Prisonization and/or Criminalization?
Some Theoretical Considerations
and Empirical Findings

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The study focuses on the correlations between criminalization and prisonization. On the grounds of earlier works, it shows that these two phenomena can be very hard to be separated from each other at theoretical level; they partly overlap. The empirical part of the article is based on a research conducted in a Hungarian medium- and maximum-security prison in the spring of 2010. It attempts to find the answers to the questions whether some attitudinal indicators of criminality and the nonconformity toward the staff expectations (as a frequently used indicator of the prisonization) are associated with one another or not; and if so, to what extent. The study also investigates whether criminality and prisonization can be related to the same factors, which may indicate the non-separable nature of the two concepts at the empirical level as well.

KEYWORDS:
Penalty.
Crime.
Criminal statistics.

One of the most basic questions of criminology concerns the role prison plays in criminality, as long as it has any remarkable impact at all. The widely used notion regarding this issue has been that prisons are the "schools of crime" in some respect since they intensify the criminal world-view of inmates. Hence, obviously these institutions are counterproductive for rehabilitation and re-socialization goals. This introduction may seem oversimplified; however, much of the research has dealt with the topic during the past decades. After all, the concept of the "schools of crime" has remained only an idea until nowadays. The methodological tools used by earlier researches have not been able to clarify the basic questions, and the theories were simply accepted with the recognition that prisons are harmful to society. Theorists do not appear to re-consider this statement. We do not know that if we were to indicate any associations between prisons and criminality, which factors would be found to influence this connection and in what context we could interpret it. The concepts of prisonization and criminalization, used in the title of this study, have surfaced in relation to this issue when thinking about prisons. The present study does not seek to support the "schools of crime" notion, but rather attempts to discuss the relationship between prisonization and criminalization based on data from a Hungarian empirical research.

1. Theoretical background

The authors of earlier studies were not consequent in considering these two concepts/ processes separated or closely interrelated. First of all, it is advisable to briefly review how prisonization and criminalization were treated at the level of theories, theoretical constructions, and measures.

At the level of theories it is worth going back to the beginnings. There is a semi-sentence of *Donald Clemmer* [1940 p. 299] on his definition of prisonization quoted in almost every work concerning the prisonization phenomena.[1] Moreover, the "universal factors" of prisonization have also been mentioned by most authors that quote Clemmer. At the same time, Clemmer's work is about a lot more than the issue of prisonization. He discusses it in a more nuanced way regarding both its implications and its association with criminalization. Although his narrow definition of prisoniza-

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[1] "…the taking on, in greater or less degree, of the folkways, mores, customs, and general culture of the penitentiary."

tion does not contain dogmas, he mentions them as one of the objects of "taking on" and he asserts that their acceptance has a crucial significance in the process of prisonization. In this context, Clemmer mentions different opinions, attitudes regarding prisons, judges, and the police as parts of prison culture. He mentions the following examples of dogmas: negative attitudes towards parole board and government officials, distrust in and hate for prison guards, and finally believing that money is the universal solution. He states that prisoners' dogmas are harmful to themselves and to society, since they inhibit post-prison reintegration. Concerning the relationship between criminality and prisonization, there are two approaches in his writings. On the one hand, he asserts that one of the consequences of prisonization can increase criminality: "The phases of prisonization… are the influences which breed or deepen criminality and antisociality and make the inmate characteristic of the criminalistic ideology in the prison community." (*Clemmer* [1940] p. 300.) On the other hand, it seems that he regards this connection more as a potential than a necessary consequence: "No suggestion is intended that a high correlation exists between either extreme of prisonization and criminality. It is quite possible that the inmate who fails to integrate in the prison culture may be and may continue to be much more criminalistic than the inmate who becomes completely prisonized. The trends are probably otherwise, however, as our study of group life suggests" (*Clemmer* [1940] p. 302.).

One of Clemmer's contemporaries, *Reimer* stated the following about the "right guy" inmate role: "These men are so known because of the consistency of their behavior in accordance with the criminal or prison code…", as well as that: "…the 'right guy' to be definitely opposed to the law and its enforcement and the institution itself…" (*Reimer* [1937] pp. 152–153.) Another pair of authors posited that: "In the prison community, the chronic hostility between cons and screws – to some extent an extension of the progressive conflict between criminals and police on the outside…" (*Hayner–Ash* [1940] p. 579.)

If we have a look at the former trains of thought, we can get confused regarding the relationship between prisonization (and the inmate code on which it is based) and criminality. The basic rationale behind Reimer's comment is that he put an equal sign between criminal and inmate code. *Hayner* and *Ash* assumed a kind of continuity between the opposition to institutional officials (as a main component of the inmate code) and negative attitudes toward criminal justice system prior to the entry to prison, treating the former as originated in the latter. In his "narrow" definition Clemmer discussed changes of attitudes during prison sentence and he also mentioned external worldviews regarding the taking-on of dogmas. Some elements of dogmas are fairly close to favourable attitudes towards criminality. This is particularly important to note since it is assumed that the concepts of prisonization and criminalization are hard to distinguish from each other even at a theoretical level; their contents are overlapping in many respects. It seems that, according to earlier

theories, there is a sort of conceptual contamination regarding the relationship between prisonization (or rather the main tenets of the inmate code) and criminalization. Moreover, besides the "present tense" of the prison period, the argument points out the "past" and "future" as well. All this may explain why later researchers could translate this theory into the language of theoretical constructions and empirical research only imperfectly.

