

# Imprisonment and its Influence on Psychobiological Needs

**Žukov I., Fischer S., Ptáček R., Raboch J.**

Charles University in Prague, First Faculty of Medicine and General Teaching Hospital, Department of Psychiatry, Prague, Czech Republic

Received January 29, 2009; Accepted April 30, 2009.

**Key words:** Delinquency – Penitentiary process – Prisonisation – Needs – Content analysis – Projective methods

**Abstract:** This article presents results of two research studies which focus on the analyses of specific needs associated with members of a delinquent subculture and the psychological alterations which occur as a result of adaptation to their imprisonment. In the first case, the specificity and differences in the area of needs were determined by content analysis of prison correspondence and further by means of an analysis of content association as reactions to a complex of incomplete sentences. The differences have been ascertained by virtue of factors that are considered significant from the point of view of delinquency and potential recidivism. A great deal of attention is focussed on prisonisation as a specific adaptation to imprisonment and its influence on the dissimilarity in the structure of the needs of those prisoners investigated. The results of both investigations facilitate mutual comparison. They also partially refer to the discriminating capability of the applied methods. The findings and results are applicable in penitentiary practice and are significant for the practical application by psychologists and other specialists in their work with offenders.

**Mailing Address:** Ilja Žukov, MD., Charles University in Prague, First Faculty of Medicine and General Teaching Hospital, Department of Psychiatry, Ke Karlovu 11, 128 08 Prague 2, Czech Republic; e-mail: iljazukov@seznam.cz

### **Solutions to the problem**

Imprisonment and the actual realization of imprisonment should not only assume a repressive role. It also has corrective socialisation as its goal. Employees active within the penitentiary system cannot fulfil people's expectation that they will solve the problem of criminality and subsequent recidivism. Criminality reflects the state of a society, its individual subsystems and, last but not least, the family unit. However, by means of specific procedures, prisoners can be influenced by attempting to eliminate the negative consequences of psychosocial factors affecting them to various degrees and intensity. This involves a complex of psychological, educational (education of individuals with behavioural problems) and other specifically therapeutic procedures, which pursue the redirecting of the offenders' personality towards adaptive social structures [1].

The penitentiary process includes a number of stress situations, especially privations in the realm of the satisfaction of psychological and some physiological needs. This entails the loss of freedom, of some human rights, of prior status in society, of social relationships, of personal and sexual relationships and particularly if the individual has a family – the severing of family relationships [2, 3].

Imprisoned individuals must adapt to a new environment and be able to orientate themselves in it. This means a substantial burden in practise, especially for a first-time imprisonment where there is no prior experience. Emerging reactions to imprisonment may exhibit differing characteristics. If alternate forms of aggression and defensive escape mechanisms dominate, a number of psychical breakdowns and breakdowns of conduct may occur. Adaptation mechanisms also fail in some cases and this can lead to serious occurrences such as those of an auto-aggressive or even of a suicidal character [4].

The environment to which the prisoners adapt has the norms and rules of conduct, which significantly differ from those regulating the society as a whole. During the course of the imprisonment, the inmates undergo the process of prisonisation during which some changes in preferential needs and values occur. However, this very often results in thoughts identifying with criminal conduct. Adaptation in this sense means the adoption of sub-cultural norms and rules, which are substantially different from those that are generally binding, socially acceptable and desirable [5, 6]. Further it means the adoption of new and the most advantageous modes of conduct from the point of view of "survival" and a gradual burn out of adaptive conduct essential for life outside prison.

From a psychological point of view, it is possible to distinguish between two constituent parts of the process of prisonisation, i.e., between a gradual adaptation to the way of life in prison and to the fellow inmates [5]. It concerns institutionalisation that indicates adaptation to a highly organized prison life. It is connected to the loss of activity and initiative. The second, more serious effect of prisonisation is ideologisation, consisting of personal identification with a criminal sub-culture. This is demonstrated by the adoption and usage of criminal argot

e.g. based on the inner acceptance of sub-cultural norms and rules, values and attitudes and also the system of rationalisation as a defensive mechanism. The imprisoned individuals form a social group, which has a specific structure, and hierarchy of roles with firmly set rules, rights and obligations [7, 8]. Its basic characteristic is the tendency towards the exteriorization of the bad. The group finds a mutual enemy outside it and rationalises its enemies into unfavourable social relationships, faulty acts, unjust judges and unfriendly prison staff [9]. With respect to the fact that the prisoners form their own informal groups with mutually specified motivation [3, 5], which we classify as the exteriorisation of the bad, we can expect astute justification of their own criminal activity. Further inner solidarity and purposeful action can be expected.

