both with participation in treatment and with reoffending, should therefore be handled, for example by controlling them in a regression model.

When the Swedish Prison and Probation Service started to conduct outcome evaluations, only the information contained in our registers was available to us. This limited our ability to handle baseline differences between program participants and the comparison group. At the time, this meant that we could control for:

- Basic demographics: age, gender and Nordic citizenship
- Type of criminal sentence
- Number of days in prison (including pre-trial remand)
- Criminal history based on the types of crimes and number of previous sentences within Swedish correctional services the last five years
- Substance misuse

This is of equal, or better, methodological quality than most outcome evaluations of offender treatment programs (Lösel and Schmucker, 2005; Mitchell, Wilson, and MacKenzie, 2012) However, there are, of course, other important baseline factors, such as age at first criminal conviction, and the results could therefore still be biased.

Our evaluations include intent-to-treat analysis, where all program starters are compared with the control group. There are several reasons to include program starters regardless of whether they complete the program or not. Firstly, when offering a program it is not known which clients will complete the program. Secondly, experiencing adverse effects or lack of effect can lead to drop-out. Thirdly, program participants who manage to complete a program tend to be in a better position to stop committing crime even before treatment. For instance, program completers tend to be more motivated (Olver, Stockdale, and Wormith, 2011). Motivation could lead to both a higher tendency to complete programs and a reduced risk of criminal recidivism. To only include program completers could thus increase the risk of biased results.³ However, taking part in the full program could be essential in order to achieve positive effects. If so, an intent-to-treat analysis will underestimate the effect of the program. For this reason, we also conduct per-protocol analyses, where program completers are compared with a control group. Usually, we also conduct a separate analysis on program-dropouts. This is of relevance because program dropouts tend to reoffend more than

³ The risk of biased results is especially high if program completers are compared with a control group consisting of dropouts, which is thus not recommended (Landenberger and Lipsey, 2005).

untreated control groups. It is also currently unknown whether this is caused by baseline differences or if program disruption in itself increases criminal recidivism (McMurran and Theodosi, 2007; Olver et al. 2011).

Initially our definition of reoffending was limited to reconviction that led to a penalty within Swedish Prison and Probation Service because we only had access to our own register data. Our evaluations usually contain both prison inmates and probationers. For clients who received a program in prison, follow-up begins at the date of release from prison. For probationers, the control group is followed from the start-date of the probation sentence and the program group from the end-date of the program. Because these dates vary between clients, the length of possible follow-up time differs. This can be handled by either deciding on a fixed follow-up time for all clients, such as one or two years, or by using a statistical method called survival analysis, which takes differences in follow-up time into account. We wanted to use all available information on reoffending and thus chose to use a method of survival analysis called Cox regression. We also handled confounders by adjusting for them in the Cox regression model.

EFFORTS TO IMPROVE METHODOLOGY

The Swedish Prison and Probation Service do not register all factors relevant to criminal recidivism. Therefore, we started to use data from other national registers. Since 1947 everyone who is registered as living in Sweden gets a unique national identification number. This number is used for many administrative purposes, such as taxation, healthcare, social security and salary payment. During the second half of the 20th century, several national administrative registries evolved and eventually came to replace the survey-based census used back then. Data from different national registers can be linked for research purposes by using the national identification number as key. In order to protect individual integrity, the data is often de-identified before researchers are given access to it. These population registries have been used extensively in epidemiology and sociology (Bauer, 2014; Lyngstad and Skardhamar, 2011; Rosén, 2002). We were able to use de-identified data from several population registers thanks to collaboration with the university Karolinska Institutet in Stockholm. This meant that we could handle a lot more background characteristics than before (see Table 1). The first report using register data from other government authorities was published in 2013 (Nordén, Fors, and Damsten, 2013).

Table 1. Register-based baseline factors

Register	Government authority	Examples of baseline factors
Total Population Register	Statistics Sweden	Age, gender, immigrant background, residential area
Conviction Register	National Council for Crime Prevention	Age at first criminal conviction, number of criminal convictions, any violent conviction, drug conviction, DUI conviction, mother, father or sibling ever convicted of crime *
LISA register	Statistics Sweden	Educational level, work experience, marital status
Patient Register	National Board of Health and Welfare	Alcohol dependence, drug dependence, ADHD, personality disorder, parental substance dependence *
Swedish Prison and Probation Service Administrative Register	Swedish Prison and Probation Service	Prison or probation client, previous participation in general offending/violent crime program, substance misuse program, domestic violence/sex crime program or motivational program
The Population and Housing Register	Statistics Sweden	Childhood socio-economic status

* Created by combining information from the register with data on family relationships from the Multi-Generation Register.

Our extended access to register-based data also has other benefits. Before, a client who died or emigrated could be registered as not reoffending, when in fact he or she could no longer commit crimes in Sweden. But with access to data from the Cause of Death Register and the Migration Register, we are now able to end the follow-up at time of death or emigration. Also, we are no longer limited to defining reoffending as new convictions with a prison or probation sentence. It is now possible for us to define reoffending as any new criminal conviction (Conviction Register) or any new reasonable suspicion of crime (Suspicion Register).⁴ Statistical power, the probability of detecting an effect statistically, is affected by the incidence rate. Hence, these more inclusive definitions of reoffending have resulted in increased statistical power. Besides reoffending, we were also able to add some other outcomes that are sometimes considered important program goals. A register-based indicator of substance misuse can now be used as a proxy outcome for substance misuse programs. The indicator is based on data from the Patient Register on acute alcohol/drug intoxication or

⁴ The suspicion register contain information on suspicions that are at least of the third degree of suspicion on a five degree scale, called reasonably suspected of crime. This suspicion level can under some circumstances provide ground for arrest or detention ("The Swedish code of judicial procedure," 1998). It is common to define criminal recidivism as re-arrest in evaluations (Lipsey, Landenberger, and Wilson, 2007), but to our knowledge there is no Swedish register on arrests. The suspicion register is therefore probably the closest thing to registered arrest in Sweden.

on entry into an inpatient substance dependence clinic⁵. This only captures some, probably severe, substance misuse and is therefore not an ideal measurement. But hopefully the indicator can give a hint on whether a program has an effect on substance misuse.