A later researcher, *Ohlin* emphasized the determination by past experience concerning inmate code: "This code represents an organization of criminal values in clear-cut opposition to the values of conventional society, and to prison officials as representatives of that society. … The code incorporates most of the values and orientations which inmates have shared in their criminal activities in the free community.… The prisoners' code reflects and adaptation of this criminal value system to the conditions of prison life." (*Ohlin* [1956] p. 28.) He was also the one who started to (mis)interpret Clemmer's prisonization theory and did not really manage to construe the attributes of prisonization theory in full compliance with the author's intention. According to Ohlin: "As Clemmer employs the term, prisonization reflects a continuous acculturation and *assimilation to the criminal values system* and the prisoner code of the inmate community." (*Ohlin* [1956] p. 39.) Likewise, *Wheeler* – who also interpreted Clemmer's thoughts about prisonization – asserted that "The net result of the process was the internalization of a *criminal outlook*, leaving the "prisonized" individual relatively immune to the influence of a conventional value system." (*Wheeler* [1961] p. 697.) In the same study, Wheeler's expression "*commitment to a criminal value system*" in connection with prisonization is also telling. At the same time it should be noted that this author, regarding the importation model (that he labeled "negative selection" model), unambiguously declared his standpoint about the relationship between criminalization and prisonization: "Their criminal acts indicate in varying degrees an opposition to conventional norms. It follows that the inmate culture should give expression to the values of those who are the most committed to a criminal value system – the long termers, those who have followed systematic criminal careers, etc. And if the culture is viewed as an outgrowth of the criminogenic character of inmates, it is reasonable to expect a reinforcement process operating throughout the duration of confinement." (*Wheeler* [1961] p. 708.)

However, another author, *Glaser* emphasized the interdependence of the two processes. He asserted that the adaptation to prison conditions (thus committing to the inmate code) is rather temporary, and it is far from certain that it has any impact after being released from prison (*Glaser* [1964]).

Later researchers aimed at translating these theories into theoretical constructions by interpreting the original ones. One of them carried on the "prisonization equals criminalization" approach. A good example for this is *Faine*'s study. It obviously reveals that he regarded the two concepts exchangeable both theoretically and practi-

cally (*Faine* [1973]). Although the title of his study includes the term "prisoniza-tion", his measures did not refer to this. Instead Faine took "inmate reference group orientation" as the indicator of prisonization, which he considered the "long range impact of institutionalization". Later, a similar practice was followed by *Walters* too, whose study contains the term "prisonization" but he measured criminal thinking and identity by his variables (*Walters* [2003]).

Another approach treated criminalization and prisonization (or its certain indica-tors) separately. Its one subtype considered both as juxtaposed components of a given group of views. *Bondeson* exemplifies this approach, constructing three scales to measure criminality: inmate solidarity, argot knowledge and criminality scales. Within criminality, Bondeson differentiated the sub-scales of criminal ideology, criminal association, and criminal identification (*Bondeson* [1989]). The common la-bel "criminality" can be somewhat misleading in this instance, because only the last mentioned part of that is closely connected with criminality, while the two other scales rather relate to the taking-on of the institutional value system (for example prisonization). This is fairly similar to the approach of another author, *Schwartz*, who labelled "criminal value-orientation", "conformity to the inmate code" and "peer identification" scales with the common name of "inmate perspectives" (*Schwartz* [1971], [1973]). Thus, in the case of Schwartz, the principles of juxtaposition and parity predominate. Although he distinguished between criminalization and prisoni-zation, he considered them as parts of the same group.

A different perspective predominates in the publications of *Thomas* and his asso-ciates. They mixed up and investigated "cause and effect" relationships in their stud-ies, following the logic of temporal arrangement. Although the importation model was mentioned by Thomas in several works of him, stating that the components of the criminal value system are rooted in pre-prison socialization, it was the "conse-quence" approach that dominated in his theoretical models (*Thomas* [1977a], [1977b]; *Thomas–Hyman–Winfree* [1981]; *Thomas–Petersen* [1977]; *Thomas–Petersen–Cage* [1981]; *Thomas–Poole* [1975]; *Zingraff* [1975]).[2] Thomas and his colleagues discuss "short-term" and "long-term" consequences of prisonization (or rather imprisonment), their variables were defined accordingly in their models. They classified the opposition to prison and the priority of interpersonal relationships with other inmates as short-term, criminalization (or rather criminal identification) and at-titudes toward the law and justice system as long-term consequences. Here we are in-terested in the last two attitudes. The approach of "long-term consequences" was jus-

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[2] It must be noted that his publications are characterized by ambiguity concerning the consequences of what he is writing about. Thomas uses the expressions of "consequences of confinement" (or of imprisonment) and "consequences of prisonization" simultaneously. Logically, this can be accepted only if we consider imprison-ment and prisonization equal, thus we accept that imprisonment cause prisonization as a logical necessity. If we adopted this perspective, it would be unnecessary to investigate the prisonization phenomenon.

tified by a logical slip. For example: "…the adoption of attitudes and values that increase the likelihood of reinvolvement in criminality upon release from the institution" (*Thomas* [1977a] p. 58.), or elsewhere: "…the greater the degree of criminal identification, the greater the probability of criminal involvement after release" (*Thomas–Foster* [1972] p. 230.). It proves that Thomas hypothesized an essential connection between intra-prison thinking and post-prison law-breaking behaviour.

