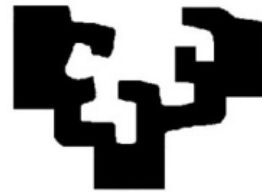





# Research about the narratives of participants in restorative processes in Araba Prison, Basque Country

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U.P.V. E.H.U.



EUROPEAN FORUM FOR RESTORATIVE JUSTICE  
10<sup>TH</sup> INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE  
TIRANA, 14-16 JUNE



## Key informations

- 2013
- Group of volunteers, professionals of Berriztu (in pairs)
- Tuesday afternoons.
- Prisoners attend the program, according to Penitentiary authorities ( Board of treatment).
- Previous designed process to help offenders to
  - deal with the harm done
  - make amends to victims
  - Help the process of awareness

## Institutional context

- The prison authorities decide according to some criteria:
  - Voluntariness and availability in prisoners to participate.
  - Some crimes excluded( gender violence)
  - Some crimes promoted: injuries, robbery, violence inside family, related to driving, drug traffic and especially those that have interactions between people.
- No penitentiary benefits for participants.



ASOCIACION EDUCATIVA  
**BERRIZTU**  
HEZKUNTZA ELKARTEA

## Practical considerations

- Previous design of the restorative way for prisoner:
  - Access to the program
  - Recognition of facts without awareness.
  - Responsibility without awareness of harm.
  - Awareness of harm and victims and availability to repair to them
  - Reflection about restorative acts.
  - **Writing a letter** for the victim.
  - Contact with victim






## STUDY: WRITING LETTERS


- Methodological instrument to orientate thoughts and feelings in order to prepare the interaction with the victim.
- It's the resource used with offenders to end the process of taking responsibility.
- It can be used to start the process of making amends.
- It is the first act of symbolic reparation to victims.

### NUMBERS

- 25 letters ( 22 males, 3 females)
  - 11.707 words
  - Largest - 1.286 words
  - The shortest - 148 words
  - Average 468 words
- 



# RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- Which is the content of the letters?
  - What categories of meaning stand out?
  - How is the letter organized?
  - What are the most used words and expressions?
  - Are there differences between males and females?
  - What do prisoners think, feel and how they act?
- 



# RESEARCH METHODOLOGY


- Deep reading of the letters.
- Identification of main themes
- Categorization in *NVivo* ( qualitative data analysis computer software)
- Creation of categories as we are reading - *Bottom up* process.





## CRIMES ( 25 letters)

Type of crimes	Number
Homicide	7
Robbery	5
Injuries	4
Murder	3
Robbery with intimidation	2
Unlawful possession of weapon	2
Scam	2
Robbery with force	2
Misappropriation	1
Dangerous driving	1
Injuries due to inexcusable conduct	1
Robbery with violence in people and us of weapon	1
Driving under the influence of toxic drugs	1
Robbery with violence and intimidation	1
Money laundering	1
Attempt to homicide	1
Asset stripping	1
Falsification of documents	1
Total	37








# RESULTS OF ANALYSIS

LETTER	CRIMES	WORDS
1	Misappropriation, money laundering, asset stripping	1289
2	Homicide	671
3	Murder	657
4	Homicide	655
5	Robbery	597
6	2 Homicides	596
7	Murder	572
8	Homicide	553
9	Homicide, injuries due to serious imprudence, dangerous driving and driving under the influence of toxic drugs	534
10	Robbery and intimidation	484
11	4 Robbery	476
12	Injuries	440
13	Murder	431
14	Injuries	426
15	Homicide, injuries due to serious imprudence, dangerous driving and driving under the influence of toxic drugs	416
16	Attempt of homicide	405
17	Homicide	352
18	Scam	340
19	Theft with intimidation and illegal possession of a weapon	327
20	Theft with intimidation and illegal possession of a weapon	326
21	Theft with intimidation	305
22	Falsification of documents, robbery with violence in in people and use of weapon and illegal possession of weapon	269
23	Injuries	233
24	Robbery with force	205
25	Injuries, robbery and scam	148



# I APOLOGIZE

Hola, me llamo [REDACTED] y me dirijo a todas las personas que han sufrido la pérdida de familiares, amigos, vecinos y vecinas de [REDACTED].

