

# Gendered Pathways of Women's Incarceration in the Czech Republic

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# Data, methodology and theoretical perspectives

- 31 semi-structured interviews with women released from prison.
  - Various contexts and constellations of informants who, for example, aged between 29 and 67, were sentenced only once X multiple times, were situated in bigger municipalities X smaller ones, some had probation X without probation, had children X did not have children etc.
- **Big thanks to researchers who conducted interviews: Alžběta Majerová, Lenka Prokopová and Alena Vyhnalová.**
- Interviews were analysed with an assistance of MAXQDA software and qualitative content analysis (Kuckartz, Rädiker, 2023) was employed.
  - > Specific categories representing findings were produced.
- Categories were assembeled to pathways.
  - Inspired by collaboration between qualitative content analysis and causal analysis posed by Gläser and Laudel (2019).
- Analysis and interpretation was led by feminist, critical, and cultural criminology perspectives as well as critical social work perspective.

# Identified gendered pathways of women's incarceration

- Five major categories – drug abuse (21 informants), partner (18), marginalisation (18), mental health and traumatisation (13), and hyper-consumerism (five) – were identified and set up into four specific pathways.
- **Partner -> (marginalisation) <-> (traumatisation) <-> (drug abuse) -> criminality.**
  - 15 informants.
- **Traumatisation -> (partner) <-> (marginalisation) <-> (drug abuse) -> criminality.**
  - Nine informants.
- **Hyper-consumerism -> (drug abuse) -> criminality.**
  - Five informants.
- **Marginalisation -> (drug abuse) -> criminality.**
  - Two informants.
- Categories in brackets were present (or not present at all) in various configurations in narratives and pathways.
- Findings are presented more thoroughly in the study 'When My Partner Abused Me Back Then, My Self-Confidence Was Very Low': Wobbliness of the 'Offender' and 'Victim' Categories published in the *Czech and Slovak Social Work* journal.

# Partner pathway – Hornusa's narrative as an example

- „Jsem měla toho manžela 8 roků, už jsem ho nenáviděla [...] on fetoval a všechno prohrál. [...] A já jsem neměla třeba 4 měsíce na nájem [...] já jsem taky brala svoje prachy, ale to jsem nepokryla. Děti šly do školy, tak jsem [...] chodila zkrátka krást. Po supermarketech, jídlo, oblečení taky hodně, abych měla prachy.“
- „I was married for eight years, and I hated my husband [...] he was a junkie and lost everything [on slot machines]. [...] And didn't have money for a rent for four months. [...] my money wasn't enough. Children went to school [...] so I simply went to steal things at supermarkets. Food, a lot of clothes, for money reasons.“

# Traumatisation pathway – Kunata’s narrative as an example

- „[...] moje máma mě týrala, [...] tak jsem se naštvála a odešla jsem z baráku. Kámoška [...] mi řekla: „Pojď, pojedeme do [město].“ [...] tam mě seznámila s partou, který kradli po krámech [...] A jednou řekli, ať počkám u nádraží. A na rohu byl krám [...] Tak jsem šla, ukradla jsem tři čokolády a šla jsem je prodat na nádraží. [...] jak se mi furt dařilo, tak jsem začla chlast, pak jsem si našla [...] [partnera] a už to jelo. Trestná činnost a u něho jsem pak vlastně poznala i ty drogy a všechno.“
- „[...] my mum was abusing me, [...] so I was fed up and left home. Friend of mine told me: ‚Come, let’s go to [a city].‘ [...] There she introduced to me to a bunch who were stealing in shops [...] Once they told me to wait at the railway station. There was a shop at the corner [...] so I stole three chocolates and went to sell them to the station. [...] I was good at stealing and began boozing and found me [...] [a partner] and that’s it. He introduced me to drugs and all.“

# Hyper-consumerism pathway – Sovata's narrative as an example

- „Já jsem totiž prapůvodně byla novinářka a v té době jsem šla do různých lidí a pak jsem vlastně přestoupila na druhou stranu a dostala jsem takovou lekci. Takže věděla jsem, co dělám, a přišlo mi úplně normální, že když manipuluju s prachama a nic nepodepisuju a on taky manipuluje s prachama a nic nepodepisuje, tak je to úplně v pohodě. A pak se ukázalo, že dotyčný řekl, že nic nedostal a že prostě najednou je to všechno jinak. Podcenila jsem spoustu věcí a pak jsem vlastně spolupracovala s policajty a všichni, který to organizovali, tak byli vlastně venku, a já jsem byla na vazbě.“
- „Originally, I was a journalist and bothered various people, and then stepped to the other side and got a lesson. So, I knew what I was doing, and it occurred me perfectly normal that I manipulated with money and he manipulated with money without any warrant. But then the man told he received nothing and everything was different. I underestimated a lot of things and cooperated with cops, but everyone, who organised it, were released and was in custody.“

# Marginalisation pathway – Kyta's narrative as an example

- „Já jsem se poprvé dostala do kriminálu jenom proto, že jsem ztratila bydlení, neměla jsem s dětma kam jít a nikdo, nikdo mi nepodal pomocnou ruku. [...] moje nejstarší dítě nechodilo do školy, 104 neomluvených hodin. Podruhé to byly alimenty a teďka taky. [...] Pak jsme si [s partnerem] začali dělat naschvály, já jsem spadla do drog a už to bylo.“
- „I was in prison for the first time because I lost housing; I had nowhere to go with my children and nobody helped me. [...] my oldest child didn't attend school, 104 unexcused hours. Second time, it was because of [not paying] the child support; and the same now. Then we began making out on purpose [with my partner] and I fell to drugs, and that's it.“

# Conclusions

- Findings were not different from the abroad experiences and analyses, except for **hyper-consumerism** that is rather under-discussed.
- **Domestic violence and toxic partner relationships** were at the pinnacle of the pathways.
  - Gendered violence is still latent in the Czech Republic (Nyklová, Moree, 2021) and should be regarded as the structural problem that needs to be addressed properly.
- All the categories constituted an **intersectional interplay** that created a complex set of needs, which must be addressed in the same complex manner through the **intensive social work** based on, for example case management.
  - In the long term perspective, social work and social services are underfinanced in the Czech Republic.



# Literature

- Gläser, J., & Laudel, G. (2019). The Discovery of Causal Mechanisms: Extractive Qualitative Content Analysis as a Tool for Process Tracing. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 20(3), non-paginated.
- Kuckartz, U., & Rädiker, S. (2023). *Qualitative Content Analysis: Methods, Practice and Software*. SAGE.
- Nyklová, B., & Moree, D. (2021). *Násilí na ženách v souvislosti s covid-19: Výzkumná zpráva*. Sociologický ústav AV ČR a FHS UK.