

DOES EU MEMBERSHIP AFFECT THE SOCIAL AND LABOUR INCLUSION OF FOREIGN PRISONERS IN SPAIN? AN ANALYSIS OF SELF-PERCEPTIONS AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS LEARNING

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Abstract:

Movements of people linked to the processes of globalization lead to the formation of foreign cultural and ethnical groups, which may generate risk of exclusion. When these people have committed crimes, and have been punished for them, this risk is increased. In this paper we analyze the case of foreign prisoners in the Northwest region of Spain. We rely on qualitative and quantitative research conducted in prisons. By means of statistical analysis of equality-of-means t-test, we found greater difficulties for the inclusion of foreign prisoners, as well as significant differences in self-perceptions of this group in relation to Spaniards, especially in the groups of non-EU foreigners. These differences are particularly apparent in matters relating to the education processes and employment training conducted within prisons. Taking into account these differences would allow designing specific education and training policies to promote the social integration and employment of the foreign-born inmate population, minimizing thus the risk of exclusion.

Keywords: social exclusion, prisoners, foreign, comparison of means

JEL Classification: J00

INTRODUCTION

The sustainability of any social structure necessarily involves the inclusion of each and every one of its members. A society with ghettos or groups without their own space will hardly achieve those levels of development needed for its survival over time (Williamson & Pickett, 2008).

Globalization is characterized by the high speed and increasing size of international relations and exchanges. People's mobility is thus growing, and societies become much more pluralistic, with the growing presence of cultural and ethnic minority groups. If societies are not flexible and tolerant enough, situations where there is a risk of exclusion will soon arise (Sen, 2000).

When these minority groups, for whatever reason, are, in addition, part of another minority group (disabled, elderly, homosexuals, drug addicts, criminals, etc.), the risk of exclusion increases and therefore, society can see its own structure and sustainability threatened.

The process of multiple risk of exclusion faced by foreign prisoners is shown in Figure no. 1, which states that migration is linked to globalization, which creates social groups, which for the only fact of being composed by foreigners, gives them different cultural characteristics (sometimes also ethnic), linked to the emergence of the risk of exclusion, which increases the risk of marginalization and/or crime, thus reinforcing the group qualitative differences and increasing the differential characteristics, entering into a vicious circle. This allows the accumulation of reasons that lead to the risk of multiple exclusion, entering into a feedback mechanism in which the exclusion processes are reinforced and augmented. That is, exclusion causes crime, which in turn leads to exclusion, and so on.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Inclusion is therefore a goal for all societies pursuing the survival of their own organizational and operational schemes, i.e. whose goal is sustainable social development. But inclusion cannot be achieved without a strong knowledge of each and every groups that should be included. Thus, the consideration of all the social groups is essential in a developed society. The fight against social exclusion in general, and multiple exclusion in particular, becomes a prime target (Silver, 1995). In fact, this concern is reflected in world declarations, such as the Millennium Development Goals (UN, 2000), or the European Agenda 2020, that sets the achievement of sustainable and inclusive growth as one of its objectives (COM, 2010).

Sometimes, situations of exclusion lead to crime, which in turn leads to exclusion (Herrero, 2003), so that the wheel of multiple exclusion begin to roll.

In this paper we present a study based on the convicted population in the northwest region of Spain (region NUTS at level 2), in order to know their home country peculiarities, and then be able to know if nationality really affects the opportunities for inclusion. If so, it would be possible to carry out some actions to reverse the situation of multiple exclusion of this group. For that reason, we made a survey among prisoners in the prisons of Galicia to evaluate possible differences in attitudes linked to nationality that could affect future opportunities for convicts.

In order to to perform the analysis, we developed a questionnaire that we distributed among the convict population of Galician prisons. This survey reflects the opinions and perceptions of inmates. We are aware that prisoners may belong to organized criminal gangs internationally, as part of a superstructure, and escape, to some extent, to the exclusion processes discussed here. However, their individual assessments on the prison system would remain valid. Similarly, we see that the group of foreign inmates as a heterogeneous group, which should be subject to further analysis.

