

# **Walking from imprisonment towards true social integration: getting a job as a key factor**

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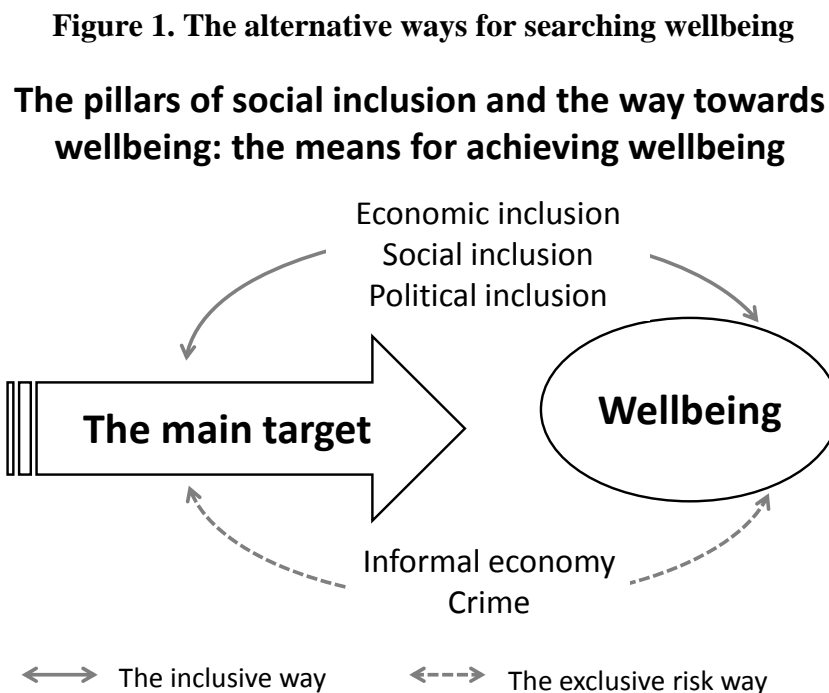
## **Abstract**

Employment is one of the most effective mechanisms for inclusion, especially for groups who have a high risk of social exclusion, as inmate population. This study analyzes data collected from in-depth interviews with twenty-two prisoners in an intermediate position between the prison and the full freedom (ranked third grade) in two Social Integration Centers and two prisons in the Autonomous Community of Galicia (northern Spain). The results show that the availability of a strong social and family network is a key issue to get a job, and in lack of this network, the self-employment is a good choice.

**Keywords:** Employment, post-secondary prisons programs, qualitative research, reintegration, release planning

## Introduction

The acceptance and social status, along with the provision of sufficient financial resources, promote welfare feeling. Specifically, people who can't achieve a minimum level both economic as social, can hardly achieve well-being pursued. So, those who live in a risk of social exclusion situation, face significant difficulties in reaching the target set. The three pillars of social inclusion rely on the economic, social and political aspects (Subirats & Gomà, 2003). Then, when individuals or social groups have no access to welfare through the above mechanisms, are compelled to seek alternative routes in the vicinity of the informal or underground economy and even in crime environments (See Figure 1).



Source: Own elaboration

It seems evident that one of the main mechanisms for achieving social inclusion is by securing job (Entorf, 2009; Naraine & Lindsay, 2011), because unemployment may conduce to isolation and poverty (Gallie, Paugam & Jacobs, 2003). Research indicates

that employment is a primary feature of successful reintegration as connections made at work may serve helping prevent criminal behavior (Opsal, 2012; Visher, Debus-Sherrill & Yahner, 2011). Nevertheless, there are few studies focused on working situation of former inmates, probably due to the trace difficulties and the data protection laws, among other reasons. In this study, incarcerated population who are in an intermediate situation, that is to say, not fully free (third grade classified) is analyzed.

In the developed countries world, there are various ways of serving prison sentences by means of a system known as prison sentence degrees. The origin of this system goes back to mid-nineteenth century England, when the progressive imprisonment was first implemented (in the Pentonville prison).

If we focus on Spain, the 1944 Penal Code establishes the progressive system and it makes reference to the four sentence types that comprise it: the closed system, ordinary system, open system and probation. Subsequently the General Organic Law of Prisons was enacted in 1979. The Act established a system of scientific individualization based on the use of treatment programs individualized for each person. It is more flexible than the progressive system laid out in the 1944 Penal Code, making it possible to directly classify the defendant within any of the three categories, with the exception of probation.