One of the issues with using regression models is that it is difficult for many practitioners to interpret the results. Group differences in percent reoffending are a lot more intuitive. However, a simple proportional comparison of criminal recidivism in treated and untreated clients is likely to be biased by background differences. But by using matching instead of regression, one can produce figures on percent reoffending that are adjusted for background differences. This is one of the reasons that we started to use propensity score matching. In this context, a propensity score can be described as the likelihood of participating in a program, based on the baseline factors that are controlled for. Consequently, propensity score matching means that program participants are matched with clients in the comparison group who did not participate in the program, but should have been about as likely to do so based on their characteristics. If successful, propensity score matching will result in an equivalent distribution of baseline characteristics between the groups (for an example, see Table 2).

Table 2. Excerpt from an evaluation illustrating the result of propensity score matching on group differences in baseline factors

Baseline factor	Program participants	Unmatched comparison group	Matched comparison group
Female gender, %	11.4	12.1	10.0
Age, m	31.6	41.6	31.1
Criminal convictions, m	8.8	11.2	9.4
Any conviction for violent crime, %	72.0	61.7	73.8
Any conviction for drug crime, %	70.6	46.4	70.8
Any conviction for DUI, %	32.0	47.3	30.8

Another methodological change is that the control group is now allowed to have previous experience of other programs, as long as it is equivalent with the experience of program participants *before* the current program. As program participation becomes more common, completely untreated clients become a less available control group. Also, since many program participants have previous experiences of treatment, a comparison with completely untreated clients will often reflect effects of several programs, not only the current one.

LIMITATIONS

Our evaluations can be considered effectiveness trials ('pragmatic' trials), which means that we evaluate the effect of programs as they are carried out in practice. In contrast, efficacy trials ('explanatory' trials) aim towards studying if a program *can* affect the outcome of interest (Treweek and Zwarenstein, 2009). Researchers try to achieve this by studying the program under ideal circumstances, for example through strict control over client selection and program fidelity. Because we make no such efforts, our results can only answer if the program seems to reduce reoffending with current implementation, not whether it is possible for the program to reduce reoffending. However, the strict control over implementation in

⁵ Inpatient substance dependence clinics are used for detoxification and withdrawal treatment. The treatment can be voluntary or involuntary.

efficacy trials is seldom possible to achieve when programs are rolled-out in ordinary practice, and our results are thus of more practical relevance.

Even though we have taken steps to reduce the risk of bias in our evaluations, there are still important baseline variables that we do not control for, such as a motivation and pro-criminal attitude. A structured risk assessment instrument for use on all clients is currently being implemented in the Swedish Prison and Probation Service. This instrument will make it possible for us to handle additional risk and protective factors in future evaluations, such as pro-criminal attitude, antisocial peers and involvement in pro-social activities. However, regardless of how many background factors you control for, there is always a risk that some important factor has been left out. There might even be important factors that are currently unknown. The only way to be sure that the results are not affected by systematic baseline differences, in both known and unknown factors, is to randomize clients into either the program or control group in a Randomized Controlled Trial (RCT) (Farrington and Welsh, 2005). This design, however, tends to be more expensive and time-consuming and may encounter resistance because of ethical or practical considerations (Farrington and Welsh, 2005).

IMPACT ON PRACTICE

Outcome evaluations have had several implications on practice in the Swedish Prison and Probation Service. One of the most obvious consequences is that they have been used as guidance on which programs to continue using. However, a single outcome evaluation indicating negative results has not been reason enough itself to discontinue a program. Outcome evaluations of the same program can have differing results. Even for interventions that show positive effect in several high-quality studies, a single study may indicate null or negative effect (see Buscemi et al. 2007; Spek et al. 2007). For this reason, the results of a single outcome evaluation must be interpreted in light of previous studies on the same or similar programs. When negative results have inspired program withdrawal, several previous studies of acceptable methodological quality also indicated that the program did not have intended effects or there were other considerations that led to that decision. Another reason could for example be that the program was not developed for use with adult correctional clients.

As in many other studies (McMurrin and Theodosi, 2007; Oliver et al. 2011), our results almost exclusively show that program dropouts have an increased risk of reoffending compared to the control group. This has led to increased measures to retain clients in treatment for programs with a high drop-out rate.

On one occasion, the results of an evaluation indicated that the intervention might not be as effective as some had hoped. However, guidelines on the intervention were very sparse, which meant that there could be local differences in both content and implementation. We therefore concluded that the results reflect the average effect of the intervention, but that some local versions may more effective than other. Based on this, development of clearer guidance for the intervention was initiated.

CONCLUSIONS

Outcome evaluations can be conducted at small cost by using data that is already collected routinely for administration or other purposes. Besides being cost-effective, register-based outcome evaluations can be conducted with good methodological quality. However, the most valid conclusions on the effect of programs are drawn from well-conducted RCTs (Farrington

and Welsh, 2005; Weisburd, 2003). The Nordic countries have especially favorable conditions for register-based outcome evaluations. There are already examples of register-based outcome evaluations in other Nordic countries, for example in Denmark (Nielsen and Kyvsgaard, 2007). In countries without population registers that use national identification numbers, outcome evaluations can still be based on administrative data collected by their correctional services. Also, without national identification numbers, client data can be linked with population registers using information such as name and birth date (see Ministry of Justice, 2013).

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Research Study of Juvenile Probation in Croatia - Design, Results and Potentials for Practice and Future Evaluation

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ABSTRACT

The type of sanction that best fits the concept of juvenile probation in Croatia is called Intensified Care and Supervision (ICS). This sanction is an educational measure that can last from six months to two years. As all probation sanctions, it is intended for juvenile offenders with low to medium criminogenic risk. Conducting of this measure is entrusted to the centres for social welfare, while ICS measure leaders (juvenile probation officers) can be professionals working in the centres or part-time associates (external measure leaders). This paper presents a short historical and legal background of ICS in Croatia, describes the basic principles of process and impact evaluation, and elaborates in more details basic methodological elements of the first national study of ICS, key results, limitations and implications for practice.

JUVENILE PROBATION IN CROATIA

Croatia has a long, century old tradition of implementing community (alternative) sanctions towards young offenders - minors/juveniles. Laws from 1922 emphasize specific rules for sanctioning young offenders with community sanctions which, in today's terms, could be characterized as probation sanctions. This tradition has been firmly maintained till nowadays and the juvenile justice system has a special position within Croatian criminal law. The most important characteristics of the Croatian juvenile justice system, including both criminal proceedings and implementation of sanctions, are the following:

- Beside the Criminal Code, two specific laws (*lat. Lex Specialis*) define sanctions for juvenile offenders, criminal procedure and detailed description of implementation framework - (1) The Law on Juvenile Courts (Official Gazette 84/11, 143/12,

148/13) and (2) The Law on Implementation of Sanctions Imposed to Juveniles for Criminal Offences and Misdemeanours (Official Gazette 133/12),

- Every criminal court and public prosecutor office has specially named judges/public prosecutors for juvenile offenders, as well as expert assistants (advisors) who are social pedagogues, social workers or psychologists,
- Almost all juvenile sanctions are implemented and conducted within a social welfare system, in community or open institutions (except juvenile prison and assignment to correction centre that are conducted within the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Justice),
- The juvenile justice system in Croatia involves close collaboration between the police, justice system institutions (the court and public prosecutor) and social welfare institutions (centres for social welfare and open residential institutions for juveniles),
- The age of criminal responsibility of young offenders in Croatia is 14 years of age (exclusively, for all offences) and juveniles are considered persons from 14 to 18 years of age, while younger adult persons are from 18 to 21 years of age (they can also be prosecuted by the Law on Juvenile Courts if public prosecutors finds this to be appropriate).