Compared to the above mentioned works there is an inverse logic in the study of *Rhodes* [1979]. In his theoretical chapter, he apparently took on the "consequence" viewpoint, but at the same time he emphasized the "antecedent" role regarding both opposition to the law and justice system and criminal identity variables (which he treated separately). However, it is noteworthy that only the importation aspect is used in the analysis. The tested model of another researcher, *Alpert* [1978] was based on the "attitudinal and ideological import" approach, whereby he investigated the role of attitudes toward justice system (besides different kinds of alienation) as imported views.

Finally, we need to mention another trend developed almost simultaneously with the start of prisonization research. It focused on inmates and, instead of investigating the conformity-nonconformity dichotomy, it studied their attitudes towards criminal justice and attitudinal changes (*Watt–Maher* [1958], *Hulin–Maher* [1959], *Mylonas–Reckless* [1963], *Cleaver–Mylonas–Reckless* [1968], *Maher–Stein* [1968], *Mylonas–Cleaver–Reckless* [1968]). The aim of these authors was the same as that of prisonization researchers: they considered the prison as a "black box" which generates changes in the thinking of inmates and inhibits their reintegration into society.

2. About the reduced model and the research

One common feature of the aforementioned studies is that they failed to answer at least two questions: what changes occur in prison and what are their consequences for the post-prison period. One of the main reasons for this is that prisonization studies were mainly based on cross-sectional design. Besides, there were some panel studies which attempted to reveal changes in thinking only during the course of several months (*Glaser* [1964], *Alpert* [1978], *Bondeson* [1989]). The cross-sectional studies explored the consequences of imprisonment purely logically. Frequently, it was declared in the theoretical part of these works that certain variables would be viewed as consequences (see for example the writings of Thomas). Another technique was creating certain synthetic groups by taking the time spent and time remaining into account (for example "early" and "late career phases", see *Wheeler* [1961]). In theory, panel studies would be suited for revealing changes during and af-

ter the prison period; however, it is rather illusory to think that these processes occur only in a few months. Cross-sectional studies are even less appropriate for answering such questions, but they can be suitable for other purposes.

In my own cross sectional study, I treated the different attitudes as what they really are, in other words, juxtaposed with each other, having not causal but correlational relationship. Hence I investigated the correspondence between certain indicators of prisonization and criminalization. That is to say, I did not regard them either as imported thinking patterns or ones that prevailed following the imprisonment. I exclusively considered them as patterns that were present right at the time of imprisonment. In some respects this approach means a step back, compared to earlier ones because the very components are missing from the model which would replace theory and which, in fact, typically justify the scientific investigation of prisonization, that is, the ones related to the effects of prison. Since – as I have already mentioned – there was not accordance between the theory and empirically measured phenomena in earlier studies, it is necessary to move back. The cornerstone (and maybe the advantage) of my approach is not showing more than the conclusion that we can draw from the data. However, it would be also important to explore the causes and potential consequences, but it should be emphasized again that we cannot venture on this due to the limitations of the current research.

The present study looks for the answer to three questions. *Firstly,* to what extent the different components of criminal world-view are associated with one another and whether they are integrated into a coherent system. *Secondly*, to what extent they are correlated with the possible indicator of prisonization, in other words, with the rejection of staff expectations. The *third* question awaiting answer is that which factors influence the criminal views and prisonization, and whether these results show a uniform pattern.

To answer these questions, I used data from a survey which was conducted in Vác Maximum and Medium Security Prison in Hungary, in March 2010. The aim of the study was to explore attitudes of the total population of adult male inmates with a definitive sentence in this institution. The number of potential respondents was 618 at the reference date (1 March). The questionnaires were properly filled out by interviewers in 365 cases, thus the response rate was 59.1 percent. It should be noted that there was no preliminary sampling in the prison. Posteriorly, however, it was possible to liken to the total inmate population with respondents of the study using data from institutional records (of course, observing the rules of anonymity and personal rights). On the grounds of this comparison, it seems that the respondent population is representative to the total inmate population at an acceptable level. There were no significant differences between the total and the sub-populations with regard to such factors as security and custody levels, age, marital status, nature of committed crimes, doing a job in prison or not, length of sentence. The Goodman–Kruskal's

gamma (γ) coefficients were used in this analysis, in accordance with the ordinal level of measurement of the examined variables (*Goodman–Kruskal* [1954]).
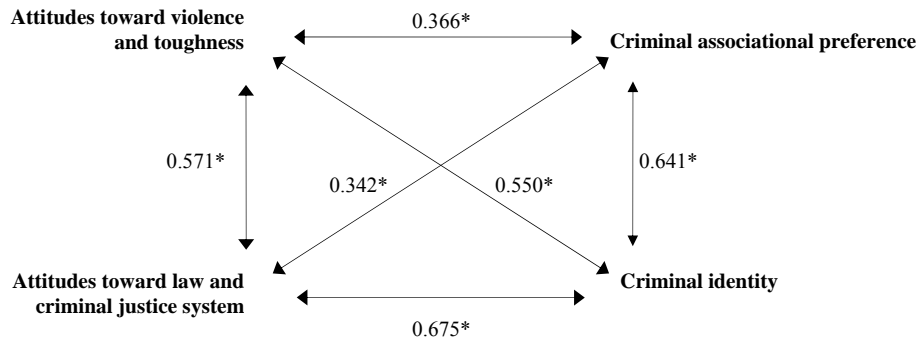
3. Analysis and findings