Article 63 of this Law establishes the criteria used to perform classification, which are: personality, individual, family, social and criminal background of the inmate, the length of sentence and legal measures, the environment he will return to, the resources available and the relative ease or difficulty in achieving successful treatment. Thus, prisoners considered dangerous or unsuitable for ordinary system are classified as first degree or for confinement. They serve time in individual cells, which make for greater

control over inmates and a major limitation in performing activities. On the other hand, the ordinary or second degree system is characterized by tight schedules, where nighttime relaxation is sharply defined as well as free time for personal matters, visitation schedules, etc. As its name implies, it is the normal, ordinary time within the prison. Finally, the third degree or open regime is more permissive than the above mentioned and there are several ways to implement it, as it will be discussed below.

The existence of various degrees in prison sentences is linked to a mandate set out in paragraph two of Article 25 of the Spanish Constitution. The mandate states that prison sentences and the holding of people in custody should aim at reeducation and social rehabilitation and may not require forced labor.

In recent years, there have been various actions undertaken in Spanish public policy, to make real this constitutional objective and to achieve the social inclusion of former inmates. It bears pointing out that many of the people who at some point in their life are imprisoned also have identities which cause a double or triple form of social exclusion since they are frequently foreigners, gypsies, women, poor or disabled. One of the most notable measures carried out is the creation of Centers for Social Integration (CIS) which provides a midway point between prison and outright release. The centers allow the inmates to strengthen their family ties, which promotes progressive coexistence within society (Ministry of Interior, 2012).

Interviews of prisoners in this category of Social Integration Centers of Galicia (North of Spain) were conducted. Also, in order to complete full Galician territory, inmates at prisons of this same Autonomous Community, which has not the option of Social Insertion Center, were visited. In deep interviews were conducted as a means of assessing the potential socio-inclusion of people serving third degree (conditional

release), type of condemnation they are paying for, as well as the difficulties encountered in achieving employment and their future plans.

The main aim of this study is to point out the importance of breaking the vicious circle of getting wellbeing from an informal or criminal way, by means of providing inmates the proper mechanisms to avoid that way and choose the inclusive and legal one. These mechanisms are mainly related to getting a job.

Results of interviews have allowed drawing conclusions about the possible social and workforce inclusion of those interviewed and those who are in a similar situation.

## **Background**

According to Cloward and Ohlin's (1960) Differential Opportunity Theory says that the crime subculture has its roots in the frustration experienced by the lower classes in trying to get welfare who want. These authors differentiate three types of criminal subcultures: the criminal subculture, subculture conflict and elusive subculture. Individually, each person can choose to give up getting welfare or choose a path in the informal or criminal economy to achieve it. Moreover, the group, which has the same feelings, supports this behavior. Each district or territory has its own structure of both legitimate and illegitimate opportunities. Thus, the social rejection may cease to function as a deterrent to crime.

In the context of what Becker (1963) postulates about the role played for family and communities, in the behavior of the individuals, the strength of the reference group and the feeling about what is right or wrong (Sykes & Matza, 1957, Cloward & Ohlin's, 1960), each one has to make a decision about which one is his or her best option to get wellbeing.

If an individual who is trying to get welfare belongs to a group at risk of social exclusion, difficulties of securing a job are compounded. This is the case of people who leave prison after serving a sentence or are serving a grade 3 type sentence. These individuals face the arduous burden of entering the workforce. Therefore, former inmate status constitutes an added difficulty for job searching and general jeopardizes the work prospects of post-incarcerated population (Apel & Sweeten, 2010; Western, 2002). Studies performed in the United States show that former incarceration leads to significant wage differentials between two groups: those who have been in jail and those who have no convictions. Before incarceration the groups shared similar salaries, but after imprisonment the differences become palpable (Lyons & Pettit, 2011). In many cases, moreover, the prison reinforces criminal behavior (Marcuello & García, 2011; Weiman, 2007).

Those inmates who have good future prospects in the labor market show lower recidivism (Brown, 2011; Skardhamar & Telle, 2012; Uggen, 2000) while those with poor work prospects relapse more easily, especially if they have substance abuse problems (Entorf, 2009; Huebner, DeJong & Cobbina, 2010). In fact, according to Opsal (2012), who has studied the situation of paroled women in the United States, serious employment instability challenges women's commitment to work as a source for crafting replacement selves and often corresponds with a reemergence into criminal activity.

As it was said before, the main problem for reentry of former inmates is the difficulty of getting an employment, and sometimes this difficulty is linked to a "labeling" matter. Henry & Jacobs (2007) have pointed out that if it were possible demonstrate that ex-offenders can be safely hired for most public-sector jobs, then, the private employers'

discrimination against ex-offenders could come to be viewed as invidious and unreasonable.

