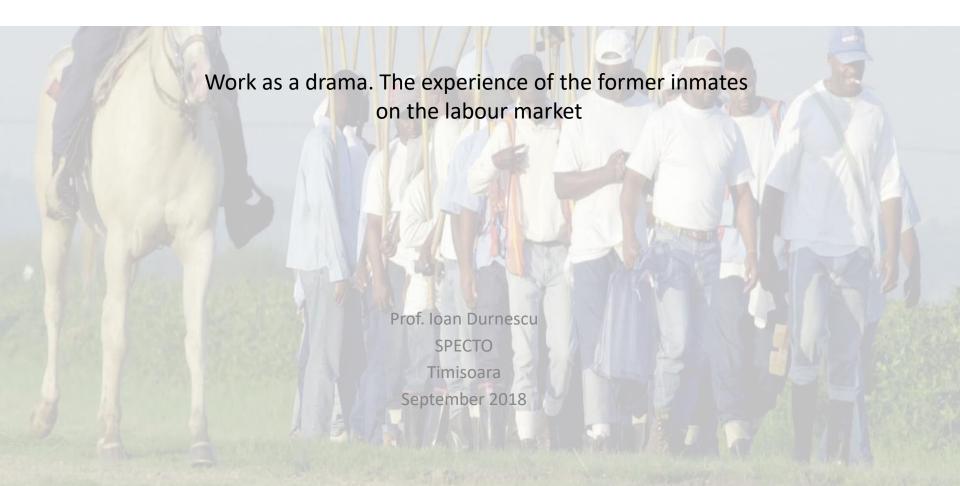




FACULTATEA DE SOCIOLOGIE ȘI ASISTENȚĂ SOCIALĂ

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• Irwin (1970:2):

'A common dimension in the nature of these obstacles and the ignorance which surrounds them is the disparity of perspectives of the officials and the felons. The programs and policies obstructing the felon's progress instead of facilitating it are planned and implemented from an official or conventional viewpoint'

• GZ:

'The real prison experience starts when released'

Aim and structure

 To present the inmates positioning on the labour market from the dramaturgic performance perspective (Goffman, 1956; Saldana, 2005; Berg, 2011)

• Structure:

- Literature review
- Methodology
- Findings
- Discussions

Work in the literature

- Work associated with desistance (Duwe, 2015; Farrall and Calverley, 2006; Lipsey, 1995; Sampson and Laub, 2001)
- Via cognitive transformation (Giordano et al, 2002) or through identity change (Maruna, 2001)
- Which comes first still contested area (Skardhamar and Savolainen, 2002; Bushway and Apel, 2012)
- Other factors might shape its impact age, social structure etc. (Uggen, 1996)
- Work is important but only if meaningful and satisfactory (Uggen and Staff, 2001)
- Positive prospects of future legal earnings appear also to reduce involvement in criminal activities (Pezzin, 1995; Shapland and Bottoms, 2011).

Difficulties in finding work

- Most parolees find their jobs through personal contacts such as **family**, **friends or ex-employers** (Berg and Huebner, 2011; Solomon, Roman and Waul, 2001; Souza et al, 2013; Visher et al, 2004; Visher et al, 2011)
- Former prisoners may 'have expectations of extremely rapid occupational advancement during the years immediately following their release, expectations which are unrealistic in light of their limited work experience and lack of vocational skills' (Glaser, 1969: 238).
- Stigma as 'negative credential' (Pager et al, 2009)
- **Discrimination** (Graffam et al, 2008; Hlavka et al, 2015)
- Precarious position 'keenly anticipate rejection' by employers (Winnick and Bodkin, 2008: 321) or 'tense or defensive interactions' with employers (Pager, 2007: 148)
- Some stop looking for work (Apel and Sweeten, 2010)
- Some focus on underground economy (Halushka, 2016)
- Others engage in intensive identity work (Maruna, 2001; Trimbur, 2009)

Work in the literature

- Focus too much on the conventional meaning of 'work'
- Look into the general orientation but neglects micro-behaviors
- Does not take into account the context economy, social, ethnic background etc.

Methodology

- Based on an ethnographic study conducted in Bucharest and the surrounding area
 - 58 released inmates from Jilava Prison theoretical sampling 28 Roma
 - One year follow up
 - Conditional released but no supervision (except 3 full released)
 - Ethnographic methodology
 - Thematic analysis

Methodology

- dramaturgical approach developed first by Goffman (1959) and later by Berg (2001) and Saldana (2005).
- provides an analytic context in which the details of the everyday efforts and interactions in relation to employment can be integrated and understood in their context.
- life as 'performance' with humans interacting as actors in conflict with each other (Saldana, 2009).