Before we discuss the analysis in detail, it is important to note that the expression of "criminalization" in the title of this study is actually incorrect (as I have mentioned already), since criminalization refers to a process, while a cross-sectional survey can show only a "snapshot". Therefore, it is more proper to talk about criminal world-view and its indicators, which were constructed in conformity with the previous literature. Accordingly, regarding the components of the criminal world-view, the following variables were distinguished by principal component analysis: attitudes toward relationship with criminals (criminal associational preference), acceptance or rejection of self-definition as a criminal (criminal identity), opinions on the law and criminal justice system, and attitudes towards violence and toughness.[3] The total scores of these variables were trichotomized. Value 3 indicates that the inmate accepts the criminal value orientations, 1 is the opposite, and 2 is the medium category.

Associations between the different criminal views and their relations to prisonization

The first hypothesis – stating that criminality indices there are interconnected – points to the fact that these variables are interchangeable, they may reflect the same phenomenon. The data presented in Figure 1 shows that all the relationships between the indicators of procriminal views are positive and significant. On the grounds of moderately strong associations, it is obvious that the delinquent self-identification also means that one has got a negative orientation towards law and the justice system, as well as this type of identification implies supporting close relationships with criminals. Similarly, the criminal identity is closely associated with attitudes towards violence and toughness, while the latter one is connected with the opposition to the law. Being less tightly related to the aforementioned, yet the views on law and criminal justice do correlate with the level of accepting or rejecting criminal friendships. This is accompanied by opinions supporting violence. These findings suggest that there is a relatively coherent criminal value system amongst inmates.
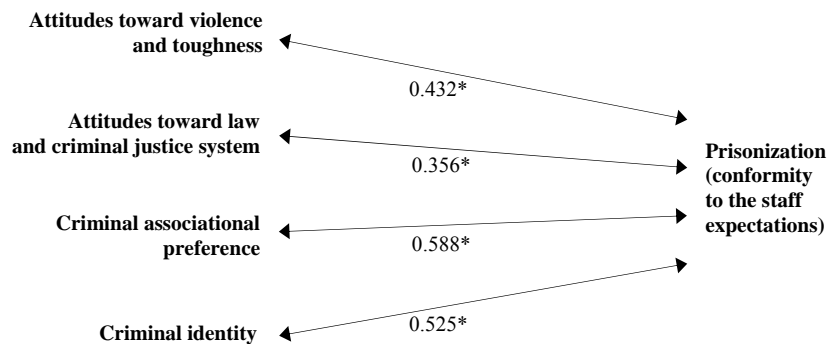
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[3] The items used to operationalize these variables are included in the Appendix B.

Figure 1. Associations between criminal views
(gamma coefficients)

Attitudes toward violence
and toughness ←——— 0.366* ———→ **Criminal associational preference**

0.571*   0.342*   0.550*   0.641*

**Attitudes toward law and
criminal justice system** ←——— 0.675* ———→ **Criminal identity**

* *p* < 0.001.

Figure 2. Associations between criminal views and prisonization
(gamma coefficients)

**Attitudes toward violence
and toughness**

0.432*

**Attitudes toward law
and criminal justice system**

0.356*

**Prisonization
(conformity
to the staff
expectations)**

**Criminal associational
preference**

0.588*

Criminal identity   0.525*

* *p* < 0.001.

The second hypothesis pertains to the relationship between institutional noncon-formity (prisonization) and each component of criminal world-view. Prisonization was measured with the use of a tool developed by *Wheeler* [1961]. It was based on some hypothetical conflict situations in which the respondents have to decide be-tween two alternatives. One option represents the expectations of the prison staff, the other those of inmate society.[4] I also applied Wheeler's guidelines when constructing the variable. That is, if the respondent agreed with the answers that represented the

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[4] The situations can be found in Appendix A. They were almost identical with the ones used by Wheeler, with the exception that actors had been given Hungarian last names, as well as in the case of the "hiding" story the respondents did not have to decide about money but Rivotril pills (which means higher risk-taking).

supposed staff expectations at least in four out of five situations, he was categorized as "conform" inmate. Those who answered this way in zero or only one situation became the "non-conform" (or "prisonized") type. The latter was coded with 3, the former with 1, and the medium category with 2. The data shows that the non-conform answers are more prevalent among those who consider themselves as criminals, who did not seclude themselves apart from close associations with criminals, who has got violent attitudes, and who is up against the law. (See Figure 2.)

The third hypothesis is linked to the factors associated with antisocial perspectives: implications of the criminal past and the prison period. Since the parts of criminal world-view are undoubtedly associated with each other as well as with prisonization, it is worth exploring that to which factors these thinking components can be traced back or whether they can be described with a uniform pattern. It is important because if these components are related to certain background variables in similar vein, this would indicate that criminal thinking and nonconformity towards institutional staff expectations cannot be distinguished from each other, thus these two can be considered one single phenomenon.

