

Once a Criminal, Always a Criminal? Attitudes Towards Reintegration of Released Prisoners Among Israeli Public

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine the attitudes of different groups toward the reintegration of released prisoners in Israeli society, characterized by the groups' ability to directly or indirectly contribute to the prisoners' reintegration in normative society. The sample included 551 subjects divided into three groups: Representatives of the law enforcement system, owners or managers of businesses of different sizes, and members of the general public. A mapping sentence, defining a specific world of content, was defined for each of the three groups. Using this mapping sentence, the researchers constructed a separate questionnaire for each test group, phrased according to Likert scale. The findings of this study suggest that, at declarative level, a high percentage of the subjects express sympathetic attitudes towards the reintegration of released prisoners in the community, and their rehabilitation within it. However, it should be noted that there is often a gap between a person's stated position and his/her actual behavior. We can conclude that members of the Israeli public do not declaratively express an extreme position against reintegration of released prisoners. The findings of this study suggest that it would be beneficial to increase public awareness in Israel of the advantages of rehabilitating and reintegrating released prisoners in the community.

Key words: Israel; Released prisoners; Public attitudes

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INTRODUCTION

Approximately 7,400 incarcerated offenders are released every year from Israeli prisons. Only a few are integrated in normative society and find proper occupation (*State Comptroller's Report*, 2014). Nearly half return to commit felonies, and are re-incarcerated (Ben-Zvi & Wolk, 2011). Almost all those convicted and incarcerated eventually return to live within the community.

In 2011, the Israeli Interior Ministry estimated that in addition to the danger to society, repetitive criminality has cost Israel approximately 14.4 billion NIS, i.e. about 2% of gross national production. The work plan of the Ministry for 2012 set out an objective of "strengthening efforts to correct and assist in the rehabilitation of prisoners and their integration in society, and reduction of recidivism". However, the report published by the State Comptroller two years later determines that the interim goals and milestones of this program have yet to be established. Reintegrating released prisoners into society after various periods of incarceration are presented in the literature as the stage with the highest risk for criminal recidivism. A study performed in the USA by the Bureau of Justice Statistics found that 68% of all people released from state prisons were reincarcerated within three years, and that nearly half (43%) of these re-incarcerations occur during the first six months of release (Langan & Levin, 2012). Weissburd, Shoham, Ariel, Manspfeiszer and Gideon (2011) also found that during the first year after release from prison, around 55% of prisoners convicted of drug offenses and who did not undergo intensive treatment in prison, were re-arrested.

One of the common explanations for these bleak statistics is the negative general attitude that normative society has towards released prisoners (Petersilia, 2003; Travis, 2002). The road to rehabilitation for released prisoners is paved with difficulties and depends on a multitude of factors. Some of these depend on the prisoner, processes he underwent within the prison system,

environmental factors, and treatment and rehabilitation frameworks he attended post-release. During recent years, various theories and programs have been developed to treat and rehabilitate criminals after their release from prison (for a wider review on the subject, see Maguire & Raynor, 2006). The term 'Re-entry' describes the process of a prisoner's transfer from prison back to the community (Gideon & Sung, 2011; Ward & Maruna, 2007), based on the assumption that to rehabilitate a released prisoner a therapeutic continuum must be maintained between treatment programs received in prison and post-release therapy and monitoring frameworks (Seiter & Kadela, 2003; Travis, 2005; Shoham, Yehosha-Stern, Efodi, & Diamant, 2010).

The new penology, which deals with actuarial analysis (probability calculations), has changed the rehabilitation concept underpinning therapeutic programs for released prisoners, and has seen the growth of rehabilitative models such as the RNR (Risk-Need-Responsiveness) model, which combines risk assessments with identification of released prisoners' needs, and involves designing an intervention program that suits his individual characteristics (Ward & Maruna, 2007); or the GLM (Good Lives Model), which seeks legitimate means to satisfy a released prisoner's needs, thus reducing the risk of recidivism. The reintegration approach assumes that repeat criminal behavior can be reduced through identifying the main difficulties which hinder a released prisoner's integration in society, and recruiting the resources and formal and informal means to address these difficulties (Taxman, 2004; Taxman, Young, Byrne, Holsinger, & Anspach, 2002; Petersilia, 2003; Travis, 2002; Travis, 2005; Uggen, 2000). This model emphasizes changing a released prisoner's position *vis-à-vis* the community and encouraging his integration in and contribution to society by decreasing the criminal stigma associated with him, which forms a barrier to his integration into the community. In addition, the model highlights the need to create changes within the community that enable the creation of legitimate opportunities to fulfill the released criminal's various needs (Borzycki & Baldry, 2003). In accordance with this, this study aims to examine attitudes towards reintegration of released prisoners in Israeli society expressed by members of the public, large and small employers and law enforcement officials.

1. PUNISHMENT VS. REHABILITATION POLICY

The development of research in theoretical and applied penology has led to therapeutic and rehabilitation programs for criminals, prisoners, and released prisoners. The embracing of policies of therapy and rehabilitation, and the operation of therapeutic and educational programs

for prisoners to promote their successful integration in society has been justified, *inter alia*, by the perception of the anti-social behavior as a symptom of individual and/or social pathology (Applegate, Cullen, & Fisher, 1997).