The importance of taking into account the views and perceptions of the group of foreign prisoners relies on the high risk of social exclusion they face. But we must also bear in mind that they are a significant part of the prison population. According to the Ministry of Home Affairs (Government of Spain), 35 percent of inmates in Spanish prisons are foreigners (Ministry of Home Affairs, 2009). Therefore, the proportion of non-nationals is high, and represents over a third of the prison population. In recent years, in absolute terms, there was an increasing trend in the number of foreign prisoners, although it decreased in 2011. However, since the total convicted population has also declined, foreigners account for a similar share of the population as in the previous year.

With respect to the country of origin, the largest foreign inmate population come from South America, followed by North Africa. Foreign prisoners from the European Union amounted, in 2009, to 18.9% of the foreign prison population in Spain, according to the Ministry of Home Affairs. The number of Romanian prisoners in Spanish jails was 2169, accounting for 8% of all the foreigners in prison. Thus, Romania is at the top of EU, followed by Portugal, with 557 inmates (2.1% of total foreigners).

In this paper, we investigate how foreign prisoners, particularly, the ones that comes from the European Union, perceive their future outlook, and if their perceptions and attitudes differ (or not) from those of Spanish prisoners.

METODOLOGY

The work is divided into two parts: in the first one, we analyzed the different areas pointed out for Subirats i Humet, Carmona and Brugué Gomà Torruella (2005) as the essential pillars of social inclusion, namely labour and economy, education and training, and famili and society..Our aim is to study the nature and magnitude of the differences between the possibilities of inclusion for Spanish and foreign prisoners.

Subsequently, we carried out a fieldwork focused on the study of the prisoners perceptions on these pillars (Family and Society, Education and Labor), depending on their nationality, and also

related to their language and their belonging or not to the European Union. In order to do this, we used a statistical analysis for comparison of means, analyzing the values of the "Student t" in order to find statistically significant differences in the responses. The questionnaire was based on a set of questions that we asked to inmate population so that they expressed how much they agree or disagree with specific statements, according to a Likert scale, where the value 1 corresponds to strongly disagree and 5 is complete agreement. We performed a pretest to 50 inmates, after that, we proceeded to the purification of the questionnaire, eliminating redundant questions and wrong understanding. The final test was translated into Arabic, with support from the Official School of Languages in A Coruña, due to the presence of prisoners of Arabic origin, with whom the research team had some communication problems.

Family and Social Area:

In this regard, we found that public visibility is a major factor, essential for inclusion. In Spain there is a high level of the condemned "without papers", we mean that they are not in legal status. Illegal residence of foreigners in the country of destination makes the problems of exclusion grow and multiply, worsening the situation considerably. That is the main reason to analyze the foreign prison population separately from that of European Union countries, which enjoy the status of EU citizens, and do not have this problem. However, they still have their own language and cultural differences, such as those from Central and Eastern Europe. This is a differential issue that may generate groups at risk of exclusion.

On the other hand, having support from family or friends is essential to achieve a normal life after leaving prison. In the case of foreigners, they often have their family abroad and, in many cases, the family does not know that they are in prison, so they must face alone this difficult situation. Foreigners face limitations on family reunification and they are expelled from the country as a preferential sanction (foreigners are given the option not to pay the whole of their term in prison if they accept to leave the country and commit not to return for a number of years), making it more difficult to leave the prison and quickly begin a normal life (Ribas *et al*, 2005). Furthermore, the social networks of the inmate are often the only way they have, for example, to get a job, being one of the most important mechanisms for achieving social inclusion. If they lack these networks, the adaptation process is complicated, so they need the help of an intermediary, such as an association (Ribas *et al*, 2005).

Economic and Labor sphere:

Leaving prison with a lawful source of income, such as a job or a pension, is decisive for non-recidivism. Those prisoners who have good prospects in the labor market reoffend less, while those who do not, among which are almost always foreigners, relapse more easily, especially if they have drug problems (Entford, 2009).

Education and Training sphere:

Having previous training and undertaking training courses in prison are a definite plus for inmates to find a job after they leave prison. Education is therefore a precondition to make reintegration easier (Smerotkina, 2010). An attempt, for example, to make the prison environment more relaxed and facilitate education is the implementation of the "modules of respect", which promote the activity of prisoners and good manners (Cantero, 2010). Despite these efforts, we must take into account the high percentage of illiteracy in prison. Often, even if inmates can read and write, they have considerable difficulties, because they lack reading and writing habits (Bhatti, 2009). Among foreigners, an important part do not speak Spanish well. For this reason, we have dedicated a special section to the differentiation of the foreign prison population between Spanish-speakers and the rest.