Aquel fatal día, viernes [REDACTED] me dirigía al caserío [REDACTED] para verme con mi ex-pareja que vivía con él y mostrarle unos documentos, no tenía pensado nada de lo que sucedió. No tenía nada contra [REDACTED] no conocía y sé que era buena persona.

Había finalizado mi relación de pareja, pero a pesar de ello quería verle para mostrarle y demostrarle con esos documentos que le decía la verdad. Habíamos mantenido una relación tormentosa y todo lo que tenía acumulado dentro de mí durante esa relación y no pude sacar en su momento, más mi inestabilidad emocional producto del trastorno de personalidad que padezco y las drogas que tome, desencadenaron que arrebatará la vida a [REDACTED] con 68 años. Cometí un homicidio.

El cuchillo que llevaba en el bolso era para usarlo contra mí delante de mi ex-pareja, no quería vivir sin él, mi vida no me importaba, quería suicidarme y me drogué para darme el valor suficiente para hacerlo. Ahora estoy en mi celda contándole todo esto y pidiéndole perdón a [REDACTED].

Pido perdón ahora, porque gracias al programa de mediación de la Asociación Educativa Berritzu, y a mis mediadores Patxi e Izaskun he podido reflexionar sobre mi delito y ser consciente del dolor que cause a numerosas personas, familiares, amigos y amigas, vecinos y vecinas.... Les pido perdón en esta carta a todas las personas que le conocían y querían a [REDACTED].

Soy consciente de la alarma social que cause en el pueblo al no entregarme a la Ertzaintza, reconozco el miedo que debieron pasar los vecinos y vecinas aquellos días hasta que me detuvieron. No me entregue entonces porque estaba asustada de lo que había hecho. Me quede en casa con mi padre esperando en que en cualquier momento vinieran a detenerme, sabía que tendría una larga condena, y viví angustiada hasta que me detuvieron.

[REDACTED] me siento tanto lo que te hice, la acumulación de tanta rabia, ira, estaba descontrolada y te arrebate la vida. Esa vida en la que aun te quedaban tantas cosas por hacer, tomar vinos junto a tus amigos en el pueblo, dar de comer a tus ovejas, levantarte cada mañana y contemplar las maravillosas vistas que tenías desde tu casa. No te permite hacer un sinfín de proyectos, de sueños...

Sé que no volveré a repetir lo sucedido porque soy plenamente consciente de todo el daño irreparable que te cause a ti y a los tuyos. Además sé que tendré que estar medicada el resto de mi vida para controlar mi enfermedad. Cambiar mi actitud en la vida, enfrentándome a situaciones complicadas, si no puedo hacerlo sola, pedir ayuda y dejarme ayudar por las personas profesionales que están para ello. Ser más reflexiva, pensar las cosas antes de decírlas o hacerlas, ver mi futuro con ganas, hacer cosas útiles que me ayuden a crecer como persona y no culpar a los demás de cosas que no tienen por ello culpa. Continuar con las actividades que me ayudan a llenar mis vacíos emocionales, trabajar, ir a la escuela, leer, estar con mis amigas de confianza... Valorarme y quererme para ser valorada por los demás. Me queda un largo camino por delante de aprendizaje, en esta nueva etapa de cambio que he comenzado en los últimos meses.

A lo largo de este programa, ha habido momentos muy difíciles, ha sido muy duro ser consciente de todo el daño que he causado, he llorado, me he esforzado y he querido ser fuerte y comprometerme cuando lo empecé a finalizarlo, para poderte mostrarte mi arrepentimiento [REDACTED].