At the same time, we are witnessing the growth of a political-administrative school of penology, which ignores the understanding of a criminal's motives as a route for developing therapy programs and argues that a criminal is motivated predominantly by the desire to profit and evade the supervision of law enforcement and justice systems. This school of thought assumes that criminals act rationally and emphasizes prevention and incapacitation of committing criminal offenses. This perception has led, in various countries, to the adoption of harsh and unequivocal punishment policies, which include longer punishments for violent criminals or those convicted more than three times. This rigorousness is explained as a means of maintaining public order, and as a result of public fear of increasing crime and its damage to the social order (Oswald, Klug, Hupfled & Gabriel, 2002; Hensley, Koscheski, & Tewksbury, 2007).

Alternatively, another approach that supports punishment policy is based on the "crime control" theoretical model, which considers the released prisoner as a threat to society (Packer, 1968; Schmallegger, 1999). According to this model, the fact that a person was delinquent in the past serves as proof of the risk posed by a released prisoner, and his expected behavior. Therefore, the law enforcement system marks the released prisoner in advance as a potential criminal and limits his behavior in various ways, such as through repeated arrests. This approach places great trust in the findings of police investigations and is the preferred option of senior officials in the law enforcement system, who consider the ongoing supervision and monitoring of a released prisoner's every move as a crucial component in the war against crime and in the protection of the public (Graham & Lwery, 2004). They suspect the released prisoner every time a crime occurs near his residence, stop him for questioning, and repeatedly arrest him. This constant exposure to incarceration reinforces and maintains the social label of the released prisoner was a chronic criminal (Mann, 1992). Officials in various public systems also perceive released prisoners as prone to continuous criminal activity, and therefore advocate for a reduction in their rights to compare to law-abiding citizens (Maxwell & Mallon, 1997).

This approach has led to the "law and order" approach, which aims to reduce tolerance of delinquencies and criminals to a minimum and which focuses on increasing the severity of punishment and removing criminals from society (Beckett, 1997). Nevertheless, punishment severity and the focus on limiting and removing criminals within the criminal punishment framework did not necessarily yield the expected results. Meta-analyses such as Killias

and Villettaz's (2008) suggest that increasing the severity of punishment leads to higher levels of recidivism in those sent to prison. These findings are in line with those of another meta-analysis, which examined the length of the prison term and showed that there was a higher rate of recidivism among those who served longer terms (Smith, Goggin, & Gendreau, 2002). The findings of these studies imply that increased severity and long imprisonment terms do not decrease the rate of recidivism, and may even make it worse.

Alongside the "just deserts" approach, rehabilitation services developed the reintegration model, which grew during the 1980s as an answer to the medical model and an attempt to replace it (*cf.* Petersilia, 2003; Taxman, 2004; Taxman, Young, Byrne, Holsinger, & Anspach, 2002; Travis, 2002; Uggen, 2000).

Behind this approach lies the assumption that a released prisoner can only be rehabilitated when society acknowledges his capacity to change his ways; his obligation and privilege to do so, and society's own obligation to seek proper ways to prevent crime and to rehabilitate criminals. Rehabilitation services express the policy of a country that feels responsible for its weaker members. Therefore, we can conclude that the rehabilitative approach, as a crucial part of the rule of law and its enforcement, may lead to a balance between the punishment policy and rehabilitation policy (Shavit, 1989; Hoffman, 2003). The reintegration approach is based on the understanding that a punishment policy often forms a barrier for released prisoners to reintegrate within the community and does not help reduce the problem of recidivism (Weiss, 2003). According to this approach, repeated delinquency is reduced by developing and nurturing positive and stable relationships between the released prisoner and the community (Amir, Horovitz & Sagiv, 2005; Timor & Shoham, 2003). This approach focuses on changing a prisoner's attitude towards the community and encouraging him to integrate into and contribute to it through decreasing his stigma as a criminal, a phenomenon which forms a barrier to his attempts for societal integration. Instead, this approach advocates engendering changes within the community that may form a window for legitimate opportunities to satisfy a released prisoner's various needs (Borzycki & Baldry, 2003; Taxman, 2004).

Gunnison and Helfgott (2011) examined the relationship between a former prisoner's needs and the array of opportunities available in the community, by examining "transition agencies": employers, asset managers, colleges and universities, and the public. This study focused on determining the level of a released prisoner's needs when he encounters these "transition agencies", and the gestures of support offered him, if at all, by his community during his process of returning to society. It was found that obtaining accommodation and coordinating services formed the main obstacles

for a released prisoner. Moreover, the study found that supervising officers do not fully understand the needs of former prisoners and do not perceive their role as crucial in the process of returning to the community. However, a study in Melbourne, Australia, which examined the perceptions of law enforcement professionals regarding former prisoners' needs showed that this population identified a number of needs regarding various issues such as steady accommodation, occupation, rehabilitation (such as drug rehabilitation) and emotional support through counseling (Graffam, Shinkfield, Lavelle, & McPherson, 2004).

The findings of these studies and others demonstrate the need for a comprehensive systematic reference, not only to the particular offense committed by a released prisoner but also to an array of existential needs that must be addressed as part of the efforts to reintegrate prisoners into the community.

2. OCCUPATION AS A REHABILITATIVE TOOL IN THE COMMUNITY

In many cases, released prisoners find themselves outcast, alienated and unemployed. When they leave prison, sometimes after a very long time behind bars, they are isolated, with no work and no profession. This situation increases the probability of recidivism. However, prisoners who underwent professional training before their release gain the opportunity to become productive citizens. The professional training provides them with an occupation and paves the way to their new life (Kaplanski, 2007).

