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**Robert Opora, *The effectiveness of social rehabilitation interactions*
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Polish penitentiary literature has been enriched by another very valuable work by Robert Opora. The Author undertakes in it the fundamental and complex problem of the efficiency of the social rehabilitation process. In the first sentences of the communicative introduction we find the opinion that retribution does not bring rehabilitative effects. This view is quite debatable. It is true that the retributive theories of criminal punishment are turned somewhat by nature towards the past and order of retaliation and prevention theories towards the future and repair. However, this does not mean that retribution entirely abandons the possibility of positive transformation of criminals. Penalty proportional to the crime may also have the power of lasting, deep and internal reconstruction of the moral sphere of the criminal. We know that social rehabilitation brings, unfortunately, all too often only external signs of improvement, which are not accompanied by inner transformation and “pangs of synderesis”. Robert Opora’s monograph is indeed characterized by the forward-looking perspective and the expectation of a successful, so bringing positive results, implementation of new ideas or penitentiary programmes.

In the introduction of the work we learn the ambitious objectives set by the Author and which – it must be said at the outset – he realized successfully. The first of these was the conceptualization and operationalization of the titular concept, i.e. the effectiveness of social rehabilitation interactions, their forms and indicators. Another objective was a critical review of the theory of social rehabilitation proposing different models of this process. The next and, indeed very important objective of this work, was the identification of conditions for the successful implementation and factors hindering the implementation of new social rehabilitation ideas in a particular socio-political situation.

The first chapter of the book points out to the Reader the different theoretical approaches to the problem of dealing with offenders and ways of preventing crime. The Author included the following as the basic theoretical perspectives of dealing with criminals: retribution, deterrence, isolation, social rehabilitation, restorative justice and early social intervention or preventive measures. The competently and interestingly presented description of theoretical perspectives is concluded by the Author with a very accurate indication of the need for linking criminal theory and practice with social context and knowledge of empirical analyses supporting, or not, particular theoretical approach.

The second chapter refers to the orientation of social rehabilitation. The Author transparently shows us different ways of defining the term “social rehabilitation”, the complexity of social rehabilitation interactions and various theoretical models of the process of re-socialization (deficit of capabilities, responsibilities of the offender and the model of capabilities). The chapter ends with a convincing reflection of the Author on the future of social rehabilitation, its meaning and reasons, not only pragmatic, but also axiological and antipunitive.

The three next chapters of the book – the third, fourth and fifth – are closely linked. They concern the accepted forms of social rehabilitation interactions, the problem of their efficiency and its indicators. The Author directs our attention first to the principle of individual correctional interventions as well as social rehabilitation programmes mainly of a cognitive-behavioral nature (their advantages and limitations).

The main risk factors for returning to crime are – as experience teaches – unemployment (of the former prisoner or person under court guardianship), no permanent place of residence, and lack of funds for maintenance. These factors are usually the key elements of individual social rehabilitation interventions. Removal of the listed deficiencies can seriously increase the probability of success of the re-socialization process and successful readaptation.

Robert Opora also points to the model of social rehabilitation of offenders of crimes referring to the idea of restorative justice. Substantial restitution of the harm done to the victim can sometimes bring the perpetrators to revise their attitudes and beliefs.

The problem of exceptional importance is the question of the effectiveness of these forms of social rehabilitation interactions and the measurement of this effectiveness. Methods for assessing the level of effectiveness of social rehabilitation are also the subject of controversy. So, what criteria should be adopted: the criterion of juridical improvement (rate of recidivism) or criteria of improvement of a pedagogical-psychological character, and if so, which?

We know that the absence of recidivism, thus not committing more disclosed criminal offenses, does not mean achieved effectiveness of social rehabilitation interactions. Therefore, what is social rehabilitation effectiveness and what are the indicators of it?

The Author cites numerous definitions of these concepts and shows us the different states of affairs as evidence of effectiveness, mainly in relation to probation.

It should be noted that the Author does not forget about the methodological difficulties posed by research on indicators of positive changes under the influence of penitentiary interactions.

The results of previous studies on the effectiveness of social rehabilitation interventions or programmes implemented are not satisfactory, as the Author indicates. Creating the right tool for studying the effectiveness of social rehabilitation interactions could certainly contribute to improving the quality of assessments of these interactions. However, there is no such tool that would take into account all of the relevant variables associated not only with intervention itself but also with its participants and terms of realization. In chapter 5, the Author returns to the previously signaled problem of performance indicators of social rehabilitation interactions. It turns out that both the so-called objective evaluation of effectiveness based on the indicators of criminal history, as well as those that refer to, for instance, a sense of guilt, remorse, acceptance of the sense of punishment or restitution and the need to change attitudes towards people, are not clear.

The sixth chapter of the book concerns an extremely important problem, namely the question of what elements distinguish effective social rehabilitation programmes from ineffective programmes. Meta-analyses of dozens of studies on the effectiveness of social rehabilitation present in scientific literature and personal rich experience of the Author enabled him to formulate effective rules, and so, effective social rehabilitation interactions. These include: the use of intensive programmes primarily against the high-risk perpetrators, adapting the style of teaching convicts to their style of learning or consistency in the implementation of the intervention. The Author does not ignore here other difficult issues, e.g. the rule of adjusting the properties of the perpetrator to the style of work of the therapist, his competences and environmental conditions.

Chapter seven presents the factors of risk of criminal acts and methods of criminological programming. Both the determination of the degree of risk, as well as as programming, are part of the basic tasks of institutions related to the functioning of the justice system.

The last chapter of the book – just as interesting as the previous ones – is characterized by substantial “gravity”, and certainly deserves careful reading, cognitive reflection and judgment of the Reader. It concerns the implementation of new ideas and methods of social rehabilitation into practice and methodological aspects of formulating these projections.

The Author shows both the conditions for successful implementation, as well as the factors disturbing the process of successful implementation of treatment programmes. At the same time he reminds us that this process is not only fundamental but also very difficult to implement. The adaptation of ideas and

programmes requires the interaction between innovation authors, managers of institutions, staff and outside entities.

In the presentation of individual chapters I have already partly evaluated them. Now I shall point out the most important qualities of the reviewed monograph.

1. The work has a clear title and transparent structure. Its sections and subsections are a logically ordered whole.
2. The selection of content and the way it is communicated explicitly proves the extraordinary erudition of the Author and his excellent orientation in the extensive literature on the subject.
3. The Author of the monograph has made not only a thorough review and presentation of a great number of problems associated with the theory and pragmatics of social rehabilitation, but he has also pointed to the ways and directions for further research into this extremely complex reality.
4. The rich literature, accurately chosen and very skillful use of style and presentation of many judgments and reflections, also personal, evokes recognition.

In conclusion, I believe that the reviewed monograph is extremely valuable and worthy of dissemination. I am confident that it will find a wide circle of PT Readers and gain their high praise.