Regarding nonconformity and the components of criminal world-view, I investigated the role of those factors that had been used in earlier studies. These variables can be divided into two "rough" groups according to their place in time (past or present). The reason of using the word "rough" is justified by the following reason. It is hard to decide which time level is represented by certain variables, similarly to establishing what phenomenon is shown by the given indicator. The variables that represent the past are casted into two groups. One of them refers to criminal past (juvenile arrest, having a clean record or not) and the other to the conventional aspects of the past (educational attainment, school behaviour and scholastic records, truancy, longest time spent in a given job). It is loosely related to the aforementioned group of variables that indicate the type of offense: violent crimes (or not) and sexually oriented crimes (or not). Since I investigated a homogenous population regarding gender (there were only adult male inmates in the prison), the demographic viewpoint was limited to age. The other group of variables refers to the "present tense" of imprisonment. The security and custody level, whether he works in prison or not, together with prison rewards and punishments fell into this group because this research was conducted in one institution only. The table contains a summary of the associations between these factors and attitude variables.

a) Factors related to the past. The assumption concerning criminal past is that the earlier and more often one has got into contact with the agents of social control or the representatives of the criminal justice system, the more probable that it has strengthened his pro-criminal views. However, the opposite is not likely to happen on a theoretical basis. Our data seem to support this hypothesis, showing that people who were arrested on suspicion of a crime as juveniles (aged 14–17) tend to adopt crimi-

nal interpersonal relations and stronger criminal identity, they are up against the law and its representatives, they accept violence and support nonconformity in prison. However, it must be noted that juvenile arrest is a "soft" indicator in some respect, since in itself it does not necessarily mean that the person committed a crime. The results connected to the other criminal past variable (namely whether he has ever been in prison) are consonant with that of juvenile arrest. Accordingly, in contrast with first-termers, those who have ever been imprisoned before the current sentence accept pro-criminal views much more and stand clearly in opposition to staff expectations. The unambiguous findings suggest that a criminal maturation process (in other words criminalization) do exist. But it must be kept in mind that these are official indicators. That is, whether a person gets arrested and later convicted are determined partly by how the criminal justice system operates, partly by the extent of how "skilful" or maybe "lucky" the criminal is, or rather by the interplay between these factors. Consequently, being arrested and sentenced can be an indicator of the extendedness of one's criminal history. Moreover, if the individual had not been caught by investigator authorities, it can be the best indicator of his criminal potential. Thus in this case we are groping in the dark, since the presence or absence of prior arrest or conviction would equally indicate strong and weak connection to crime.

Perhaps it is not an exaggeration to state that there is only one conventional mobility channel in our age: school. Schooling was measured by official educational attainment as well as subjective indicators such as scholastic records, school behaviour, and truancy. The explanatory mechanism behind is that early broken or fragmented school career leads the later perpetrators to alternative ways of living, to crime, which very likely generate some changes in their way of thinking. As can be seen from data, this hypothesis was not unfounded either, since favourable attitudes toward crime and opposition to the demands of the institutional staff are more prevalent among the poorly educated inmates and the ones who defined themselves as frequent truants. The coefficients that show the relationship between school behaviour and certain antisocial views point in the same direction. However, the past scholastic records are surprisingly only associated with negative attitudes toward law and prisonization, while in the cases of the three other types of views the coefficients are weak and not significant. We can only assume what may stand in the background. Questions about past school behaviour and scholastic records seem to relate to the same "unit", but this is only an artifact. The former refers to a more or less narrower phenomenon: following or breaking regulations concerning teachers and fellow students. However, regarding the latter, the answers are based on more complex experiences, which would lead to some kind of distortion. Another reason for the lack of associations can be that school failures have different significance in various social groups; in certain ones, they can be highly respected instead of stigmatization. Due to subjective retrospection and the special conditions, the reliability of the answers about school records is questionable.

Not independently from past school experiences and educational attainment, it is worth looking at the relationship between criminal views and labour market performance. Although there were questions about the respondents' typical and last occupation in the questionnaire, the variables that were constructed from them have proved unusable. In fact, they should be treated as constants rather than variables, since almost all inmates fall into the category of unqualified blue-collar workers. That is why we utilized the continuity or discontinuity of the labour market position as an indicator, based on the longest time spent at a workplace. We confirmed the hypothesis that the shorter time an inmate spent at a given workplace, the more willing he is to accept some criminal views as well as the more hostile towards staff expectations. It is important to emphasize that "workplace" also refers to non-registered types of employment in this study. If it would be restricted to legal or registered jobs, presumably the findings would be even stronger.

The table also shows that the age of inmates is inversely related to the acceptance of criminal views and prisonization. In other words, the younger prisoners tend to accept such opinions that support close association with criminals, the use of violence and the rejection of the law and criminal justice system more than the older ones do. It seems there is a "fading" process with aging. The question about other factors that may influence this association arises again. It is fairly conceivable that the data do not indicate a kind of real prosocial maturation process but the strengthening of concealing, outwitting and manipulating the outside word. Thus there can be a latent "manipulation" factor which would influence the observed relationship. It is not impossible either that the younger and older inmates have committed different types of offences or they have dissimilar social backgrounds, which would explain why members of different age groups think differently.