Consequently, the potential inclusion of foreign prisoners is lower overall than that of national prisoners, even those that enjoy European citizenship. After considering these spheres, we decided to conduct a questionnaire for the inmates to further examine these aspects of prisoners' life

and see the aspects that can be targeted in order to get out of the situation of social exclusion they face.

EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

The study has been carried out in the region of Galicia, located in the Northwest of Spain. There are five prisons in Galicia: Teixeira, Bonxe, Monterroso, Pereiro de Aguiar and A Lama. There are also two Social Integration Centres (CIS), with third grade prison population (semi-freedom).

One of the main difficulties in the implementation of this work has been the access to the prison population. Entry into prisons has required nominal permits for each of the members of the research team from the Ministry of Interior of the Government of Spain (Penitentiary Institutions).

Once we got the required permits, we visited all these prisons and the CIS for the completion of the questionnaire, thus obtaining a sample of 473 respondents. 461 prisoners of all respondents answered the question about their nationality, representing 97.5% of total. 337 prisoners have Spanish nationality and 124 are foreigners, mostly from South America, North Africa and the East of Europe. These are the groups of foreigners with more representation in Spanish prisons, as we have discussed before. The randomness of the selection process of inmates ensures the representativeness of the sample and, therefore, the possibility of inferring results for the whole prison population. The description of the sample in Table no. 1 shows the most representative classification variables:

Table no. 1. Description of the sample

VARIABLE	CATEGORY	FRECUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Sex	Men	352	74,4
	Women	121	25,6
	Total	473	100
Studies	No education	47	9,9
	Primary education	190	40,2
	High School	151	31,9
	Training	45	9,5
	College	27	5,7
	Total	460	97,3
Age	18-30	130	29,1
	31-50	284	63,5
	>50	33	7,4
	Total	447	94,5
Nationality	Spain	337	71,2
	North Africa	39	8,2
	South America	52	11
	EU without Spain	19	4
	Others	14	3
	Total	461	97,5

The questionnaire focused on the analysis of job skills, family relationships and their self-perspectives, from statements about which should show their degree of agreement or disagreement with a Likert scale of 5 points in which, as already we noted, 1 indicates the position most in disagreement with the proposed statement and 5 the one most in agreement.

We compared the averages of the two groups using a difference-of-means t-test. The classification variable is nationality, so we compare the responses of the group of Spaniards and foreigners, in order to detect possible differences in the responses of both groups. As a prelude to

the t-test, we conducted Levene's test, which indicates whether it is possible to assume equal variances or if they are different.

We have analyzed the responses grouped into the fields we have commented previously:

Family and Social sphere:

We found significant differences in certain questions. The foreign prison population has a more positive perception than the Spanish because they think that will be received better in their environment when they leave prison. However, foreign prisoners often have their families abroad. Their family supports them, but they must rebuild their lives by themselves.

Economic and Labor sphere:

The questions with significant differences are covered in Table no. 2.

Table no. 2. t test for equality of means

Question	Nacionality	N	Mean	t Statistic	Degrees of Freedom	Differences on averages
When I get out prison, I will try to work	Spanish	326	4,518	-1,99 ^(*)	253,141	-0,19711
	Foreign	116	4,715			
When I get out of prison, I will go to an association to ask help	Spanish	323	3,284	-3,833 ^(**)	209,465	-0,68008
	Foreign	114	3,964			
Employers prefer to hire a Spanish former prisoner rather than a foreigner	Spanish	308	2,714	-3,119 ^(**)	158,098	-0,58274
	Foreign	101	3,297			

Significance Level: ^(**) 95%, ^(*) > 99%

The probability associated with the t-statistic is below 5 percent when we compare the means related to their intention to work when they leave prison. Therefore, in this issue there are significant differences: foreigners have more intention to work after they serve their sentences than the Spanish prisoners. However, they themselves consider that an employer will rather hire a Spanish convict than a foreigner. They are aware that they will encounter more difficulties in the labor market.

The foreign population considers further the possibility of going to an association to help them find a job, because the average of the Spanish responses is 3.28 compared to 3.96 for foreigners. This is related to the fact their family is usually away from them and do not have friends or acquaintances who may hire them. On the other hand, they are more used to go to these organizations than the Spanish. Since arriving in Spain, many of them have difficulties in other areas of their lives and go to associations for information and support. Associations serve as the "link" with society that many lack.