Thus the course of imprisonment leads in most cases to the elimination of the majority of social roles by means of prisonisation and social isolation. The loss of knowledge, skills and habits occurs. This leads to antipathy and loss of interest in social self-realisation. These changes create an obstacle for a later return to society [10].

The basic aim of penitentiary practise [1] lies in the application of specific procedures and subsequent correction of undesirable manners of conduct to ensure that socially desirable ones or, at least those of an acceptable form are formed. The further aim is that such a change should become as far as possible permanent and no recidivist conduct should occur. Psychological support should thus be directed towards the elimination of risk factors, which increase the probability of recidivism [9, 11]. These are, among other things, the negative consequences of the above process of prisonisation. Furthermore, it is important to strengthen the social bonds. The chances for an orderly social life are increased by work habits and skills. A higher probability of getting a job is strengthened by education and the obtaining of professional qualifications. The specialists and other employees strive for this during the incarceration period. Among other things there are treatment programmes, within the framework of which labour, educational and specific therapeutic activities are employed.

One of the assumptions of the effective influence is the sufficiency of theoretical as well as practical knowledge and specific needs of the imprisoned persons. Their description forms the content of our contribution. In the next part of the text the results of the research studies focus on the identification of differences in the structure of the needs of imprisoned persons and for the determination of conclusions regarding psychological and special education practice are presented.

## **Methods**

In the period from 2005–2007 the following investigations were undertaken with respect to persons incarcerated in select Czech prisons. The aim of these investigations was the following:

- to discover characteristic features in the structure of the needs of the prison sub-culture,
- to discover whether and in what way the structural needs change under the influence of various psychosocial aspects connected to the imprisonment, especially the effect of prisonisation. We describe this manner of adaptation specific to the penitentiary process, in the preceding part of the text,
- to consider the discrimination capability of the applied methods, where, with respect to the generally lower educational level of the prison sub-culture it is often not possible to use regular questionnaires and tests due to, for them, the incomprehensibility of instructions and questions.

To ascertain the specificities and changes in the needs of the imprisoned persons the content analyses method of prison correspondence (N=408) has been chosen for the first investigation. The unit for the analysis (analytical criterion) was the occurrence of the needs manifested in the correspondence. The content analysis has also been chosen as another possibility for a mutual comparison of findings. In the case of this following investigation, (N=347) associations as reactions to the presented set of incomplete sentences have been analysed. The modification of Sachs Sentence Completion Test [12] has been created containing the set of incomplete sentences focusing on the discovery of actually experienced needs and their manifestation. The occurrence and frequency of the expressed needs has again been chosen as the unit of analyses of the content of verbal associations. The hierarchical conception of the needs according to Abraham Maslow [13] has been chosen. We consider this to be didactically and otherwise useful.

We define the following words and phrases as the examples of the reflection of individual needs. Due to a high amount of variability we always define a basic form.

#### *Physiological (basic) needs*

I think about sex, drugs; I'm sick; I wish I could be out already; I toss and turn at night, can't fall asleep, wake up. I haven't slept for a week; I am nervous, grumpy; send me a parcel, send me cigs (smokes) and letter paper, send me money; something to drink; beer; food...

#### *Need for safety and security*

What is waiting for me outside?; I'm frightened (at night); I feel uncertainty; I wish the court hearing were over; I don't know what is happening with you, I wish the sentence were over; the most important thing is for you to take care of the kids; I would never leave you; I hope you will wait for me...

#### *Need to belong and for love*

I am looking forward to my girl-friend, wife, children; I'll get married; I'd like to have a family; to be at home with my family, friends; I miss you so much; I

miss you, honey; I'd like to see the children; I love you; I love only you; you're my beloved sweetheart; I think about you all the time; I think about all of you and wonder what is new at home, I'm homesick; I wish I could be with you; I wish I could be at home; write me what is new at home, write me all the time, darling; send me a letter immediately; I have to cry when I think about you; come for sure (you must come) to see me, I wish I could see you, I wish I could touch you; to kiss you and kids during your visit; write me, write me above all, send a letter; and what about my friends?, tell them to get in touch; tell them to come...

