Electronic Monitoring, Resettlement and Recidivism

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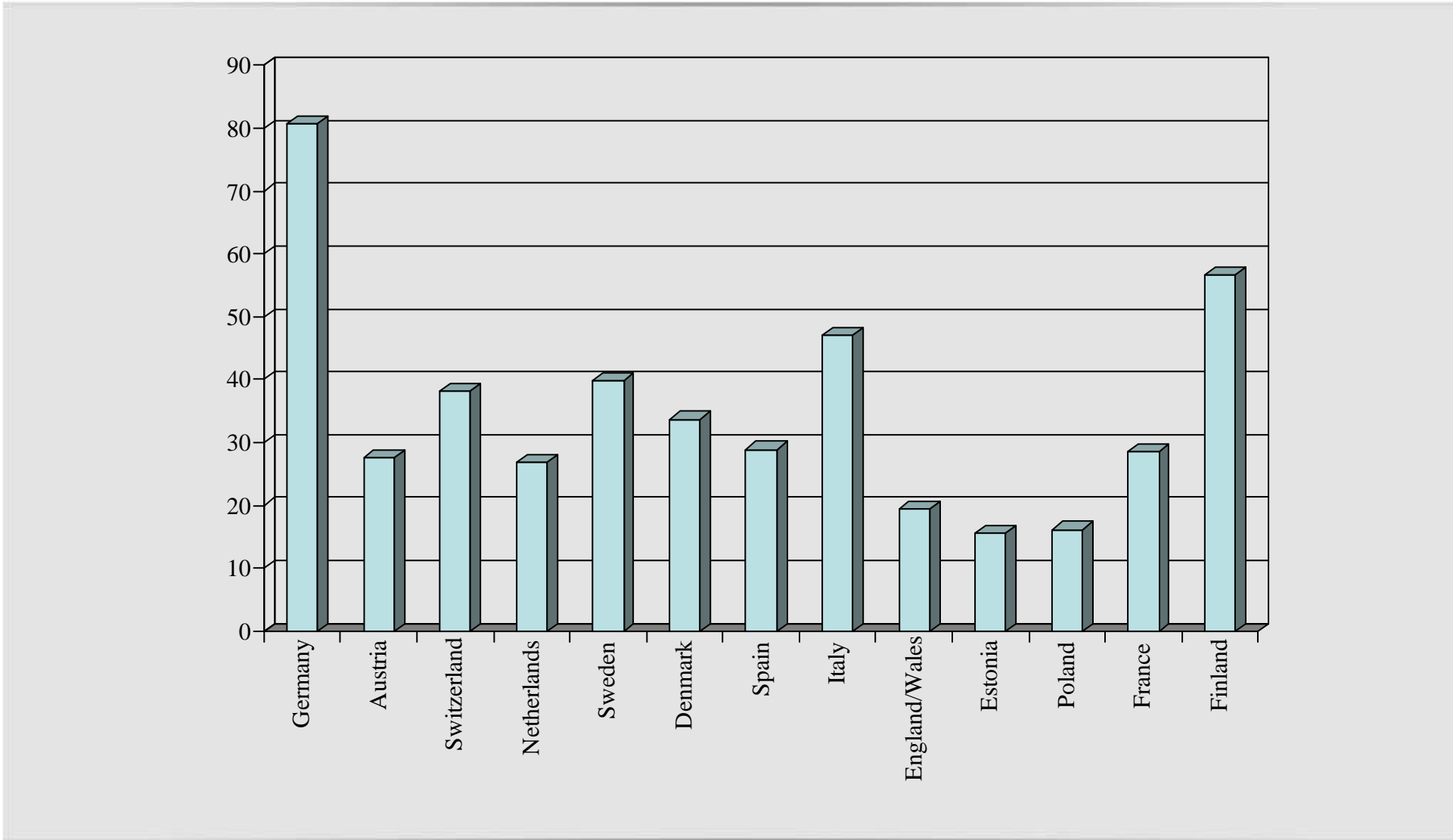http://www.mpicc.de

Content

- Introduction: Germany and Electronic Monitoring

- What do we know about resettling prisoners?

- What do we know about EM and recidivism?