The Law on Juvenile Courts (hereinafter: the Law) defines three types of sanctions: (1) Educational Measure; (2) Juvenile Prison and (3) Security Measures. Then, there are eight different educational measures which can be divided into three major groups: (1) Measure of Warning, (2) Measures of Intensified Supervision (Probation Measures) and (3) Institutional (Custodial) Measures.

By law, the main purpose of all these measures is to provide protection, care, help and supervision to the juvenile offender and to ensure their general and vocational education. This way the Law aims to influence the upbringing and education of the juvenile, development of their whole personality and strengthening sense of their own responsibility. The seriousness, motives and circumstances of the criminal offence, behaviour after the offence and recidivism are only one side of the criteria the Court must take into consideration when choosing a sanctions. Other criteria are more developmental and psychosocial, such as juvenile's age, physical and psychological development, (family) living conditions and circumstances, health, education, etc.

The type of educational measure that best fits the concept of juvenile probation in Croatia is called Intensified Care and Supervision (ICS). By law, this educational measure can last from a minimum of six months up to a maximum of two years, but the exact length will not be determined at the court with adjudication. It will depend on achieved changes and positive outcomes that the court needs to assess at least every six months. This means that the court's role and participation does not end with adjudication. On the contrary, through the meetings at the court, known as 'control-trials', judges' expert assistants/advisors (social pedagogues, social workers or psychologists working at the courts) assess changes in a juvenile's behaviour, relationship with family members and peers, schooling, work obligations etc. The juvenile with their parents and ICS measure leader are obliged to come to the court and present their perspective on the quality of conducting ICS.

After such a control-trial, the court can decide that conducting of ICS should be:

- a) continued,
- b) suspended due to positive and expected changes, or
- c) changed with a more intensive (mostly residential) educational measure - if the conditions of juvenile's behaviour and life circumstances have deteriorated.

Juvenile judges are the only ones who can formally decide about suspension or changing of this measure after their expert assistants/advisors give them such a recommendation in their report. If the ICS measure should continue, another control-trial should be held within six months period, and so on, until the maximum of two years.

Conducting of this measure is entrusted to the centres for social welfare, while ICS measure leaders (juvenile probation officers) can be professionals working in the centres or part-time associates (external measure leaders) (Ordinance on Modus of Conducting Educational Measures, Official Gazette 141/11).

ICS is intended for juvenile offenders with low to medium criminogenic risk. Their criminal activity should be a result of some excess, adolescent crisis (developmental factors) or circumstances defined by antisocial peers and situation. It is not intended for juveniles who have a long record of previous criminal offences (intensive recidivism), who have developed a criminal career pattern and who have highly negative and dysfunctional family circumstances.

Official data from the Croatian Bureau of Statistics (2011, 2012, 2013)⁶ show that in the past 15 years, ICS made around 40% of all juvenile sanctions, while the other 40% were measures of warning with different special obligations. These statistics emphasize the importance of this sanction in the Croatian juvenile justice system. Nevertheless, even though the tradition of conducting juvenile probation in Croatia is long, till nowadays there has not been any systematic national research that has measured the characteristics of juvenile offenders under probation, characteristics of their measure leaders and the interactions between them. The research study presented in this paper focused exactly on those elements that are important for improving its quality.

SCIENTIFIC EVALUATION OF YOUTH JUSTICE INTERVENTIONS

Evaluation is the use of social research methods to systematically investigate the effectiveness of social intervention programs and it is intended to be useful for improving and informing programs and social actions (Rossi *et al*, 2004). The authors describe it as activities in social sciences focused on collection, analysis, interpretation and communication of information on performance and effectiveness of a specific social program. Program evaluation is the application of systematic methods to address questions about program operations and results (Newcomer *et al*, 2010, p5). Ajduković (2011) considers program evaluation as a tool for intervention program or project management. The importance of

⁶ The Croatian Bureau of Statistics is the main producer, disseminator and coordinator of the Official Statistical System of the Republic of Croatia as well as the main representative of the national statistical system in front of European and international bodies competent for statistical affairs. The Croatian Bureau of Statistics is a government administrative organisation that is autonomous in performing its activities. Data about justice system are reliable and easy to obtain as they are available on-line (http://www.dzs.hr/default_e.htm).

evaluation is unquestionable nowadays and it is seen as a necessary standard of each program implemented/carried out in practice. The demand for systematic data on the performance of interventions and programs continues to rise across the world. In fact, as the resources are limited and usually pre-planned, it is logical that the sustainability of the social program depends on the assessment of its effectiveness. Therefore, the purpose of evaluation can be defined as the clarification of relations between goals, invested resources and results, as well as the determination of the taken interventions/programs effects compared to the problems and objectives set.

Some authors (e.g. McDavid, 2013) divide evaluation into three main types with regards to its purpose: 1) assessing the need for a program; 2) process evaluation; 3) outcome or impact evaluation.

Process evaluation is a form of evaluation designed to describe how a program is operating and assesses how well it performs its intended functions (Rossi *et al*, 2004). It tries to determine the progress made towards the program objectives, specify the intervention users and services offered in order to provide recommendations for the further program implementation. In short, program process evaluation assesses whether the intervention is delivered as intended to targeted users, so that if the purpose is to demonstrate how the project is meeting its objectives, using its resources, and whether any modifications in its process are required, a process evaluation should be conducted. Process evaluation tracks operational activities and collects information related to the process.

