

Difficulties and Challenges in an Employment Supervision Program for Paroled Prisoners

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Abstract: The integration of paroled prisoners in employment is presented in the theoretical and research-based literature as one of the principal means of achieving successful re-entry by the prisoners into the community. The literature deals extensively with the correlation between integration and perseverance in employment and risk indices, the most pronounced of which is a return to crime. According to the Theory of Desistance from Crime, it is not enough for criminal activity to cease; a complex process must set in motion to bring about a change in perceptions and behaviour in all walks of life, especially regarding employment. A key program being implemented by Israel's Prisoner Rehabilitation Authority is one involving an employment guidance and supervision program for paroled prisoners. The program emphasizes employment in all its facets – placement, support during the period of employment and supervision during parole – alongside psychological treatment and rehabilitation in the community. Operating the program are employment supervisors and psychotherapists. In order to understand how the program is managed and perceived by its operators, in-depth interviews were conducted with seven psychotherapists and employment counsellors in the framework of the present qualitative-interpretive research. The article describes the perceptions of the personnel responsible for running the program during the period 2018-2020. The findings of the research highlight the difficulties and limitations the prisoners face, harmony and dissonance in the encounter between supervisors and psychotherapists, the dilemma over protection of society vs. assistance to the prisoners, employment characteristics as indicative of the rehabilitation process, and the merits of the program. The article also discusses the contribution of employment supervision to successful reintegration of paroled prisoners in normative employment and society.

Keywords: Employment, ex-prisoners, parole, perceptions.

INTRODUCTION

The past decade has witnessed a distinct rise in research interest in employment programs for paroled prisoners (e.g. Cook *et al.*, 2015; Duwe & Clark, 2017; Redcross *et al.*, 2012). Employment is a crucial starting point in integration of the paroled prisoner in society, serving as a legitimate source of income as well as an important item in the individual's routine activities (Bucklen & Zajac, 2009; Bushway & Apel, 2012; LeBel, Burnett, Maruna & Bushway, 2008). Despite the considerable impact of employment on desistance from crime, some claim that the effect is indirect (Aaltonen, 2016; Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990; Haines, 1990; McCord, 1990; Visher & Courtney, 2006), or that employment on its own is not a game changer (Aaltonen, 2016; Visher & Courtney, 2006).

The importance attached to employment as a means of reintegration into the community notwithstanding, many paroled prisoners find it difficult to find work or persevere in work over time (Bloom, 2006; Davis, 2013; Davis *et al.*, 2014; Solomon, 2004). There are even a number of countries in which prisoners convicted of criminal offences are prevented from working in government or public jobs (Bloom, 2006; Holzer, Raphael, & Stoll, 2003; Pager, 2003).

In Israel, the Prisoner Rehabilitation Authority is authorized by law (Parole Law, 5761 – 2001) to prepare programs for supervising and guiding paroled prisoners. A key program of the Authority is one that includes supervision, rehabilitation and psychological treatment in the community, with the emphasis on placement in employment and employment guidance during the early release period (Peled-Laskov *et al.*, 2018). The program is staffed by employment consultants working side by side with psychotherapists.

The present qualitative research attempts to examine through the eyes of supervisors and psychotherapists how the employment program is managed and perceived, and what are the main difficulties and challenges facing paroled prisoners who participate in the program? Along with that the difficulties and challenges with the personnel responsible for running the program have to cope.

REHABILITATION THROUGH EMPLOYMENT FOR EX-PRISONERS

Programs for prisoner rehabilitation through integration in employment have held high appeal in the Western world (Nathan, 2010). According to Human Capital Theory (1964), people with education and extensive employment experience relatively more occupational opportunities. Thus, employers base their decision to hire a candidate principally on their education, experience and skills acquired in performing

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certain duties (Becker, 1964). However, as seen from research findings, many released prisoners do not meet the above criteria (Petersilia, 2003; Ramakers *et al.*, 2015). Low education and cognitive abilities are typical of many ex-convicts (Bloom, 2006; Davis *et al.*, 2014; Lawrence *et al.*, 2002; Saylor & Gaes, 1997) as are, *inter alia*, meagre employment experience and poor work skills (Cullen & Gendreau, 2000; Davis *et al.*, 2014; Gaes *et al.*, 1999; Visher *et al.*, 2005), low self-esteem, and negative expectations with respect to their ability to be accepted for work (Saylor & Gaes, 1997). These characteristics could lower their chances of finding a place in the job market (Bloom, 2006; Lawrence *et al.*, 2002) or maintaining their jobs over time.

Additional obstacles derive from the poor family and friend-based support network found among released prisoners. Connections of this nature can be helpful in finding work through other employed individuals (Berg & Huebner, 2011; Lin, 1986; Souza, Lösel, Markson, & Lanskey, 2013), enabling the released prisoner in more speedy integration into a job. However, many employers, appear to be diffident about hiring released prisoners (Bloom, 2006; Davis, 2013; Mosley, 2019).

A further obstacle is wage level. According to literature, the average wage earned by released prisoners is lower than the mean wage (Geller, Garfinkel, & Western, 2006). Moreover, many ex-convicts owe heavily in the way of debts and fines (Pogrebin, West-Smith, Walker, & Unnithan, 2014), so that their integration into employment frameworks constitutes an important component in their process of rehabilitation, even serving as a turning point in their criminal career (Duwe, 2015a, 2015b; Gillis & Nafekh, 2005; Sampson & Laub, 1993; Skardhamar & Telle, 2012).

According to the Desistance from Crime Theory (Ward & Maruna, 2007), successful rehabilitation is a long-term process, encompassing a broad set of individuals, social and structural aspects. Desistance from crime necessitates reference to an extensive process that includes not only cessation of criminal activity but also the ability to sustain the motivation to do so while maintaining a positive self-image (Bersani & Doherty, 2018; Laub & Sampson, 2001; LeBel, Burnett, Maruna, & Bushway, 2008). Occupational and training programs for prisoners enable them first and foremost to acquire employment experience, work habits, financial stability and a positive, normative reference group, thus strengthening them in terms of

their readiness for rehabilitation (Hunter & Boyce, 2009; Maguire, 1996; Sampson & Laub, 1993; Warr, 1998). Emphasis has begun to be placed in recent years on additional skills such as interpersonal communication, team work, adherence to goals, problem solving, adaptation to changes, time planning, and attention to safety at work (Latendresse & Cortoni, 2005).

Released prisoners are often classified as being low in motivation and personal organization (Social Exclusion Unit, 2002). In Britain, for example, it was found that seventy percent of released prisoners who claimed they would begin to look for work or professional training on release did not keep to their word (Home Office, 2001). Various organizations lending assistance to released prisoners reported that many did not attend the work interviews that had been fixed for them. It was also found that a criminal record affects the future wage level and stability at work (Bushway, 1998; Western, Kling, & Weiman, 2001). Additional obstacles in the way of released prisoners in finding and persevering in work are a lack of suitable training, an absence of employment experience, and transportation difficulties.

Research studies show that social support and assistance in finding work have a considerable impact on the released prisoner's ability to find a job in the community and keep it over a period of time (Cherney & Fitzgerald, 2016; Gillis & Andrews, 2005; Rakis, 2005). An ability to live with stigma, a supportive family, steady work before incarceration, contacts with employers prior to release, a worthy job and steady employment have also been identified as factors raising the probability that the released prisoner will find work and persevere in it (Novo-Corti & Barreiro-Gen, 2015; Ramakers, Nieuwbeerta, Van Wilsem, & Dirkzwager, 2016; Tharshini, Ibrahim, Mohamad, & Zakaria, 2018; Visher, Debus-Sherrill, & Yahner, 2011).