- Conclusions

Introduction

Criminal Sanctions and German Exceptionalism % Fines

Models of Electronic Monitoring in Germany

- Hesse (experiments starting 2000, state wide implementation since mid ca. 2005) mixed front and back
  - Alternative to pretrial detention
  - Condition of a suspended prison sentence
  - Condition of parole
- Baden-Wuerttemberg (experiments starting 2010) Back end only
  - Replacement of default imprisonment (day fines)
  - Condition of furlough programmes and prison leave
  - Condition of early release to halfway houses
    - Tracking schemes included
- Federal level (German Criminal Code)
  - GPS based tracking systems for dangerous (sexual) offenders released from preventive detention/psychiatric hospitals and as part of probation supervision (starting 2011)

Why Did Electronic Monitoring Not Yet Travel to Germany?

- Strong opposition to electronic monitoring in the 1990s – and persisting - voiced by
    - Welfare organisations (probation/social workers)
    - Political parties, in particular Green Party and Social Democrats
    - Crime politicians
    - Legal professions
  - Arguments
    - If we created more positions for welfare staff (jobs for social workers) we would not need to resort to technology
    - Humans are much more effective than technology in reforming criminals; in addition this is more humane
    - Electronic monitoring stands for interests in surveillance and social control
    - No need to reform the system of criminal sanctions, day fines work properly and there is no room for other alternatives to imprisonment

What Do We Know About Resettlement?

A new concern for resettlement/re-entry

- Comprehensive planning for crime prevention

- Life course and desistance

- Security and the dangerous offender

- Prison inflation and large numbers of ex-prisoners (in particular US, UK)

Research lines – independent tracks

- Studies on desistance (criminal career research)

- Life course studies

- Studies on re-entry, resettlement

- Studies on recidivism after early release, completed prison sentences (treatment/rehabilitation in prison research)

How should resettlement of prisoners function?

- **Re-entry depends on**
  - **Providing for structure** (or increasing human/social capital)
    - Surveillance
    - Assistance
    - Throughcare
      - » Employment focused interventions
      - » Housing
      - » Substance abuse treatment
      - » Financial problems/assistance
      - » Family/social relations
      - » Community relations
  - **Agency/Motivation**
    - » Black box („Shared beginnings, divergent lifes")
    - » Making plans and implementing such plans

What works?

- Intuitive (theoretical) knowledge that certain approaches to re-entry problems should work in supporting desistance from crime
  - Employment
  - Stable income
  - Family and kids
  - Absence of substance abuse

- Research results are „mixed", to say the least (see for example the Campbell review Visher et al 2006 on employment interventions)

- Individualization/tailoring, multi-agency, high risk groups

What do we know about EM and Recidivism?

What do we know about electronic monitoring and recidivism?

- In general, electronic monitoring comes with small failure rates only
  - Explained by selection of good risks
- In general, recidivism rates are low
- Meta-Analyses
  - Few attempts to realize meta-analyses
  - The Campbell based review attempt (by Renzema) has been deregistered in 2009
  - No basis for a sound meta-analysis
    - Few eligible studies (< 5)
    - Heterogenity of offender populations, offence types etc.
- No evidence of less recidivism
- Studies focusing on the resettlement process and specific contributions of EM have not been carried out

Recidivism after EM in Germany (Hesse)

- Three groups:

- Experimental: Prison sentence suspended, condition: electronic monitoring

- 1. Control group: prison sentence suspended, regular probation

- 2. Control group: Prison sentence not suspended

Matched Pair Approach

- Gender, age, nationality

- Prior convictions

- Criminal offence

- Sentence length

- Each group: N = 66

Characteristics of Experimental and Control Groups

- Criminal offences: Property crime and drug offences (70%)
- Remaining differences

|	EM	Probation	Prison
Prior Conv	3,5	3,3	3,8
Prior Probation	1,2	0,9	1,1
– Max N	9	5	6
Prior Prison	0,6	0,5	1,1
– Max N	9	6	8

Results: Recidivism after 24 months, 2-Tailed Significance

	All Reconvictions	Reconviction prison sentences	Reconviction immediate imprisonment
EM v Regular Probation	**.005**	.169	.103
EM v. Imprisonment	.340	.537	.537