Ha sido positivo y ha valido la pena pasar por ello, porque he podido sacar mi dolor y gestionar mi angustia, el resultado ha sido ser consciente de mis actos y del dolor que cause, y pedir perdón por ello. Además de deciros a todas las personas que habéis sufrido con mis actos que podéis contar conmigo para lo que creáis necesario, yo estoy a vuestra disposición.

Crime of  
homicide



## RESULTS OF ANALYSIS



30 more repeated words - Length 5



## RESULTS OF ANALYSIS



10 more repeated words - Length 6





sorry	59
family	39
I feel	33
always	31
I want	30
person	29
caused	28
past	27
moment	23
aware	21
weather	21
prison	20
I hope	19
would like	18
situation	18
after	17
accident	16
suffering	16
although	15
heart	13
people	13
realize	12
I write	12
do what	12
repentance	11
I think	11
consequences	10
money	10
even	10
death	10
ask you	10
possible	10



## RESULTS OF ANALYSIS

Words that  
appear 10  
times or more


## Categorization of main themes (times appeared)

RESPONSIBILITY - PETITION OF APOLOGIES - FORGIVENESS	49
RESPONSIBILITY - EXPRESSION OF REPENTANCE	26
RESPONSIBILITY - EMOTIONAL EMPATHY	25
CONTEXTUALIZATION	19
PRESENTATION OF THE PRISONER	19
COGNITIVE- EMOTIONAL EXPRESSION	17
AVAILABILITY TOWARDS VICTIMS	15
DESCRIPTION OF FACTS	12
RESPONSIBILITY	10
SELF-REVELATION	10
RESPONSIBILITY - EXPRESSION OF REPAIRING THE IRREPARABLE	8
POSITIVE OPINION ABOUT THE PRISON	7
DESIRES OF WELFARE TOWARDS VICTIMS	6
PETITION FOR DIALOGUE MEETING	5
REFERENCES TO THE JUDGMENT	5
REFERENCES ABOUT THE TIME IN PRISON	4
RESPONSIBILITY - REPARATION COMMITMENT	4
RESPONSIBILITY - EXPRESSION OF THE OCCASIONED DAMAGE	4
PETITIONS TO VICTIMS	3
INCOMPRESSION OF FACTS OCCURRED	3
RESPONSIBILITY - DESIRE NOT TO DO DAMAGE AGAIN	3
GRATITUDE	2
ABSENCE OF PENITENTIARY BENEFITS	2
INFORMATION ABOUT TRAININGS - EDUCATION IN PRISON	2
RESPONSIBILITY - CONSEQUENCES IN THE COMMUNITY	2
DESIRE TO RECOVER THE INNER PEACE	2
RESPONSIBILITY - EXCULPATION TOWARDS VICTIMS	2



## Categorization of main themes (times appeared)

PRISON TRANSFERS	1
INFORMATION ABOUT LABOR SITUATION IN PRISON	1
RESPONSIBILITY - ASSUMPTION NOT TO BE FORGIVEN	1
DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FORENSIC TRUTH AND NARRATIVE TRUTH	1
RELIEF FOR POLICE DETENTION	1
EMOTIONAL REFERENCE TO OWN FAMILY MEMBERS	1
SUICIDE ATTEMPTS	1
REFERENCE TO THE CONDEMNATION	1
NEED TO SELF-FORGIVE	1
DEBT WITH THE VICTIMS	1
NEGATIVE OPINION ABOUT THE PRISON	1
RESPONSABILIZATION - CONSEQUENCES IN ONSELF AFTER TAKING AWARE	1
RESPONSABILITY - FIRST TIME OF TAKING AWARENESS	1
RESPONSIBILITY - REASONS FOR THE AWARENESS	1
RESPONSABILITY - APOLOGIES ARRIVE LATE	1
RESPONSIBILITY - PETITION OF FORGIVENESS TO GOD	1
RESPONSIBILITY - TAKING PERSONAL COMMITMENTS	1





