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## Expected outcomes of sport practice for inmates: A comparison of perceptions of inmates and staff

David Moscoso-Sánchez<sup>3\*</sup>, Eric De Léséleuc<sup>\*\*</sup>, Luis Rodríguez-Morcillo<sup>\*\*\*</sup>, Manuel González-Fernández<sup>\*</sup>, Antonio Pérez-Flores<sup>\*</sup> and Víctor Muñoz-Sánchez<sup>\*</sup>

### *EXPECTED OUTCOMES OF SPORT PRACTICE FOR INMATES: A COMPARISON OF PERCEPTIONS OF INMATES AND STAFF*

KEY WORDS: Sports, Social Reintegration, Physical and Psychic Health, Prisons.

ABSTRACT: In our society there is a version of sports that is “invisible”. It is not competitive, it generates no new records and provides no victories. It consists of the unrecognized sporting experiences of certain social minorities. One of these minorities is the prison population. Some research has examined the effects that the practice of sports can have in prisons. This article analyzes these effects based on the results of a qualitative study carried out in Andalusia in Spain. It focuses on the role of sports in the social rehabilitation of the prison population, emphasizing its potential in generating positive attitudes and behaviors that are helpful in reintegration. It also reveals that the role sports has in social rehabilitation is only effective if sports programs in prisons have sound pedagogical practices behind them.

In the last years, there has been a growing interest in the research about the potential of sports in the social rehabilitation of the prison population, mainly in Canada, the US and the UK. The majority of studies in this area have examined the physical, psychological and relational benefits of sports for the prison population (Boice, 1972; Morohoshi, 1976; Middleton, 1983; O’Morrow and Reynolds, 1989; DeMaeyer, 2009).

These studies, which analyze people in jail, are based on a strong current in the scientific literature that presents sport practices as a positive element in the socialization processes. But some other studies, which do not specifically analyze people in jail, defend opposite results. Drinkwater (1980), for example, argued that physical exercise and sport can bring about violence and other anti-social behaviors. We can also mention studies from Otto (2009), who analyzed the criminal activities of athletes in the United States, above all, American Football Players and the types of crimes they committed. So, sport practices cannot be always considered as a positive

way to produce resocialization. That is why it appears necessary to evaluate if sport practices in prison is working or not in terms of social rehabilitation processes.

Research on this topic is not very widespread in Spain (Chamorro, Blasco and Palenzuela, 1998; Castillo, 2006; Martos, Devís and Andrew, 2009). This is why we took the opportunity to analyze a Spanish sport-in-prison program development (CIT Batá 1998- 2010) to evaluate how it works in Andalusia (Spain). This program is called “Sports in the Penitentiary Centers of Andalusia” (CIC Bata), and is founded on a social approach which is characteristic of community intervention (Rothman, 1970). Likewise, it additionally applies a cognitive-behavioral methodology and, in particular, one of modeling and training in social skills (Bandura, 1973). The specific objectives developed by the CIT Bata program 2011 were:

- 1.- To collaborate in the processes of reeducation and socio-laboral rehabilitation.
- 2.- To develop personal and social skills which the

<sup>3</sup> Correspondencia: David Moscoso Sánchez. Facultad de Ciencias Sociales, Departamento de Sociología, Ctra. Utrera km. 1, s/n, 41013 Sevilla (España). Email: dmoscoso@upo.es

\*Universidad Pablo de Olavide

\*\*Institut d’Enseignement Supérieur et de Recherche Handicap et Besoins Éducatifs Particuliers (INS HEA).

\*\*\*Instituto de Estudios Sociales Avanzados (IESA), Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (CSIC).

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labor market currently values and demands.

3.- To foster feelings of solidarity, cooperation and tolerance for labor reinsertion.

4.- To create healthy preventative habits.

5.- Sports training.

6.- Training in the organization of sport events and competitions.