In 2000, Uggen investigated Sampson and Lamb's criminological assumption (Sampson & Lamb, 1993), which considers integration in a workplace as turning point in the career of released prisoners. This study showed that integration in work does serve as a turning point in a prisoner's criminal career; however, it is important to note that finding work is only one level of the social support systems that may contribute to a prisoner's reintegration in normative social networks (*cf.* Maruna & Immarigeon, 2004). In a study conducted in Canada in 2005, data from over 20,000 prisoners released on probation between 1998-2005 was analyzed. The study compared prisoners who managed to find work and prisoners who could not find work after their release, once the researchers verified that both groups had similar characteristics that would allow valid comparison. It was found that prisoners who had integrated in workplaces after their release had higher chances of successfully completing their probation period and a lower probability of returning to prison due to a new offense (Gillis & Nafekhm 2005).

Increasing academic achievements and professional skills can help a prisoner, to find work post-release and

thus decrease the likelihood of recidivism. Cross out the word-Even Seiter and Kadela (2003) emphasize in their study the need to develop programs in prisons that would prepare a prisoner for his release, especially on an occupational level. In their study, Seiter and Kadela found that a released prisoner who received psychotherapy and drug rehabilitation treatments in prison, who had undergone occupational training, had worked in prison and acquired skills to obtain and maintain work, had greater chance of rehabilitation once released from prison.

A meta-analysis performed by Wilson, Gallagher, and MacKenzie (2000), which studied the effectiveness of various rehabilitation programs within the prison compared to recidivism rates among those who participated in rehabilitation programs after their release from prison, found that the rate of recidivism among prisoners who did not participate in occupational programs was approximately 50%. Among prisoners who participated in occupational programs in prison, recidivism was reduced to 39%.

Despite the great importance of occupation as a tool to reintegrate released prisoners, there is an array of factors that inhibit the integration of released prisoners in occupational frameworks. Some are related to the characteristics of the released prisoner himself, such as the lack of stable work habits, difficulty in accepting authority, difficulty in deferring gratification, unwillingness to accept any type of work and a lack of proper support and information services for released prisoners. Others are related to the employers, such as negative social branding of released prisoners, suspicion and mistrust towards them, etc.. Quite a few studies have been dedicated to investigating the attitudes of employers toward hiring released prisoners. Holzer, Raphael, and Stoll (2000) found that employers in the United States tend to hire released prisoners at much lower rates than other members of deprived populations. Similar findings were also published in the UK's Department of Work and Pensions, in 2001 report. According to the report, approximately 50% of employers are not willing to hire released prisoners and more than half of released prisoners are unemployed (Pager, Western, & Sugie, 2009; Metcalf, Anderson, & Rolfé, 2001).

Other studies show that applicants with any criminal record will be rejected by 50% of job application, and this rate even reaches as high as 90% for former prisoners who committed severe offenses. It was found that employers fear the potential risk to other employees or customers, from negative public relations to their business, and the released prisoners' lack of skills in addition to their unreliability and lack of motivation. Various surveys show that most employers are mainly troubled by the low professional suitability of released prisoners and less by their risk level of society. In other words, helping prisoners to acquire professional experience and supporting their post-release in obtaining a workplace

and maintaining it can significantly improve a prisoner's chances of integrating in the work force (Hunter & Boyce, 2009; Bushway, 2003).

3. PUBLIC OPINION: REINTEGRATING OR RESTRAINING AND LIMITING RELEASED PRISONERS

Public opinion sometimes has an important, even dominant role, in designing the punishment policy in many democratic countries. Politicians and law and order practitioners tend to refer to public opinion both as a support of their punishment policy or as recognition of the enforcement policy they are trying to promote and in order to delegitimize existing enforcement systems (Dearley, Carlsmith, & Robinson, 2000).

According to the literature, the attitude of the normative public, including its representatives of various formal frameworks, plays a significant part in the failure of released prisoners to integrate in the community as law-abiding citizens. The average citizen often tends to label released prisoners as chronic offenders, and therefore disassociates from them (*cf.* Maruna & Le Bel, 2003; Seittoer & Kadela, 2003). In addition to the stigma that hounds the released prisoner, Travis (2002) speaks of "invisible punishments" as part of the difficulties that society poses released prisoners, and which become a tool for social exclusion. This situation may lead to failures and difficulties in major areas such as employment, family, and socializing, which may hurt the self-image of released prisoners and drive them to look for other social and financial alternatives, often in the company of other released prisoners. Often this chain of events drives them to commit offenses again (Maguire & Raynor, 2006), creating a self-fulfilling prophecy. There is no doubt that the success of reintegration of a released prisoner in the community is, in many ways, the result of the released prisoner's characteristics and behavior. However, without the close support and assistance system provided by the community, the chances of a released prisoner reintegrating into normative society are significantly decreased (Clark, 2007; Travis & Petersilia, 2004; Roman & Travis, 2006).

This study aimed to examine the moral position regarding the level at which safeguarding the public should be balanced with the need to protect the released prisoner's right for a normative, quiet life (Shoham, 2008; Stern, 2002; Packer, 1968). We assume that the attitude towards released prisoners' integration in the community is affected by various factors which refer to the level of trust attributed to them, or fear due to social perceptions, stereotypes and prejudice towards people labeled as released prisoners, along with the level of experience and familiarity that particular individuals has with released prisoners (Rattner & Fishman, 2004; Petersilia, 2003).