## SOME UNFINISHED OBSERVATIONS


- The process of writing a letter is very personal and conditioned by the work of the facilitator.
- The content of the letters is getting longer, rich in details and in cognitive-emotional expressions in the process of these four years.
- A letter between 400 and 500 words seems to be enough.
- All prisoners want to apologize and ask for a forgiveness (200%)
- They express their repentance to victims (100%)







## SOME UNFINISHED OBSERVATIONS

- They express emotional empathy to victims (100%).
  - They contextualize the crime and want to tell what was happening at the time immediately before the crime (76%)
  - Most of them want to present themselves as a form to initiate the letter (76%).
  - They express their availability toward victims (60%), 100% in the last 10 letters.
  - Not all want to make descriptions about the facts (48 %)
- 




## SOME UNFINISHED OBSERVATIONS

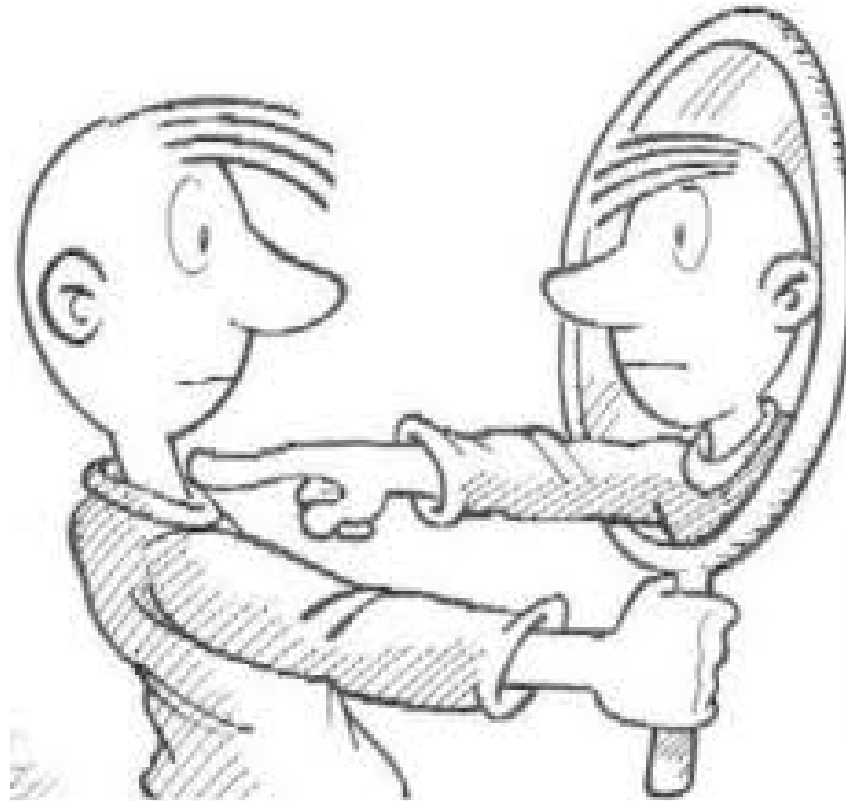
- Less than middle want to make self- revelations about them (40%).
- The prisoners that talk positive about the prison are more(7) than the only one that talks negatively.
- Less than the middle makes descriptions to the facts.





## CATEGORIES TO GIVE MORE SPACE

- What do they do during the prison period?
  - Do they forgive themselves?
  - Opinion about the forensic truth and their narrative truth
  - How do they react during the judgment?
  - How did they feel when they were arrested by the police?
  - Which kind of debt do they have with victims?
  - When and how did they start taking aware about the harm? How do they react after that?
  - What kind of personal commitments do they want to take with the victims?
- 



**I am aware of the irreparable damage caused, I  
want to say that I am at your disposal to alleviate  
this damage in the way you consider most  
appropriate**