*Need for self esteem and self-actualisation*

I'll sort it out with the social security administration; I have written to an attorney; I have written because of the job; I'd like to adopt a profession, I'd like to support my family; I'd like to work as I could here...

*The following prisonisation features have further been ascertained*

*(Institutionalisation)* I don't think about anything; I can't think of anything; I don't think about the future, I'm satisfied; now I'm a dreamer; I like dreaming; it is good, half of the prison sentence has been served...

*(Ideologisation)* I'll have my revenge for the unjust punishment; I'd like to be the Minister of Justice and root out corruption, I piss at night; next time I'll be more clever; they'll not catch me; the past is OK; I am upset at having to get up; I regret living in this country, I don't want to work, I'd like to be a judge; expressions of prison slang...

*(Rationalisation versus guilt and repentance)* I'd like to be good but it's no longer possible; I'd like to do something which would bring me joy; what was once, can't return in the same way; I'd like to make up for everything in the past; I'm afraid I'll be imprisoned again; I don't want to be incarcerated again, thinking about the past makes me feel sick, I am angry with myself...

Pertinent differences in all the above-observed phenomena have been considered pseudo-longitudinally based on the criterion of a first-time and a habitual prisoner (imprisoned twice or more). Other criteria for ascertaining differences have been the factors considered to be significant predictors of delinquent conduct [1, 14]. It concerns factors connected in a negative case to a higher probability of recidivist conduct and the failure particularly in the so-called adaptation phase (within two years after discharge) [10]. In both cases men were subject to the investigation. In the case of the Czech system, women serve their sentences in prisons designated exclusively for them. Taking into consideration the minute representation of women among the total Czech prison population, the findings would have no statistical significance.

## Results and their analysis

The following findings show us the differences in the needs and other observed features of the investigated group. To compare and consider statistically significant differences of the observed features a contingency table has been used ( $\chi^2$ -square test). The statistical test was used as an appropriate method for analysis of presented psychological data [15, 16]. For  $\chi^2$  critical configuration see Table 1.

By means of the comparison of the expected and empirical frequencies presented in Tables 1 and 2, no statistically significant differences have been discovered in the frequency of relevantly shared basic (physiological) needs. It is the same in the area of the need to belong and for love. A slight shift, albeit statistically insignificant, can be observed in the manifestation of the basic needs of the persistent prisoners and the need for safety and security in the first-time prisoners by virtue of analysis of the correspondence.

From the point of view of adaptation level, this finding can be interpreted in such a way that the defensive mechanism of the first-time prisoner is more differentiated and affects more areas than it is in the case of more experienced prisoners. It can be stated on the same interpretational level, that the persistent prisoners already have at their disposal, a clearer experience perspective. This perspective can contain various pragmatic experiences. Material values can be exchanged in prison and thus various advantages can be obtained, e.g., defence, bribery of the guards, obtainment of information, facilitating contact with an accessory, etc.

The fact that the differences, even though statistically insignificant, have been manifested to a larger extent in the correspondence of investigated persons is

**Table 1 –  $\chi^2$  critical configuration**

a/f	1	2	3	4	5
5%	3.84	5.9	7.81	9.49	11.07
1%	6.63	9.21	11.34	13.28	15.09

a – significance level; f – freedom level, [15]

**Table 2 – Findings concerning categories for the first-time prisoner and the persistent prisoner**

	Content analysis of correspondence	Content analysis of associations
Basic (physiological) needs	$\chi^2=2.21$	$\chi^2=0.02$
Need for safety and security	$\chi^2=2.71$	$\chi^2=0.31$
Need to belong and for love	$\chi^2=1.39$	$\chi^2=0.60$
Esteem and self-actualisation needs	$\chi^2=4.02$	$\chi^2=6.16$
Prisonisation features	$\chi^2=5.83$	$\chi^2=16.73$
Rationalisation	$\chi^2=1.22$	$\chi^2=0.12$
Guilt, repentance	$\chi^2=3.62$	$\chi^2=4.14$

probably related to the fact that it is addressed to persons closest to the prisoners. The investigated persons convey their troubles to them in this correspondence. It is not the same in the case of the second investigation, which uses the technique that is understood to be a test (incomplete sentences). Both observed groups were represented by both single and married individuals and those who gained experience from the procreation of a family. Therefore no difference has been discovered in the manifestation of the need to belong and for love. This naturally does not influence the above finding.