The purpose of this program was to transform attitudes which influence the physical, psychic and relational health of the prison population, considering the individual in the framework of an organizational structure (the prison), and intervening in the key elements for the social reinsertion of the inmates. The intervention strategy was developed by a team of graduates in sports sciences which was contracted, along with professional teams of psychologists and social workers of the penitentiary centers. The main aims of the intervention program are therefore social and psychological. Amongst others, to contribute to the inmates' social reinsertion in the communities of origin, to foster feelings of solidarity, cooperation and tolerance, to provide them with functional autonomy and healthy habits, to collectively acquire competences regarding empathy and cohabitation through the rules of sports games, and to facilitate their integration into prison life.

Plenty of studies focused on the physical benefits have analyzed the importance of sports in improving health and quality of life among inmates (Hagan, 1989; Clement, 1992; Chevy, Aoun and Negro, 1995; Mortimer, 1999; Wagner, Mabride and Crouse, 1999; Courtenay and Sabo, 2001). Some studies have also stressed the practice of sports as a factor in the prevention of and recovery from substance abuse in prisons (Hitchcock, 1990; Chamorro, Blasco and Palenzuela, 1998).

Regarding the psychological benefits, sport plays an important role in the use of free time in the prison population (Sabo, 2001), enabling inmates to enjoy a sensation of freedom during the sport activity (Courtenay and Sabo, 2001; Strandberg, 2004). Grayzel's research (1978) has shown that boredom may be one of the worst punishments for inmates and a source of problems of coexistence in prisons. Elger (2009) has studied the harmful effects of isolation on the prison population, in particular, the suffering from insomnia, and has recommended the practice of sports to counteract the high levels of stress.

Regarding the relational benefits of sports in prison, the majority of studies emphasize its role

in rehabilitation and social control (O'Morrow and Reynolds, 1989). In the earliest studies, Boice (1972) and Morohoshi (1976) analyzed the benefits for inmates of the possibility of relating through sports to the non-prison population. Middleton (1983) examined how shedding their prison uniforms when doing sports affected the lives of inmates in English prisons. DeMaeyer (2009) carried out a study which showed how the prison system could be reconverted into a means for the ongoing personal education of the inmates.

Following this theoretical tradition, the main aim of our study was to check if sports can act as an instrument to create favorable conditions for the social rehabilitation of inmates.

Following the research requirements, we have centered on the actors' points of view: the inmates and the qualified prison staff. This is why we have analyzed their speeches, investigating their perceptions and representations of whether the practice of sports in this area is beneficial or not.

With this goal, the study has aimed to evaluate the rehabilitating potential of sport, expressed through the speeches of the inmates and the qualified informants—the latter have contributed control elements for the analysis of the inmates' speeches, as these could be conditioned by structural censure (Bourdieu, 2000)—, in order to assess if this pedagogical tool in prisons is suitable.

## Methodology

The aim of this article is therefore to analyze the perception of the effects of the intervention program "Sport in Penitentiary Centers in Andalusia", carried out between 1998 and 2010. This NGO's goal was to generate processes of alternative intervention which propitiate a social transformation.

We present results obtained through the analysis of qualitative data produced via two research techniques: on the one hand, thorough interviews with penitentiary staff and staff related with the sports program and, on the other hand, semi-directive interviews of biographical stories obtained from the program's sports inmates. The results only shed light on how sport contributes to the perception of the personal evolution of the inmates, and on the improvement of their abilities and skills.

## The interviewees

There are thorough interviews of 6 qualified informants involved in the handling and custody

of inmates, either through the sports program or the structural functions of the Centers. To do so, a structural sample was designed which compiled the main roles when implementing the program. This meant that it included someone in charge of sports programs, a sub-director of penitentiary enforcement, a doctor, a sports trainer contracted for the program, a prison civil servant dedicated to sports activities and a social worker. Attention was also paid to each interviewee coming from a different Penitentiary Center and being selected through the Center's management.