The fact that a given person committed a certain kind of crime (for which he was sentenced to imprisonment) can indicate a kind of orientation to law, hereby to crime itself. The criminal cases are considerably diversified and grouping them – even if the penal code contains one classification – can be problematic. Within the framework of the present study, the crimes, or rather the perpetrators were categorized according to two criteria. One is based on the distinction between violent and non-violent crimes, while the other differentiates between sexually and non-sexually oriented crimes. The logic behind these distinctions is that violent crimes are at the top of the crime hierarchy, while sexually oriented crimes are at the bottom of that, and the position in this stratification is supposedly associated with the individual's own values and views. However, the findings suggest that the types of committed crimes in the past are not or only slightly linked with antisocial thinking. There is no significant relationship between the violent nature of crimes and the acceptance/rejection of the inmate perspectives; the values of the coefficients are almost zero. The lack of the latter association is interesting because the rate of the violent perpetrators is approximately 80 percent of

the total convicted population in the studied prison. There were questions also about attitudes toward violence and toughness, but the hypothesis was rejected again. A possible reason is that a part of violent crimes were motivated by passion or were non-intentional, thus they were not linked with an ideology that supports violence.

Committing sexually motivated crimes is associated with only some views in the predicted direction. So the opposition to staff expectations and accepting associations with criminals are less prevalent among those who committed sexual crimes than among other inmates. One's attitude towards relationships with law-breakers is probably not independent from his position in the prison. An inmate's opinions about his fellows can be shaped by others' general orientation toward him. The perpetrators of sexually motivated crimes (or even its suspicion) can be stigmatized by the public within the prison what can lead to loneliness. The items/statements of the associational preference scale explicitly refer to attitudes towards criminals and, inseparable from that, towards fellow inmates. This special socially excluded position within the prison may explain the similar strength and direction of the association between non-conformity and committing sexual crimes. The utilized situations are based on two important aspects of prisonization: the conflict between solidarity among inmates and, as its complementary, the opposition to institutional staff. Interestingly, however, the otherwise closely associated three other components (attitudes toward law, criminal self-identification, violent views) do not show any relationships with the sexual-based grouping. A tentative explanation for this can be that inmates who committed sexually motivated crimes have more contradictory attitudes towards the label of being a "criminal" than other prisoners. Although violence is a typical motif and often used also in the case of sexual crimes, the answers do not reflect that it was used as an intentional strategy. Similarly, the attitudes towards law and criminal justice were not influenced by the type of crimes committed in the past.

b) *Immediate context of the prison, factors of the present.* The study was conducted in an institution in which inmates serve their sentence at either medium- or maximum-security level. Security levels reflect the conditions of imprisonment. Actually, they are partly related to the present and partly to the past, because court sentences decide on them on the basis of criminal law that defines the conditions and seriousness of a crime. From at least two respects, it would be logical to assume that the inmates in more rigorous maximum-security sites tend to accept the investigated antisocial opinions. Firstly, the maximum-security punishment is characteristically imposed upon perpetrators of more serious crimes by the court, who are likely to have deeper and more criminal motivations. Secondly, the conditions of confinement are harsher than at medium-security level and this can make inmates responsive to accepting antisocial orientation (as stated by the deprivation model of *Sykes* [1958]). The data suggest that these assumptions do not hold. Security level has no influence on inmates' views. It should be emphasized that inmates in either medium- or maxi-

mum-security units are housed separately. These units are theoretically different but practically not or only imperceptibly. Nevertheless, it is also possible that if we had got data from inmates housed in minimum-security prison (this kind of security level was not present in the investigated institution), we would have succeeded in showing significant relationships.

Another possible comparison would be based on inmate custody level which is not determined by the past but the present behaviour in the institution. Custody levels range from 2 to 4, where the numbers refer to the harshness of circumstances. At admission, every inmate is classified into medium level (level 3), and in the case of good behaviour or low-level security risk and other requirements, the inmate gets into level 2, while in the instance of high-level risk, into level 4. The majority of inmates in the studied prison generally stay at medium level, the rates of downwardly and upwardly mobiles are 7-8 percent, respectively. Since this classification regarding custody levels takes inmate thinking and general orientation into consideration, we can assume that stricter custody level goes together with higher level of acceptance of criminal views and of nonconformity. This hypothesis is basically supported by the data. Although there is a significant relationship in only one case, associations with the other four inmate perspectives point in the same direction.

Whether an inmate has a job in the institution can also indicate his attitudes towards getting on in conventional life, that is, towards the opposite of crime. The findings regarding this assumption are considerably contradictory. Violent thinking and prisonization are not at all affected by participating in prison work activities. The acceptance of criminal self-conception and opposition to the law are more typical amongst non-workers, although the relationships are not too strong. On the contrary, workers give priority to contacts with criminals more often. These results raise the question that how wide the "range" of these criminal associations is, with whom they want to maintain closer relationships. Since the working inmates are housed in separate living units and they work with their cellmates or with other inmates from the same living unit, it would be logical that these individuals would be their potential post-release associations. It may explain the negative sign of the coefficient.