On the other hand, drug use, health problems, mental disturbances, advancing age, family problems, membership in a minority group, and financial indebtedness have been found to lower the chances of employment of released prisoners (Decker, Ortiz, Spohn, & Hedberg, 2015; Pogrebin *et al.*, 2014; Visher *et al.*, 2011).

THE ISRAELI EMPLOYMENT SUPERVISION PROGRAM

Against the background of the many difficulties involved in integration and perseverance in meaningful

employment, the Israeli Prisoner Rehabilitation Authority has operated a supervision program that provides guidance and advice for released prisoners by employment counsellors who also offer support and practice supervision (Efodi, 2014), factors that are essential for integration in employment and perseverance in a job over time (Bialer & Peled, 2011; Shoham, Efodi, & Yehosha, 2015).

Every paroled prisoner included in the employment supervision program is also required to participate in a psychological treatment program geared to the type of offence he committed, his criminal past, his personality and other factors. Participation in the psychological treatment program twice a week, once individually and once as part of a group where each session lasts 50 minutes. The prisoner's consent to participate in the program, following its approval, must be obtained prior to his release from prison (Peled-Laskov, Shoham, & Cojocar, 2019).

The professionals accompanying the program include psychotherapists and employment counsellors. The psychotherapists being social workers, clinical criminologists, psychiatrists, and other trained personnel. Once the prisoner is found suitable, a program is prepared for him for presentation to the Parole Committee. The employment counsellors, whose backgrounds include criminology and education, are responsible for checking the suitability of the workplace proposed by the prisoner, supervising him and attending to his needs in all matters relating to employment. They are also responsible for finding additional places of work, mobilizing employers, and providing occupational training for the prisoner. After his early release from prison the parole prisoner meets with an employment counsellor from the Prisoner Rehabilitation Authority and community psychotherapists. Participation in the program is conditional, among other things, on cooperation with the relevant prison personnel and on being drug-free.

Although research has been conducted to examine the effectiveness of such programs based on indices showing proclivity towards criminal activity (Peled-Laskov & Bialer, 2013; Peled-Laskov, Shoham, & Cojocar, 2019), to our knowledge no research has focused on the manner in which the programs are perceived by their operators. The present study seeks to explore the challenges and obstacles facing the released prisoners participating in the program, as well as the contribution of the supervision employment program to successful integration of paroled prisoners in a normative cycle of life.

METHOD

The present research is a qualitative-interpretative study (Shkedi, 2003). In order to understand the attitude of the counsellors and psychotherapists towards the employment supervision program, the researchers met with the Authority's research officer and obtained his approval for conducting the research. Subsequently, a meeting was held with the employment officer, who presented a general outline of the program's features. In the following stage in-depth interviews were held with seven of the employment counsellors and psychotherapists in central Israel.

All the interviews were held at the central offices of the Prisoner Rehabilitation Authority, each interview lasting for 45 minutes to one hour.

An interview guide was produced based on the literature in the field of prisoner correctional programs (e.g. Andrews & Bonta, 2010) as well as on the CPAI guide, which is geared to the evaluation of therapy programs based on empirical criteria (Gendreau *et al.*, 2010). The guide included principally questions relating to admission to and classification in the program, definition of success or failure in integration, and the program's contribution to the prisoner's return to the community. The guide also included questions on professional background and experience.

Analysis of the interviews were performed in three stages. In the first stage the interviews were transcribed and forwarded to two judges working with released prisoners for the purpose of identifying and classifying the primary and secondary themes. In the second stage, following identification of the primary themes, the interviews were analysed by each of the researchers separately; at this stage secondary themes deriving from the interviews were added. In the third stage the separate analyses of the researchers were cross-referenced and merged, while a differentiation was made between all the secondary themes arising from the statements of the counsellors and psychotherapists (for identification and construction of themes, see Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

FINDINGS

Five primary themes emerged from the interviews with the psychotherapists and employment counsellors, relating to: 1. The gap between the rhetoric and the practice – obstacles and limitations in the way of the supervision and guidance process and in the released prisoner's integration into the work force. 2. The

existing tension between the supervisory and psychological treatment aspects of the program. 3. The dilemma between the risk to society and the rights of the released prisoner. 4. Is it really possible to transform law-breakers? 5. The advantages of the employment supervision program. As stated, for each of the primary themes a number of secondary themes were found based on the subjects raised in interviews with the counsellors and psychotherapists.

The first, broadest theme, encompassing a large number of subjects, dealt with the obstacles and limitations in the way of the prisoner seeking to integrate into the job market following parole.

1. From Theory to Practice: Obstacles and Limitations

1a. Work Load and Burnout among the Interviewees

According to the employment counsellors, they find themselves battling on several fronts at the same time against both internal and external elements, without sufficient manpower for successfully surmounting the difficulties. Extreme frustration is expressed by them over the fact that the various authorities, including their own, do not provide them with suitable tools to succeed in their endeavours. According to them, the considerable importance in the professional literature attached to employment (Duwe, 2015a; 2015b; Gillis & Nafekh, 2005) as a means of reintegrating released prisoners and helping them to desist from crime finds no expression in the facilities available to them. As stated by one of the counsellors: *"Our situation is bad. I keep maintaining that the number of supervisees under each employment counsellor is impossible. It's a question of extinguishing fires instead of an in-depth approach... in my eyes this is one of the main obstructions leading to an increase in recidivism. Not enough is invested in employment ... neither the state nor the Prisoner Rehabilitation Authority treats this seriously ... there is no standardization with respect to employment, which is why things look the way they do"*.

Counsellor: *"Each year 1,900 prisoners are paroled. Which means that there is one employment counsellor for every 190 who are under supervision... The feeling is one of collapse. The number of supervisees has risen and only the number of employment counsellors has remained the same ..."*.

The psychotherapists too, like the counsellors, describe an extremely high work load, alongside a

feeling that the organization as a whole is not providing financial and other resources commensurate with the high importance attached to employment in the process of integration into society. Psychotherapist: *"To my regret, the resources in the Authority are extremely meagre. That is, I can provide you with psychological treatment till tomorrow, but if I cannot give you a loaf of bread, then ... the economic question is the key issue in crime, it is the core issue in crime and that is sad"*. Another psychotherapist: *"The workplace is where they spend most of their time during their period of rehabilitation. Certainly, more time than that spent in talks and group work. It's not possible to rehabilitate without work. I think that the more work is in line with the process the more it succeeds"*.

The small number of personnel engaged in guidance and employment supervision vis-à-vis the large number of paroled prisoners, their attributes, and the high work load the employment counsellors have to bear raise issues, as stated, of burnout and frustration. As expressed by one of the employment counsellors: *"People are mobilized for loads of assignments and serve on several interfaces: once as marketing expert, another time offering containment, and again as supervisor. This calls for a huge number of skills and standardization is extremely problematic. A lot of people approach us, a lot, our timetable is tight, people call all the time, telephone calls everywhere, whimpering. It's emotional burnout. There is no venting, no guidance"*.

Alongside the shortage of personnel, the counsellors also refer to the outdated technology that is not in keeping with the work needs. *"The organization is not computerized. Everything is on the staff's shoulders, insofar as they are involved..... The Authority does not fully subsidize public transport. The counsellor is expected to visit employers but travel is not funded in full"*.