The participants in the technique of biographical stories were also selected through the management of the centers, following another structural sample elaborated after analyzing the statistics of the penitentiary population of the Spanish Government's Ministry of Interior, in which it stood out that 92,5% of the inmates in Andalusian Penitentiary Centers were men. The profiles of our sample reflected the most representative situations in the penitentiary centers and in the different penal contexts. Each profile was characterized by a combination of variables: the type

of Penitentiary Center, gender, nationality, the degree of the sentence, whether there was serious mental illness and the type of crime committed. Furthermore, all those selected had to fulfill three general requirements: that they were convicted inmates, that they had been in prison for at least a year and that they regularly practiced sport in the prison.

The profiles were extracted from different Penitentiary Centers. To do so, it was taken into account that there were four types of Penitentiary Centers: a) conventional Penitentiary Centers (which accommodated second and third degree inmates and which had blocks for women); b) one 1st. degree Penitentiary Center for especially dangerous inmates; c) one Penitentiary Center for Women; and d) one Psychiatric Hospital Penitentiary. As conventional Penitentiary Centers have more inmates than the capacity for which they were designed, we differentiated according to the degree of overcrowding (Table 1). Centers with a low level of overcrowding (up to 150% of excess of inmates), medium (between 150% and 200% of excess of inmates), and high (more than 200% excess of inmates).

Table 1.

*Sample Design of Biographical Profiles*

No.	Type of prison	Sex	Nationality	Sentence	Age	Mental illness	Crime
1	1st degree	Man	Spanish	1°	32	No	1
2	Low	Man	Spanish	2°	30	No	2
3	Medium	Man	Moroccan	2°	40	No	7
4	Medium	Man	Spanish	2°	34	No	3
5	Medium	Man	Spanish	2°	38	No	4
6	Low	Man	Spanish	2°	20	Compulsive gambler	3
7	High	Man	Bolivian	2°	24	No	5
8	Women's	Woman	Spanish	3°	31	No	2
9	Psychiatric Hospital	Man	Spanish	-	40	Personality disorder	6
10	Psychiatric Hospital	Man	Spanish	-	43	Psychotic	6
11	High	Man	Spanish	3°	44	No	2

\* This is a maximum security prison. *Crime: 1. Homicide and assault; 2. Against Public Health; 3. Theft; 4. Sexual; 5. Sexual and/or assault; 6. Damage to family property; 7. Other.*

The sample is representative of the penitentiary population but does not mean to be statistically representative of the all this population. Moreover, the function of the Penitentiary Institution of preserving the privacy of inmates conditioned the way of accessing them. Due to this, their selection was beyond the control of the researcher. This selection was carried out by the workers of the Center who were directly involved in, on the one hand, the carrying out of the sports programs, and, on the other hand, the general result of penitentiary aims. This could introduce a bias into the sample in the sense

that the inmates might correspond with those who exemplify a positive evolution in the penitentiary centers as a consequence of their participation in sports activities.

Eleven biographical stories with well-defined socio-demographic characteristics were obtained. The men were married or had a partner and had children, except the two who suffered from mental illnesses, who were single. The two women had children with partners who they had separated from. Only a few interviewees had primary education, while the rest had dropped out. However, many of them had

a work career, though precarious and poorly trained. Except someone mentally ill, they had a history of drug abuse and even in some cases of low-level street distributing (or retail selling) and the great majority had self-qualified themselves as good sports people in their life, with two of the mentally ill standing out.

### **The material used**

All the interviews were recorded digitally and were transcribed for their later analysis with the Atlas.ti program. The interviews were confidential and took place in an office or private room of the Centers. They all took place in a friendly and collaborative atmosphere. The attitude of the inmates changed from being initially reserved to being trustful, as was proved by the satisfaction and well-being that they expressed for having cooperated.

All the interviews were semi-directive with a guided script and open to the responses of the interviewees, enabling a greater shift in the biographical stories. The interview script for qualified informants was structured with an introduction, an investigation concerning their knowledge and participation in the sports program, a valuation of the program, the influence perceived of the program in the inmates and the changes which they deemed necessary in the program. In the case of the stories, the script was structured: the collecting of socio-demographic information, their penitentiary experience, their experience with sport in the Penitentiary Center, the changes perceived in their attitudes and expectations, and a conclusion.