Identically striking differences may then be observed in the need for self-actualisation ( $\chi^2=6.16$  and  $4.02$ ,  $p\leq 0.05$ ), where the manifestation of such needs statistically significantly appears with the first-time prisoners. A higher frequency discovered by the analysis of responses to the incomplete sentences can be related to the tendency to appear in a better social light in front of the prison service staff (I care; I want to improve). It is highly probable that this finding can be interpreted as the phenomenon evidencing the prisonisation and its institutional element, which is related to the loss of activity, interests and abilities to assert oneself socially with the individuals who execute the sentence repeatedly. This statement confirms a significant finding in the frequency and occurrence of prisonisation features in the analysed associations ( $\chi^2=16.73$ ,  $p\leq 0.01$ ). This finding can be used for penitentiary practice from the point of view of support and to help those who have not lost interest and the capability to sustain it. This can act to strengthen or at least to maintain social self-realisation and the skills necessary for it. From the psychological point of view it concerns the prisonisation effects influencing the prisoners in various forms and with different intensity.

The groups of prisoners were subject to further analysis from the point of view of age. The results are presented in Table 3. The offenders in the age group up to 26 years old are the subject of increased interest under the conditions of the Czech penal system. The starting point is a higher probability to reach the correction of conduct. It also concerns the trends for which the basis is the European prison rules [17].

**Table 3 – Findings regarding the category of persons up to the age of 26 and older**

	Content analysis of correspondence	Content analysis of associations
Basic (physiological) needs	$\chi^2=2.78$	$\chi^2=1.58$
Need for safety and security	$\chi^2=1.92$	$\chi^2=1.73$
Need to belong and for love	$\chi^2=2.39$	$\chi^2=1.97$
Esteem and self-actualisation needs	$\chi^2=1.02$	$\chi^2=1.05$
Prisonisation features	$\chi^2=5.11$	$\chi^2=4.07$
Rationalisation	$\chi^2=1.41$	$\chi^2=1.57$
Guilt, repentance	$\chi^2=1.64$	$\chi^2=1.56$

In relevantly shared needs no statistically significant differences have been revealed in the individuals up to the age of 26 year old and above. Only in the correspondence, a higher manifestation of basic (material) needs was again demonstrated in the case of the individuals up to the age of 26 years. This involves the connection between the influence and effect of the media and probably their life style. Younger individuals increasingly accept the subjects of advertisements as their ideals and aims. In prison such needs are sufficiently satisfied (sport, TV, video, etc.), notwithstanding the fact that they manifest such needs in their correspondence. Such is the case with the manner of communication with those persons, closest to the prisoners. The satisfying of material needs during imprisonment can be intensified by the media. A socially undesirable transformation of value orientation in the material area can then occur with a higher probability. The aim of the work of psychologists and specialists is to influence the orientation towards social and moral values and needs. This finding can certainly be used for their activity within the penitentiary process.

A statistically significant higher frequency of prisonisation features in older persons ( $\chi^2=4.07, 5.11, p\leq 0.05$ ) is connected to a higher number of the persistent prisoners representing this category. This finding corresponds to the results obtained upon the analysis of observed features in this category of prisoners (see the comparison the first-time prisoners versus the persistent prisoners). Findings regarding categories single and married or having experience with the procreation of a family are presented in Table 4.

Despite the differences in the manifestation of the need to belong and for affection, no differences have been ascertained between the observed groups of prisoners. A slight shift in the manifestation of basic (material) needs in single individuals can be explained by their lower age (they have not raised a family yet). The finding is also connected to the influence of advertisement and the manner of communication (see previous interpretation).