In the 1950s, Allport (1954) developed the Contact Hypothesis, according to which the level of prejudice can be reduced by contact between those holding prejudicial opinions and the subjects of those opinions. If an individual meets more released prisoners in various states and reaches a greater rapport with them, he will have more clear and consolidated opinions regarding what should be considered appropriate treatment for them (*cf.* Zanna & Rempel, 1988). Therefore, we assume that the willingness of employers to hire released prisoners depends to a large extent on their previous association with former prisoners. This association may help to decrease their fears of hiring released prisoners (Giguere & Dundes, 2002).

Society's attitude towards released prisoners often depends on the type of offense the released prisoner committed. This issue is most prominent among employers, who often refuse to employ released prisoners who committed certain offenses, mostly violence and sex offences (Albright & Denq, 1996). Many employers will also not hire drug offenders and white-collar offenders (Leonard, 2005), and there also are quite a few employers who will not hire anyone with a criminal record. Even among the general society, there is a prominent negative attitude towards released sex offenders, which are sometimes expressed by publicizing their names and pictures to warn the public about them (Levenson, Brannon, Fortney, & Baker, 2007). Therefore, we assume that the willingness of employers to hire released prisoners in the workplace will be highly related to the type of offense the prisoner committed. The lowest willingness to integrate released prisoners will be found in relation to prisoners convicted of sex offenses.

Furthermore, we assume that among law enforcement practitioners whose role is to capture criminals and bring them to justice, the positions supporting harsh punishment /for criminals and mistrust of their true willingness to rehabilitate will be more common (*cf.* Fabregat & Perez, 1992; Paoling, 2003).

4. METHODS

This study focuses on studying the attitudes of different Israeli societal groups regarding reintegration of released prisoners in the community, groups that are potentially able, directly or indirectly, to contribute to the reintegration of offenders in normative society. The sample group includes representatives of three groups: the law enforcement system, employers owning businesses of various sizes, and individuals representing the general public.

Initially we sampled 200 subjects for each group. Forty-nine out of the 600, either could not be found by the researchers during the investigation process or did not cooperate, and so we were left with 551 subjects. The sample selected in each group was a random sample, in

which each area of the country was represented according to the relative size of its population¹.

A. Representatives of the law enforcement system sampled for this study were mostly from the police; however a small number were prison guards, according to the ratio of employed personnel in these fields², a total of 181 subjects in the group. it should be noted that quite a few police officers became prison guards in recent years, since during 2006 the entire correction system was placed under the responsibility of the Israeli Prison Service (the number of officials from the State Attorney's Office who agreed to participate was negligible and so they were dismissed from this study).

B. Employers owning and managing various businesses such as factories, garages, plant nurseries, heavy and light industry, and commerce. The employers were categorized into three groups according to the size of their owned or managed businesses and in proportion to the business type's prevalence in the Israeli market³. In total, 170 small, medium and large business employers participated, categorized according to the number of employees in their businesses.

C. General publics. Residents of apartment buildings, recreational activity partners, worshippers in synagogues etc. A total of 200 subjects were examined from various areas around Israel, mostly from the center and a few from the North and South. In total, all three groups included 551 subjects.

For each group we constructed a mapping sentence, which defines their specific social sphere. This social sphere forms the basis for constructing the attitude questionnaire, which was given to each participant in the three groups (the mapping sentence defines the groups of parameters (facets) that compose this research field). Using the mapping sentence, we constructed a separate questionnaire for each of the tested population groups.

The employers' questionnaire is composed of 37 questions phrased according to the Likert Scale, in which the employers were asked to describe the various conditions and characteristics which underpin their decision to employ or not to employ released prisoners. The general public questionnaire included 30 questions based on the Likert

¹ Jerusalem and Judea and Samaria – 16%; Tel Aviv and the Center – 41%; Haifa and the North – 29%; South – 14% (Osrael Central Bureau of Statistics, 2008).

² The ratio in Israel is one prison guard for every 3.5 police officers – the number of police officers in 2007 was approximately 27,000 (Interior Ministry, 2008) and prison guards – about 7,700 (see Israeli Prison Services, 2008).

³ Small and medium-sized businesses are defined as those employing up to 100 workers and form 96% of the general employers. The percentage of employed workers in these businesses from the general employed population is about 55% (the sources are unclear regarding the number of employees in small businesses, whether they are up to 10 or up to 50 workers. The large businesses, which have over 100 employees, form 4% of the general businesses and hire 45% of all employed population ((Trade and Labor Ministry Report, January, 19, 2007, Jerusalem: The Knesset Press)

Scale, in which participants were asked to describe their willingness to create social relationships with released prisoners in various aspects of their lives, from distant relationships (living in the same neighborhood) to close relationships (romantic involvement with a released prisoner). The law enforcement system personnel questionnaire included 30 questions based on the Likert Scale where participants were asked to describe their attitude towards the reintegration of released prisoners in various fields within the community.

Participants were promised that their identities would remain anonymous. They were also informed that there are no right or wrong answers, and that they should mark any answer that corresponds with their position on a certain matter. The filled-out questionnaires were returned to the researchers in sealed envelopes that preserved the anonymity of the subjects.