1b. Limitations Imposed by the Parole Committee

Prisoner parole in Israel is regulated through the Parole Law (2001) and implemented through the Parole Committee operating under the Ministry of Justice and comprising a retired judge and two professionals, such as a criminologist and social worker. The Prisoner Rehabilitation Authority (together with private psychotherapists) is responsible for presenting the program for supervision and rehabilitation of the prisoner in the final third of his sentence – a program that must also include a place of employment.

The Committee imposes several limitations on the place of work proposed by the Authority personnel, whether based strictly on the provisions of the law or on a very broad interpretation of these provisions, and supervises implementation through follow-up committees. *"There are places of work that are not approved: work in a self-employed establishment, work with a family member (the exact relationship must be defined), work with an employer who has a criminal record ... the entire system does not allow me to match an employer to a prisoner. It's terribly difficult to put things together. Till one finds suitable employment ... there is a huge gap between the rhetoric and the practice"*.

The employment counsellors also describe the prolonged, cumbersome dealings with the Parole Committee, which also acts as the authorized agency for rubber stamping any change in the place of work originally selected in prison. As explained by an employment counsellor: *"It takes a month and a half to approve a change in the place of work, and meanwhile the person is not allowed to begin work so long as there is no approval!! The more leeway we are given in terms of our discretion regarding the possibility of setting up a self-employed business the more he profits, the less the risks ... these businesses have begun to run up debts. The business has been inactive for a long time, the family has had no livelihood. Let me, as an independent entity, use my discretion and help me supervise"*.

1c. Jumping Hurdles

The interviewees describe the difficulties placed in their way by the Parole Committee, referring to them as the "four aitches" for the four principal "hurdles" set up by the committee with respect to a possible place of work. This is despite the discretion displayed by the employment counsellors, who in many cases view the obstacles as unnecessary and at times even harmful. *"The hurdles by the Parole Committee are, for example, overnight detention. This is rooted in the program without looking at the person. Our discretion does not count in the face of the dry facts of the committee ... lots of times there is information with the police but as far as we are concerned it is classified. For example, if this is because of the criminal past of the employer, even if the offence was committed 30 years, but an employer with a criminal past can be rehabilitated and he would be the best person to save [the prisoner]. But technically he is not allowed to do so. At times we circumvent this ... try to break it down*

and remove the obstacles because we see their motivation and then rehabilitation would be better ... we see the frustration. We are at one with him in the battle".

One of the psychotherapists said *"The Committee is only supposed to provide guidelines"*. *"We at the PRA [Prisoner Rehabilitation Authority] see the capacity and the need to be flexible ... the problem is that the Parole Committee is extremely strict. And if 15 years ago he [the prisoner standing before the committee] used drugs ... the judge on the Committee could send him back to the PRA and say, wait a minute, what about the matter of addiction? So, either you give us a mandate and trust what we have seen or not"*.

Another psychotherapist explained: *"Unimaginable things are happening, unimaginable! For example, a prisoner who received topmost treatment here for two and a half years. He is manager of a banquet hall and is under house arrest from 11 p.m. On Passover he asked to go on vacation with his wife. The Committee was opposed to it because there was some sort of violation. Nobody knows what it was about. As a result of the violation another meeting was held by the Committee. The police response was that the man was not at home at 11:30 p.m. I sent a clarification to the judge stating that the prisoner had obtained approval to be away from home till 1:00 a.m. This prisoner was on his way to issuing a petition and I was behind him"*. The same psychotherapist notes: *"It's just not right that the committee add in the conditions of parole that compensation must be paid, making us apply to the Law Enforcement and Collection Authority for allowing the payment to be made in instalments. If this is one of the conditions of parole then I would want to change this condition. Actually, I am the link that connects between the parole committees"*.

Although there are cases in which the Committee, despite opposition from the police and the state attorney, accepts the position of the Prisoner Rehabilitation Authority and releases the prisoner, the psychotherapists feel that there is not enough cooperation between them and the Committee and suggest that a representative of the Authority sit in the Committee. *"I always say that without a representation of the Prisoner Rehabilitation Authority in the Parole Committee changes will take place but at a much slower pace and meanwhile there are prisoners (souls) that are paying the price"*.

1d. Unsuitable Employers and Low Prisoner Wages

The psychotherapists regard employment as an important component in the psychological treatment process and thus wax eloquent over the merits of employment and the obstacles that are strewn in the way of the paroled prisoner in the course of his integration in employment, noting as an example the low wage he receives and the difficulty in finding suitable employers.

The literature describes the concerns that employers have about hiring paroled prisoners (Shoham & Timor, 2016), among other things, because of the stigma borne by the prisoners (Travis, 2002). The psychotherapists told about the difficulty in finding employers who would be willing to take on a paroled prisoner. *"Lots of employers are unwilling to accept prisoners"*.

"There's a lot of stigma, a lot of apprehension ... we do not have enough manpower or relevant employers. There are prisoners who say that they prefer to state that they are prisoners on parole from the outset. Others feel they are being restricted".....

"The prisoners feel they are being shackled in the matter of the prisoner's work", adding a quote from a prisoner: "You want the employer to write that he knows I am a paroled prisoner, you want work under conditions in which even a normative individual would find it difficult to survive". She continues: "I think the solution could be, among other things, to speak with the large offices because at present we work with so many small concerns. The employers have to have government help here... an additional benefit, something that will support and incentivize them ... our work at present is one on one".

The employment counsellors also referred to the difficulty in finding employers. One of the counsellors raised the possibility of recruiting "friendly employers" (for details on friendly employers see Peled-Laskov & Bailer, 2013). *"Over time we have acquired an inventory of friendly employers. They see the advantages in having cheap labour under supervision. We have also had greater success with small and medium-size employers. They are able to contain the situation. Large chains and major industries are less able to be containing. Which is a pity since large chains would be able to offer promotions. The employers do not enjoy state benefits. Some marketing strategy is needed but we do not have the time to develop connections with employers. It's out of our reach ... the*

state knows how important employment is but when it comes to the prisoner it's as though it's no longer relevant".

Alongside the unwillingness on the part of employers to hire paroled prisoners, another barrier exists, namely, the wage level. It is found that prisoners typically earn an hourly wage that is 14 to 26% lower than that of citizens with no criminal past (Geller, Garfinkel, & Western, 2006).

Psychotherapist: *"I claim that it is the height of immorality for a person to work and not earn a decent livelihood. It's a message that is anti-rehabilitative. People who have accumulated debts and fines, almost all my charges are in the throes of procedures with the Debt Enforcement and Collection Authority over debts that grew during their period of incarceration,... in addition there is a desire on their part to do right by the family. It's a terrible feeling to be a father who once earned a heap of money by dubious means and to not have enough now to buy anything for his children"*.

1e. Supervision in a Multicultural Society

The challenge of the employment supervision program is brought into sharper focus against the backdrop of the social and cultural schisms existing in Israeli society. Prisoners on parole constitute a highly heterogeneous population. A considerable number of the paroled prisoners come from areas where security and welfare agencies are not to be found. The counsellors describe a feeling of apprehension and insecurity in a large number of places where they are expected to operate. In the words of one of the counsellors: *"M goes to supervise in a Bedouin area, which is very large. The women are afraid to enter Arab villages. So, go find people who are suited for this – men, Arabic-speaking, who will go into the field there. They should have set up an entity for supervision on the ground. A police van with officers in uniform to go there. If the social workers were to hear me, G'd help me ..."*.