There are very few the studies analyzing released prisoners' working situation. Some of them are focused on recidivism (Skardhamar *et al.*, 2012) or on particular groups (Huebner *et al.*, 2010; Opsal, 2012). One exception is the work of Visser *et al.* (2011), dedicated to the employment experiences of a sample of former prisoners, and identifies the factors influencing the likelihood of employment after release from prison, as having consistent work experience before incarceration or conventional family relationships because these factors improve employment outcomes after release.

Reinforcing the “positive” or “inclusive” behavior (solid line in Figure 1) should be undertaken jointly to penitentiary proceedings for avoiding the “informal” or “exclusive” behavior (dashed line in Figure 1) should be in mind of policy makers for achieving the goal of avoiding recidivism (Cohen, 1955). These actions could be more effective if they are able to take advantage of the guiltiness and shame feelings that offenders try to neutralize (Sykes & Matza, 1957).

Labor integration plans for the inmate population. The role of Social Integration Centers: Operation and legal regulations.

Spain had 70,472 people in prison in 2011 (65,184 men and 5,288 women), representing one of the largest prison population in Europe. The 13.77% of them were classified in third grade (Ministry of Interior, 2013). The prison population of the Autonomous Community of Galicia represents 5.25% of the Spanish one.

Inmates in third grade, in general terms, can remain in the penitentiary center on which they were located (in provinces that do not have special facilities) or be moved to a Social Integration Center. In other countries, there are institutions with similar

characteristics, as Adult Transition Centers (ATC), like in United States (Jung, 2014). Social Integration Centers are located in buildings physically separate from prison grounds. However, in terms of administration, there are two types Centers: Those which are independent and, therefore, autonomous with respect to prisons and, on the other hand, the centers which constitute both an organic and functional part of a prison. Today there are twelve Social Integration Centers and eighteen independent CIS which are attached to a penitentiary. According to the Ministry of the Interior (2012), Social Integration Centers are responsible compliance with probationary prison sentences, as well as non-custodial sentences in the Spanish justice system. Therefore, there are several modalities applied to probationary sentences.

First, within the residential modality, we find the following types:

- Full Third degree sentences, which increase social inclusion and support their integration into society (Article 83.1 of the Prison Code (P.C.), adopted by Royal Decree 190/1996, February 9, 1996).

- Restricted-open regime in which release time is dependent on certain characteristics of the person in question, such as his or her preparation for a broader probation grant (Art. 82.1 P.C.).

- The Second degree mode (Art. 100.2 P.C.), introduces the principle of flexibility, making conditional release available to convicts given second degree type sentences.

Second, within the open non-custodial category, there are several sentence types including:



-Residencies for the treatment of certain inmates (Art.165 P.C.), for example, ordinary apartments or homes without identifying signs, for people serving third degree sentences (conditional release).

-Compliance with probation outside of prison for inmates who need treatment for addiction to certain substances (Art.182 P.C.).

-Replacing the minimum required length of stay via electronic monitoring or other control systems (Art. 86.4 of the P.C.). In this way, inmates only have to remain in the facility for treatment activities, interviews, face-to-face visits.

Finally, the Prison Rules provide for two special cases:

-The day release of seriously ill or suffering incurable (Art.104.4 P.C.).

-The granting of probation to non-resident foreign inmates legally in Spain, or for Spanish citizens residing abroad so that they can be released in the country of residence (Art.197 P.C.).

Thus, these centers and the provision of conditional release status, help promote inmates' autonomy and responsibility, foster social ties and reduce the control exercised over the prison population. The very existence of these centers is in line with the comments made by Martin (2011), which states that prisoner reentry initiatives should be created well before an inmate's release day. The centers have a diverse staff, ranging from management, service coordinators, teachers, psychologists, and lawyers. The CIS also host other agencies including private and public institutions, such as NGOs, associations and collaborating institutions which run treatment programs, contribute to social inclusion of prisoners and provide services such as for example job placement. The Centers help prisoners to seek employment, do not directly help in job searches.

Therefore, these organizations play a vital role, as well as inmates' families and acquaintances in job searching.

Some of these associations working in the CIS, depend on public grants, which have been reduced as a result of the crisis which has hit Spain from the past few years through to the present time. Therefore, in a context in which it has become much more complicated, in general to obtain employment, the lowering of these grants or delaying them, has complicated the job search of prisoners dependent on CIS. That said, having a job is no prerequisite for being granted probation. It is possible to obtain approval for conditional release classification for other non-work activities, as the inmates themselves will later describe in interviews. These activities include: training activities, family responsibilities or job searching.

