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AXIOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF RESOCIALIZATION AND SOCIAL REINTEGRATION IN THE PREVENTION OF RECIDIVIST CRIME

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ABSTRACT: This article removes the problem of preventing recidivist crime from the narrow technical and legal framework of penal policy and examines it from the standpoint of the axiological foundations of resocialization and social reintegration. The author conceptually distinguishes resocialization, understood as the reconstruction of the individual's internal system of values, from reintegration, understood as the repositioning of the person within social structures, and substantiates that the principal source of recidivism lies precisely in the asymmetry between these two processes. Drawing on the doctrine of the aims of punishment, the criminological characterisation of the offender's personality and the theory of values, the study identifies five core elements of the axiological structure of the former convict: dignity, trust, the meaningful status of labour, family belonging and future time perspective. The empirical findings confirm that the persistence of social closure and stigmatisation after the formal restoration of legal status significantly increases the risk of repeat offending. The article proposes a model of continuous resocialization that links penal institutions, the probation service, the mahalla and the family within a single axiological logic.
Keywords: recidivist crime, resocialization, social reintegration, axiological foundation, hierarchy of values, stigmatisation, aims of punishment, probation, social capital, desistance from crime.

INTRODUCTION

In contemporary criminological thought, recidivist crime occupies a distinct epistemic position, since it functions as the most reliable single indicator of the effectiveness of penal policy. Whereas the general level of criminality depends upon a multifactorial complex encompassing socio-economic conditions, demographic structure and the quality of law enforcement activity, the recidivism rate answers one question directly: was the punishment applied by the state actually capable of transforming the behavioural strategy of the individual? In this sense a repeat offence is not merely a new instance of unlawful conduct but an empirical verdict upon the failure of the preceding punitive and corrective cycle. This methodological standpoint requires that the problem be removed from the technical domain of the execution of sentences and analysed instead at the level of the value structure of the personality.

The conceptual core of the present study consists in a rigorous distinction between two notions that scholarly literature frequently treats as synonyms, thereby obscuring the essence of the problem. Resocialization is an internal, subjective process denoting the reconstruction of the individual's hierarchy of values, normative orientations and self-conception; its outcome is not observable conduct but a transformation of the motivational structure itself. Social reintegration, by contrast, is an external, objective process signifying the repositioning of the person within the systems of labour, family, education, property and civic relations. Although these two processes are interdependent, neither

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automatically generates the other, and it is precisely the asymmetry between them that constitutes the most persistent source of recidivism.

This asymmetry manifests itself in two opposing forms. The first is external placement without internal transformation: the individual is formally employed, provided with accommodation and placed under registration, yet the norms of the criminal subculture retain their dominant position within his value system, so that conduct reverts to the earlier pattern as soon as institutional support is withdrawn. The second is internal transformation without external opportunity: the person has genuinely revised his values and formed a sense of responsibility, but the labour market, the local community and at times the family refuse to extend renewed trust, with the result that the newly formed motivation finds no field of realisation and gradually fades. From a criminological perspective the second form is no less dangerous than the first, since it intensifies the experience of injustice and reactivates the mechanism by which criminal conduct is retrospectively justified.

It is precisely this analysis that substantiates the necessity of an axiological approach. A value is not simply an acknowledged norm but an internal criterion that determines priority in situations of choice. An examination of the axiological structure of the former convict allows five core elements to be isolated. The first is dignity, that is, the individual's perception of himself as a moral subject. The second is trust, understood as belief in the predictability of social relations. The third is the meaningful status of labour, that is, the acceptance of work not as an obligation but as an instrument of self-affirmation. The fourth is family belonging, the most powerful source of a sense of responsibility towards others. The fifth is future time perspective, the capacity to set long-term goals. Empirical research indicates that this last element is among the most reliable predictors of recidivism, for where the temporal horizon has contracted, the long-term costs of crime become psychologically invisible.

In the conditions of Uzbekistan the relevance of this problem is directly connected with the humanising orientation that criminal policy has acquired in recent years. The scope of application of penalties not involving deprivation of liberty has been broadened, the system of education and vocational training within penal institutions has been improved, the social adaptation and employment of persons released from custody have become a distinct field of state activity, and the formation of the institution of probation has made it possible to combine post-release supervision with genuine support. At the same time a distinctive resource of the national social structure, namely the institution of the mahalla and the durability of family relations, offers the process of reintegration an additional opportunity that is absent from other models.