A statistically significant difference has been observed in the case of both investigations with respect to the manifestation of repentance in “favour”

**Table 4 – Findings regarding categories single and married or having experience with the procreation of a family**

	Content analysis of correspondence	Content analysis of associations
Basic (physiological) needs	$\chi^2=2.52$	$\chi^2=1.70$
need for safety and security	$\chi^2=1.92$	$\chi^2=0.46$
Need to belong and for love	$\chi^2=1.39$	$\chi^2=0.87$
Esteem and self-actualisation needs	$\chi^2=1.02$	$\chi^2=0.03$
Prisonisation features	$\chi^2=2.11$	$\chi^2=2.82$
Rationalisation	$\chi^2=2.49$	$\chi^2=2.32$
Guilt, repentance	$\chi^2=6.44$	$\chi^2=7.67$



of the persistent prisoners ( $\chi^2=6.44, 7.67, p\leq 0.01$ ). With respect to a lower emotional stability and emotional flatness [18, 19] it is necessary to subject this finding to another quantitative analysis. Especially if repeated delinquents manifest themselves emotionally, it often involves superficial manifestations and the feeling of guilt is lacking. The repentance is usually related to their own persons. The case is with the defensive mechanism, typical of the offenders [3, 14]. It can be related to their frequent idealisations. Significant is the question of functional or non-functional background, the analysis of which follows. In the case of the persistent prisoners, it can also concern sense of purpose. There is a frequent tendency on the part of the prison employees to take a fancy to something for reasons of their expectation of some various advantages for themselves by doing so.

The investigation of the prisoners was divided according to the degree of functionality of their social background (findings resulting from the observation of psychologists and educationalists resulting from a course of visits, examination of their personal correspondence). The results are presented in Table 5 which differ from those of the previous investigation when the “legal” state was the main criterion of consideration.

The need to belong and to love is statistically significantly manifested by those who have the background ( $\chi^2=5.68, 4.32, p\leq 0.05$ ). The case is with the oscillation of the desire to meet with those persons closest to the prisoners and the fear of losing them. Those who do not have a functional background preferred statistically insignificant basic (material) needs.

Interesting and striking is the finding with respect to the occurrence of features evidencing the prisonisation ( $\chi^2=10.28, 7.11, p\leq 0.01$ ) which occurred in the persons without functional background and, to the contrary, the manifestations of guilt and repentance with respect to the crimes committed in the persons with the functional background ( $\chi^2=6.84, 6.71, p\leq 0.01$ ). A significant level appeared in the event of both investigations. Therefore we can state that a functional background is a significant factor from the point of view of the possibility to influence the offenders. The aim of psychological and therapeutic activities

**Table 5 – Findings regarding categories functional social background, non-functional background or without background**

	Content analysis of correspondence	Content analysis of associations
Basic (physiological) needs	$\chi^2=2.08$	$\chi^2=0.53$
Need for safety and security	$\chi^2=1.92$	$\chi^2=0.72$
Need to belong and for love	$\chi^2=5.68$	$\chi^2=4.32$
Esteem and self-actualisation needs	$\chi^2=1.09$	$\chi^2=0.22$
Prisonisation features	$\chi^2=7.11$	$\chi^2=10.28$
Rationalisation	$\chi^2=0.96$	$\chi^2=0.73$
Guilt, repentance	$\chi^2=6.71$	$\chi^2=6.84$

should be the support for the maintenance or strengthening the bonds of the prisoners with the family or those closest to the prisoner outside prison. The existence of social bonds helps significantly to alleviate the effects of prisonisation.

Work experience, skills and habits are, except for the functional family background, considered a basic mainstay necessary for the attainment of the required corrections and changes in the behavioural patterns of the offenders [1]. Differences between the offenders being or not being employed within the execution of a sentence have been discovered (the performance of work of a more permanent nature was considered). The results are shown in Table 6.

By means of the analysis of needs, a divergence in the needs of self-actualisation, which have been statistically significantly manifested ( $\chi^2=4.02, 3.86, p\leq 0.05$ ) by the persons performing a regular job within the serving of the sentence, has been ascertained. Interesting is another significant finding ( $\chi^2=7.53, 9.23, p\leq 0.01$ ) in the case of the occurrence of phenomena evidencing the influence of prisonisation which more often appear in the reactions and manifestations of unemployed persons and persons without work habits. From the psychological point of view and the point of view of special education, work is a significant therapeutic phenomenon. The ordered way of life in prison leads to the loss of independence and initiative without regular work. A change in the structure of attitudes, behavioural patterns and in the structure of needs results from it. The individual's personality disintegrates and loses the ability to return to society.

### Discussion and Conclusion

The above findings come from the area of the Czech penal system. For a long time the Czech penal system has been striving to be comparable to the standard in the countries of the EU. We are convinced that from this point of view the findings and conclusions could be inspiring for specialists and other employees in the penitentiary sphere.