## **Methodology**

This paper presents a qualitative approach. The data were collected through semi-structured interviews, conducted in an informal manner. The structure of the interviews varied but all focused on the topics of education, employment and social support.

The questions of the interview were open and focused in five main aspects:

- The offender environment and feelings at the time of the crime
- The offender labor and economic environment at the time of the crime
- The offender familiar and social environment and feelings at the time of the crime
- The offender attitude and participation in prison activities
- The expectance of social and labor future after leaving prison.

To carry out our field work, we requested the necessary permits from the Prison authority and were granted permission to carry out questionnaires and in-depth interviews with the Galician prison population in the half of 2011. Subsequently, we obtained an extension of the authorization to proceed with research in the second half of the year. Therefore, the interviews took place between January 2011 and December 2011.

Interviews were conducted in the Center of Social Integration within the Autonomous Community of Galicia, namely in the province of A Coruña and Pontevedra, and in the jails with prison population in third grade, located in provinces without CIS (Lugo and Ourense). The A Coruña CIS is called “Carmela Arias y Díaz de Rábago” and the Vigo CIS is “Carmen Avendaño”. The first one is an independent CIS and has about 160 inmates. The second one is a Center attached to the A Lama Penitentiary. It has 135 cells.

Conducting these interviews has been complicated by the short amount of time working inmates spend in the center or those on release by electronic means as well as limited opportunities we therefore had to talk to them. Therefore, we went into the CIS on days when inmates were due to come in to sign or when they had to talk to the work coordinator. Interviews conducted in CIS were lead in offices next to the labor coordinator, in order to interfere as little as possible to operate the center. Interviews in prisons also took place in small offices inside the module. In all cases the interviewees and the interviewer were alone, without the presence of any officer, to guaranty no external influences in responses. Responses were captured via audio taping and transcribed by the interviewer. Participation in the study was voluntary.

Data analyzes were done through coding by hand and grounded-theory approach (Strauss, 1987). Therefore, each interview was coded line-by-line. Using memos (Charmaz, 2006), broad analytic themes emerged from focused codes including employed self, employed for others, obstacles to labor inclusion or family support. Although it was initially focused on understanding the common ground of the interviewees narratives, within each analytic theme, It was looked for variation among concepts.

### ***Respondent Characteristics***

We conducted twenty-two in-depth interviews, of which thirteen were men and nine were women of different ages, most of them between thirty and sixty years (63.64%), being representative of all prison population (Table 1).

The offenses committed by the interviewees were greatly varied. The same applies to their current working situation. Most of interviewed people had a job or had dependents at the moment when they were contacted.

As we have explained, not all these people meet the day release conditions in the same way: some have come to the center to sign, as they have agreed to electronic monitoring, others sleep in the CIS (usually eight hours) at night and go out to work in the daytime. There are even those who are unemployed and are spend almost all their time in the center or in the prison

**Table 1. Description of the sample (N = 22).**

Variable	N (%)
Gender	
Female	9 (40.91)
Male	13 (59.10)
Age	

<30 years old	4 (18.20)
30-60 years old	14 (63.64)
>60 years old	4 (18.18)
<b>Crime</b>	
Homicide and its forms	2 (9.10)
Injuries	7 (31.82)
Against liberty	1 (4.55)
Against property	1 (4.55)
Against public health	9 (40.91)
Falsehoods	1 (4.55)
Obstruction of Justice	1 (4.55)
<b>Current situation</b>	
With work: Self-employed	5 (22.73)
With work: For others	8 (36.36)
With family responsibilities	5 (22.73)
Collecting unemployment	1 (4.55)
Another type of pension charging	2 (9.09)
Seeking employment	1 (4.55)
<b>Prison/Social Integration Center</b>	
CIS “Carmela Arias y Díaz de Rábago” (A Coruña)	9 (40.91)
CIS “Carmen Avendaño” (Vigo, Pontevedra)	9 (40.91)
Bonxe (Lugo)	2 (9.09)
Pereiro de Aguiar (Ourense)	2 (9.09)

## **Findings**

Then we discuss the most relevant aspects of the interviews we have conducted, focusing on the following areas of interviewees’ lives: overall living conditions, work, social and emotional.