Yet this very social density possesses an ambivalent nature. On the one hand the mahalla and the family constitute for the former convict the shortest channel of reintegration, a source of informal control and of both material and moral support. On the other hand, within a community characterised by a high degree of mutual acquaintance, information concerning a criminal past does not remain concealed, and stigmatisation assumes a considerably more stable form than it does in an anonymous urban environment. In sociological literature this phenomenon is designated social closure: although formal legal status has been fully restored, informal social status has not, and the person remains legally present within society yet socially excluded from it. This contradiction demands dedicated examination within the national context.

An analysis of the available scholarly sources demonstrates that Uzbek legal science has elaborated in considerable depth the doctrine of the aims of punishment, the criminological characterisation of the offender's personality and the legal foundations of the system of prevention, while philosophical

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literature has developed the theory of values and the methodology of spirituality as an independent field. The question standing at the intersection of these two traditions, however, namely through which institutions, at which stages and under which conditions the axiological mechanism of resocialization operates effectively, has not been adequately conceptualised. It is this scholarly lacuna that defines the problem field of the present research.

The aim of the study is to substantiate theoretically the axiological foundations of resocialization and social reintegration in the prevention of recidivist crime and to elaborate an institutional model capable of ensuring their organic interconnection. The following tasks have accordingly been defined: to distinguish conceptually between the notions of resocialization and reintegration; to model the axiological structure of the personality of the former convict; to identify the empirical manifestations of the asymmetry between the two processes; and to substantiate the contours of a continuous model linking penal institutions, probation, the mahalla and the family within a single logic. The subsequent sections of the article successively present the literature review, the methodology, the empirical findings and their discussion within the context of international scholarly debate.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In assessing the degree to which the problem has been elaborated within the national scholarly tradition, the research of Doctor of Legal Sciences, Professor M.H. Rustamboev devoted to the doctrine of punishment serves as the principal theoretical support. In his course of criminal law, punishment is interpreted not as an instrument of retribution or of the infliction of suffering but as a means of attaining the aims established by statute, namely the restoration of social justice, the correction of the convicted person and the prevention of new offences, and it is substantiated that within this hierarchy of aims correction occupies a position of particular significance. The most valuable aspect of Rustamboev's approach for the present study is that it advances a criterion by which the effectiveness of punishment is measured not by its severity but by the degree to which its aims have been achieved: if a convicted person serves the entire term of deprivation of liberty yet returns to society without any alteration of his value orientations, the punishment has been formally executed but has not been substantively accomplished. This thesis removes the problem of recidivism from the confines of penal law and raises it to the level of the structure of the personality.

The second line of inquiry is associated with the criminological research of Doctor of Legal Sciences, Professor Q.R. Abdurasulova. In her textbooks and educational works on criminology, as well as in her studies of the criminological characterisation and prevention of female and juvenile criminality, the personality of the offender is analysed not as a static legal construction but as a dynamic formation shaped through the interaction of the social environment, family relations, educational level and value orientations. Abdurasulova divides the system of prevention into general social, special criminological and individual levels, emphasising that the most delicate and at the same time the most effective link is the individual level, which requires direct engagement with the concrete life situation and value crisis of the particular person. This position carries immediate methodological significance for the present article, since resocialization is in essence the most complex form of prevention operating at the individual level.

A comparative analysis of these two lines of research reveals an important scholarly situation. In the works of M.H. Rustamboev, correction as an aim of punishment is firmly grounded in normative terms, yet the internal, axiological mechanism of correction, that is, the question of how and by what means the hierarchy of values is in fact reconstructed, remains outside the subject matter of legal

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doctrine. In the works of Q.R. Abdurasulova, by contrast, the criminological picture of the interaction between person and environment is drawn in considerable detail, but the principal orientation of the analysis is directed towards the stage preceding the commission of the offence, whereas the post-punitive stage of reintegration receives comparatively limited attention. In other words, in the first case the aim remains without a mechanism, while in the second the mechanism has not been fully transposed to the stage that follows punishment.

From this standpoint the axiological inquiries of philosophical literature may serve as an intermediate link, for they substantiate that a value exists in reality only where it has ceased to be merely acknowledged and has become an actual motive of conduct. The present article seeks to unite these three sources, namely the doctrine of the aims of punishment, the criminological analysis of the personality and the theory of values, within a single conceptual framework.