**Table 6 – Findings concerning imprisonment in the categories of the previously employed and unemployed within the course of their serving of the sentence**

	Content analysis of correspondence	Content analysis of associations
Basic (physiological) needs	$\chi^2=1.08$	$\chi^2=0.94$
Need for safety and security	$\chi^2=1.94$	$\chi^2=0.64$
Need to belong and for love	$\chi^2=2.39$	$\chi^2=1.55$
Esteem and self-actualisation needs	$\chi^2=4.02$	$\chi^2=3.86$
Prisonisation features	$\chi^2=9.23$	$\chi^2=7.53$
Rationalisation	$\chi^2=0.41$	$\chi^2=0.01$
Guilt, repentance	$\chi^2=0.54$	$\chi^2=0.01$

Within the course of imprisonment, the individual should be prepared in a corrective way for a way of life after discharge. In most cases this can be successfully realised only with such individuals where a background built on functional relationships and work habits and related professional skills exists. Otherwise the discharge is another burden and therefore recidivism often occurs already in the so-called adaptation phase [3, 4].

Paradoxically, the patterns and manners of behaviour obtained at liberty are useless in the serving of the sentence for the maintenance of the above social mainstays. The individual goes through the process of prisonisation where he is forced to accept new values, norms and patterns of behaviour enabling his adaptation to a specific way of life connected to the imprisonment and isolation from the surroundings. This is not only formal adaptation but also a factual acceptance of another system of values, identification with the norms and rules of prison subculture. This identification provides support for the imprisoned individual and therefore, if he is not convinced strongly enough or does not have a strong background, he accepts it. Within the time during which he adopts more effective norms and patterns of behaviour from the point of view of survival within incarceration, a gradual burn-out of the behavioural patterns required for life in the normal society outside the prison occurs. The imprisoned individual, i.e., an adapted individual, has a worse criminal prognosis and recidivism of delinquency is more probable. The above mentioned processes may also lead to different types of psychiatric phenomena as i.e. dissociation [20].

It is possible to come to the following conclusions based on the above analysis of the needs and comparison of the results of both investigations:

1. The performance of an ordered and a regular job significantly contributes to the correction of the patterns of behaviour and the attainment of required changes in the personal characteristics of the offenders. The activity of working has the following significance for the prisoners from the psychological and the special education point of view:

The activity of work significantly contributes to the reduction of undesirable reactions to the burdens arising from the imprisonment and alleviation of the influence of prisonisation. The work activity leads to a general pacification, to harmony in the psychosomatic functions and also to putting a number of social and psychological aspects in a certain order. From this point of view the work activity can be considered therapeutic. A unique possibility of influencing the prisoners by means of work is thus offered to the psychologists.

A specific individual can obtain specific working skills which can be applied by him after his discharge from the imprisonment and this can eliminate the potential repetition of the criminal forms of behaviour.

The respective individual learns regularity and habituation via the regular performance of expected work. Here an opportunity is offered to the penitentiary practice consisting of a suitable application of educational means (rewards and

punishments). The imprisoned persons can experience that the performance of regular work can bring them benefits as well as joy and recognition. The work can thus become a need (self-actualisation) and a tool for finding a place (required from the point of view of socio-cultural norm) in the hierarchy of values.

2. The existence of functional social bonds is another significant factor helping to confront the negative consequences of the imprisonment and prisonisation. To alleviate the prisonisation effects, the influence of the psychologists on this level involves close co-operation with the specialists (educationalists and social workers). The aim of their work should reside in the maximum use of the possibilities of interaction inside the family and in the relationships with those closest to the prisoner. It concerns the support for the creation, maintenance and strengthening of the bonds of the individuals serving the sentence, with the family or close persons outside prison. Unequivocally, the preference and support of positive bonds with the family and friends, also a part of the work and professional contacts, is necessary both from the psychological point of view and from the point of view of special education.