More specifically, Ajduković (2008, 2011) talks about these process evaluation questions:

- *Is the program progressing in compliance to its intended goals?*
- *Who benefits from the program?*
- *Are those receiving a program the intended targets?*
- *How satisfied are the participants with their involvement in the program?*
- *Are they receiving the proper amount, type and quality of services?*
- *What could be done different?*
- *Did some unforeseen circumstances occur?*
- *What lessons can be learned from the way in which the project is unfolding?*

In other words, Ajduković (2008) specifies the main process evaluation questions as follows:

- *Is the project being implemented as intended?*
- *Does it serve its intended purpose?*
- *Can the program be improved in order to enhance its efficiency?*

Additionally, an important evaluation issue is choosing the evaluation model and methodology. The purpose of the evaluation (e.g. control, support, improvement), what one wants to find out, from whom (from whose perspective) and for who are relevant questions in this regard. To sum up: the key issues in deciding on which method or methods to use for any evaluation are the context of the situation and the evaluation questions that need to be addressed (Mc David, 2013).

The same author (p.167) states that “qualitative methods can be used in various stages of an evaluation: determining the focus of the evaluation; evaluating the implementation or the process of a program; determining improvements and changes to a program” (McDavid,

2013). Posavec and Carey (1989, cited in Mejovšek, 2013) argue that the usefulness of qualitative evaluation is that it offers an analysis of aspects that are hard to quantify, such as personal experiences and perceptions of intervention. Patton (2002) and Mohr (1999) add that qualitative methodology is more oriented toward process evaluation while quantitative is more focused on impact evaluation. Qualitative evaluation has its focuses on the examination of personal experiences of target users and in the observation of program activities. Usage of qualitative methodology allows information about numerous details which are hard, or even impossible, to grasp quantitatively, meaning that qualitative methods can yield information with a breadth and depth not possible with quantitative approaches (Robson, 2001; Vanclay, 2012).

With regards to qualitative process evaluation, Ajduković (2008) lists indicators to assess program progress: feedback on benefits/effectiveness of a program, types of communications, observable changes in attitudes, behaviours, skills, habits, complaints about program, participant's perceptions of the program, etc. Information for this type of evaluation, among other (e.g. program documentation, treatment protocols and procedures) can be sought from program staff, management and beneficiaries.

Throughout the program's life course, at some point it is necessary to conduct an impact assessment of the program. Such assessment enables conclusions about program's effects on the intended, but also relevant unintended, outcomes (Gertler *et al*, 2011, Rossi *et al*, 2004). Impact assessment is also known as impact or outcome evaluation.

Every intervention in the youth justice system has goals or aims with a tendency to change a young person's attitudes, values, cognitive distortions, behaviour, etc. The only possible way to determine if wanted changes have occurred is by conducting an impact evaluation. Process evaluation imparts description of conducted interventions, numerous information about a person's reaction to the intervention, users' satisfaction with the program and dynamics in relationship between client and person that conducts the intervention. In contrast to process evaluation, impact evaluation establishes whether the intervention had an expected effect on individuals, households, and communities, and whether this effect can be attributed to the intervention concerned (Royse *et al*, 2006). Even if a particular program or intervention has been implemented as planned, and participants are extremely satisfied with this intervention, without impact evaluation there is still no evidence that this intervention had its effect on intended outcomes, i.e. that the participant's attitudes, values, behaviour or way of thinking has changed in intended direction.

In program evaluation, research is planned and conducted with the purpose of answering evaluation questions of interest (Mejovšek, 2013). The key evaluation question in the context of impact evaluation is "*What is the impact or causal effect of a program on an outcome of interest?*" (Gertler *et al*, 2011). However, numerous other impact evaluation questions could be of interest to evaluators. In impact evaluation of youth justice interventions evaluators, treatment staff and policy makers would probably want to know answers to the following questions:

- *Does risk and delinquent behaviour of juveniles reduce after implementation of the sanction?*
- *How long after the sanction was completed do risk and delinquent behaviour remain reduced?*
- *What are the characteristics of those juveniles on which the sanction had the most effects?*

Since the primary goal of impact evaluation is to determine whether intervention had the impact on desired outcomes (Stufflebeam and Coryn, 2014), it is crucial to determine outcome indicators and define them so they can be measured. It is important to select suitable outcome measures, but what will be a suitable outcome measure for a particular intervention depends on its goals and aims, i.e. it depends on expected outcomes. Royse *et al* (2006, p233) suggested “a good principle is to select measures that are as close as possible to the real problem that is the focus of intervention”. For example, if the outcomes of interest were behavioural (such as decreased risk/delinquent behaviour) questions would have to be very specific, at the individual level (Holden and Zimmerman, 2009) and in behavioural terms.

Intervention has an effect on the outcome if the desired outcome is in the greater extent accomplished in the group that received intervention than in the group that did not receive it (intervention and control groups). In addition, intervention is also effective if the group that received it shows significant difference before and after intervention. The mentioned difference could be determined in variety of characteristics (behaviour, attitudes, values, etc.) depending on what are the measured and expected outcomes. However, research design has to be planned and carried out in such a way that no factors other than the intervention itself affect outcomes.

In an impact evaluation, beside information about the outcomes, the evaluator also needs information on inputs, activities that are conducted and sometimes costs of the intervention (DPME Evaluation Guide No 2.2.13). Impact evaluation is therefore complemented by other types of evaluation, especially process evaluation. As impact evaluation examines the extent to which outcomes have been achieved, it only gives us information about an intervention effect size. It does not explain why some intervention has high effect or why the effect failed to occur. By planning and conducting impact evaluation in parallel with process evaluation, researchers should have enough information to identify the reasons for effectiveness or lack of one.

RESEARCH STUDY OF INTENSIFIED CARE AND SUPERVISION

In 2012 the UNICEF Office in Croatia identified a need to conduct a national research study on Intensified Care and Supervision, due to its importance in juvenile sanctions and the lack of research or scientific data in this field. The authors of this paper prepared a framework and research design for this study, that was accepted and conducted during 2013. The whole research was financed and organized by the UNICEF Office in Croatia, as well as publishing of the book (Ricijaš, *et. al*, 2014) available *online* at UNICEF web site <http://www.unicef.hr/> (under Publications). The book is written in Croatian, but with an extensive Executive Summary in English, where more detailed information on the background, aims, results and conclusions can be found. In this paper, we shall focus on the elements of research design and results that could be useful for practitioners and policy makers in preparing evaluative research, respecting an international context.

The general aim of this research was to gain insight into the specifics of conducting Intensified Care and Supervision in Croatia. With this aim in mind, we focused our research on three major scientific questions in the broadest sense:

1. What are the characteristics of the youth with ICS?
2. What are the characteristics of their measure leaders (probation officers)?
3. What are the characteristics of the process before and during implementation of this sanction?