METHODOLOGY

The methodological foundation of the study consists of an organically connected three-level construction in which the general philosophical level is represented by dialectical and hermeneutic approaches, the general scientific level by systemic-structural, axiological and synergetic approaches, and the specialised scientific level by dogmatic legal analysis together with criminological and socio-legal approaches, the integration of these levels making it possible to analyse the phenomenon of resocialization simultaneously as a legal institution, as a social process and as the internal axiological reconstruction of the personality. The dialectical method has served to examine resocialization as a process of resolving the contradictions between the coercive nature of punishment and the free choice of the individual, between the demand for social protection and the principle of humanity, and between supervision and trust, while the hermeneutic method has ensured the substantive interpretation of normative legal instruments, practice materials and the life narratives of former convicts.

At the theoretical stage the methods of retrospective historical analysis, conceptual synthesis, the differentiation and refinement of concepts, comparative legal analysis, typologisation and modelling have been applied, by means of which the conceptual boundary between the notions of resocialization and social reintegration has been substantiated, the axiological structure of the personality of the former convict has been modelled on the basis of five core elements, and two typological forms of asymmetry have been distinguished; at the same time the texts of penal enforcement legislation, of educational work programmes and of documents concerning the social adaptation of persons released from custody have been processed through the method of content analysis, which has permitted the identification of the relative frequency and contextual use of the categories of supervision, coercion, support, trust and dignity.

The empirical stage was organised within the territory of the Namangan region and involved 180 persons released from custody who had spent varying periods at liberty, together with 96 experts selected from among probation inspectors, mahalla activists, psychologists and employers; data were collected through the combined application of a standardised questionnaire survey, in-depth semi-structured interviews, the biographical method of analysing life-course narratives, documentary study, observation and expert assessment, while the level of resocialization was measured on the basis of three criteria, namely the value-motivational, the socio-communicative and the behavioural, together with a corresponding system of low, medium and high levels.

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In processing the data obtained, a combination of quantitative and qualitative analysis was employed, including descriptive statistics, Pearson's chi-squared test for the comparison of distributions, Student's t-test for evaluating the significance of intergroup differences, correlation analysis for establishing relationships between variables and elements of multifactorial regression analysis for isolating the predictors of recidivism risk, while the qualitative narratives were generalised through thematic coding and triangulated against the quantitative findings; at the concluding stage the methods of SWOT analysis and scenario modelling were used to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the existing system of resocialization and, on that basis, to substantiate the contours of a model of continuous axiological support.

RESULTS

The findings of the study first of all confirmed empirically the hypothesis of asymmetry advanced at the theoretical level: while a considerable proportion of respondents displayed satisfactory indicators of formal reintegration, including the availability of accommodation, official registration and return to the family, their indicators according to the value-motivational criterion proved markedly low, which demonstrates that external placement has outpaced internal reconstruction and confirms that it is precisely within this group that the probability of repeat offending was assessed as highest.

The results of the content analysis disclosed the institutional root of this asymmetry: within the texts of the documents examined, the frequency of the categories of supervision, registration, obligation and restriction proved several times higher than the frequency of the categories of support, trust, dignity and social restoration, which is to say that the linguistic and conceptual core of post-punitive practice is constructed upon a supervisory logic while the restorative logic remains at the periphery; this circumstance leads the former convict to perceive the process of reintegration as a continuation of punishment and diminishes his activity as a subject of that process.

The analysis of data relating to the individual elements of the axiological structure made it possible to identify the weakest link: indicators of dignity and trust displayed the lowest values across all groups, while the meaningful status of labour was recorded among the majority of respondents in an instrumental interpretation, that is, solely as a source of income, whereas within the group of respondents who accepted labour as an instrument of self-affirmation all other indicators were consistently higher; the analysis of future time perspective, for its part, revealed that among persons whose planning horizon extended to less than one year the risk of recidivism was assessed as significantly elevated, thereby confirming the prognostic value of this indicator.

Correlation analysis yielded one of the most significant conclusions of the study: a strong positive relationship was established between the level of resocialization and the social ties supporting the individual, the decisive factor proving to be not the quantity of such ties but their quality, namely the existence of at least one stable relationship free of accusatory attitudes; among respondents whose family relations had been preserved and who received informal support at the level of the mahalla, indicators across all criteria were significantly higher than within the socially isolated group, which confirms empirically the reintegrative potential of the national social structure.