### ***Overall***

With regard to the difficulties these people have found when seeking employment, we can make a distinction between those problems that inmates point out as being common to everyone who has been in prison, and other certain barriers which each individual in

his particular experience, has had to overcome. The most common place difficulty respondents mentioned was society's distrust generally of prisoners and former prisoners: "Let's see, it is somewhat because people have misgivings. No matter how much you tell people 'I went to jail for such and such a reason', how are they to know that I am not a murderer or that I will not stab them?"

However, not all inmates believe that society is equally mistrustful of all people who have been in prison, rather they expressed that it depends on the offense committed. Those convicted of drug trafficked, for example, or those who have committed theft are considered more reliable: "People who are average can get hired. Thieves and drug addicts are unwanted. If you're a normal person, only you had financial difficulties, why wouldn't they take you? You're as good as anyone."

Moreover, the inmates highlighted greater difficulties in finding work and leading a normal life beyond the general mistrust of society.

On the one hand, the terms and conditions of open regime sentencing may hamper their ability to hold down a job. People who have electronic monitoring should be home at night by time, while others must return to the center to spend the night, a requirement which is not compatible with all professions. In fact, the schedule is one of the additional burdens faced by people working in such sectors as transportation or hotels, since they do not always fit with the requirements set out in the third degree releases. A thirty years old man, who had been in prison due drugs traffic, stated that: "For example, I would have to leave work at midnight or a little before 1 am, and I go out every day at a quarter to twelve, ten to twelve, because I have to be here at noon. For me it was not an issue, but for others this can be an issue. A person is not completing his shift."

In many cases, inmates do not discuss their conditional release in the first job interview. However, they are forced to mention it when they are going to be hired, because in many cases, they will have to be away a few hours to go to sign papers in the Social Integration Center or to go into the station. Inmates at this point run up against many problems finalizing the hiring process: “It is hard to find work. They do give you work, but once they find out you have a bracelet they think twice about it”.

Another limitation is related to the obligations to be met in third degree is that convicts cannot leave the country, so they cannot work across borders. A trucker man, fifty years old, complained about that: “The thing is that I had a job in which I had to travel. I had to go to Portugal every day and come back. The thing is that with the bracelet, you cannot leave the country. If you leave the country you are breaking the law. I did not know that. I even asked the coordinator the other day. I did not know about that because it is the first time I have been in jail.”

In the case of two gypsy women interviewed, both responded the same way when asked if they believed they would have more difficulty finding employment because of being gypsies or for having been in prison. Both felt that undoubtedly being gypsies was a larger barrier than having been in prison. For example, one of them stated: No, as gypsies they never call us. There are a lot of racism, yet people come from abroad, foreigners, and they give better jobs to foreigners, than to gypsies. Why? We are all Spanish. Spanish citizens should have the same opportunities as foreigners. We, the gypsies, have no luck here. Anyone who says that racism is over here is lying.

These gypsies’ complaints are also frequent in inmates classified in first or second grade, as Novo-Corti, Barreiro-Gen, & Espada-Formoso (2014) have highlighted.

## ***Work life***

When asked about confinement, the majority of respondents performed activities in jail, such as for example, education or vocational courses. However, the activity most common activity among respondents was prison labor and some of which was paid: “I was working in jail, in the vocational workshops and cleaning. I had two jobs, 104 euros, that’s all. Every now and then you would have some spare change, or by not smoking or anything, I could gather enough for a coffee or some other trifle. I earned spare change.”

One of the interviewed women, middle-aged, who was serving her sentence in the Vigo’s CIS, stated as follows:

*And I say, when I went to prison, I knew nothing, and I had to adapt, I had no other alternative, and as I said, everyone was great with me: staff, everything, everything. Even then, I worked in the ninth prison convenience store, then also in the tenth convenience store and I worked in both stores at once. And later I was given electronic monitoring. I went out to work in a workshop. It was about...and I still got the food handler card, to make food. Yes, and they paid us, we paid, yes, we paid five hundred euros each, every student who came out.*

However, not all the prisoners give equal weight to getting a job. There are therefore different points of view: There are those who view work as a means of getting released. Many inmates think of work more as a way of getting out of prison as soon as possible than as a means of ensuring a normal life after leaving the prison. They live thinking about the day to day. Their main goal is to get out of prison. That is why they seek jobs to achieve the third degree status and be closer to release. Thus, some of the inmates of in the CIS do not seeking employment because they have trials pending in the short



term and are aware that it is very likely they will return to prison soon, to the second degree type lockup. Others, however, see the work as a means of leading a normal life and not to become repeat offenders.