### **Analysis procedure**

The information was processed with a computer program and thematically analyzed. Two complementary perspectives were obtained. One was the institutional perspective of the qualified informants concerning the evolution of the inmates. The other was the perspective of the inmates stemming from their own personal experience and their perception of the impact on their lives of sport in prison. The comparison of the two gave us knowledge about how sport had become a positive activity. This enabled us to check whether the inmates had internalized the aims of the sports program and the way in which the program satisfied or did not satisfy the goals of re-education and social reintegration.

The recommendations of Blanchet, Giami, Gotman and Léger (1985) were taken into account for the analysis. The saturation principle was respected—It is assumed that there is a saturation of the speeches when the different interviewees repeat subjects which describe the effects of sport—in both perspectives (inmates and staff). This allowed us to consider that all the study's possible topics had been covered.

The procedure followed to analyze the statements was the following. In the first phase, the interviews were transcribed. In the second phase we reduced the analysis to a series of categories or subjects. In the third phase we interpreted the results. We show the subjects used in the analysis in Table 2.

Table 2.

*Topics of the analysis of the speech*

Topics of the analysis of the qualified informants	Topics of the analysis of the biographical stories (inmates)
Sports Activities	Activities
Interviewed Functions	Benefits and health prevention
Sports Inmates	Change of Attitudes and Values
Program Carried Out	Change of Personality and Expectations
Initial Program	Previous Sport and Benefits
Program Aims	Previous Sport
Program Organization	Sport in Prison
Program Results Sports Resources	Mental Illness
Reinsertion	Entrance in Prison
Relation with Inmates	Occupational Studies and Incomes
Family and Social Relations	Family of Origin. Family Relations and with partners
	Relations in Prison
	Socialization and Rehabilitation
	Path as Inmate
	Exterior Links

**Results**

As is shown by the results below, the sports promotion program in the prisons of Andalusia has had a positive impact on the perceptions of inmates and staff. Both kinds of actors state that sport practices have changed the inmates' ways of behaving concerning habits, attitudes, values, the use of drugs and medicine, and social reintegration factors. On this matter, the perception of the inmates and the qualified informants are similar. A summary of the key changes in the prison population following

their participation in sports programs is shown in Table 3, where, moreover, these changes perceived by the inmates and the qualified informants (columns on the right) are compared to the starting points identified by those taking part in the study (column on the left). The changes of perception in the prison population, following their participation in sports programs, which is gathered in the column on the right of the table is expressed conceptually, in the abstract, though this means incorporating some ideas stemming from the stories of the interviews which exemplify them.

Table 3.

*Effects of sport on the prison population*

Results regarding	Initial situation when joining the sports program	The results after taking part in the sports program	Results perceived by the qualified informants
Attitudes	Lack of discipline in the organization of their lives – non-fulfillment of their aims.	Increase of daily discipline Increase of satisfactory personal goals	Hygiene-healthy habits and well-being. Social relations and skills- Personal self-control.
Values	Violent conduct, aggressiveness, self-esteem problems Difficulties in social relations	Increase of empathy, self-esteem, positive state of mind, the ability to relate and personal responsibility	Development of attitudes of commitment, socialization, responsibility, participation and tolerance. Improvement of emotional state and self-esteem. Adoption of attitudes of respect and compliance with norms
Drugs and medicines	Rejection of honesty, friendship, co-operation, tolerance Low satisfaction at work Valuation of pessimism	Increase of optimism, appreciation of effort, friendship, co-operation and statement of more tolerance.	Assume new social values: honesty, effort oriented at goals, compliance with daily routines, respect, sincerity, responsibility, solidarity, co-operation, tolerance, comradeship and commitment.
Social reintegration	Use of medicine to treat abstinence	Progressive move away from drugs	Generate physical and mental well-being which reduces stress, aggressiveness and the consumption of medicine.

Regarding the first objective, all of the qualified informants state that sporting activities are used in prisons with the goal of increasing the success of the re-education and rehabilitation of inmates. They believe that sports promote two fundamental objectives: they help inmates structure their lives around the prison system and they channel aggression.