It was important for us to include different perceptions of all major persons involved in this process, so the research was conducted with (1) ICS measure leaders, (2) juveniles and (3) their parents (who are by law obliged to participate in the execution of ICS). Official data from the records about juvenile offenders were also analyzed by measure leaders.

We prepared a parallel dual research design using two methodological approaches (quantitative and qualitative) with specific aims. In the quantitative part of the research, by using parallel sets of instruments for juveniles and measure leaders, we focused on exploring criminogenic risk factors and needs, official criminal activity of juveniles, self-reported risk/delinquent behaviour, characteristics of criminal procedure, perception of ICS by juveniles and their measure leaders, professional competencies of measure leaders and the frequency of using different treatment procedures and interventions during ICS, as well as exploring the perceived quality of relationship between juveniles and their measure leaders. In the qualitative part, by conducting different focus groups with measure leaders, juveniles and their parents, we focused on exploring the perception and experience of this sanction from all three perspectives, and to explore the process of implementation from professional and users' perspectives, methods used, (un)importance of gender issues between measure leaders and juveniles, as well as to gain insight into their perceived effectiveness of ICS (from all three perspectives).

Sampling for the quantitative component was more difficult as we aimed to achieve a proportional stratified sample of juveniles with ICS in Croatia. Strata were defined considering four criteria: the juvenile's gender, age, length of educational measure and level of community urbanization where the juvenile lives (rural/urban area). We contacted centres for social welfare from 32 Croatian cities/towns to provide us information about young offenders with ICS, with regard to the above mentioned criteria. After receiving that information, we defined sample ratios by gender, age, length of educational measure and level of community in accordance with the data collected from centres. In the end, a total of 182 young male and twelve young female offenders with ICS (N=194) participated in the research, with their measure leaders (N=141), from 28 Croatian cities/towns. This way we achieved a proportional stratified sample that enables us to generalize gained results to the wider population. Before starting this final research, a pilot study was conducted with six offenders and four measure leaders in order to test the understanding of each item in the instrument, to test the time needed for filling-out all questionnaires, to test the clarity of given instructions and to receive feedback and recommendations for improvement.

The qualitative part of the research was conducted separately, with a convenience sample of measure leaders, juvenile offenders and their parents from four major Croatian urban areas (cities). A total of 75 participants were included in these focus groups and they provided valuable information from their experience and perspectives. Although the data for this part of research could have been collected via interviews, in order to understand users'

perspective, a focus group technique was used. This particular method was chosen mainly due to enable group participants to interact with each other and stimulate discussion about the topic. In addition, as Liamputtong (2007) states, when researching sensitive topics with vulnerable groups, speaking with others like you may be less intimidating than speaking just to the researcher. The other reason for choosing a focus group method was more pragmatic and is related to time and finance: focus groups are more economic than individual interviews. In the research design, it was planned to include 84 participants in 14 focus groups, while the final number of participants was 75. Measure leaders and juveniles were rather easily accessible and no one declined participation in research. Parents, however, were the hardest participants to engage. It was difficult to gather all parents at the same time: some parents repeatedly cancelled the focus group meetings, so in the end some of them did not participate in the study. Even repeated telephone contacts with parents had no effect on increasing their motivation to participate. Part of the explanation why parents were hard to access, while measure leaders and juveniles rather easy, could be because every day practice reflected in research results: parents are in most cases not very cooperative and involved in ISC implementation (or other interventions for juveniles). Therefore, we suggest that in future studies more attention should be paid to motivating this group of research participants.

Since this was a national study, before starting our research it was necessary to obtain written consent for it from the Croatian Ministry of Social Policy and Youth. In regard to the Code of Ethics in Research with Children (2003), but also in order to obtain official permission to use data within the jurisdiction of the Ministry, written consent of the mentioned Ministry for conducting the research in centres for social welfare was the first condition that had to be satisfied.

To ensure high quality and efficient implementation of such a complex and extensive research design, the Ministry delivered their consent to all 32 centres planned to be involved in the study and encouraged/motivated professionals in the centres to cooperate and to submit required data. In the same letter, it was also noted that focus groups with offenders, parents and measure leaders would be conducted, respecting prior consents of each of the potential participants.

Quantitative data were collected by employing services from the agency/company for market research which specializes in social research studies and data collection. As 32 centres for the social welfare are spread throughout the 32 cities/towns in the whole country, it was necessary to include an agency that has regional offices and interviewers with experience. Before administering the questionnaires, the agency's interviewers were trained by members of the research team in order to ensure their approach to the participants, especially to young offenders, to know how to carry out different questionnaires and how to react in ambiguous situations. Trainings were conducted in four different Croatian regions, while interviewers also received a manual prepared specifically for them. Research team members conducted all focus groups themselves, as they were organized only in four largest Croatian cities.

Since the quantitative part of this research design could not ensure participants' absolute anonymity, due to the different sources, and with respect to the need for data triangulation (juvenile offender, measure leader and formal documentation), it was very important to come up with the coding system, so the merging of the data from different sources would be enabled. The research team guaranteed participants confidentiality of collected data, while also ensuring that no one could associate a participant's identity with individual answers.

Both the qualitative and quantitative parts of the research were conducted in the centres for social welfare.

In relation to the professional (and personal) ethics of the researchers, we followed the Code of Ethics in Research with Children (2003), and used a "matrix" proposed by Hill (2005). According to that matrix, potential research participants should be given the following, clear and concrete information: (1) What is the purpose and the main goal of the research? (2) How much time should participants devote to the research and what will be their responsibilities? (3) Who will be informed about the results? (4) Will participants receive feedback on the results as well as conclusions of the research? (5) Is confidentiality and anonymity of information/data ensured? It was also important to fulfil Hill's postulates with two additional aspects: (1) the right to refuse participation in the study and (2) the right to withdraw from the study at any time.

As expected, from such an extensive research design, we gained many results and findings that confirmed current perceptions of practice, but also gained new and surprising results from all subgroups of participants. In summary, we could emphasize the following important results:

(A) Key psychosocial characteristics of juveniles

- Most of the risk factors are connected with high level of impulsiveness and sensation-seeking; high level of verbal and physical aggressive behaviour; antisocial attitudes and relationships with antisocial peers; growing up in families burdened with conflicts, verbal and physical abuse, neglect and mainly permissive parental style lacking supervision and consistency; rarely childhood traumatic experiences and an early beginning of substance use.