Codes:

- OBJ: objectives or wants or needs
- TAC: tactics employed by the participants to deal with conflicts and obstacles
- CON: conflicts or obstacles confronted by the participants/actors which prevented them from achieving their objectives
- PROPS: skills or artefacts used or mentioned by participants related to employment (e.g. education, qualifications, professional skills etc.).

Findings: Objectives

- Provide drive for action
- All participants attempted to become economically active
- Work as:
 - Start a new life 'First of all, work! Work to earn a living' (MH)
 - Earn autonomy 'This is what I planned from the beginning: to be independent. Not to depend on anyone' (MM)
 - Compensate the family
 - Earn a living outside crime 'I do not want to steal anymore. I don't want to hear about this anymore...' (IA)
- Work multiple function

Findings: Conflicts & Obstacles

- PTSD flashbacks, lack of sleep, dizziness etc.
- Major health issues
- Deep feelings of shame:

'How could I go there? I am ashamed. If they call me, I might go but ...' (MH)

Stigma:

'For the moment nobody gave me any work around here. They are afraid that I did time in prison... They are afraid I will steal from them' (MM)

• Internalized stigma:

'If they fear you, you start to feel dangerous' (NM)

- Temptation
- Huge family issues
- Terrible living conditions toxic neighbourhoods
- Identity papers
- Complex and dysfunctional bureaucracy
- Criminal record the number of criminal certificates issued by the Romanian police for work reasons has increased from 163,616 in 2013 to 779,677 in 2016.



Strategies

- Heavy reliance on family networks, friends, former employers
- No IT skills to search Internet
- State almost absent no trust
- Precarious position accept low paid jobs in the underground economy no labour contracts – no security, 'ripped off' - Work 'does not allow me to die but I cannot live either' (DV).
- Roma more entrepreneurial why?
- Some wait for better opportunities better paid, source of hope
- Some emigrate 'going abroad' dream, successful (including on the identity level), but ...
- Most of them vacillate between different forms of participation informal, cvasi, hustle, conventional economy
- Economy around Bucharest 2% unemployment, increased number of jobs in construction, metal and transportation
- No decent prospects no hope, prison as a romantic place etc.
- Not too many resources within three moths they know what is the occupational route

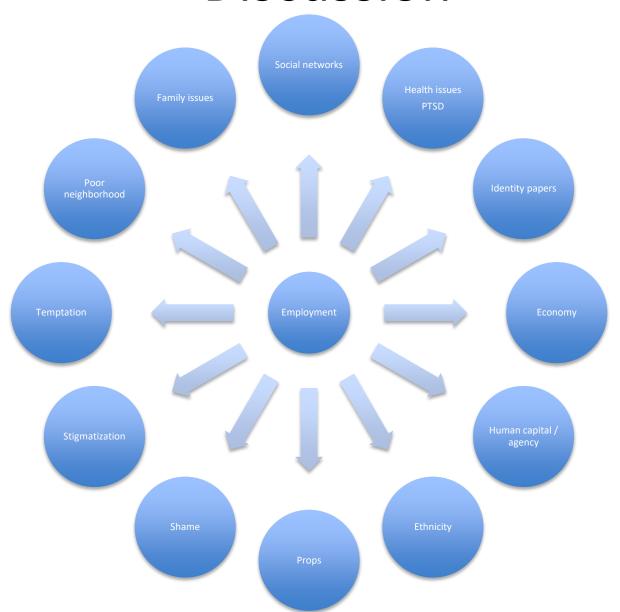
Findings: PROPS

- Elements that support the actor's roles
- Goffman's terms (1956: 14) they are: 'items of expressive equipment, the items that we most intimately identify with the performer himself...'.
- Enhance their representation: skills, gestures, artefacts etc.
- Focus on work qualifications
- No focus on soft skills e.g. teamwork, punctual, reliable etc.
- No skills in self-disclosure:

'As I was already nervous from the other interviews I told them: listen, I have a criminal record. They said they will check with their bosses and call me back ... yes, no phone call back, it is funny' (NM)

No artefacts – letters, diplomas, recommendations etc.

Discussion



Discussion

- Employment complex process in a difficult context
- At the intersection of personal, structural and relational factors
- Many anticipate rejection 'learned helplessness' give up hope and confidence
- Solutions:
 - Enhance self-efficacy in and post-prison
 - Up-skilling towards new economies
 - Mutual help 'friendly employers', social economy etc.
 - The role of State use of unemployment funds to create solidarity employers, fiscal benefits with no strings attached, awareness
 - Encourage entrepreneurial initiatives especially for Roma

More details – Filmul 2 lei 60 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cuRJxCN4P81

Thank you! idurnescu@gmail.com