Institutional behaviour, more specifically rule infractions and rewards can be important indicators of the position held by prisoners within the institution. The higher number of the former and the lower number of the latter can be indicative of the fact that inmates have such a way of thinking that facilitate rather than hinder criminality. In the case of few punishments and many rewards, we can hypothesize the opposite. Previously, rule infractions (institutional punishments) were frequently utilized as the indicators of the behavioural aspect of prisonization. However, the role of institutional rewards was not investigated. Within the framework of the present research, it was possible to match questionnaire data with institutional records. The problem was mainly with the construction of these behavioural variables. The time factor has a

significant impact on both of them, as it does matter how long it takes for someone to attain a certain amount of rewards or punishments. To this end, the number of punishments and rewards were divided by the total time spent from the present sentence (in months). The derived values were grouped in two different ways. (See the table.)

Factors associated with the measures of criminal views and prisonization
(gamma coefficients)

Variables investigated	Criminal associational preference	Criminal identity	Attitudes toward the law	Attitudes toward the violence	Prisonization
Juvenile arrest (no, yes)	0.400**	0.549**	0.335**	0.327**	0.397**
Number of times he has been in prison (once, more)	0.134	0.434**	0.274**	0.287**	0.246**
Educational attainment (completed 0–7 grades, 8 grades, high school)	–0.120	–0.295**	–0.265**	–0.106	–0.132*
Scholastic records (good, medium, bad)	0.122	0.045	0.224**	0.044	0.166*
School behaviour (good, medium, bad)	0.386**	0.176*	0.211**	0.175*	0.385**
Truancy (no, yes)	0.428**	0.497**	0.340**	0.200*	0.455**
Longest time spent at a given workplace (0–1 months, 1–6 months, 6 months–1 year, more than 1 year)	–0.399**	–0.497**	–0.316**	–0.321**	–0.445**
Age group (18–29, 30–39, 40–49, 50–X years)	–0.356**	–0.283**	–0.166*	–0.261**	–0.417**
Violent crimes (yes, no)	–0.038	–0.033	–0.019	–0.095	–0.156
Sexually oriented crimes (yes, no)	0.307*	0.133	0.004	–0.038	0.300*
Security level (medium, maximum)	–0.022	0.025	0.100	0.054	–0.021
Custody level (2, 3, 4)	0.195	0.345**	0.202	0.163	0.155
Whether he works in prison (yes, no)	–0.159	0.201*	0.133	0.068	0.028
Rewards (yes, no) – absolute	0.067	–0.134	–0.102	–0.074	–0.018
Punishments (yes, no) – absolute	0.244*	0.223*	0.159	0.131	0.135
Rewards (few, medium, many) – relative	0.045	–0.282	–0.206	0.075	0.019
Punishments (few, medium, many) – relative	0.270	0.294*	0.401**	0.359*	0.287*

* $0.01 \leq p < 0.05$.

** $p < 0.01$.

On the one hand, absolute measures were developed in which the inmates were classified into two categories: those who got at least one reward and those who re-

ceived none at all. We followed the same procedure for punishments. On the other hand, since these are fairly "rough" indicators, relative measures were also constructed. In the case of both rule infractions and rewards, the values were trichotomized, hereby the constructed variables refer to relatively few, medium and many rewards (and punishments). The assumption is that punishments are more frequent among those who prefer criminal views and nonconformity, while institutional rewards are more frequent in the group of those who respect law and staff expectations and those who reject the criminal value system. These hypotheses – irrespective of using either the absolute or the relative measures – were only supported in the instance of rule violations. The associations were moderately strong in the case of the three-way relative categorization and weaker when using the absolute measures. It can be concluded that the relative number of rule infractions are higher among those who consider themselves as criminals, clearly oppose the law and the criminal justice system, support violence and reject staff expectations. The acceptance of close relationships with criminals is also associated with the higher number of rule violations, although this result is statistically not significant.

There are no such relationships regarding institutional rewards, although in some cases (criminal self-identification, negative attitudes towards the law) the values of coefficients are between 0.2–0.3 and negative in the three-way categorization. It suggests that inmates who accept pro-criminal views received relatively more rewards. However, it must be noted again that these associations are not significant. In other cases, the values of coefficients are very close to zero. It would be reasonable to suppose that reward and punishment are opposites of each other, but it seems they are not. In order to clarify this relationship, we would need to understand the mechanisms that are at work when imposing rewards and punishments. For example, it is important that (in principle) rule violations are not limited in a given period, while imposing rewards are. It is very likely that negative and positive sanctions are initiated by different actors and through different "channels": the former falls within the cognizance of custodians, the latter within that of the treatment staff. Another important question is whether the same "threshold" level applies to rewards and punishments. It is fairly conceivable that in a stricter prison it is easier to commit rule infractions than to get rewards.

4. Summary and discussion

The data presented in this study shows that there is some kind of combination of procriminal views among inmates, which are closely associated with nonconformity

to institutional staff. Even though the theoretical model applied in this study makes a distinction between the rejection of staff expectations and the components of the criminal value system, our findings suggest that for the most part the same factors influence both of them and in the same direction. So inmates with more extensive criminal background, lower education, only temporary labour market experience, stricter custody level, and more instances of previous incarcerations are more often characterized by criminal and non-conform views. These findings – even if partially – would take us closer to the topic of "the schools of crime". On the one hand, it is obvious that criminals are kept in prison, so the widespread acceptance of the criminal value system is not unexpected. On the other hand, results concerning pre-prison indicators suggest that the roots of criminal views go back to the period prior to the entry into the institution. Unfortunately, the current investigation leaves an important question unanswered: to what extent prison forms and deepens the already existing value system. However, it is very unlikely that general nonconformity of both the pre-prison and prison period would essentially change after inmates will be released.