*“In general, it is all about collaborating in the rehabilitation and socialization of the inmates [...] at least not to have the trace of having been in prison so visible and, well, hoping that the person would acquire skills [...] that may help them in some way not to recidivate ...” (Key agent 3)*

*“... the program comes to us with a set of three or four main branches of actions that are the social field, the field of health, participation and sports training ...” (Key agent 2)*

These objectives can be reached, in the opinion of these professionals, because sporting activity consists of a type of role playing in which participants emulate the roles that exist within any type of social organization. Inmates adopt roles, and they become accustomed to playing by the rules of the game and accepting the authority of the referee and trainer. Note that in prisons, inmates in higher security sections usually choose contact sports. In these sports, aggressive behavior can only be carried out

in a specific physical space and under certain rules that ultimately protect the physical integrity of the participants.

*"... I ask them to work in pairs, in groups so that both of them are able to reach a consensus, make proposals; they are able to solve conflictive situations, simple conflicts ..."* (Key agent 2)

*"... in all activities, group work is always much richer [...] activities are also more beneficial if in a group. Besides, in a group, well, we work a lot more values and educational aspects at an individual level"* (Key agent 5)

In short, through sport, practitioners affirm that they learned to sublimate aggressive behaviors and to respect rules and regulations (that punish not so much aggressiveness as violence) in a specific space and context. In this sense, we could say that in sport they found a process of the rationalization of violence in which it is possible to realize one part of their functional re-adaptation of aggressive behaviors.

*"...the day before having a sporting activity, the inmates seem more predisposed to cooperate for the proper functioning of the center (they are on time without having to be reminded, no altercations or quarrels between them occur...) and subsequently to the implementation of the sporting activities, they seem more relaxed and the number of issues that require attention during the night decreases..."* (Key agent, 2)

Regarding the information gathered from inmates' biographical accounts, this confirms and completes the perspective offered by the qualified informants. The inmates talked about the changes which they experienced through the practice of sport, referring specifically to three aspects of their socialization.

The first was their adaptation to prison. Through this adaptation process inmates mentioned how they overcome the emotional and behavioral shock of imprisonment, as sport helps inmates internalize prison routines, surmount initial anxiety, escape feelings of isolation and fill their time.

*"... in the beginning I did not feel like doing anything. And when I started to do sports ... I don't know, my life changed [...] I dedicated myself to sports, and now I feel good, I feel happier, I feel more satisfied this way, up to everything."* (Inmate 7)

The second aspect mentioned by inmates is that practicing sports in prison they felt a great quantitative

and qualitative effect on their social relations. Inmates believe that what sport helps them with the most is establishing relationships with prison officials and accepting authority, avoiding or resolving conflicts in relationships and facilitating the transition to release after prison through their participation in sporting events outside of prison.

*"Sports make you nicer to people ... happier. If you're happy and feel good, somehow you transmit it to people"* (Inmate 3).

The third aspect inmates refer to is the development of social skills. As social skills are necessary to achieve goal-oriented actions, they are usually of great importance for inmates. Through sports, inmates become more assertive while also becoming less aggressive toward others: accepting the judgments of others, increasing their ability to reach agreement with others and their ability to project themselves outwardly. Their inner desire to belong to a group also increases, and they welcome and accept external social control.

In particular, a group of relational skills has to do with self-organization and the ability to resolve conflicts. This presupposes internalizing respect for and recognition of others, which is developed through the exchange of roles in the practice of sports. In this way and according to them, sports strengthen recreational and caring relationships, facilitate discipline, assist in the development of a spirit of personal and group improvement, modify selfishness and introversion and allow inmates to develop active strategies, calculate costs and benefits and exchange knowledge.

*"Like saying: 'you have to see, huh, I've made a big effort, it's been worthwhile', 'I've worked hard, I've overcome myself', right? I mean, I blow my own horn, right? ..."* (Inmate 10)

Furthermore, for the qualified informants, the ultimate objective of sports programs is to promote a change in attitudes and values. The informants have a positive vision of the change in attitudes brought about through sporting activities, as the new attitudes are usually based on more positive values, increase self-esteem and facilitate social relationships.