Despite the high heterogeneity of the group of paroled prisoners, the issue of cultural diversity and adjustment of treatment content to the variegated population, e.g. Jews and Arabs, was never raised by the psychotherapists.

1f. Information from Intelligence Sources

An additional obstacle that was raised in the context of psychological treatment related to information from intelligence sources that could put a spoke in the wheel

with respect to treatment activities, and the fact that it was beyond the control of the psychotherapists. As described by two psychotherapists: *"It's okay for the police to divulge intelligence but the information must also reach the agencies entrusted with psychological treatment. I feel that the Prisoner Rehabilitation Authority lays everything on the table, but there are entities that cover things up on the pretext of security and stuff ... they use this to their advantage. I think this is something that is not scrutinized sufficiently. Here is an additional entity, which is the police. Cooperation must be reciprocal, in both directions. At times, when I send an application to the Committee, I know which prisoner will receive it and which not. At times all sorts of applications are received and at times applications are dropped, and we don't even know over what. This is under the cloak of 'intelligence information', an external reality which must be faced"*.

Another psychotherapist said: *"In the matter of intelligence information, I wouldn't even know! And it's not a rare occurrence, is it? It happens a lot! And moreover, the response of the police refers to psychological treatment ... but wait a minute, the mandate for treatment lies with us and not the police. You are responsible for supervision and the judges accept this, and the state's attorney is having a field day over it! It's a catastrophe. There is no sense of proportion!"*.

1g. Lack of Continuity

The research literature attaches great importance to the continuity between the prison and the authorities handling prisoners following parole as part of the attempt at integrating them back into a normative community (Shoham, Zelig, Hasisi, Weisburd, & Haviv, 2019). This continuity relates to a variety of domains, among them psychological treatment and employment. According to the interviewees' statements, there is a lack of continuity, with even a certain disconnect from the work that is being done within the prison walls, particularly as regards employment. *"One of the key obstacles existing is in the sphere of information transmission. The Prison Service now has a computer system. I am fighting a battle to have all information in written form. The reports keep repeating themselves in copy and paste fashion. There is no reference to how the prisoner is functioning in employment; it does not appear in the reports, and this is a great pity. I have opened hundreds of reports and there is no mention of it ... the state invests a lot but there is no follow through. Something is out of sync. Nothing is*

documented; professional training in prison, activities engaged in prison, even the work is not documented. The employment officers do not report on how he is. There is nothing about what his occupation was before imprisonment".

Another counsellor adds: *"I meet with the prisoner here and begin to ask him everything from scratch. There is no state database that will give the status of employment: number of study years, past employment, all that happened in prison (in terms of employment)"*.

2. Supervision vis-à-vis Psychological Treatment

2a. Shades of Harmony between Psychological Treatment and Supervision

At the start of the interview the employment counsellors described the cooperation existing with the psychotherapists accompanying the paroled prisoner. On probing further, however, various issues surfaced, attesting to the encounter between the two professions being fraught with a certain dissonance.

According to the interviewees, there is no clear-cut differentiation between psychological treatment and supervision, and the two in fact form a synergetic mix. According to one counsellor: *"A dichotomy is supposedly formed between supervision and rehabilitation, although I see them going hand in hand. As far as I am concerned, the goal is the same. Psychological treatment is authoritarian, while guidance contains elements of supervision. Guidance and supervision must be performed empathically and humanely. Any one of them cannot be stripped away, a balance must always be found. The prisoner must be returned to society and it must all be done together – guidance and supervision"*.

Another counsellor said: *"Mutual communication with the psychotherapist is always ongoing. At times issues are raised in conversations with them. And then I fix a meeting with the prisoner. At times psychological treatment is over when the psychotherapist feels the need for it and she calls me. It does not happen frequently ... if in the psychological treatment groups certain content comes to the fore that is associated with employment problems the psychotherapist will update the employment counsellor"*.

The employment counsellors view their role as being less one of supervision and more as support and advice. The job of the counsellor is to explain the meaning of supervision, he is the one to whom the

payslip is presented, and he is the contact person for the Parole Committee. The paroled prisoner is required to update the counsellor when he is ill or has a problem. *"I explain to him that he has to bring any difficulties he has in work itself to the surface, not to keep things bottled up, so that we can deal with it. Not to leave a place of work without thinking ahead"*. A psychotherapist in the program agrees with this conception but at the same time emphasizes the element of supervision: *"I think our program has first and foremost something very supervisory which the Parole Committee relies on greatly"*.

Despite the supposition that the employment counsellors will give due weight to supervision and successful employment whereas the psychotherapists will focus on psychological and personal content that comes to the fore in the treatment room, there appears to be no clear-cut separation between the two disciplines as regards intervention. Both populations recognize the importance of the employment component in their respective interventions.

2b. Shades of Dissonance between Psychological Treatment and Supervision

The different types of intervention applied by different agents, using a different language and in many cases rooted in different social science disciplines, could lead to disconnects between psychological treatment and employment counselling and supervision. This dissonance has indeed found expression, principally among the employment counsellors.

Counsellor: *"Disciplinary fights are being fought. Psychological treatment in the room is receiving some weight and it's as though the rest is just extra. I believe that first of all the emphasis must be placed on employment. It's all a question of attitude. From the viewpoint of the psychotherapist, treatment in the room is central, what's done in the room for a period of 45 minutes"*.

According to the employment counsellor, treatment in the closed room is to a great extent administered under semi-sterile laboratory conditions so that it does not constitute a genuine or valid response to the difficulties the paroled prisoners are experiencing. *"The language must change. The language inside the treatment room is confined. The prisoner then emerges to interact with the community. It's rote recitation. In the final analysis the prisoner goes up to the employer: erupts, and all...the social workers have no concept of*

a payslip. Without appreciating the pay-slip they cannot understand the narrative, the life story. During treatment, say the counsellors, there is no talk of the here and now ...the social workers relate to pathology. One has to listen to the other thing. The supervisors coming from the field of criminology are armed with other skills. Only in employment counselling are criminologists admitted. I actually see the differences".

The counsellors even describe a situation of someone falling between two stools – between treatment demands and employment demands: *"At times our program creates a limitation. Treatment is in the morning and not in the same town. This can really disrupt the prisoner's work. Most of them do not have a car and find it difficult to reach places. On that day the employer lets him go but his wage, which is already low, is docked for that day"*.

The charged encounter between the two disciplines is not only a matter of the emphases and weight attached to intervention, which is perceived as relevant for the purpose of successful reintegration into society, but also a matter of status and employment conditions. This is typified principally by the statement of a counsellor: *"There are huge gaps between the wages of the psychotherapists, who come from the field of social work, and that of the counsellors, who come from the field of criminology"*. There is, however, practically no reference made by the psychotherapists to the issue of the possible clash between psychological treatment and supervision. The psychotherapists enjoy better employment terms and are less preoccupied with the issue of inter-professional clashes.

3. The Good of Society vs. the Needs of the Prisoner

3a. Risk Assessment

As two-thirds of the prisoner's sentence approaches its end the prisoner is entitled to meet with a representative of the Prisoner Rehabilitation Authority in the prison in order to judge his suitability for the Authority's program. The meeting with the prisoner is also held for the purpose of aligning expectations. *"I explain the requirements of the program to the prisoners. I tell them that the program is a difficult one! Very! Very! Difficult. And we need to see if they are suited to it"*.