Some of those interviewed had never worked legally. However, most of them had a job before entering prison, but, by being imprisoned, not all were able to keep that job. They were forced either to find another job, or decide to work on a freelance basis. Also, the economic crisis our country is in, greatly complicates public and private hiring of new staff. One of the interviewed men, middle-aged, said: "I am self-employed. I do maintenance in a school. That is the job I could find. The job market is really tough. You have to take what comes your way. I thought they would take me in the aluminum business I was in. They are laying people off. Of course they said that when something opened up they would give it to me but I need to be working."

Most of the respondents who had a job, have managed to be readmitted to the same companies where they were working before being incarcerated. In general they were firms related to industry (painting, welding, construction, etc.) or hospitality businesses. A painter man said: "From my work as a painter in the same company. I stopped working, as I said, 'Look, this is happening to me'. They already knew because they had seized my pay check each month. Yes, they knew about the problem and when I left, they hired me back."

Among respondents who were self-employed before entering prison, 60% have their business running while in prison, and once obtaining conditional release, were reinstated, while the other 40% were terminated. One participant explained: "I was self-employed. I had tractors clearing hills. The thing is that when I got arrested, her father, my father-in-law did not know how to run the business and everything went down. I

have to spend another fifty thousand euros on machinery. Yet with the way things are going now, I am not going to spend another fifty thousand on a tractor because it is not worth it for me.”

However, as previously stated, not all people on conditional release have gotten a job. 22.7% of respondents have dependents to provide for family to attend. Among those who did not find a job when granted conditional release, one respondent had applied for unemployment benefits.

### *Social Sphere*

Having the support of family and friends during their stay in prison is very important, but this support is fundamental to adapt to social life when the inmates leave the prison. In fact, one of the women participants, with more than sixty years, stated “If you lack family, then you are died.” As we have seen, some of the respondents have maintained their pre-entry work in prison, because their former employers have relied on them. In other cases, relatives or acquaintances of inmates have gotten them the job.

When asked how they felt about their prospects of finding work, whether through family or through job placement services, respondents chose the first option, as one of the requested women said: “In my town everyone knows what happened. The support was incredible, my parents, my family, everything. On the contrary, once out, a restaurant, another one, friends of my sister, everything, gave me work, I had no problem”.

However, they have general never found a job through job placement service Employment, one of the gypsy women stated: “Through the gypsy association. Yes, yes, we did that when there were hairdressing courses, gardening, we would pay 10,000 pesetas for that one. But we went to the INEM, and they never called us.”

### *Affective relations*

Not all people on conditional release handle it the same way. Not only are there different sentence lengths, but there are many other factors which also play a role such as an individual's personality, available support, the ease in rebuilding his or her life, etc.

Frequently, the inquired people denounce the delay of justice. They felt that the prison sentence had torn their life apart, since the offense for which they were convicted had been committed many years before the trial. One of the queried women states that: "It was a small sentence and it had been years ago since the thing happened. Nine years."

It also bears mentioning, that in many cases, the life destroyed is not only that of the person going to prison, but also the family who depends on the offender as in this case: "My family, just like me, depended on me since I was the one working in the home, so then there was no income coming into the household. I left as much savings as possible and well, although now I was able to start working, recovering a little, because otherwise they would go bankrupt."

Finally, we ended the interview by asking a phrase to sum up their stay in prison. This experience has been negative in the large majority cases, as in the following: "I had to see everything. I had arrhythmias; I was in the Juan Canalejo Hospital. I had a stomach problem, my hair dropped, I lost ten kilos. I was in there for a month and a half, but the month and a half for me was...my life's hell. I had never cried so hard in my life."

However, for some of the interviewees, it has allowed you to change certain things in your life, such as the abandonment of drugs or return to studies: "In a phrase...decisions. I do not know. I helped a lot, helped me much, at least I know where I want to go and where I am going".

## **Analysis of results**

In this section it is being presented the analysis of our results in order to make findings, combining the results obtained in the different spheres of life of those interviewed, as all these areas are interrelated and influence the attainment of a job once the inmates leave prison.

With respect to the overall sphere and mistrust they perceive that society feels toward the prison population and former prisoners, it does not always matter what crime was committed when looking for work. Once the company in which the person is seeking work knows that the person has committed a crime, they usually no longer rely on whether the ex-inmates tell the truth about the crime. It is as if, having committed a crime, the individual loses all credibility and trust with the people who do not know him or her.

With respect to the labor field, the majority of the jobs performed before imprisonment and that they now perform require few skills (fisher, waiter, salesman ...) with some exceptions (lawyer).