(B) Key characteristics of criminal offences and criminal procedure

- 37% of juveniles were recidivist; 33% of them have previously had different community measures imposed upon (mostly conditional processing from public prosecutor); 8% have been sanctioned by the court; 17% had previous misdemeanour sanctions; in 50% of cases the centre had previously implemented some interventions (mostly within the Family Law jurisdiction).
- ICS is in most cases (50.7%) pronounced for property crimes, then drug offences (15.2%) and different kind of violent crimes.
- With regard to the criminal procedure, results show objections mostly related to the sluggishness of the judicial system - lack of 'control-trials' (please see above) and the long duration of criminal process, as well as the lack of clear and uniform criteria for adjudicating this sanction.

(C) Perception of this educational measure

- In general, ICS is perceived positively by all groups of participants (juveniles, parents and measure leaders), although their perceptions are influenced by their specific role and experiences that come with these roles.
- In that sense, measure leaders have the most complex perception of ICS - they perceive it as the "most comprehensive, most quality, most effective" measure (compared to other educational measures), but at the same time very demanding for implementation.

- Parents perceive this measure as a benefit for themselves; primarily they speak about psychosocial help and counselling they received.
- Juveniles perceive ICS both as help and control, but also as an opportunity for changing their behaviour. Some of juveniles express certain feelings of stigmatization (mainly by peers).

(D) Perception of relationship quality

- All three groups of participants emphasized the importance of a good professional relationship, based both on their positive and/or negative experiences.
- All ICS measure leaders answered that they used many of their professional skills to establish positive relationships, while, as expected, juveniles didn't notice them to the same extent.
- Juveniles perceive their relationship with a measure leader as a good one, with high level of trust, and feelings of comfort in communication. However, compared to measure leaders, juveniles reported lower feeling of closeness.

RESEARCH LIMITATIONS AND POTENTIALS FOR FUTURE EVALUATION

This research provided a wide spectrum of information about the characteristics of juveniles on probation and their measure leaders, their perception of this sanction, the process and relationship. Parents of juveniles were also involved, ensuring a third perception of a very important party in this process. The main aim of every criminal sanction is to reduce recidivism and accomplish intervention goals defined in individual treatment plans, mostly oriented on behavioural changed. This can only be achieved if we know the characteristics of all persons involved in this process, as well as their perception of the sanction.

Due to the limited budget, in this research measurement was conducted at one point in time, and therefore we do not have information about the changes that might occur in the future (e.g. recidivism or positive behavioural changes). Nevertheless, the coding system used in this design enables us to perform a follow-up study and to request juvenile offenders and their measure leaders to participate in the research again after some period of time.

If there were greater financial resources, longitudinal research at least two points in time would have been conducted. The time between the two measurements would be at least one year which would give us an opportunity to collect the data about ICS's impact on juveniles that had this measure for a year and their sanction is still current, and also those whose measure was suspended in that year. Ideally, there would be three points in time – the second point one year after the first and a third point two years after the second. That kind of research design would give us information about ICS's proximal and distal outcomes on juveniles. We could also get insight into different psychosocial factors that contributed to such outcomes.

The primary goal of this research was to gain insight into the specifics of conducting Intensified Care and Supervision in Croatia. We planned the research design so it included key aspects of process evaluation and the possibility for impact evaluation. It was designed to ensure substantial information about ICS implementation and to provide recommendations for improvements. As we gathered both official and self-reported data about risk/delinquent behaviour of juveniles before the ICS, there is a possibility that we might contact the same participants after ICS has finished, and conduct impact evaluation. This research design can

serve as an example of how to plan process evaluation of any intervention, by taking into account the importance and need for impact evaluation - even if the execution of impact evaluation may be questionable, mostly due to the lack of financial resources.

POTENTIALS FOR PRACTICE

It was important to publish a book with major findings from this research study. This way, not only was state of the art information about juvenile probation in Croatia made available to the public, but all recommendations and guidelines are written and available to major stakeholders in this field. They are mostly important for the centres of social welfare, public prosecutor office and juvenile courts, and policy makers in those areas.

When drawing conclusions and making recommendations, we followed key theoretical principles for effective community sanctions. Therefore we categorized them as recommendations important for (1) criminal procedure and decision-making process, (2) planning of interventions and (3) conducting Intensified Care and Supervision.

With regard to improving criminal procedure and decision-making processes, results indicate following recommendations:

- Need for an additional investment in creating fast criminal and court procedures in accordance with intensive developmental characteristic of young people, with the aim to enhance effectiveness,
- Mandatory standardization of risk assessment as a basic presumption for deciding about further procedure.

With regard to planning interventions, results indicate the need for:

- Further investment for encouraging individualization of this educational measure, with more active involvement of young people in creating individual treatment programs (in accordance with all legal documents), with clearly defined outcomes, expectations and aims of work,
- Printing of informative brochures for young people and their parents so they could be systematically informed about this sanction, their rights and obligations,
- Planning and implementing both individual and group work as modalities for conducting this sanction, in accordance with the needs and characteristics of young people.

With regard to improving the quality of conducting Intensified Care and Supervision, the results suggest the following recommendations:

- Organizing a variety of trainings for ICS measure leaders, depending upon their profession, previous education and position,
- Investments in suitable workspace conditions for conducting ICS in the Centres, but also for part-time associates who could, for example, use empty offices in the Centre in the afternoon (after working hours),
- More active involvement of the court in the process of conducting ICS, in accordance with legal documents,

- Better inter-agency cooperation with a clear system of education to elicit sensitization in teachers and other counselling school staff toward young offenders and to ensure partnership between centres for social welfare and schools with regard to mutual goals aimed at the healthy psychosocial development of young people.

One more gain for practice is the potential to use instruments that were specifically constructed for the purpose of this research - specially focused on this sanction and its context. That is a Questionnaire on the perception of this sanction, a Questionnaire about perceived quality of relationship with an ICS measure leader and a Questionnaire about the perception of the treatment methods use by the ICS measure leader. Practitioners can today use these instruments in their everyday practice if they want to gain more personal information about these topics, and that way we enabled practitioners to implement their own self-evaluations and feedback information for users - juvenile offenders under probation.

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CAPITAL PUNISHMENT IN 20TH CENTURY BRITAIN: AUDIENCE, JUSTICE MEMORY (2014)

Lizzie Seal

Routledge, 181pp excl. appendix and references

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Reviewed by Dr. Wulf Livingston, Glyndwr University

There is often a deep ambiguity between the repeated calls for capital punishment, especially in response to very particular crimes, and any societal comfortableness with the actual execution of individuals by the state. This book provides a really lucid and rich exploration of these uncertainties, as experienced through the British twentieth century journey towards an ending of capital punishment. It is a detailed sociological history, fusing academic and original sources, which help us, understand the how and why of the passage that led up to the British abolition of capital punishment in 1965. Beyond the account of a nation's move to the primacy of life sentences, this skilfully crafted narrative offers deep reflection on the collective emotional relationship that occurs through the processes associated with the state ending an individual's life.