These informants believe that sports programs promote this change in attitudes and values in participants through socialization and the acquisition of social skills. Social skills produce attitudes that help inmates to assume responsibility for their

own behavior and to develop values that increase their possibilities for social reinsertion. Values such as honesty, effort, sincerity, the love of work, friendship, cooperation and tolerance contribute to the development of inmates' personalities in every dimension of their lives and, therefore, increase the likelihood of their social integration.

*"... For some of them there comes a time they think: 'Let's see, I've been stuck in this jail all this time and ...' at some point they say, 'from now on I have to consider a different life (I have to start doing something, I have to start demonstrating, I have to start taking responsibility, I cannot just be lying around the yard all the time). 'Sport is the first step for many of them in this sense. "(Key agent 2)*

*"... All values involved in sports are in normal life, there they are much more enhanced. And that makes it easier for people to adapt, to assume their roles in the penitentiary center, and then to be able to do other things. "(Key agent 4)*

Over time, informants think that the new behavior produces a change of attitude, and when inmates perceive this change in their own attitudes this provides a greater motivation for their personal development, guiding them in finding a purpose and in their social rehabilitation, and spreading to other activities in which they participate within the prison.

*"... An inmate's motivation and motivational aspects are not only addressed to sports. When people feel motivated they are being motivated in many other things, right?, which is more ... let's say, their attitude is more open to participating in other things, they're more interested in other aspects that perhaps did not interest them before ... " (Key agent 5)*

*New attitudes, along with greater personal motivation, result in a perception of an increase in participation in prison activities, more and better social relations, and greater self-esteem.*

*"... I think so ... I cannot say. The impression is that they do , those people who enrol in an activity, connects it to another one, to other areas ... " (Key agent 6)*

But the qualified informants also talk about the limitations of the influence of these changes on the possibilities of social integration. This also depends to a great degree on the social conditions inmates encounter upon their release from prison.

*"... We believe that the fundamental reintegration comes from finding a job. When they go out there, if you have a job you can continue, and if not, it's complicated. Then we notify the orientation and job search service for inmates and there we close the circle..." (Key agent 4)*

As for the inmates' experiences, the changes are based on some of the values that have already been mentioned by the qualified informants, especially friendship, cooperation and tolerance. The inmates express particular appreciation for certain institutions that are greatly missed in prison: freedom, the family as the foundation of social relations and the emotional world, and work to provide structure and order in life; in addition, they have come to appreciate prison rules as vital to their present life. Change has also been made possible because of the drop in drug consumption, which was a significant destructuring factor in the lives of many inmates.

*"Well, the truth is ... it is not that I feel bad, right? But for me this was a way to escape from all this, right? [to escape from drugs] And I felt like more, more, more cornered, right? [...] My freedom more curtailed [...] sport makes me escape from this, right?" (Inmate 10).*

*"Well, respect, the truth is I've always had respect for others, but what I feel, how I feel like when I do sports is ... come on, my mood is good and I transmit it to my family, friends, and my joy and ... " (Inmate 3).*

*"... The truth is that entering prison did me good [...] from the first day I got into prison I started thinking; I began to reconsider things... I started practicing sports, I got to be an assistant in the sports section, I worked here for around three years [...] I took refuge in sports, I began to take refuge in sports, studies ... and bit by bit I stopped suffering the withdrawal and, in that way, the need to use drugs "(Inmate 4) .*

From their accounts we can also infer that an expansion in their social relationships is an important factor in their change in attitude, specifically because it is the social context within which this change arises. In general, social relationships improve psychological well-being and this generates greater receptivity among inmates to the changes sport encourages (Chamarro, 1993). Sports change inmates' beliefs, decreasing negative and fatalistic thoughts about themselves and their past, present and future. They also alter the preconceptions that condition their

attitudes toward social relationships and prison. These changes are encouraged by the relaxation that sports bring about, which makes it possible to maintain a calm attitude in social relations.