For this study, we defined three fields as key parameters:

a) The group to which the participant belongs. An individual's allocation to a certain social, occupational group in many ways dictates his attitude towards other groups (*cf.* the Social Identity Theory, Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner, 1982). As the group becomes more united and has more common denominators, the positions of its members will become more similar (*e.g.* see Jackson, 2002). The positions are also derivative of the groups' occupation. Police officers, whose occupation is to capture criminals and bring them to trial, will hold positions that support the severe punishment of criminals and demonstrate a lack of trust in offenders' stated desires to rehabilitate (*e.g.* Fabregat & Perez, 1992). Members of the general public, who does not normally deal with criminals, will have less dramatic attitudes and will be less stringent toward criminals (*e.g.* Furnham & Alison, 1994; Gideon, & Loveland, 2011).

b) Previous acquaintance with a released prisoner. The willingness of employers to hire released prisoners greatly depends on their former acquaintances with released prisoners. Such an acquaintance decreases their fear of hiring released prisoners (*e.g.* Giguere & Dundes, 2002).

c) Type of offense. The attitudes of society and its subgroups towards released prisoners often depend on the type of offense the released prisoner committed.

This issue is most prominent among employers, who often refuse to hire released prisoners who committed certain types of offenses, mostly violence and sex offenses (Albright & Deng, 1996). Many employers will also not hire those convicted of drug abuse or white-collar offenders, and there also numerous employers who will not hire anyone with a criminal record (Leonard, 2005). Among general society, the negative attitude is most prominent towards sex offenders, which are sometimes expressed by publishing their names and pictures to warn the public about them (*e.g.* Levenson et al., 2007).

The attitude towards reintegration of released prisoners involves four aspects:

- a) The power of the negative label attached to the prisoner – “once a criminal, always a criminal”.
- b) Attitude towards integration of prisoners in the community.
- c) Personal willingness to maintain a social or occupational relationship with the released prisoner.
- s) Supporting limitation and monitoring of the released prisoner.

5. SUBJECTS

Most subjects live in urban districts in the center of Israel, and about one third of subjects from the law enforcement system and the general public have academic education of at least a bachelor's degree (compared to only 2% among participating employees). Most participating employers are men, unlike the law enforcement subjects, half of whom were women. In addition, the average age of the law enforcement subjects was lower compared to subjects in the other two groups. Half the subjects from the general public and law enforcement system groups were single, while the single rate among employers was only 16%. About half the participants from the general public and law enforcement system groups define themselves as secular, while approximately 65% of employers define themselves as secular.

Table 1
Background Data of Subjects in All Three Groups

		Social environment (n=200)	Law enforcement system (n=181)	Employers (n=170)
Age	25-40 years	66%	86%	45%
	41-60 years	34%	14%	55%
Gender	Males	35%	59%	82%
	Females	65%	41%	18%
Traditionalism	Secular	48%	50%	65%
	Transitional	30%	37%	11%
	Religious	22%	13%	9%
	Unknown			15%
Origin	Ashkenazi	35%	28%	
	Sephardic	45%	60%	
	Other	26%	12%	
	Unknown	7%		

To be continued

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		Social environment (n=200)	Law enforcement system (n=181)	Employers (n=170)
Education		56% high school graduates	58% high school graduates	98% full or partial high school graduates
		28% Bachelor's degree	31% Bachelor's degree	2% academic education
		8.5% Master's degree	8.2% Master's degree	
Familial status		51% single	49% single	16% single
		10% married, no children	13% married, no children	79% married
		39% married+	36% married+	5% divorced/ widowers
Area	Center	70%	57%	65%
	North	25%	2%	9%
	South	5%	41%	26%
Settlement	Urban	82%	84%	82%
	Rural	12%	16%	18%
	Unknown	6%		

6. FINDINGS

6.1 Attitudes Among Employers

As discussed, 170 employers participated in this study. Half own small businesses of up to 10 employees, 30% have medium businesses of up to 50 employees and 20% of them have large businesses employing more than 50 employees. Only 12% of employers previously hired released prisoners, while 20% reported that they have a friend who is or was a prisoner.

Out of the general socio-demographic characteristics examined through parametric and non-parametric tests, significant differences were only found for the gender parameter: it seemed that women (60%) were a lot more willing than men (36%) to hire prisoners should certain conditions exist ($\chi^2(1)=12.43, p<0.00$).

Twenty percent of employers participating in this study reported that they know released prisoners, but most employers (88%) reported that they had not employed released prisoners in the past. In relation to previous acquaintance with released prisoners and

the willingness to hire them, there was a significant difference found in willingness to hire released prisoners between employers with previous experience in hiring released prisoners to employers who lack such experience ($\chi^2(2)=25.13, p<0.00$). It seems that the willingness to unconditionally hire them was higher among employers with previous experience in hiring prisoners.

Seventy percent of employers who previously hired released prisoners were willing to unconditionally hire a released prisoner. Among employers who had no previous experience with hiring prisoners, only 13% were willing to hire a released prisoner and 27% were willing to hire them under specific conditions only.

Sixty-two percent of employers believe that a released prisoner can be rehabilitated, while 38% think that released prisoners can be rehabilitated only in some cases. Forty percent of them also think that released prisoners should be allowed to be integrated in employment directly after their release, while 60% think that it should be allowed only under certain conditions.

Table 2
The Level of Willingness Among the General Employers Group and Among Employers From Specific Fields to Hire Released Prisoners (N=170)

	True	Sometimes	False
As a rule, I am willing to hire a released prisoner	19%	67%	14%
It scares me to hire a released prisoner	19%	41%	40%
Willing to hire (in agriculture)	54%	46%	
Willing to hire (in industry)	47%	47%	6%
Willing to hire (in shops and small trade)	22%	43%	35%

Table 2 shows, that only 19% of all employers have reported that they would be unconditionally willing to hire a released prisoner. Two third of employers (67%) claimed that it is possible, but they are not sure, and 14% completely dismiss the possibility that they would hire released prisoners.