The suitability for joining the program is checked against a number of considerations, one of the main

ones being the future danger posed by the prisoner. Nearly all the psychotherapists mentioned the issue of assessing the prisoner's dangerousness. In contrast to the established assessment of dangerousness as per the law in the event of sex offences (Shoham, 2008), its assessment as described herein is based on the impression gained by representatives of the Prisoner Rehabilitation Authority and their hands-on experience: "There is the interview, there are all the facts, and there is the impression. Each factor has a different weight. I assign a higher weight to facts: What kind of imprisonment is this? What was the offence? Was it a disciplinary offence? Naturally, a prisoner who is serving his first sentence is nowhere like a recidivist. A significant weight is assigned to the type of offence, and this determines the level of dangerousness". Psychotherapist: "Generally a person who is serving his first sentence and has a family has more to lose and so his chances of reverting are less high".

Psychotherapist: "First of all dangerousness must be ruled out. Secondly, we tend to allow more in the first incarceration, that is, when perpetration of an offence has not become a profession. Age is a significant matter. A starting prisoner is unlike an older prisoner. On the other hand, an older man of 40 could be committing his first offence ...".

Psychotherapist: "If someone is constantly unable to keep to the framework in prison, it may be reasonably assumed that he will be that way in the program too. I also take into account the fact that he may be out of prison and ask what he has been doing from the time of his latest offence up to now. How much time has elapsed and what happened there?".

The attitude of the community to which the paroled prisoner is to return is also taken into account, although it is not entirely clear who represents the community... "I check with the community if they are willing to take him in once again. I look to the good of society and the prognosis is also the good of society".

Another consideration in the process of diagnosis and testing for suitability, as expressed by most of the psychotherapists, is treatment potential. Clearly, not everyone is suited to a psychotherapeutic framework and the probability of treatment succeeding depends on a large number of factors, such as motivation to undergo change, the age of the prisoner, etc. (Elizur et al., 2016). "Young people have much more strength while addicts have far less. Naturally the illness of addiction is very, very harsh ...".

Psychotherapist: "I look to the prognosis, is there motivation and suitability for treatment? Does he know to say in a few words what his psychotherapeutic needs are? I estimate that the program will succeed for him, first of all based on his participation in the psychotherapeutic program in prison, which is a touchstone, and if not, then why not? It is possible that because of the short period of time in prison he did not participate but was referred to a social worker".

Psychotherapist: "It is very important to see motivation and a willingness to change. To check that it is not merely lip service. One senses when it is authentic. Even if I meet a prisoner who is serving his fifth sentence, and he tells me very eloquently what his needs are, it is possible that when offered the program in prison he will wriggle out of it with various excuses. In contrast, a person who does not know how to talk and is nervous, but did participate in a psychotherapy program in prison, is motivated to change and undergo treatment, and has more empathy towards victims, one's attitude is different. On the subject of repeat crimes and serious offences I would want to see acts and not leave it only to the impression gained at the meeting".

Another psychotherapist states that over and above the therapeutic-rehabilitative potential "where my impression is that this extra year in prison will do more harm than good, I recommend a rehabilitation program".

The dilemma between protecting society and meeting the prisoner's needs finds expression principally in certain kinds of offences, such as domestic violence. "At times what is put before me is the expert opinion of the Committee on Domestic Violence and this is very important because this Committee has something that we do not have – it establishes contact with the victims. It is difficult to assess the dangerousness of perpetrators of domestic violence because they are seemingly the nicest and most normal of people. So, when the Committee expresses opposition and declares a high level of dangerousness, we assign a very high weight to it".

Almost all the interviewees referred to the degree of responsibility involved in saying yes. "The responsibility towards the public is very high ... it's something that is very significant. At times a forum of three judges can decide on a sentence of one or two years and we can recommend one-third, and this is a reduction in the period of imprisonment, which is very significant and

therefore there is a lot of weight behind this and it is somewhat pretentious after a half hour meeting to decide if he will spend an additional six months in prison".

One psychotherapist qualifies the level of accuracy in diagnosing the suitability of the prisoner for the program and states that "there is no yardstick which is one hundred percent. It's here and there. My diagnosis is based on impression. Between us, for internal purposes the 'structured suitability assessment' tool is used based on anamnestic details, which to a great extent also take into account the reaction of the community to which the paroled prisoner is to return".

3b. Supervision Based on Intuitive Assessment of Risk

Following admission to the program, the essential component of hands-on supervision of the prisoners is implemented to see if they are adhering to the restrictions imposed on them, among others integration and perseverance in work. As gathered from the statements of the counsellors, most of the supervision is done over the phone and by means of the payslips forwarded by the prisoners to the Authority.

At the same time, in cases where the supervisor feels that there is a need to ramp up oversight, he will make surprise visits. In this regard all the counsellors refer to the need to find and invent, mainly based on intuition, a tool to assess dangerousness, which will allow them to operate, due to the shortage of manpower, a differential supervisory system based on assessment of the dangerousness they assign to the prisoner under their jurisdiction: "As regards supervision, I have understood that my powers of supervision are low. I do not engage in supervision 24 hours a day. So, we constructed a differential model based on research studies as well as on intuition. For example, we know that from the third time in prison there is a greater probability that the person will return to crime. We have constructed a multicoloured plan in which the red line indicates the highest dangerousness, requiring us to raise our level of supervision".

Counsellor: "Due to the large number of supervisees I use the system of prioritization that was developed by the employment counsellors, based on which I reach mainly those who are defined as needing a high level of supervision ... the model is based on variables such as drug use, young age, no family, no work habits, number of imprisonments, etc. The model includes three levels of supervision: red – high level

(according to which I will visit the place of work more than once or twice during the entire two-thirds period); orange – medium level; and green – low level. The red line can mean: third imprisonment or more, age ranging from young to 40, high risk, property and drug offences, marital status divorced or single. The green line is where I collect payslips. I have tried prioritizing. I invest relatively more resources in the red line than I do in the green line ...it depends a lot on gut feeling during the intake".

4. Can Lawbreakers Really be Rehabilitated?

The problems that the prisoner must face on his re-entry into the community come to the surface in the course of both individual and group psychological treatment. The principal issues concern problems at work, difficulty in bowing to authority, coping with the temptation to return to crime and the lure of making a quick windfall, domestic problems and stresses, marital problems, low self-image, and traumas from the period of imprisonment (Peled-Laskov, Shoham, & Cojocar, 2019).

The psychotherapists emphasize the difficulty in integrating convicts following their release from prison: "To start off with, one has to understand how they have left prison. Prison is a traumatic and dehumanizing experience. They leave totally broken – a condition that involves a breakdown and reconstruction of the personality. One sees this in every kind of offence. It's precisely the strong ones who go to pieces. And then altogether the initial stage is coping with the traumatic experience". Psychotherapist: "The second stage is, how do I go back to my family? It's very difficult work. Will they rely on me or not? Lots of gaps that have to be bridged".

The psychotherapists also refer to marital problems that come to the fore during treatment. "Because of low self-image he does not allow himself to share things with his wife or to ask for help".

Integration in work gives rise to a host of problems (Shoham & Timor, 2016) which are fleshed out in the course of psychological treatment. In the words of a psychotherapist: "In the process of treatment we talk less about the workplace, although we do refer to content deriving from the workplace. We work on the ability to make a separation between one experience and another".

Other content that surfaces during treatment in connection with work includes, according to another

psychotherapist: "A view that sees the world as black or white, emotional self-regulation, impulsiveness, emotional honesty as an expression of strength that must be used, responsibility (I know what my duties are), boundaries (apologizing, thanking ...)".