3. The analysis of needs seems to be a useful instrument for penitentiary psychological and special education practice. The use of the projective method to discover the specificity of needs has its pros and cons. The pro is particularly the fact that the application of various questionnaires has, as a result of the lower educational level of the offenders, only a small effect. The use of projective methods enables a better recognition of the personality of these individuals. The projective methods are generally less connected to the tendency to desire to appear in a better social light (by means of deception). However, it is necessary to comment critically on the fact that the completion of sentences turns out to be socially more favourable when using the first form than, e.g. the third person [16]. A certain disadvantage is the exigency of objective interpretation which requires the sufficiency of theoretical and, in particular, practical experience. Further the case is with a non-standardized method. The examiner must discharge such problems as distortions resulting from his projections (multeity of the projective situation), his own theoretical orientation and hypersensitivity to various phenomena. This means that caution is necessary upon the interpretation of the results obtained in this way.

The analysis of correspondence probably appears to be more suitable. The persons serving the sentence are obliged to present it according to the legal standards. The reason for this is the functioning of the criminal law system. In the case of specialists, psychologists and therapists this may be enlarged to assume a diagnostic function. The imprisoned persons tend to answer purposefully in the case of tests' application even though it concerns the projective technique. This is very rarely possible in their correspondence. Besides respecting the ethical norms, the analysis of correspondence reveals the most intimate knowledge of the person and could be therefore perhaps the better method of working with the offenders. It concerns the application of the ideographic (individual) approach.

## References

1. FISCHER S.: *Etopedie v penitenciární praxi (Special education in penitentiary practice)* (in Czech). Univerzita J. E. Purkyně, Ústí nad Labem, 2006.
2. EYSENCK H. J.: *Crime and personality*, 3rd edn. Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1977.
3. RAINE A.: *The psychopathology of crime: Criminal behavior as a clinical disorder*. Academic Press, San Diego, 1993.
4. BLACKBURN R.: *The psychology of criminal conduct: theory, research and practice*. John Wiley and Sons, Chichester, 1993.
5. INCIARDI J. A.: *Criminal justice*. Harcourt Publishers, Inc., Orlando, 1998.
6. THOMAS CH. W., FOSTER S. C.: *Prisonization in the inmate contraculture*. *Soc. Probl.* 20(2): 229–239, 1972.
7. GLASER W., DEANE K.: *Normalization in an abnormal world: A study of prisoners with an intellectual disability*. *Int. J. Offender Ther. Comp. Criminol.* 43(3): 338–356, 1999.
8. United Nations: *Life imprisonment*. United Nations, study materials no. ST/CSDHA/24, Wien, 1994.
9. FRY J. L.: *Impact of formal inmate structure on opposition to staff and treatment goals*. *Br. J. Criminol.* 16: 126–141, 1976.
10. CHRISTIANSEN K. O., MEDNICK S. A.: *Biosocial bases of criminal behavior*. John Wiley and Sons, Chichester, 1977.
11. WELLFORD CH. F.: *Contact and commitment in a correctional community*. *Br. J. Criminol.* 13: 108–120, 1973.
12. SACHS J. M., LEVY S.: *The sentence completion test*. In: *Projective psychology*. Bellak L. (ed), Knopf, New York, 1950, 357–397.
13. MASLOW A.: *A theory of human motivation*. *Psychol. Rev.* 50: 370–396, 1943.
14. CLONINGER C. R.: *Personality and psychopathology*. American Psychiatric Publishing, Inc., Arlington, 1999.
15. MEILI R., ROHRACHER H.: *Lehrbuch der experimentellen Psychologie*. Hans Huber, Bern – Stuttgart, 1968.
16. HARDY M. A., BRYMAN A.: *Handbook of data analysis*. Sage Publications, London, 2004.
17. *European Prison Rules: Recommendation Rec (2006) 2 of the Committee of Ministers to member states*.
18. WALTERS G. D.: *Changes in criminal thinking and identity in novice and experienced inmates: Prisonization revisited*. *Crim. Justice Behav.* 30(4): 399–421, 2003.
19. ŽUKOV I., VEVERA J.: *Výšetřovací metody u kriminálního chování (Investigation methods with respect to criminal behaviour)*. In: *Neurobiologie duševních poruch (Neurobiology of psychical disorders)* (in Czech). Sikora J. (eds), Galén, Prague, 1999.
20. PTÁČEK R., BOB P., PACLT I., PAVLAT J., JASOVA D., ZVOLSKY P., RABOCH J.: *Psychobiology of dissociation and its clinical assessment*. *Neuro Endocrinol. Lett.* 28: 191–198, 2008.