Of the general employers group, 40% claimed that hiring a prisoner does not scare them. Forty-one percent reported that hiring a released prisoner scares them

sometimes and only 19% reported that they are afraid to hire a released prisoner.

The highest willingness to hire prisoners was found in garage and agriculture work (54% willing and 46% uncertain). It should be noted that out of all the subjects in this group, only 22 people were from the trade and computing fields, but all those reported willingness to hire released prisoners, even if some mentioned partial probability of doing so. The lowest level of willingness

was found among store owners (35% completely unwilling to hire released prisoners).

In order to understand the motives behind a decision to employ a released prisoner, we asked the employers to rate the importance of parameters that may affect their decision in this matter. Most employers mentioned the professional skills of the prisoner (95%) and their personal impression of him (85%) as the most important factors in the decision whether to hire a released prisoner. The type of the offense for which the man was imprisoned (77%) as well as the duration of the prisoner spent in prison (42%) also forms important factors in that decision. Parameters such as the prisoner's ethnic origin (6%) or religion (19%) were rated by subjects as parameters of low importance.

Table 3
Parameters That Affect the Decision to Hire a Released Prisoner in Descending Order (N=170)

Parameter	Frequency
Prisoner's professional skills	95%
Personal impression of the released prisoner	85%
Type of offense	77%
Imprisonment duration	42%
Prisoner's religion	19%
Prisoner's ethnicity	6%

6.2 The Law Enforcement System Group

Forty eight percent of the law enforcement subjects group reported that they had, through their work, interaction

Table 4
Attitudes Towards Integration of Released Prisoners (Agreement Percentage) Among Subjects From the Law Enforcement System Group (n=181)

Attitude	True	Sometimes	False
"Once a criminal, always a criminal"	72%	21%	7%
Participating in rehabilitation is mostly manipulation	40%	30%	30%
A released prisoner who wants to be rehabilitated will succeed	36%	40%	24%
Prisoners who show motivation for rehabilitation should be helped and assisted	60%	28%	12%
The prisoner is also a victim	31%	45%	20%
There is a direct connection between recidivism and difficulty to blend in society	68%	24%	8%
The State should develop rehabilitation programs	91%	6%	3%
Punishment in Israel is too lax	81%	16%	3%
Released prisoners' supervision should be more severe	83%	14%	3%
Dangerous released prisoners' names should be published	52%	20%	28%
Dangerous prisoners should be permanently excluded from society	31%	54%	15%
The safety of the community should be of higher priority than giving a chance for rehabilitation	70%	21%	9%

with prisoners and 56% reported that they know prisoners.

At first we wished to see whether it is possible use the socio-demographic characteristics of law enforcement subjects to understand their attitudes towards community integration of released prisoners. Out of all the socio-

demographic characteristics examined through parametric and non-parametric tests, a significant difference was found only in the subjects' faith that released prisoners can be rehabilitated in relation to their gender. It was found that women (60%), more than men (40%), believe that under certain conditions released prisoners can be rehabilitated ($\chi^2(1)=9.69, p<0.05$).

No significant differences were found in relation to the power of the negative label attached to the released prisoner or the need to continue and monitor him after his release. Interestingly, even when subjects were asked about their willingness for close relationships with released prisoners (e.g. "will you be willing to have your children play with the children of a released prisoner" or "will you be willing to have your child marry a released prisoner"), no significant differences were found in relation to subjects' gender, age or education. Approximately 60% of police officers, men and women, responded to this question in the negative.

Another parameter tested was the level of acquaintance the law enforcement official had with released prisoners. Fifty-eight percent of the subjects in this group reported that they know one or more released prisoners. About half the participants in this group reported that their work has some relation to actual prisoners or to release prisoners. Even in this case, no significant interaction was found between the prior acquaintance experience with released prisoners and the attitude towards released prisoners, the evaluation of their chance to rehabilitate and the level of supervision they should be under.

Table 4 shows that 72% of the subjects from the law enforcement system agree with the phrase "once a criminal, always a criminal". The highest frequency of support of this phrase was found among secular police officers (85%) and the lowest among officers who consider themselves traditional (59%). Seventy-three percent of the religious police officers surveyed agreed with this phrase. A significant difference was found in support of this phrase between secular, traditional and religious police officers ($\chi^2(2)=9.5, p<0.00$).

Nearly half the law enforcement subjects do not have faith in various prisoner rehabilitation programs and consider them mostly as a form of manipulation that the prisoner uses against the system and not a genuine attempt for change. However, this perception is significantly more common among male police officers compared to female police officers. Twenty-two percent of male officers believed that in almost all cases participation in rehabilitation programs is a kind of manipulation by released prisoners, as opposed to only 10% of female officers who supported this thought ($\chi^2(1)=7.1, p<0.05$). A significant correlation between lack of faith in a released prisoner's will to rehabilitate and the traditionalism of the police officer was also found ($\chi^2(2)=7.5, p<0.05$). This lack of faith was prominently common among religious police officers (60%), followed by secular police officers

(54%) and had the lowest frequency among police officers who defined themselves as traditional (38%).

Most subjects who practice law enforcement (83%) believe that supervision over released prisoners should be more stringent and that punishments in Israel are too lax and encourage delinquency (81%).