Psychotherapist: "At times an issue arises over the fact that they are doing something they do not enjoy. Then, the minute a prisoner says that he does not feel good at work we very often investigate to see what exactly is wrong. The outcome of joint thinking is not necessarily changing the place of work but rather together gaining an understanding of the problem there. The question of employment is central to psychotherapy. The more I think about this, the more I realize that it's the case with practically everyone. More than a few ... 75%".

One of the difficulties that could act as a stumbling block to the prisoner's integration in work is bowing to authority (Hasisi et al., 2015; Shoham, Efodi, & Yehosha, 2018). "The question of what is my business and what is the other one's business comes up a lot in treatment. Working on this is no easy task. Take for example M ... M has a very irritable boss, but there are other things that please him greatly at work. M learned to pick up the phone in the evening and tell his boss 'It's difficult for me when you are irritable'. Previously, there were times when he said: 'I don't want to talk about it, I am leaving', but one has to work on inner stability and this is hard work ...it's a challenge finding out what happens to a person at work, what happens to him vis-à-vis his boss, ... one must understand the issues that arise in connection with work and construct treatment based on this. We want the prisoner to experience success".

The psychotherapists are of the opinion that a longer period of time is needed for meaningful treatment than is available to them, namely, the final third of the sentence, which is in many cases drastically reduced. A psychotherapist explains this difficulty: "At times the supervision period is over and I feel that the time has not been enough". The Authority allows assistance to be given to prisoners on a voluntary basis as well so that treatment that began during the period of supervision can continue after it is over. Psychotherapist: "I will not let them go with the feeling that everything is okay and has been taken care of, and then offer to continue with talks on a voluntary basis".

Treatment of paroled prisoners is also characterized by misgivings on the part of the prisoner during the

period of his parole at sharing his difficulties and apprehensions, thus possibly affecting the treatment process. "Very often the real treatment begins during the voluntary stage. They then tell us things that they were afraid to say during the supervision period".

The psychotherapists also describe objective difficulties that are unrelated to the prisoner's personality: "I feel that prisoners have a true work ethic. They are not lacking in ambition ... the prisoner wants to feel productive in his place of work and at times comes up against an employer who is not easy, leading to questions such as: Is someone else allowed to humiliate me? Is a boss allowed to lose his temper with me? It is an encounter with self-regulation. It's not at all easy for them. Many at times, we hear of employers getting angry and being irritable and the prisoners have to deal with this, although there are also positive figures of authority in the workplace ... there are also authoritative figures at work who are beneficial. In the final analysis the feeling is that they do succeed in adapting to the places of work. We talk about employment less as a psychotherapeutic issue and perhaps more as a trigger for opening up to other things. For example, there are bosses who may be looked up to as 'kind father' figures".

4b. Advantages of Group Treatment

The problems that surface in individual treatment are also manifested in the group, allowing the prisoner to realize that he is not alone. The group constitutes support for the prisoners and helps them to cope with their difficulties. One of the aims of group treatment is to identify mistaken perceptions and beliefs (such as those associated with work) and try to change them (Efodi, 2014; Shoham et al., 2019).

The psychotherapists see a huge advantage inherent in group treatment: "Generally the mix is also very proper, and without this group of people they would never have met. There is an opportunity here for a discourse that is very variegated, and as moderators it has to connect to the here and now. The thing most typifying criminals is isolation and a lack of sharing. So, you seat criminals together and tell them let's talk openly and you have a complex situation. One has to try and bridge these gaps. There is individual treatment, which is more protective and facilitating".

Another psychotherapist makes reference to the matter of employment, which is brought up in the group. "The subjects of money, work, stress and livelihood are raised. The minute you open the subject

of financial difficulties, you don't even have to be there, they simply sit and talk about it since it occupies their thoughts".

The same psychotherapist quotes the prisoners: "...you are shackling us to the work of a prisoner, you want the employer to write that he knows I am a paroled prisoner, you want work under conditions where even a normative person would find it difficult to survive ...". The psychotherapist identifies with these statements and clarifies: "People are under a lot of stress, they support families, they rent apartment and they have children ... as salaried workers we are preoccupied with this all the time. We invest a lot of energy in this ... so clearly a paroled prisoner with no profession, no supportive family, very unstable emotionally and very stressed ... here is the backyard, which is very sad, with a minimum of resources being invested ...they are seriously lacking an existential basis".

4c. Why don't they Persevere?

The psychotherapists talk about the fact that many prisoners do not manage to hold on to one job and frequently change places. A change in the place of work necessitates applying to the Parole Committee, so that "the prisoner has to face the Committee several times (over the change in place of work)". The psychotherapists suggest a number of reasons for this: firstly, in order to be released, the prisoner will take any job offered him and from the point of view of the Authority there are time constraints, so that in-depth inquiries are too insufficient to enable a proper impression to be gained of the place of work. Psychotherapist: "Carrying out an in-depth investigation as to what suits him. This would be far better. We would have to face less difficulties".

Psychotherapist: "I would say that there is a feeling that the prisoner accepts any place willing to take him, anything! ...employment placement must begin within the prison walls. The matter concerns prisoners with unique offences. There is a need to take note of different questions, such as: Can he return to his town? Find work in his area?"

Another reason raised by the psychotherapists for the fact that there is a large turnover in places of work is that the prisoner at time encounters work difficulties, such as aggressiveness towards him on the part of the employer and not enough staff members to guide him and help him in times of crisis. "Often the prisoner does not get on at work. The employment counsellors are

very busy and overworked and do not find the time to deal with it. What is needed is someone whose job it is to be there, on the ground. And act like a marriage counsellor, intervening between the employer and the supervisee".

As stated, reasons were cited for the fact that prisoners change places of work frequently, but it also happens, according to one of the psychotherapists, that prisoners are forced to stay in an unsuitable job until the period of supervision is over. "Often they stay in the same place of work for a longer period of time because that is the procedure, and they have to deal with the inability to express themselves and tell their employers about their problems and are forced to remain in a place where they are unhappy".

4d. Employment Characteristics as Indicative of the Rehabilitation Process

One of the main aspects mentioned in the literature in connection with perseverance at work is the nature of the employment (Peled-Laskov, Shoham, & Cojocar, 2018). The research literature states that it is not enough to merely zero in on a place of employment, and that the features and conditions of the work are highly important in determining perseverance (Visher, Debus-Sherrill, & Yahner, 2011).

As in the literature, the employment counsellors and psychotherapists interviewed also attached great importance to the issue of integration in employment, as expressed by one of the counsellors: "In my view, employment is the jewel in the crown of the Prisoner Rehabilitation Authority, and as much as I try to mobilize a budget, it is difficult!! Where there's work there's hope. When there is something to lose the prisoner will think twice before committing a crime. He will have something to lose. Employment is there in order to achieve something. The criminal is instrumental and the response must be instrumental...employment is a key component in self-image, in the ability to stand before the family ... it determines who we are in our own eyes and in the eyes of the family".

The importance of employment can also be learned from the statements of the psychotherapists, who claim: "The economic-employment issue is the most crucial but it costs money, so there aren't too many resources. It's very sad because this is the key to everything. It's the most central issue".