Cox Regression (Group, N Prior Revocations, N Prior Day Fines)
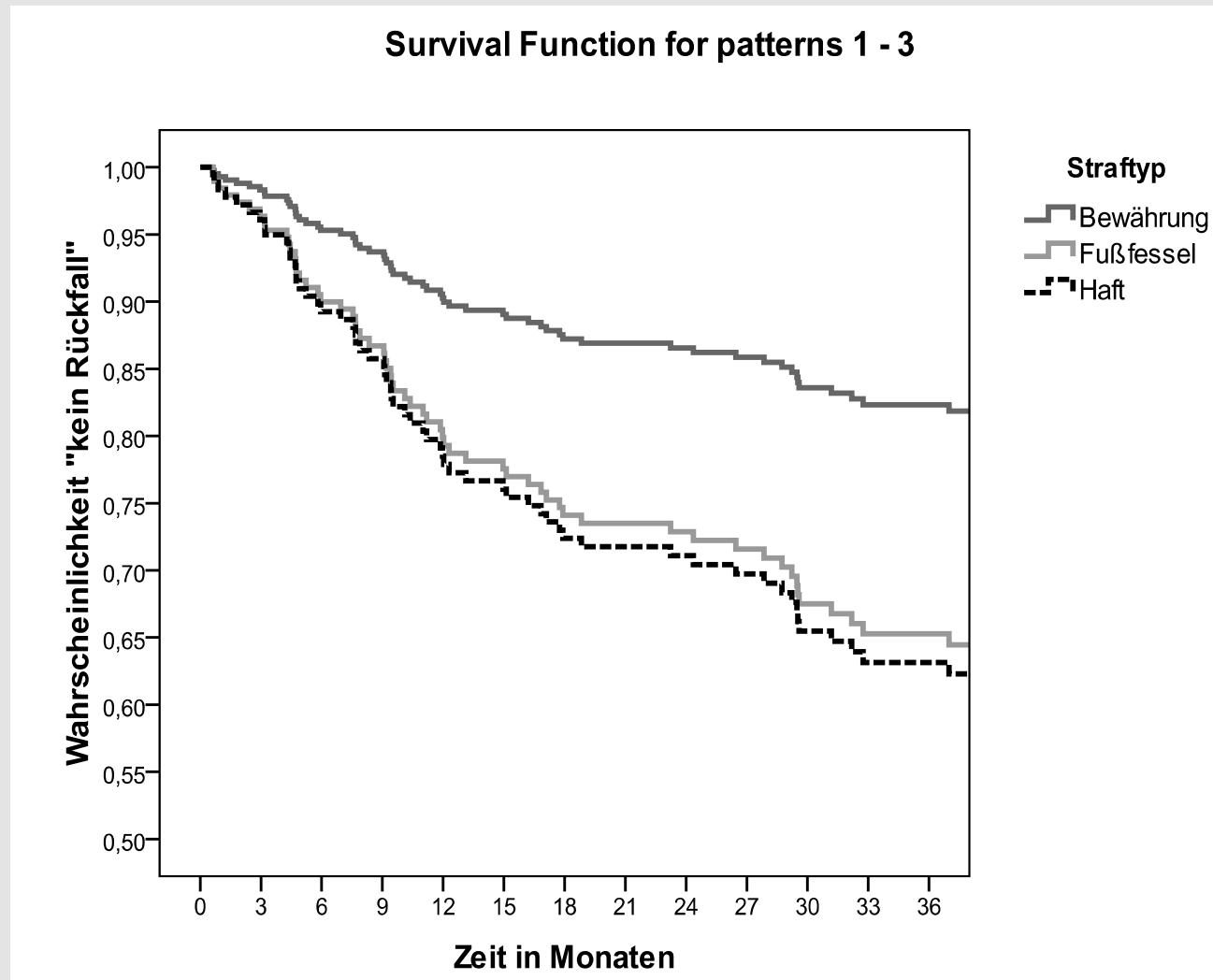
Survival Function for patterns 1 - 3

Conclusions

- **Providing for structure**
  - Compliance (short term, probation/parole conditions)
    - Rational choice (increasing the costs of non-compliance)
    - Developing routines (daily life routines)
  - Supporting (through establishing routines and rational choice) the process of accumulation of social and human capital

- **Integration of EM with a strategy of backing up „agency" and motivation**

- **Relief from pressure exerted by security policies**