About one third (31%) of the subjects would like to see legislation that would permit the exclusion of prisoners who had been defined as dangerous from society for their entire lives. Half of the subjects (52%) think that the names and addresses of dangerous criminals should be publicly published ahead of their release, even though these offenders had served their prison time. Debating the dilemma between the need to protect the community and give citizens a sense of safety, and the need to allow a released prisoner to integrate into society in order to rehabilitate, the law enforcement subjects clearly prefer society's sense of security (70%). In this context, we also asked them who among prisoners who committed various offenses should be allowed a chance to fit back into society. For most offenses, there was no significant difference between the attitude of law enforcement practitioners and the tested parameters such as age, familial status, place of residence etc. However, significant differences were found between men and women regarding their willingness to give criminals a second chance.

While half the men (52%) surveyed believe that a released prisoner who was formerly convicted of domestic violence offenses should get a second chance, only a third of the women in the law enforcement system think so ($\chi^2(1)=7.1, p<0.05$). A significant, albeit weaker, difference was also found between men and women in their attitude towards prisoners convicted of drug offenses. While 60% of women believe in a second chance here, only 48% of men support this concept ($\chi^2(1)=3.1, p<0.05$).

Differences between the law enforcement subjects were also found in relation to the parameter of prior acquaintance with prisoners. Law enforcement officials who interact with prisoners through their work are more supportive of giving a second chance to release prisoners convicted of violence offenses (54%) compared to law enforcement officials who have no contact with prisoners through their work (34%). This difference in supporting giving a second chance to violent offenders was found to be significant ($\chi^2(1)=5.7, p<0.05$). Law enforcement officials who had or had no interaction with prisoners show significant difference in their willingness to give a second chance to release prisoners who committed domestic violence offenses ($\chi^2(1)=11.6, p<0.00$), embezzlement, and forgery offenses ($\chi^2(1)=5.3, p<0.02$) and ideological offenses ($\chi^2(1)=4.1, p<0.02$).

For all the above-mentioned types of offenses, a greater support for giving the released prisoner a second chance was found among law enforcement practitioners who have interaction with prisoners through their work compared to those who have no interaction with prisoners.

6.3 The General Public

Almost all those surveyed from the general public (93%) believe that released prisoners can be rehabilitated. Approximately two thirds (70%) report their unconditional willingness to assist in the process of prisoner rehabilitation. Table 5 shows that about half the subjects did not express fear for their safety due to release prisoners and are willing to connect with them (56%), rent their rooms (66%) and even by their neighbors (75%). These percentages significantly decrease when subjects were asked whether they would marry a released prisoner (42%). However, as saw below, many subjects stipulate their willingness in the type of offense committed by the released prisoner. Most of those surveyed from the general population (82%) do not think the names and offenses of prisoners should be published after their release.

The general public group also showed no significant differences in their attitudes towards reintegration of released prisoners in the community. The Spearman Test shows a significant positive correlation between faith that released prisoners can be rehabilitated and the participant's age ($r=0.15, p<0.05$). Although there were no significant differences in the gender parameter, the willingness to allow a relative to maintain relations with released prisoners was lower among women (12%) than men (22%).

Table 5
Attitudes Towards Integrating Released Prisoners (Percentage of Support) Among Subjects From the Wider Public (N=200)

Attitude	True	Sometimes	False
Released prisoners can be rehabilitated	93%	5%	2%
I am willing to help in the integration of a released prisoner	70%	23%	7%
I am willing to connect with a released prisoner	56%	37%	7%
I am willing to live next to a released prisoner	75%	19%	8%
I would be willing to rent a room to a prisoner	66%	27%	5%
I am willing for my children to interact with the children of a released prisoner	74%	20%	6%
I am willing to marry a released prisoner	42%	28%	30%
The names and offenses of released prisoners should be publicly published	6%	12%	82%

A Pearson Correlation Coefficient analysis between the various attitudes towards reintegration in the community found a significant correlation between the willingness to maintain some sort of relationship with a released prisoner and the belief that they can be rehabilitated ($r=0.30; p<0.05$). A significant correlation was also found between the attitude that released prisoners can be rehabilitated and willingness to allow a family member to maintain a relationship with a released prisoner ($r=0.25, p<0.05$). It was also found that there is a significant negative correlation between belief that a released prisoner can be rehabilitated and the attitude that prisoners should

still be supervised after their release ($r=0.25$, $p<0.01$). A significant correlation was also found between the belief that released prisoners can be rehabilitated and the belief that the participant should personally invest in prisoner rehabilitation ($r=0.40$; $p<0.00$).

6.4 Type of Offense and Willingness to Integrate Released Prisoners in Society and the Workplace

The great importance attributed by employers to the type of offense the released prisoner committed has led us to investigate the correlation between the type of offense and the willingness to reintegrate these prisoners within the general population, including in the workplace, among the three tested groups. In this section, we did not examine the main attitude towards the integration of released prisoners but rather the personal willingness to welcome a released prisoner to one's environment or workplace

Table 6
The Type of Offense and the Personal Willingness to Integrate the Released Prisoner in Society and in Workplaces Among Different Sectors

	Employers	General populace	Law-enforcers
Property crimes	20%	45%	12%
Domestic violence	27%	12%	4%
Sex offense	4%	2%	5%
Tax offense	56%	51%	Not asked
Drug offense	26%	29%	2%
Embezzlement	17%	Not asked	8%
Ideological offense	Not asked	22%	5%

Table 6 shows that all groups have relatively low personal willingness to integrate released prisoners in society and the workplace. The highest level of willingness, 56%, was actually found among employers, and refers to tax offenders. Subjects from all three groups showed very low willingness to reintegrate sex offenders. The integration of sex offenders scored the lowest level of willingness among subjects from the various groups and was found among the general population group: Only 2% of this group reported that they would agree to accept a released sex offender. Subjects from the law enforcement system showed the lowest level of willingness for all types of offenses, while the general population showed the highest average level of willingness to reintegrate prisoners from all type of offenses.