However, most people with whom we spoke were accustomed to lead a more or less organized life, with schedules. They had worked before incarceration etc. However, many of the people who are in prison have never had such a life. If we add to this the high percentage of inmates with drug problems, the social and labor inclusion of the prison population grows much more complicated.

Although the results are mixed, depending on the particular characteristics of inmates, it was found that the availability of strong social and family networks is a key for successful job searches. In fact, we found people who had committed very serious crimes, which thanks to the fact that there were people who had trusted them, they are

working. Therefore, after conducting these interviews and further study we realized that it is essential that the inmate have support to establish a normal life after leave the prison. The role the inmate's family plays and social networks he or she can rely on after leaving prison is vital. If the inmate has strong social networks, the schedule compatibility problem which we mentioned in the overall perspective will be easier to resolve, because people will be hired by people close to them. In this way employers are more likely to show greater flexibility when establishing work conditions. If the person worked before entering prison and proved him or herself in that position, it is likely that, if it was done right, the person will be rehired. However, the current economic crisis makes it quite difficult for them to be rehired by their former employers.

The inmates' personality is also important, because individuals with lots of willpower and desire to get away from crime are more likely to achieve his or her goal.

We have observed that people living in criminal environments generally take better to their own imprisonment than those who have committed a one-time crime within the context of an organized life far away from high crime environments.

### ***Analyzing the consequences of stay in prison with respect to employment***

Life in prison has different consequences depending on the type of person who has been private of his or her liberty. Particularly, it hinges on their family situation, their social networks and of their personal way of life and their labor position before offending.

While an important part of interviewed people bears their time in prison as a break in their lives, some of them feel this experience as an opportunity to change some undesirable aspects of their former life.

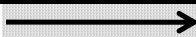

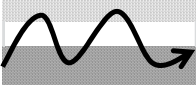
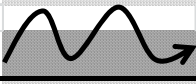
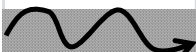

In the following section, according to the data collected, various profiles of inmates be delineated related with prison experience and employment status. In basis to the inmates' life path, their labor situation before and after prison and the interaction of both spheres, this research has found three profiles of inmates, which are shown in Figure 2. In this Figure, it is drawn an arrow to point the path toward social inclusion, it shows the situation before and after dropping at prison, and it is at three possible levels of inclusion situation: low, medium and high exclusion risk.

***Type A: Crime as a befallen act***

Most interviewed people, who were at the time of this research classified in third grade (15 people), used to lead a normal life before crime: they were employees, with family support, no drugs consumption, and with no crime contact, before dropping into prison.

Moreover, for some of them, the trial (and then the conviction) was delayed several years from the crime time, so that the admission to the prison was a real break in life. This goes against the main core of the Spanish prison system goal, established as the full reintegration of inmates to society, which is referred in Article 25.2 of the Spanish Constitution.

**Figure 2. Profiles of inmates related with prison experience, employment status and life story**

	SITUATION BEFORE	AT PRISON	EXPECTED SITUATION AFTER	LEVEL OF EXCLUSION RISK
TYPE A		WORKING		INCLUSIVE SITUATION
				NO RISK
		ASERTIVE		EXCLUSION RISK
TYPE B		NO WORKING		INCLUSIVE SITUATION
		SOME PARTICIPATION		NO RISK
				EXCLUSION RISK
TYPE C		WORKING / NO WORKING		INCLUSIVE SITUATION
				NO RISK
		RESTRICTED SOCIAL NETWORKS		EXCLUSION RISK

Source: Own elaboration

All people included in this group (Type A) have been actually active at prison. They have been involved mainly in working inside the penitentiary: in maintenance, laundry, kitchen, etc. They used to assume properly the timetables and they were easily willing to suit their own job at prison. Moreover, they stated that the main reason to engage in work at prison was that it was the best way for spending their time at prison as fast as possible, which is in accordance with the of prior research (Moner *et al.*, 2009).

For this group (Type A), the entrance at prison shown two different consequences: the labor situation turned worse for five people, due they were not able to find a new job after prison or they couldn't maintain alive their own business while they were at prison; on the other hand, ten people were working back on their former firm or were able to find a job with some known people support (due to networks of family or friends), this agrees with Visher *et al.* (2011) findings. The effects of jail in this Type (A) of inmates are never positive. Although the exclusion risk is low, their own way of live has been strongly beaten for their punishment at prison, and social networks has been the main reason to mitigate their exclusion risk (see Figure 2).

***Type B: At risk exclusion prior to the offense***

Their time at jail has been an added problem to the complicate life for another Type (B) of inmates. Those that is possible to state that they were at the situation defined by Grimm, Hirseland & Vogel (2013) as “stable instability”. Such a situation is characterized by various changes of employment, occupational status and high degree of vital insecurity.