Seal explores developments in British responses to capital punishment across a number of thematic considerations; the nation as viewers of executions, changing responses in comfortableness with the implications of death sentences, long lasting disquiet with miscarriages of justice and the hanging of the innocent, and the legacies of memory and current policy debate. In order to contextualise these conversations the book's initial chapter provides an overview of concepts and events associated with capital punishment. This and the subsequent chapters are underpinned by a dextrous use of traditional academic sources and a range of other archive material. These latter sources are from local, regional and national newspaper archives; plus other national archives and, in particular, letters to politicians. The analytical discussion begins with two chapters that explore the continued viewing from afar (the 1868 Act made executions no longer public), via the media, and how tales of the gallows remained both entertainment and causes of increasingly ambivalent disquiet. What is especially good about these chapters is how they capture the sense of an enduring audience, and its feelings about the leaked details of the process of death and the character and crime of those hung.

Chapter four articulates how these feelings increasingly represented a popular protest against execution. Seal does this through accounts of the most uncomfortable of killings, such as that of Derek Bentley; and explorations of key campaigners like Violet van der Elst. The book then moves on, through the themes of; justice, doubt, mitigation, arbitrariness, inequity and retribution to consider the diversity of public responses, as often expressed in detailed letters. The book really begins to stretch out, offering a detail for those studying or working in these arenas to reflect upon their own understanding of history and current policy debate.

The two exemplars of Edith Thompson's 1923 and Timothy Evans' 1950 hanging are subsequently used to illustrate how some of these themes played out in detail. But more than describing the events, Seal provides a crafted exposition of how the disquiet about the appropriateness of these killings then lingers, as a ghost to haunt subsequent generations and

discourses. The penultimate chapter brings together the ambiguities and memories into considerations of the post-abolition of execution period. Thus, an account of those who still give support and voice for a return to capital punishment, calls for more punitive considerations, the fear of miscarriage and the mistrust of the efficiencies of any method of execution.

Seal concludes with an exploration of the relationship between the law, actions of execution and subsequent memory. In doing so she explores the spaces where the legitimacy of appropriate justice, the fascination with the detail of the killing and the subsequent reflective re-examinations merge in to a collective societal discourse. In this sense the book is a fascinating companion to other sociological orientated explorations of execution, like that of Brook et al (2008), which help us understand that the events of any particular killing have a legacy discourse that frequently speaks beyond events and into the shaping of future narratives and understanding.

The theme of dissonance between desire for (even fascination with) exacting punishment and unease at states taking life, is one that continues to prevail in Britain. Indeed the book's concluding chapter explores three key aspects of current British policy; the desire for punitive punishment of particular heinous murderers (notably Myra Hindley and Ian Brady – the 'Moors Murderers'), unease with the possibilities and consequences of miscarriages of justice; and dismay at the current American experiences. Thus, while this book concentrates on the specifics of the British predicament, it acknowledges the wider global context and in particular the tribulations of the current USA approach. These contradictory pulls remain a global phenomenon, perhaps best illustrated by the 22% decrease in executions being carried out worldwide in 2014 (to an known minimum of 607), set against a 28% increase in people being known to have been sentenced to death – to at least 2,466 (Amnesty International 2015). This book helps provide a rich contextual analysis of the qualitative considerations that help explain the paradoxes between the desire to punish by sentence to death and the reluctance to have state executions.

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REORGANIZING CRIME: MAFIA AND ANTI-MAFIA IN POST-SOVIET GEORGIA (2013)

Gavin Slade

Oxford University Press, 180pp

ISBN: 978019967640

Reviewed by Neil Stone, Head of Community Offender Management Policy, NOMS

This book aims to explore and help understand the resilience of criminal groups and the success of state intervention (in this case the nation state of Georgia) in reducing the influence of organised crime. What had took place in Georgia post collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 which in Gavin Slade's view had turned it from 'a quintessential, organised crime-ridden post-Soviet republic to no country for made men.'

Use the term 'mafia' and most of us will automatically default to mainstream literature and movie sources such as Mario Puzo's 'Godfather' and the Italian-American films of Martin Scorsese. Use the term 'Russian Mafia' and again the default position belongs to films like 'Goldeneye' and 'Lord of War.' Thus while the notion of a mafia and what it is comes easily to us in populist terms when it comes to academia some scholars have argued that the use of the term mafia can obscure more than it can enlighten. The rejection is based on the fact that the multi-application of the term to many concepts (particularly so in the post-Soviet era) that 'mafia' becomes everything and nothing. Gavin Slade defines mafias for his purposes as autonomous entities that pursue a monopoly on protection provision services based ultimately on force within a given territory. Post-Soviet Georgia's thieves-in-law (of which more later) are therefore recognisable by this definition through their involvement and immersion in organised crime.

Georgia declared its independence from the Soviet Union in 1991. This new found independence according to Slade set Georgia on a course of violence, decline and impoverishment as conflicts and civil war broke out. Eduard Shevardnadze, former first secretary of the Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic, was invited to run the country in 1992 and by 1995 had negotiated a temporary end to conflicts. His control was always tenuous and relied on granting autonomy to regional 'strongmen' in return for their loyalty. As the state retreated one group, the thieves-in-law took full advantage. With their origins in the Soviet gulags this group had what Slade calls a: 'carefully cultivated reputation as honourable outlaws within Georgian society based on a mythologised past.'

By the 1990s they were acting with a great deal of impunity, had infiltrated the legal economy and such was their political influence at times they appeared more powerful than the government. This state of affairs began to change in 2003 when Shevardnadze was ousted in a non-violent coup which became known as the Rose Revolution. The new regime led by Mikheil and his United National Movement (UNM) pastry challenged the strongmen, purged the state of corrupt officials, built new prisons and adopted a zero tolerance attitude to all crime.

How did the thieves-in-law fare under this new regime? They failed to adapt to the change in mood and as Slade identifies they had low levels of resilience to what was in effect a state attack on them. Put very simply the thieves-in-law did not adapt to a new social and economic reality and the adaptations and adjustments they made paradoxically left them open and vulnerable to what turned out in the end to be a successful state attack.