*"... if you practice sports, the day you leave you'll go out enthusiastically. [...] The things you learn here, right? How to do it, how to do one thing or the other, right? And so this way, I think, one day you can go out and [...] I'd like to train people, right?" (Inmate 7)*

*"... you should always have the possibility to never lose contact with the outside world for a long time because we believe this is the best way one can get reintegrated. So for us, sports tours to the outside are essential; as much as it is essential that society re-enters the Centers ...". (Key agent 4)*

## Discussion

The aim of the research was to check if, from the experience of the program of sports activities in the prisons of Andalusia, an improvement in those psychic and social attitudes which positively reverse their social reinsertion was perceived in the inmates who took part in this program. To do so, we compared the starting situation of the inmates when they began their participation in the program with the results at the end of this period of participation (see Table 3). We took into account that the participants had attended the sports program for at least a year. This comparison was established, moreover, by contrasting the perceptions of the inmates themselves who took part in the program with those of the qualified informants.

The results show that sport is a way to resocialize inmates, the following aspects being mentioned: they acquired personal skills, improved their social relationships, learned healthy habits and formed new attitudes. However, the inmates did not perceive that this would help them enough for social reintegration when released. This same perception is clearer in the qualified informants. Both of them, the inmates and the informants, perceive that social reintegration will depend on the social context in which they are integrated when released. In short, we can say that, according to them, sport fosters the penitentiary system's goal of social rehabilitation, but social reintegration will also depend on each inmate's external social context.

In general, sporting activities are seen as a catalyst for the development of better healthy habits and offer a context for a change in attitudes. Through sport, practitioners learn to sublimate aggressive behavior and to respect rules and regulations (that punish not so much aggressiveness but violence) in a specific space and context. In this sense, we can say that in sport we find a process of the rationalization of violence in which it is possible to realize the functional re-adaptation of aggressive behavior.

These results do not coincide with the studies of Drinkwater (1980) and Otto (2009), who think that physical activity and sports foster violence and anti-social behavior. Indeed, the stories of our informants show that sport in prisons improves social relations and favors the acquiring of more peaceful and empathic behaviors with the group of inmates. It is a perception shared by the inmates, psychologists and the management of the prisons, as well as by the security guards.

On the other hand, they are in line with those, who showed how the prison system can become a means of social rehabilitation (Boise, 1972; Middleton, 1983; DeMaeyer, 2009). As we indicated in the introduction, ultimately the results depend on whether the sports programs consider pedagogical methodologies and aims (Martos, Devís and Andrew, 2009).

The behaviors redirected through sport can end up being instrumental and provide the inmate with many other benefits, in addition to physical and emotional control. At the same time, through the role-playing involved, social relationships are established with other inmates. This has a positive impact on other personal and social spheres. These roles imply the development of social skills that contrast with the skills that got them into prison, which were individualistic and oriented toward obtaining immediate gratification. And, in the case of inmates who have not had destructured lives, they are able, through sports, to maintain and carry out normal socialization and work to regain the life they had before their imprisonment. Nevertheless, the transition from one type of skills to another cannot happen overnight, but requires long-term participation in sporting activities.

As sports are motivational and benefit the psychological well-being of inmates, participants come to value themselves more, acquiring new social skills and developing more positive attitudes in order to re-integrate themselves socially. The research shows that inmates who practice sports develop two types of integration strategies: one oriented

toward adapting to their life in prison and personal development, and the other oriented toward social reinsertion when they are released.

In short, both perspectives (from the individual in-depth interviews and the biographical accounts) share the view that the inmate goes through a process of re-socialization in prison based on the general organization of the prison regime, which is enhanced by sporting activities. The prison regime introduces the principle of order into the destructured lives of inmates and structures their lives through the establishment of daily routines. Sporting activities continue this process, as the recreational gratification they provide increases the inmates' tolerance of others and of rules. Sports also help inmates to regain the positive socialization that they may have had at some point in their lives and to internalize respect for the rules of the game (symbolic of all types of social norms). They assign inmates with functional and vocational roles, and increase social relations. Finally, sports help them acquire intra-organizational skills (e.g., designating and adopting simple or multiple roles, learning and internalizing organizational rules, learning the processes involved in an activity and estimating costs and benefits), as well as extra-organizational skills (e.g., learning legal-administrative rules and those regarding authority and the general population).