Despite its importance, two psychotherapists maintain that it is precisely employment that is the Achilles

heel of the program. *"We don't place sufficient emphasis on the role of employment, we see this as something that they [the prisoners] have to do".*

Reduction of one-third of the sentence in Israel is conditional, among other things, on finding work that will be waiting for the prisoner once he obtains his parole. The task is left for the prisoner to shoulder while he is still in prison and he is agreeable to almost any job so long as he gets early release. After the prisoner finds employment the employment counsellor is required to check if the work is indeed suitable. The counsellor establishes contact with the employer, makes sure that the place of work does exist, and forwards the request to the police for investigation.

The jobs involved are generally simple, paying a minimum wage, and include labour in supermarkets, aluminium plants, carpentry shops, garages, restaurants and bakeries. There are also jobs involving deliveries and installation of air conditioners. A counsellor explains: *"As regards the workplace, it must be a place that does not clash with the offence. If, for example, the offence was embezzlement, there cannot be exposure to credit cards. If drug usage was involved, placement will not be somewhere that offers an opening to that world, such as a restaurant that serves alcohol or a central bus station".*

Not every place of work is accepted as suitable for employing the paroled prisoner. Psychotherapist: *"In terms of work too there are a lot of dry rules on the supervisory level. For example, your work cannot involve movement from place to place since that will not allow us to oversee you, and you cannot work in a family business. There is something here that puts one in a corner. We try to probe the employment background and make a match accordingly. We glean from what is presented in the report and investigate it with the enterprise ... the start of the job, the first two months, are the period of adaptation, stabilization. We check changes and developments ahead... It often happens that the prisoner fantasizes about a particular place and then sees that it is not what he imagined ... it is the opposite of what he thought. Optimally, I would have to find him suitable employment. What did he learn from the fact that he found work? He cannot really conduct a search himself because he is in prison. If he found work on his own steam, then fine. But in today's reality this is not the case".*

The interviewees describe a slew of problems and mismatches deriving from finding unsuitable employ-

ment. *"Employment following parole is accompanied by many difficulties. The prisoner is agreeable to virtually any work prior to his release, but subsequent to this he often discovers that it is very far from home, the wage is low, the physical conditions are at times harsh, there is no regular transport to work, providing for the family is difficult, debts have to be paid, there are problems with the employer, there is a feeling of being used, lack of motivation, etc."*

Further to the disconnect described earlier between the psychotherapists and counsellors, the counsellors too describe a lack of information on the prisoner, his employment skills, and his employment record prior to and during incarceration. *"An additional obstacle, after he has found work, I look at the social reports from prison. For example, about all sorts of limitations (blindness, for example ...) and see that he is not suited to the job. We do not see him ...the Authority's representative who met with the prisoner in prison in order to prepare the rehabilitation program did not include information on the prisoner's employment (what his work consisted of, where he worked). All he did was copy and paste from the social reports of the Prison Service ... nothing is written about the health and employment status of the paroled prisoner. Neither the Prison Service nor the Authority's representative wrote about this ... I approve employment without receiving the necessary information on the prisoner".*

5. Merits of the Employment Supervision Program

Both the Desistance from Crime Theory (Ward & Maruna, 2007) and the Good Lives Theory (Ward, 2002), recognize the considerable importance of meeting the person's needs as part of his process of rehabilitation.

The interviewees ascribe considerable advantages to the program due to its holistic nature in integrating both instrumental and expressive roles, which in many cases are intertwined. As a rule, the employment counsellors view their role as being primarily an instrumental one of guidance, information transfer, advice and mediation vis-à-vis employers, but no less also one of support.

Counsellor: *"Even the older ones who have never been salaried employees, have never had a normal routine, suddenly exhibit competence, an ability to work as a team, with work colleagues, social benefits, people who are trusted, there is somebody to talk to ...work changes attitudes. The daily coping of the*

worker. There's a possibility of dialogue. If things happen in the workplace, they are able to talk about it. At times they deliberate over how to ask the employer for a raise. We teach them how to manage on their own. They learn the basics in workshops in prison prior to release. They go to meetings in prison. Every field has its own time. We work with them in depth. Start with technical matters. Probing intensely with each one: about his place in the job market, about thinking ahead, pay slips, rights and obligations, legal assistance, national insurance. Problems can spring up during the last third of the sentence but we can help them".

One of the counsellors describes the elasticity of the job boundaries and its complexity: "My job is mainly one of assistance, guidance and mediation and not therapeutic ... the interaction between the counsellor and the supervisor is limited by the needs of the supervisee, I will go with him wherever he leads me ... I will be the voice of the prisoner ... I will mediate. There are also counsellors who are of the opinion that the employment supervision program, which is bound by protocol, is not suitable or essential for all paroled prisoners ... a considerable percentage of paroled prisoners do not need or want the employment counsellor but they are obligatory according to the protocol".

Despite the mainly instrumental components that the counsellors attribute to their role, they also see rehabilitative aspects in their work. "I see rehabilitative aspects even in the work of the employment counsellor as exemplifying the erection of boundaries, teaching acceptance of authoritative figures, giving hope for the future, developing a capacity for containing and not reacting, etc.... Despite the huge work load and difficulties imposed by the system, it is a role that makes me smile in satisfaction ... I feel I am doing something important".

In contrast, the psychotherapists too, who of necessity are engaged in matters such as emotional self-regulation or difficulty in accepting authority, are busy with the instrumental components of employment, which project onto the success of the treatment process. For example, one psychotherapist claims that over and above the contribution of treatment to the success of the program there is also "the matter of employment supervision from which much is imbibed, such as a work ethic. The individual has the opportunity to see that he can succeed in conducting himself in a normative manner, earning a living, feeling creative".

According to one of the psychotherapists, success is gauged based on the very fact that the paroled prisoner comes to treatment and has a positive experience: "I think we are very successful but I see success in the fact that he comes for treatment and even if he reverts to whatever, I want to give him a positive experience".

Another psychotherapist defines treatment success somewhat differently: "Very often the supervisees have an experience of success and development and for them this is a lot. A prisoner who grew up from kindergarten with criminals came to me voluntarily. He connected with the individual talks and even continued them voluntarily. He was not able to be in a place of work from eight to four. But the external boundaries (it was either this or a return to prison) gave him internal boundaries and ultimately, he said: The Prisoner Rehabilitation Authority taught me that I too can be a normal person. Sometimes people need to have a change of place. The prisoners experience a sense of being needed and this is a huge feeling for them. There are many who do this only because they don't have a choice and then they feel suffocated. Following supervision some of them continue. I think most of them do change".

The psychotherapists agree and conclude that in spite of everything the program is a success: "I think that this is a very good opportunity for prisoners from both high and low strata to receive treatment. For testing and for some kind of introspective contemplation... here is a very good alternative to continuing to sit in prison ...".

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The aim of the present research was to examine the perceptions and attitudes of psychotherapists and supervision personnel accompanying paroled prisoners participating in the employment supervision program under the auspices of the Prisoner Rehabilitation Authority – the rationale being to understand the principal difficulties and challenges faced by prisoners on parole as seen by the program staff.

The employment supervision enterprise for paroled prisoners is based on three pillars: guidance and employment counselling, psychotherapeutic-rehabilitative intervention, and supervision. Each of the pillars rests on language, expectations and a system of values and beliefs shaping the course of action that typifies the particular discipline (Hucksely, 2011).

The most all-embracing theme emerging from the statements of the interviewees related to the many difficulties that the paroled prisoners have to cope with in attempting to integrate into legitimate employment following their release. The interviewees claimed that despite the importance of employment, not enough resources are invested in the field; indeed, this constitutes the Achilles heel of the operation. The prisoner is, for example, expected to find a job himself and this is generally done while he is still serving his sentence. Employment following release from prison is accompanied by a number of difficulties, including distance from the place of work, lack of proper public transport, low wages, and problems with the employer (Decker, Ortiz, Spohn, & Hedberg, 2015; Pogrebin, West-Smith, Walker, & Unnithan, 2014).