Regarding prisons as crime-intensifying institution, it would be necessary to conduct a research (following the logic of impact analysis) which would aim at exploring control and experimental groups by a follow-up study. It would cover – at least in theory – such criminals who have never been in prison. It is the only way to distinguish general temporal changes in criminal views from the real effects of imprisonment. The investigation should hypothetically start before the occurrence of the crime itself, which, certainly, is absolutely impossible. Hence it appears that the concept of the schools of crime remains an open question. Maybe even the question itself is wrong, since the real motives of crime should not be sought inside the prison but outside its walls.

Appendix A

Hypothetical conflict situations used to measure the prisonization are enumerated below.

Conformity to staff role expectation

1. An inmate, *Gulyás* is working as much as he can in the institution. Some other inmates threaten him because he does more work than anybody else in the crew. He works as hard as he can just like earlier.

2. Inmate *Szabó* goes before a committee that makes job assignments. He is given a choice between two jobs. One job would call for a hard work, but it would give Szabó training that might be useful to him "outside". The other would allow him to do easier time in the institution. But it provides no training for a job outside. Szabó decides to take the easier job.

3. An inmate, without thinking, commits a minor rule infraction. He is given a "write-up" by a correctional officer who saw the violation. Later three other inmates are talking to each other about it. Two of them criticize the officer. The third inmate, *Fodor* defends the officer, saying the officer was only doing his duty.

4. Inmates *Deák* and *Budai* are very good friends. Deák has 50 pieces of Rivotril pills that were smuggled into the institution by a visitor. Deák tells Budai he thinks the officers are suspicious, and asks Budai to hide the pills for him for a few days. Budai takes the pills and carefully hides it.

5. Inmates *Kocsis* and *Pintér* are planning an escape. They threaten inmate *Szűcs* with a beating unless he steals a rope for them where he works. While he is trying to smuggle the rope into the cell house, he is caught by an officer, and Szűcs is charged with planning to escape. If he doesn't describe the whole situation, may get into serious trouble. He can avoid it by blaming Kocsis and Pintér.

Appendix B

Items used to measure the major attitude variables are listed below.

Attitudes toward law and justice system

It's all right for a person to break the law if he doesn't get caught.

The only bad thing about breaking the law is the chance of getting caught.

It's hard to have much respect for the law after I think about how I've been treated by the police and court.

It's all right to bend the law as long as you don't actually break it.

It's hard to have much respect for the law after I think about how I've been treated by people who are supposed to support the law.

There's nothing wrong with breaking the law as long as nobody gets hurt.

Stealing is just another way to make a living.

Laws are so often made for the benefit of small selfish groups that a man cannot respect.

The law is more rotten than core.

A hungry man has the right to steal.

Laws are the enemy of freedom.

Laws are for the poor to obey and for the rich to ignore.

A person should obey only those laws which seem reasonable.

Criminal identity

I would rather lead a life of adventure and dishonesty than that of a law-abiding type with a regular job.

I'm more like people who are after easy money than I'm like people who grind away at a job.

It is better to do a few illegal things to make money than work at a job with regular, fixed hours in the same place every day.

I'm more like the people who can make a living outside the law than I'm like those who only break the law occasionally.

I would define myself as a criminal.

I would like to be able to take things easy and not have to work hard.

The life of most people who follow the rules and have a steady job is dull.

People who have been in trouble with law are more like me than people who don't have trouble with the law.

A man is fool to work for a living if he can get by some easier way, even if it means violating the law.

I would define myself as a law-abiding person.[5]*

I think more like other inmates than people outside.

People who have been in trouble with the law have the same sort of ideas about life that I have.

You've really got to respect a guy who's smart enough to break the law and get away with it.

Criminal associational preference

I would rather associate with people who obey the law than those who don't.*

When I get out I don't want to associate with the kind of people that are always getting into trouble.*

I want to keep in touch with inmates I have met in here after I get out.

Upon my release, I will avoid all friends I have here.*

I don't care to associate with the kind of people that are in prison.*

Most of the friends I have made in prison are not like the friends I would make in the streets.*

The only kind of persons I take as a friend is one who respects the law.*

The kinds of guys I hang around with here are really a lot like most of the people I knew on the street.

I am friendly with a group of guys who work hard and feel that an inmate should try "to better himself" while in prison.*

Most of the inmates in here are like the people I ran with in the free world.

Attitudes toward violence and toughness

In order to survive in prison, an inmate has to establish a "tough guy" reputation.

The best way to get respect around here is to act tough.

You have to be hard to make it here.

If you ever do have to fight, you're wise to do a good enough job on the other guy that he'll never come back for more.

Knowing that you are tough is sufficient. You don't have to show it by force.

I believe in the use of force to overthrow the law.

There is never a good reason to use psychical violence no matter what the situation might be.*

It's not smart to look for trouble, but once it comes you can't back away from it and still be a man.

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[5] Here and hereinafter * means reversed items.

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