DISCUSSION

In contrast to the common belief that the Israeli public is not willing to reintegrate released prisoners within the community, the findings of this study point to a slightly different trend. The findings show that, at least at a declarative level, a high percentage of those surveyed were willing to socially interact with a released prisoner, live next to him, rent him a room and even allow their children to socially interact with the released prisoner's children. This finding negates findings from many other studies in other countries, such as the USA and UK, according to which the released prisoner finds extensive

social rejection (cf. Bushway et al., 2007; Clark, 2007; Patersilia, 2003; Roman & Travis, 2006; Seiter & Kadela, 2007; Visher et al., 2004).

However, this finding does not stand alone. When asked questions regarding willingness to socially interact with released prisoners who committed specific types of offenses, respondents expressed low willingness for drug offenders (29%), very low for violence offenders (12%) and nearly null for sex offenders (2%). It seems, therefore, that on a declarative level the general population does not tend to use labels. The term "criminal" is vague. It can refer to a traffic offender, tax offender, etc. but, when the question refers to a specific offense, people's positions change.

Many studies have found that for released prisoners, finding and maintaining employment is a relatively effective step to prevent recidivism (e.g. Sarno et al., Zhang, Roberts & Callanan, 2006). Many studies in the USA and UK have repeatedly drawn the conclusion that many employers tend to not hire released prisoners (cf. Holzer et al., 2002; Netcalfe et al., 2001; Pager et al., 2009). Most subjects in this study stated that they are willing to hire former prisoners only on certain conditions (67%) or that they were unwilling to do so at all (14%). Their attitudes were similar, to a certain level, to the dissenting and negative attitudes of the law enforcement practitioners. It is possible that this similarity stems from the employers' perception that hiring a former prisoner requires constant monitoring of his behavior. It is also likely that the employers' unwilling attitude stems from prejudice and negative labeling of former prisoners. Allport (1954), the author of the Contact Hypothesis, argued that the level of prejudice could be reduced through contact between the prejudiced person and the subject of the prejudice. In accordance with this theory, which was reinforced by many later studies (e.g. Burnett & Maruna, 2006), employers who personally know former prisoners hold fewer negative opinions about them.

While released prisoners are an invisible group that is rarely discussed within Israeli public discourse (the issue of prisoner rehabilitation was raised for the first time in 20 years in the 2013 State Comptroller's Report), sex offenders are a group with increased visibility due to the high level of risk the public attributes to them. The broad negative attitude toward sex offenders from those surveyed across all interview groups, not just the employers group, does not reflect a more severe, objective danger from released sex offenders compared to other offenders such as those who have been convicted of drug or property offenses. In fact, the general level of recidivism by sex offenders is relatively low and was, at least in the West during the 1990s, at only 13.4% (Hanson & Bussière, 1998). However, the lack of knowledge about this recidivism rate and the stereotypical perception of sex offenses as severe and dangerous, which stems from moral panic (Shoham, 2008), results in drastic attitudes regarding employing and socializing with them.

Hucklesby (2011) mentions at least three belief systems that characterize professionals who work within the penal system: the punishment credo, the efficiency credo and the care/humanity credo. Professionals who support the punishment credo are hostile to criminals, focus on denouncing and expelling criminals, and believe in the Crime Monitoring Model and a harsh, quick punishment response for every violation of the law. Indeed, the perceptions of law enforcement agents who participated in this study were in line with the Crime Monitoring Model: More than two thirds considered criminality a regular occupation from which a criminal cannot retire. The fact that through their work they come across many criminals who were previously caught committing various offenses, and who were not convicted or whose punishments were too lax according to the law enforcement agents' estimation, or who returned to criminal activity after their release from prison (Chen & Shapiro, 2007; Gendreau et al., 2008) leads them to the conclusion that rehabilitation is nearly impossible. All that can be done, in their opinion, is to increase supervision and to make punishments more severe.

To sum up, this study suggests that Israeli society, at least on a declarative level, is willing to receive released prisoners who express a wish to rehabilitate themselves, whether through a willingness to live near such prisoners or by providing them with paid work. Even compared to findings of studies conducted in the USA and UK, Israeli declarative attitudes are moderate and reflect a higher willingness to receive released prisoners into society and employment. All this is true for prisoners who committed offenses other than sex offences or very violent crimes. For offenders in those categories, it seems there is no willingness to reintegrate and rehabilitate them. The common attitude is that these offenders should be excluded from society for a long period. It seems that, regarding this population of released prisoners, there is a moral panic which ignores factual data regarding recidivism rates. Public demand regarding these offenders is far more severe punishment, which, after it is finished, should be followed by alienation and exclusion from normative society.

Despite the high level of support found among participants of the general public regarding the option to rent a room, connect with or help released prisoners, it should be noted that there is a significant gap between stated levels and actual actions. One possible explanation for this difference between public attitude and the difficulty to rehabilitate prisoners in the community is associated with the concept expressed by the acronym NIMBY ("not in my back yard"). This term, coined in the 1980s in the United States, refers to the phenomenon where, while the public expresses a positive approach and supports a certain course of action, individuals do not want these things to happen near their home or in their neighborhood. It seems that in Israel – as in other Western countries – various groups and sectors must content with

the NIMBY phenomenon which, in practice, excludes them from different geographic environments and thus may further promote their alienation.

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