A CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM AND AN INTER-DISCIPLINARY ACTION PLAN FOR THE PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT OF RECIDIVISM

By

MARELIZE ISABEL SCHOEMAN

FOR PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE DEGREE

DOCTOR PHILOSOPHIAE IN SOCIAL WORK

in the

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK

at the

UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

PROMOTER: PROF. DR. ANTOINETTE LOMBARD

NOVEMBER 2002 PRETORIA

DEDICATION

THIS STUDY IS DEDICATED TO THE FOLLOWING PERSONS:

My husband Ryno for all his motivation and moral support through long and often difficult years of study

My children Joggie and Rynhard

My parents Joggie and Isa van Bruggen as well as Tom and Nellie-Marie Schoeman for their encouragement

All the professional people, especially social workers, who are involved in offender care

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TO GOD ALL THE GLORY

The Department of Correctional Services is acknowledged for permission and assistance in this study. The opinions expressed and the conclusions reached, are those of the author and not necessarily supported by the Department of Correctional Services.

The United States of America is acknowledged for the opportunity they granted the researcher, by means of their visitors program, to explore the prevention and management of crime and recidivism in America.

My sincere appreciation to the following individuals to who I am most grateful;

- **Prof. Dr. A Lombard, my promoter, for her guidance, expertise, motivation and support**
- **Bertie Hannekom of the Perspective Training College for assisting with the development of the PFIR eco-metric scale**
- **Karin Coode for editing the research report**
- **To all the social workers of the Department of Correctional Services who assisted me during the quantitative phase of this study**
- **To all the experts mentioned in this study for sharing their knowledge with me**
- **To all my friends, especially Maryna, Lyndsay, Annie and Marelie for their assistance and support**

ABSTRACT

A CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM AND AN INTER-DISCIPLINARY ACTION PLAN FOR THE PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT OF RECIDIVISM

by

M I Schoeman

Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Antoinette Lombard

Department of Social Work

The high crime rate in South Africa and the government's apparent inability to deal with this problem is a reality. Even though no official statistics exist regarding the recidivism rate in South Africa it is estimated that it could be between 55% and 95%. The contributing role that recidivism plays towards the high crime rate can therefore not be ignored.

In South Africa no classification system exists whereby a repeat offender can formally be classified as a recidivist. The crime prevention and management strategies currently utilised in South Africa furthermore does not recognise and address the role that recidivism plays as contributing factor towards the high crime rate.

The aim of this study was to formulate a classification system for the South African recidivist in order to compile an inter-disciplinary action plan for the prevention and management of recidivism.

The research design of this study was exploratory and both quantitative and qualitative data gathering methods were used in this study. The quantitative study involved the completion of the PFIR eco-metric scale by offenders falling within the classification criteria for recidivism. From the analyses of this data a proposed profile of the South African recidivist was compiled. During the qualitative phase of the research interviews were conducted with experts in the field of crime prevention and management. A semi-structured interview schedule was used for this purpose.

Based on the key findings of the study an inter-disciplinary action plan for the prevention and management of recidivism was compiled. The purpose of this action plan is to propose an inter-disciplinary and inter-sectoral intervention and management strategy to address recidivism holistically. Within the action plan it is suggested that recidivism should be addressed on three levels, namely prevention, therapeutic and developmental intervention and reintegration. The primary recommendation of this study was that the proposed inter-disciplinary action plan should be adopted by policy makers and be included in the crime management and prevention strategies

of South Africa. The study concluded with specific recommendations to help facilitate this process.

KEY TERMS

Recidivism

Chronic offender

Habitual offender

Criminal career

Inter-disciplinary action plan

Classification system

Crime management

Crime prevention

Psycho-social functioning inventory for recidivism (PFIR)

Forensic social work

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