Therefore, in the labor field, although they are more willing to seek work, they feel they need some kind of mediator to find a job and it is possible that they will be discriminate vis-a-vis a national.

Educational and Training area:

The questions in which we have found significant differences between the averages are shown in Table no. 3.

Table no. 3. t test for equality of means

Question	Nationality	N	Mean	t Statistic	Degrees of Freedom	Differences on averages
Courses and professions that I have learned in prison will help me find a job	Spanish	319	2,589	-3,643(**)	425	-0,66066
	Foreign	108	3,25			
Courses in prison are sufficient	Spanish	322	1,729	-3,786(**)	156,352	-0,61564
	Foreign	110	2,345			
Institutions promote enough programs for inmates	Spanish	316	1,744	-3,475(**)	153,577	-0,58343
	Foreign	107	2,327			

Significance Level: (***) > 99%

The foreign prison population has a higher educational level than the national average, although it should be noted that the courses of studies are not always equivalent. Also, foreigners know, in general, more languages than Spaniards. Their interest in languages is explained, often, by the need to communicate in the host country and in prison, where in many cases they can not communicate with others in the language of their home country.

When inmates are asked about the usefulness of what they have learned in prison at the time they go free, we get an average of 2.59 points in the case of the Spanish and 3.25 in the foreign; about their opinion on the existence of sufficient training in prison, the means are of 1.73 points compared to 2.35 and as to whether they consider that institutions promote sufficient support programs, the average values obtained are of 1.74 points in the national group of prisoners against 2.33 for foreigners.

In all three cases, the average response of the Spanish prisoners and foreigners differs significantly, as indicated by the low probability associated with the t-statistic, far below the reference value 0.05. Foreigners have a more positive opinion of these three aspects. They value more positively the programs and courses held in prison. It is possible that foreigners are more eager to learn than national prisoners, but it is possible to accept the help offered by the institutions further than domestic ones, because they have fewer resources to rely on.

The greater effectiveness of actions taken in the educational field was verified. However, in order to clarify this result, we divided the foreign prison population into three groups: from South America, North Africa and the European Union without Spain. Then, we did the same comparison of means, three times, first comparing the group of South American with the other foreigners, second to the North Africans with other foreigners. Thirdly, we compared the EU's collective without Spain with other foreign prison population. Despite the differences, according to this analysis, are not significant, the average of Africans responses is the highest. This group may not only be influenced by the factor of foreignness. The level of studies which this group has is lower than the level of other foreigners. The mean difference in this respect is shown significantly at a 98% level. Moreover, inmates who come from the European Union show in these questions a lower average compared to other foreigners. This group has also a higher education level.

In order to determine the influence of factors such as language or belonging to any EU Member State, we proceeded to a new analysis for the comparison of means.

First, we split the sample into Spanish speakers and other inmates. We have obtained very similar results to those discussed above (Table no. 4). The non-Spanish speakers valued more positively the courses and programs offered in prison. With respect to the knowledge acquired in

prison, the probability associated with the t-statistic is 0.055, so with a confidence level of 95%, we could assume equal means, but with a confidence level of 94%, we can reject the null hypothesis.

Table no. 4. t test for equality of means

Question	Variable	N	Mean	t Statistic	Degrees of Freedom	Differences on averages
Courses and offices that I have learned in prison will help me find a job	Spanish-speakers	355	2,687	-1,92 ^(*)	425	-0,410
	Others	72	3,097			
Courses in prison are sufficient	Spanish-speakers	358	1,768	-3,56 ^(**)	92,78	-0,691
	Others	74	2,459			
Institutions promote enough programs for inmates	Spanish-speakers	353	1,793	-2,96 ^(**)	88,55	-0,593
	Others	70	2,386			

Significance Level: ^(**) > 94%, ^(*) > 99%

On the other hand, we use belonging to the European Union as a classification variable. We obtain that the prison population outside the EU values the knowledge acquired in prison through courses and programs more than the population of the Union (Table no. 5).