In spite of the relevance of the results obtained, it is advisable to point out some aspects which mark the scope or the limits of the study. Firstly, the use

of a structural sample, which is usual in qualitative research, enables the characterizing of the speeches of the different categories of subjects, but does not aspire to statistically represent the weight of these speeches (or of certain characters) in the population as a whole. Likewise, as Martos, Devís and Andrew (2009) point out, the results obtained are not necessarily generalizable to all the experiences in which sports programs are developed in penitentiary centers. In the case studied, the program was explicitly subject to pedagogical aims oriented at facilitating rehabilitation and has been carried out with the multidisciplinary participation of people in charge of prisons, social workers, psychologists and sports technicians. Furthermore, we are aware that the aim of the social rehabilitation of inmates through sports depends, to a great extent, on the type of life that they have had before entering prison, and, in particular, on the type of social context or origin (structured or destructured) from which these inmates come.

Despite our awareness of these limitations, we value the experience studied positively, considering the results useful to encourage penitentiary administrations to reproduce similar experiences.

Likewise, as a future challenge, we believe that this work shows the interest of a research line which goes thoroughly into the perceptions and effects of sport among specific inmate populations, defined by gender, health condition or origin, among other characteristics.

#### *RESULTADOS ESPERADOS DE LA PRÁCTICA DEL DEPORTE ENTRE LOS RECLUSOS: COMPARACIÓN DE LAS PERCEPCIONES DE PRESOS Y PERSONAL DE PRISIONES*

**PALABRAS CLAVES:** Deporte, Reinserción Social, Salud Física y Psíquica, Cárceles.

**RESUMEN:** En nuestra sociedad existe una versión del deporte "invisible". No se trata de deporte competitivo, no bate marcas, no proporciona victorias. Consiste en una experiencia desamparada para algunos colectivos sociales minoritarios. Uno de estos colectivos es la población reclusa. Algunas investigaciones han examinado los efectos positivos de la práctica deportiva en las cárceles. Este artículo analiza esa relación a partir de los resultados de una investigación cualitativa realizada en el Estado de Andalucía, en España. Se centra en el papel del deporte en la rehabilitación social de la población reclusa. Señala su potencial en la provisión de actitudes y comportamientos positivos para la integración. Igualmente, revela que el papel del deporte en la rehabilitación social sólo es efectivo si existen estrategias pedagógicas que sustenten los programas deportivos en las cárceles.

#### *RESULTADOS ESPERADOS DA PRÁTICA ESPORTIVA ENTRE OS RECLUSOS: COMPARAÇÃO DAS PERCEPÇÕES DE PRESOS E PESSOAL (FUNCIONÁRIOS) DAS PRISÕES*

**PALAVRAS CHAVES:** Esportes, Reinserção Social, Saúde física e Psíquica, Cárceres.

**RESUMO:** Em nossa sociedade existe uma versão invisível de esporte. Não se trata de esporte competitivo, não bate recordes, não proporciona vitórias. Consiste numa experiência desamparada para alguns coletivos

minoritários. Um desses coletivos é a população em regime de reclusão. Algumas investigações tem examinado os efeitos positivos das práticas esportivas nos cárceres. Este artigo analisa essa relação a partir dos resultados de uma investigação qualitativa realizada no Estado da Andaluzia, Espanha, e se centra no papel do esporte na reabilitação social da população reclusa. Assinala seu potencial na provisão de atitudes e comportamentos positivos à integração. Igualmente, revela que o papel do esporte na reabilitação social só é efetivo se existem estratégias pedagógicas que sustentem os programas esportivos nos presídios.

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