So what does this book tell us? Well, for the researcher interested in attempting to emulate such a large and I would add complex study, the research methodology is very well laid out and dotted with some interesting cultural insights such as the fact that very few of the interviews were recorded because: 'in a post-Soviet country such as Georgia, voice recorders do not elicit positive responses.' Whilst the book is very good in making a case for explaining what happened in Georgia Slade is wary of extrapolating the conclusions to other countries which are struggling with extra-legal governance providers such as Southern Italy, Colombia, Jamaica and Mexico. Especially the latter where there isn't the same evidence that hard line state intervention has caused organised crime to decline - rather the opposite with some of the drug cartels seemingly to be growing stronger. Instead he offers the view that there are many variables for understanding why and when criminal organisations change or fail to change. I do think though that there is some cross reading to be done here with other organised crime groups and this work can contribute to a greater understanding of what is a global phenomenon of differing proportions.

In 2012 Mikheil Saakashvili's UNM party was ousted by Georgian Dream who declared an amnesty and released thousands of prisoners despite warnings from the UNM that such a move would bring about the return of the thieves-in-law. There is no sign of that happening up to now but what is interesting is the legacy lessons learned from the time of the UNM. Georgia's economy was liberalised with a privatisation agenda, Saakashvili declared executive powers which drew greater control of affairs to himself and unemployment and the accompanying poverty and inequality remained at stubbornly high levels. And whilst the criminal justice system was overhauled to root out corruption the courts remained largely unreformed and mistrusted by the public. The prison population grew as the anti-mafia policy took hold with many citizens drawn into the net which is not surprising given the passage of laws which made it an offence to be suspected of mafia association. Ironically then, one of Strang's telling conclusions is that whilst the belief persists that the state is unjust and there is no social stigma to having been in jail then the alternative extra-legal governance providers, like the thieves-in-law for example, will always find themselves in demand and an outlet for what services they have to offer.

CULTURES OF DESISTANCE: REHABILITATION, REINTEGRATION AND ETHNIC MINORITIES (2013)

Calverley, A.

Routledge, 195pp excl. index and references

ISBN: 9780415623483

Reviewed by Bernadette Wilkinson, Independent Trainer and Consultant

Studies are available that focus on the engagement of minority populations in crime and in the criminal justice system, for example the overrepresentation of certain groups at different stages of the criminal justice process. In criminal justice more generally the attention to risk factors and the routes into offending for all offenders has been widened in more recent years by the literature on desistance; paying attention to the ways in which individuals move away from offending. So far however, there has been a lack of substantive thought about the potential influence of ethnicity in successfully moving away from crime. This book very helpfully begins to redress the balance.

The author opens with case studies of two particularly successful individuals of different ethnicities, who have desisted from crime and prospered. There is a danger that using well-known names might be seen as an irrelevance and the author acknowledges that they are in some ways atypical, however it is an engaging start to the book. It also acts as a reminder that an understanding of, not just, the shared influences and pathways between individuals, but an understanding of each individual's particular lived experience is important. In the first chapter the author succinctly reviews the existing literature on desistance. This is a clear account which makes plain, as it progresses, the need to know more about how ethnicity and culture may interact with other variables, to influence both processes and outcomes.

The next chapter is a detailed methodology setting out the basis of the findings; a study of 33 individuals of Indian, Bangladeshi, Black African, Black Caribbean and Dual heritages. It largely draws on in-depth qualitative interviews, of what is acknowledged to be small sample and the chapter explores in some detail the choices that were made in selection. Those choices in themselves explore challenging issues. For example the choice was made not to include recent migrants and also not to conduct a comparison study with specific matched white offenders. This latter decision allowed a clear focus on the experiences of individuals from different backgrounds in their own right and in contrast to each other, although as always with small scale qualitative research also raised interesting areas for further work. The author makes it clear that when looking at the process of desistance, core influences and processes are shared between the groups in the study and between them and the mainly white individuals featuring in other research. The bulk of the book is then able to look in detail at particular aspects of the experience of individuals from the subgroups represented. The depth of those accounts is interesting in its own right and a welcome reminder of the importance of understanding subtle factors that can be operating in any individual's journey to desistance.

In chapter seven the author looks comparatively at the findings from the interviewees from different groups and argues that the processes associated with desistance are both universalistic and particular. This study explores the particular but in the context of an understanding of shared aspects of desistance. Differences between groups are produced by

variations at a wider societal level, at the level of community and in the family and in the individuals themselves. When looking at the level of the community and neighbourhood the ways in which those wider influences play out is explored, for example the very different social context of the Indian offenders whose family tend to be less likely to be involved in crime and who often have higher levels of social capital. This raises questions about the impact of this, not just on processes like access to employment, but also on social processes like family shame and family competition that can make a real difference to individuals. In the Bangladeshi sample the greater importance of religion and the opportunity it provides for relationships with pro-social others was clear. Those contacts were less important economically, but recognised and validated the efforts of individuals to desist. Black and dual heritage groups were found to have weaker access to social capital and were more likely to experience unhelpful influences from their family and community. In contrast with Bangladeshis whilst more than half of the Black and Dual heritage group had a religious upbringing and believed in God, this was of much less significance to desistance, being individualised and less likely to involve them in positive social contacts. The more individualised path to desistance was more likely with a 'knifing off' from old contacts and associates and a finding of motivation and strengths within themselves. Summaries like this however don't do justice to the complexity of the findings and should simply encourage reading of the book and full engagement with the detailed findings and arguments within it.

The book concludes by thinking about the implications of the study and acknowledges that ethnicity is not found to be an independent causal variable, however the author argues that it is a significant dependant variable, affecting the resources and pathways out of crime available to individuals. The evidence of the study is persuasive but only one small step towards a greater understanding. The author suggests further studies using quantitative and qualitative methods, but also using alternatives and specifically ethnographic studies, in order to capture more immediately the processes of desistance themselves. There is also an ongoing need to study other groups and contexts. This study was London based and also did not include women, or more recent migrants. It would be fascinating to see how the findings compare in different parts of the UK and across Europe where social and cultural contexts will vary and where the pattern of ethnic diversity is rapidly changing.

From the point of view of the practitioner the place for ethnographic studies providing that nuanced understanding of the process of desistance is clear. This book and the detailed accounts of individuals of different ethnicities in their structural and community contexts it contains should be widely read by practitioners in criminal justice. While of particular interest to practitioners in a UK context the findings will resonate in areas across Europe. The book provides practitioners with topics to think about when working with an individual or community and provides a reminder of the importance of interpersonal skills in engaging with individuals and learning from them. Every practitioner can play a part in learning about the lives of those seeking to end an involvement in crime in order to understand how their journey to desistance is experienced and how best it can be supported.