That is the case of two gipsy women interviewed or the situation of another woman with family at prison. Likewise, it is possible to include a man with no family support before

neither after prison. The social break is not so clear for this group of inmates, less linked to family or friends than the other group so called A, since they had not such a structured and standardized life than the type A people.

In this group (B) is not very usual to find a relation between interviewed inmates and the labor market, in fact, only two of the five people in this group had a job before their punishment, the other three people didn't work before neither after prison. In Figure 2, this path is show by an expected fall down in the arrow showing social exclusion risk.

***Type C: At multiple exclusion risk***

While both groups of inmates described above lived their time at prison as a negative process, independently of their level of social integrated and normalized life, in this group, so called Type C, two of the people have stated that their time at prison has been a positive experience. The first case was a woman who consumed drugs and had not family support. She learned a trade in jail, which leads her to retrieve a good relation with her family and go away from drugs consumption, then, she stated that prison had been good for her, because it gave her a new opportunity to change her life. The second situation is a man who was paying the punishment for terrorism. Prison gave him the opportunity of changing: he studied a grade during his punishment time and now he has his own business related to the subject studied in his university career.

These situations show how when people comes from a critical situation, without family support, engaged in drugs or violence matters, they are able to achieve the reconstruction of familiar networks or getting a job, improving substantially their situation in relation with the initial stage.

It must be taken account that the sample used for this research was composite only with inmates at third grade (semi-liberty). They are not representative of all incarcerated



population. If all of them was the analyzed, it would be probably find a much higher percentage of people, that prior their entering in prison, were in trouble with drugs, with weak family links or with serious problems to get or maintain a job (Barreiro, Novo & Ramil, 2013).

In Figure 2, this group is initially in the lower stage, with restricted social networks and no job, so that they be at high exclusion risk, but as it was explained before, inmates can choose the possibility of learning at prison that the best way out of exclusion is collaborate with their own reinsertion, and then the expected situation after prison would be the one showing an arrow upwards shaped, but it is also possible the option of missing this opportunity if inmates are not willing to exploit the benefits of working or learning a trade at prison, falling completely in the net of social exclusion. The path in this case would be the one on the bottom, driving directly to high exclusion risk and frequently to recidivism.

### **Performances proposed and conclusions**

Once again, this work shows the importance of the qualitative research. This method is essential to understand the whole situation of complex groups like prison population.

A possible future line of research could be a study following-up ex-offenders one year after release taking into account the three types explained in the present work. It would suppose a step from static qualitative research to dynamic qualitative research. However, the only possibility to carry out this type of research is through the proactive and voluntary collaboration of post-incarcerated population, because institutions cannot provide information about them once they leave prison due to data protection laws. The longitudinal study will be not viable without their engagement. Therefore, the sample of the study should be smaller, in order to be deeper and more exhaustive.

On the other hand, public social and workforce policies play a crucial role and should be designed with effective mechanisms that work immediately when the inmate, through his or her own means and through family or acquaintances, is unable to get a job.

Therefore, the state should play a subsidiary role, yet in our opinion it should intervene on two fronts:

While we propose the design of inclusive employment policies, which in a general framework to address the specific problems of different groups in risk of exclusion, we suggest, as a “second best”, is maintained at least temporarily, the financial support (subsidies) to associations and NGOs working in the job search for the inmates, accounting the last resort to find it and are acting as substitutes for public institutions. By acting as mediators, they can help reduce general distrust that exists in society towards these people.

Given the finding of a general public distrust toward conditional release grantees, we propose the development of policies that promote self-employment and entrepreneurship among this group, mainly for these situations where family and social networks are weak or is particularly difficult getting a job. In these cases inmates feel that their only opportunity relies in self-employment for escaping from social exclusion spiral (Gallie *et al.*, 2003).

Taking account that public employment is vetoed for inmates and self-employment is especially difficult in the economic crisis context and, in addition, there is the mistrust they perceive that society feels toward the prison population and former prisoners, the State could grant specific aid so that inmates seek self-employment, rather than request unemployment benefits when they are unable to find gainful employment. This would provide support for entrepreneurial minded inmates who need financial support to

launch their business. Also, they would not suffer discrimination for being ex-prisoners going out to companies looking for a job. Naturally, the granting of aid must be accompanied by a rigorous control and proper management of them. We leave open the question of what levels public interventions should be undertaken at because we believe the issue should be the subject of new research.

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