The interviewees explained that prisoners do not succeed in staying in one job and change places of work with great frequency – among the many reasons being the fact that they will agree to any work offered them. From the point of view of the Authority, the time constraints do not allow enough in-depth inquiries to be made in order to obtain a proper impression of the place of work. In addition, difficulties experienced in the workplace may include aggressiveness on the part of the employer and an insufficient number of personnel to guide the prisoner and assist him in times of crisis.

The interviewees describe a series of obstacles relating to the extremely protracted and cumbersome operations conducted vis-à-vis the Parole Committee, imposing a host of restrictions on them and allowing practically no room for using their own discretion. This is exemplified by the moniker assigned to the restrictions – the four "itches", referring to the four principal "hurdles" imposed by the Committee with respect to possible places of employment. No countenance is given to the discretionary considerations of the employment counsellors, who in several instances view these hurdles as unnecessary and at times even damaging: overnight detention, prohibition regarding self-employment, prohibition regarding work with family members, and police information which is classified and not available to the Authority.

As reported in the literature (Hasisi *et al.*, 2018), the interviewees too consider employment as a key feature in the process of rehabilitation and freely articulate their views on the attributes of employment and the obstacles the paroled prisoner has to deal with in finding his place in the work force, including a low wage

and difficulties in locating a suitable employer. Moreover, employers do not receive commensurate remuneration, a fact that necessitates government assistance.

Supervision in a multicultural society calls for a special state of preparedness, which does not always receive the right response. The counsellors describe a feeling of apprehension and defencelessness in some of the places they are expected to visit (Guetzkow & Ben Zvi, 2017). They also refer to the lack of continuity between the prison and the Authority. Although the literature attaches great importance to continuity between the prison and the authorities handling the prisoners following their release in the interests of their rehabilitation (Taxman, 2011), it appears that such continuity is in reality lacking, especially in matters relating to employment. The disconnect is explained against the backdrop of the paucity of information on the prisoner's employment in prison (type of training and occupation, functional capability, etc.).

The psychotherapists and counsellors also catalogue additional obstacles such as the difficulty in finding employers who would agree to hiring prisoners on parole (Shoham & Timor, 2014), obtaining suitable working conditions (Redcross, Millenky, Rudd, & Levshin, 2012), the relatively short period of time available for proper handling of the prisoner, and the diffidence on the part of the prisoner to share his difficulties and air his apprehensions (Shoham, Efodi, & Yehosha, 2015). An additional obstruction that surfaced was the intelligence in the possession of the police, which could affect treatment, without the psychotherapists having any control over it.

An additional theme that emerged from the interviews relates to issues of professional tension between psychological treatment and supervision (Hucklesby, 2011). According to the employment counsellors, they experience harmony and dissonance at one and the same time in their joint work with the psychotherapists. Despite the expectation that the employment counsellors would emphasize supervision, guidance and occupational success, and that the psychotherapists would focus on personal psychological issues that come to light in the treatment room, it appears that the boundaries are not clear-cut. At the same time, the counsellors are of the opinion that the psychotherapists tend to overstress the treatment process and are therefore alienated from the real problems that the paroled prisoner faces in attempting to integrate into work.

The mix between supervision and treatment brings to the surface the dilemma of the good of society vs. the needs of the prisoner. This dilemma is manifested in all matters relating to assessment of the prisoner's risk. The interviewees state that assessment of risk is one of the principal considerations in acceptance of the program and the level of differential supervision over the prisoner. In contrast to the assessment of risk as specified in the Penal Law, e.g. in the case of a sex offence (Shoham, 2008), the assessment of risk described in the interviews is based primarily on the impression gained by the representatives of the Prisoner Rehabilitation Authority and their hands-on experience. The principal variables taken into account are: type of offence, number of imprisonments, age of the prisoner, use of drugs, employment experience, conduct in prison (disciplinary problems), marital status (married/single), ability to conform to a framework, and expert opinions, such as those on perpetrators of domestic violence, which also take into consideration the voice of the victim (Shoham, 2013).

In order for the program to address the criminogenic nature of the prisoner, his treatment potential is also tested. The main factors taken into account are motivation, a genuine willingness to change, empathy for victims, participation in a psychological treatment program in prison, and the potential for an additional contribution in the way of treatment by remaining in prison. Almost all the interviewees noted that it is a question of public responsibility and since the assessment is subjective it can never be error-free. Assessment of risk based on experience and intuition could lead to a confusion between risk factors and dangerousness (Eizenstadt, 2007; Shoham, 2013).

One of the key questions posed among professionals in the field of prisoner rehabilitation is: Is it possible to bring about a true change in the framework of psychological treatment? (Shoham & Timor, 2016). Is it possible to change ways of thinking, conduct and emotions? This question is highly relevant in all matters relating to the treatment of lawbreakers (Ward & Maruna, 2007). When, as in the present case, the aim of treatment and employment guidance is to return them to society as employed individuals, law-keepers adopt normative perceptions and attitudes (Yates *et al.*, 2010). From the statements of the interviewees, it appears that not everyone is suited to a treatment framework and the possibility that treatment will succeed depends on several factors, such as motivation to undergo change, age and drug use (Elizur *et al.*, 2016).

Professionals affiliated with the Prisoner Rehabilitation Authority believe that it is possible to effect a change in prisoners, and try to convey this message to them. The issue of employment is a central one in treatment, encompassing problems in adaptation to work against the backdrop of difficulties in accepting authority, warped perceptions, difficulties in emotional self-regulation, difficulty in asking for help, as well as objective problems such as a harsh boss. These problems, which accompany the prisoner on his re-entry into society, necessitate immediate attention.

Despite the many difficulties and challenges facing the paroled prisoner, the psychotherapists and counsellors taking part in the employment supervision program also described the program's strengths. As a general rule, the interviewees view their role principally as being an instrumental one involving guidance, information transfer, counselling, mediation, and encouragement in making the prisoner's voice heard by the employer. The counsellors dwelled to a considerable extent on instrumental issues (e.g. how to ask the boss for a raise, how to deal with an unpleasant boss or leave an unsuitable job) as well as on expressive and rehabilitative issues such as the erection of boundaries, teaching acceptance of authoritative figures, giving hope for the future, and inculcating a capacity to contain without reacting. The psychotherapists too, who of necessity deal with expressive psychotherapeutic content, such as emotional self-regulation and difficulty in accepting authority, dwelled on instrumental aspects such as employment, which project on the success of the treatment process.

Most of the interviewees agreed that without finding an appropriate solution to the financial needs of the paroled prisoner, it will not be possible to achieve the rehabilitation aims. The interviewees were of the opinion that despite the difficulties inherent in the program it is still one that has a very important potential and should be reinforced by investing more financial and organizational resources that those available to it at present.

The present research focuses on the manner in which those involved in operating the employment program described the principal features of the program alongside the difficulties and challenges facing the paroled prisoner. In a follow-up research being conducted currently by the researchers, a study is being made of the way in which the prisoners themselves perceive and describe the program. There

is room to continue investigating the features of the program in serving the authorities as a means for reintegrating the paroled prisoner into a normative cycle of life as part of an ongoing process – albeit one strewn with difficulties – of encouraging desistance from crime.

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