The results of the expert survey and the biographical interviews supplemented the foregoing conclusions by recording three principal obstacles to the process of reintegration: the functioning of information concerning a criminal past as an informal filter in matters of employment, the lack of continuity between educational work within the penal institution and support following release, and the prolonged persistence of stigma within the local community. Taken as a whole, the findings

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demonstrate that the decisive condition for overcoming recidivism is not the intensification of supervision but the coordination, in both temporal and substantive terms, of the internal axiological mechanism of resocialization with the external institutional opportunities of reintegration.

DISCUSSION

Interpreting the findings within the context of international scholarly discourse requires recourse to one of the most substantive conceptual debates in contemporary criminology, namely the polemic between the American sociologist Robert Sampson and the British criminologist Shadd Maruna, for this debate bears directly upon the question of the principal source of desistance from crime. In the age-graded theory of informal social control developed by R. Sampson together with J. Laub, the decisive factor of desistance is identified in structural turning points such as stable marriage, steady employment and other events binding the individual into a new system of social obligations. Sampson's central thesis holds that change is not the product of a conscious decision but the consequence of structural commitment generated by new social bonds: once a person possesses something worth losing, the opportunity cost of crime rises sharply and conduct is reorganised of its own accord.

Sh. Maruna, by contrast, advances a systematic objection to this structural determinism and, on the basis of an analysis of the life narratives of former convicts, locates the core of desistance in the narrative reconstruction of identity. In his view, the reason why one of two persons possessing identical structural opportunities abandons criminal activity while the other persists lies not in external circumstances but in the manner in which each narrates his own life: those who desist construct a redemption narrative in which past criminal experience is interpreted not as the essence of their personality but as a stage that has been overcome, and discover within themselves a genuine and originally present positive core. On this basis Maruna criticises the structural approach: employment and family do not generate desistance but rather consolidate an internal change already under way, which is to say that the direction of the causal relationship is the reverse of that asserted by Sampson.

The third pole of the debate is constituted by the theory of reintegrative shaming developed by the Australian criminologist John Braithwaite, in which two types of shaming are rigorously distinguished: stigmatising shaming severs the individual from society and drives him towards the criminal subculture, whereas reintegrative shaming condemns the act while preserving the person's membership of the community. Braithwaite thereby partially resolves the contradiction between Sampson and Maruna, since he identifies the mediating link between social structure and internal identity, namely the moral attitude adopted by the community itself.

This debate provides an important orientation for the interpretation of the present findings. Our data partially confirm Sampson's position, since indicators proved consistently higher among respondents whose family ties had been preserved and who had entered into stable labour relations. At the same time, the fact that the decisive significance attached not to employment as such but to its acceptance in a meaningful rather than an instrumental interpretation supports Maruna's objection, for what operates is not the workplace itself but its meaning within the individual's narrative. Braithwaite's conception, finally, acquires particular importance for the national context, since the institution of the mahalla may by its very nature become an instrument either of stigmatising or of reintegrative shaming, and the direction in which it operates ought to be the subject of deliberate legal and moral-educational policy.

CONCLUSION

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The study has made it possible to substantiate that the problem of overcoming recidivist crime is resolved not at the level of the severity of punishment or the density of supervision but at the level of correspondence between the internal axiological mechanism of resocialization and the external institutional opportunities of reintegration. The conceptual differentiation of these two processes identifies with precision the genuine source of the problem, namely the asymmetry existing between them.

The axiological structure of the personality of the former convict comprises the elements of dignity, trust, the meaningful status of labour, family belonging and future time perspective, and the empirical data recorded dignity and trust as the weakest links within that structure. The contraction of future time perspective, in turn, emerged as one of the most reliable predictors of the risk of repeat offending. Content analysis demonstrated that the conceptual core of post-punitive practice is constructed upon a supervisory logic while the restorative logic remains peripheral. Correlation analysis established that the decisive factor is not the quantity of social ties but the existence of at least one stable relationship free of accusatory attitudes, which confirms the reintegrative potential of the institutions of the mahalla and the family.

On this basis the following recommendations are advanced: to introduce a unified resocialization programme ensuring substantive and temporal continuity between educational work within the penal institution and support following release; to rebalance the content of probation activity from the function of supervision towards the function of support; to develop incentive mechanisms in the sphere of employment capable of reducing the effect of informal filters based upon a criminal past; to create dedicated methodological provision for mahalla activists and psychologists grounded in the principles of reintegrative shaming; and to establish a system for evaluating the effectiveness of resocialization on the basis of axiological rather than formal indicators. The consistent implementation of these directions would serve both to reduce the level of recidivism and to strengthen the humanistic content of criminal policy.

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