Table no. 5. t test for equality of means

Question	Variable	N	Mean	t Statistic	Degrees of Freedom	Differences on averages
Courses and offices that I have learned in prison will help me find a job	European Union	346	2,587	-4,59 ^(**)	421	-0,933
	Others	77	3,519			
Courses in prison are sufficient	European Union	351	1,79	-2,80 ^(**)	98,145	-0,536
	Others	77	2,324			
Institutions promote enough programs for inmates	European Union	343	1,781	-3,05 ^(**)	98,682	-0,587
	Others	76	2,368			

Significance Level: ^(**) > 99%

Therefore, we see that not only nationality, but also the existence of other barriers to integration into Spanish society, such as speaking a different language or belonging to a different culture, influence the attitudes that inmates have towards learning in prison. Foreign prisoners who do not speak Spanish and who do not belong to the European Union valued courses and programs offered in prison more positively.

However, we recognize that there may be other variables that affect the attitudes of the inmate population towards education and work, such as the number of children, studies, or gender.

Therefore, we performed a regression model, using the E-views software. The dependent variable is the assessment of learning in prison. The independent variables are the intention to work

after leaving prison (TRY_TO_WORK), opinion on the adequacy of the courses (COURSES_EN), the studies they have (STUDIES: including primary, secondary, vocational training and university), the belonging to the European Union (EU), female gender (WOMAN) and the number of children (CHILDREN). We obtained the following results, shown in table no. 6.

Due to the type of data that have little variability, the adjustment obtained is not good. As a result, we must be cautious in drawing conclusions. However, the aim of this regression is to seek evidence of possible variables that influence the desire to study of the prison population and therefore may be subject to further studies, because we know that it is possible that nationality is not the only influence on this issue.

The variables that are relevant at a 99% level are the consideration of courses in prison, EU membership and sex. At a confidence level of 94% we could also consider having children a relevant variable. Opinions about the existence of sufficient courses in prison and being female are positively related to the assessment of what they have learned in prison. However, European Union membership, as we have seen at the make the comparison of means, influences negatively. Thus, EU membership makes the knowledge acquired in prison less valuable. Having children also makes the assessments that they made lower.

Table no. 6. Regression of assessment of learning in prison

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
C	2.273.215	0.466931	4.868.422	0.0000
TRY_TO_WORK	0.125171	0.074768	1.674.113	0.0950
COURSES_EN	0.432709	0.059420	7.282.171	0.0000
STUDIES	-0.121153	0.077025	-1.572.906	0.1166
EU	-0.769755	0.208773	-3.687.049	0.0003
WOMAN	0.618452	0.194423	3.180.961	0.0016
CHILDREN	-0.102191	0.053530	-1.909.057	0.0570
R-squared	0.208968	Mean dependent var		2.729.947
Adjusted R-squared	0.196035	S.D. dependent var		1.663.135
S.E. of regression	1.491.234	Akaike info criterion		3.655.625
Sum squared resid	8.161.273	Schwarz criterion		3.729.073
Log likelihood	-6.766.018	F-statistic		1.615.847

So despite the limitations of the model previously discussed, it seems that there are other variables that can complete the explanation of attitudes towards learning in prison.

CONCLUSIONS

Foreign and Spanish Prisoners do not have the same opportunities of inclusion. In fact, the foreign prison population is at risk of multiple exclusion. As groups of foreigners who are not in prison and inmates who are not foreigners are often discriminated against, the fact of belonging to both groups multiplies the risk. Furthermore, if they are women or disabled, the probability of being excluded from society is very high.

The realization of this comparative study of attitudes and perspectives of the prison population by place of origin has spotlighted several issues that should be considered for the design of social policies that can help break the chain of exclusion.

We have noticed a more positive attitude in many responses from the foreign prison population over the Spanish, but in the area where we believe that this attitude is more important is in education. However, not only nationality influences this more positive assessment, but also EU membership or language.

So foreign inmates value the learning they do in prison, as well as programs and courses that are offered in a prison environment, more positively,. Therefore, we believe that certain training courses adapted to the needs of this group would provide additional mechanisms to rebuild their lives, and could be one of the key elements to achieve reintegration. However, in the case of foreigners outside the EU the development of these programs may not be an effective mechanism for labor integration, since within the group of foreigners in prison are those who give a lower valuation of these activities, probably motivated by the higher education level or the possibility of obtaining inclusion in other ways.

Also, we leave the analysis of the influence of other variables such as sex or the number of children on the assessment of education in prison open to possible further detailed investigation.

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