

The impact of stigma on challenges and integration of young ex-offenders

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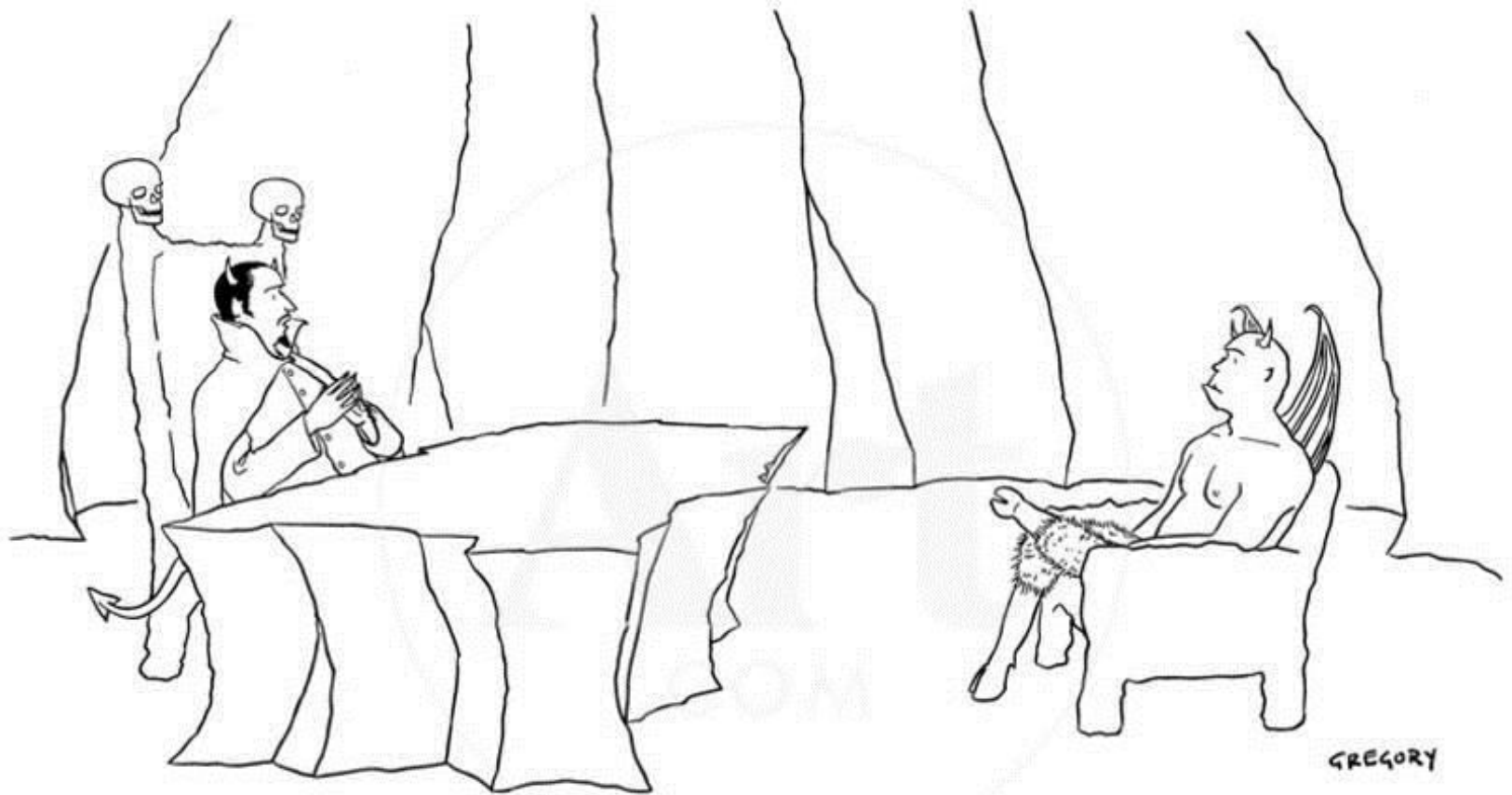
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UNIVERSITY OF TARTU



promoting youth
involvement and
social
engagement



“I need someone well versed in the art of torture—do you know PowerPoint?”



Case study:
young ex-
offenders

Ethnography: photo elicitation
and later peer-research approach

Fieldwork: August 2017 – March
2018

22 semi-structured interviews
with 24 ex-offenders

Data analysed using Nvivo
software



MINU LUGU
13.10-26.10
Noorte fotonäitus
Kullo Lastegalerii, Kuninga 6, Tallinn



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Conviction as a stigma

“In case I would say that I have been punished under criminal law for one or the other, a person will immediately look at me with another glance. Instantly. No matter what criminal act it is: I am a murderer or I have sold weed. If you're a criminal, you're a criminal.” (male, 19)

“In the hospital, it was also the attitude that I shouldn't have kids at all. It's like they were looking at you when you were taking something, it's like you're a drug addict. (female, 25)

Stigma as a barrier for social integration

“That at the moment, for example, if there has been a wish to rent an apartment or something, then Google will draw all the chances to zero. That if you write the name [into application], it's pretty difficult.” (male, 23)

Financial obligations as a stigma

*“I've just started paying them back the last year. Soon it will be paid and it was not easy at all. Because those bailiffs, they have a full-of-crap ride on your back. Doing things they are not allowed to do.”
(MG, 23)*

Strategies
for resisting
the stigma:
do not tell
anyone

“Well, that's how you find a job... well, that stuff like: go and do a CV and upload it to CV-center [on-line job market], this stuff is not going to help a person who came out of prison. When needed they [prison staff] gave some tips how to conceal that 5 years gap in the CV and how to cheat in your CV, just like any practical tips. [Tips] to fill that gap, so you have a real chance of getting somewhere”. (male, 24)

Strategies for resisting stigma: a new life from scratch

"I've decided that this circle [of friends] is not exactly what it's most suitable for me. And since I had settled my life here in Finland already, I had some kind of base down here, so when I got out from prison, the very next day I had a ferry ticket, and I was back here. ... I decided that Finland is a new life base for me. That there I can start off from scratch. I'm going to put my life back together block after block." (male, 24)



“I pushed out my best friend too, because everyone else was negatively reacting and I thought it [breaking relationship with good friend] would be a punishment for me, etc., and then I didn't trust anyone anymore.” (female, 25)

Accepting
stigma:
low self-
esteem
and
self-
excusion

Policy recommendations:



Post-release involvement in the programs that bring together employers and YP (EE:STEP, DK: High-five).



Reduce financial burden, e.g. conditional fines in combination with aforementioned programs.



Involvement of YP in programs that motivate and help to increase self-esteem (e.g. volunteers exchange program).

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Thank you for
your
attention!



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Kullo Lastegalerii, Kuninga 6, Tallinn
Näituse avamine 13. oktoobril kell 17.00

"Minu lugu" on noorte fotonäitus, kus eksponeeritakse ühiste fototöötabade tulemusi. Näitusele on kogutud valitud tööd, mis avavad noorte endi vaadet nende elule ja kohale ühiskonnas. Projekti eesmärk on uurida, miks noored otsustavad ühiskonnas osaleda (või mitte osaleda) ja mis nende arvates peaks ühiskonnas muutuma.

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