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Communication and Resocialisation Dimensions of Colours in Prison

Assistant Professor **DAMIR NADAREVIC**

Faculty of Health Studies,
Bihac, Bosnia and Herzegovina

e-mail: damir.nadarevic2@gmail.com

Professor **NEBOJSA MACANOVIC**

Faculty of Political Sciences,
Department of Pedagogy and Methodology
Banja Luka, Bosnia and Herzegovina

e-mail: nebojsa.macanovic@fpm.unibl.org

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ABSTRACT

According to ecological valence theory, the popularity of colours stems from the feelings we have about objects of a certain colour. We love blue because we associate it with blue skies and clear water, yellow with sun and heat... However, the problem is when we do not have colours. Imagine a world without colours. Prison environment (and majority of total institutions) are very close to such a world. Grey and white colours dominate. Black and white, and their combinations and shades are not considered colours. Such an environment cannot evoke any recollection, at least not a pleasant one. The space is "sterile", "barren", it does not give any information or stimulation. In such an environment, re-education and re-socialization are a prescribed form without appropriate content, without incentive. In this paper, we try to emphasize the importance of colours in creating an educational and stimulating environment in prison. In addition, we point out the importance of their correct interpretation in the environment that the prisoners themselves arrange, and we give advice for "managing" communication specifically by using colours in interaction. The paper uses methods of explicative analysis and ethnographic method of qualitative observation with participation. The research was conducted at the Semi-open prison in Bihac, where one of the authors of the paper was employed as the head of the department for the examination of prisoners' personality. The aim of the research was to determine whether and how colours in prison affect the mutual communication of prisoners themselves, but also the communication of prisoners with employees and ultimately the process of their resocialisation and re-education.

KEY WORDS: *Colour, communication, prisoners, interior, prison.*

INTRODUCTION

"Colors, just like facial features, follow emotional changes."

Pablo Picasso

We encounter colors from birth. Colors are all around us. We often don't pay attention to them. They are part of our environment, they complete our visible world, their presence seems self-evident. In addition, color is also a very important communication factor because it is found all around us (Hubinkova and Kirinic, 2020).

What is color? Isaac Newton (1642-1727) was the first to claim that colors emanate from light. He discovered that white light is made up of many different colors. He directed a beam of white light through a prism and on the other side got a rainbow made up of seven colors: red, orange, yellow, green, cyan blue, dark blue and violet. Something similar happens in our eyes. The human eye can only perceive white light.

When there is no light, there is no color, because color is light. Such light is a mixture of all the colors of the visible part of the spectrum (a mixture of different electromagnetic wavelengths that represent color). What the human eye sees is actually only a small part of the spectrum of electromagnetic waves (Tanhofer, 2000, pp. 26-28; Cramer et al., 2020).

Therefore, "color is a property of light, but also a subjective psychophysical experience that arises in the eye as a result of the action of electromagnetic radiation" (Miličić, 2013, p. 18). Color perception is completely subjective, people can experience it differently (Trstenjak, 1996, p. 9). From there, its influence on people is different. The very name of the color is an abstract concept. When we say that something is red, we will have an idea of what color it is, because we have agreed that light of a certain wavelength is called that. So it's an agreement. Likewise, the same wavelength of light could have been called differently if we had agreed on it. Similarly, Westland and Cheung (2006: 7) argue that color exists only in our minds as a reaction to light entering our eye directly from light sources and indirectly by reflecting light off objects. Not a single object that we see has its own color, but reflects, transmits or reflects light of a certain color. Objects have a pigment that allows us to recognize the wavelengths of the light spectrum. What the pigment has not absorbed we see as color. So, what we called red, blue, green pigments are, in fact, different substances that reflect or transmit light of a certain wavelength, which activated certain photoreceptors in our eyes and created the sensation of a certain color in the brain (Cramer et al., 2020).

Colors are most often perceived as an optical phenomenon. However, there are studies that have established that in the perception of colors we still use the whole being, that is, all the senses (Tanhofer, 2000, p. 20). The body also recognizes color through the skin. Research was conducted with blind people who felt color on their fingertips and claimed that e.g. red is rough and warm, and blue is smooth and cold (Jelavić, 2009, p.12). Therefore, light is part of the spectrum of electromagnetic waves. So, color is also a form of energy.

Colors represent strong symbols in each of us, evoking numerous emotions and associations in us and acting differently on each individual. Color can calm, but also encourage action or cause stress. Intense colors can cause aggression, while gentle colors can soothe (Lovgren, 1996, p. 20).

People, in all cultures, have been using color for centuries in communication, religion and cultural relations in their social environment (Annen, 2017, p. 62). Color symbolism is relevant to a certain social community, culture, in a certain space and time. So, for another community or culture, the same color can have a different symbolism, or for the same culture that lives in another space or after a certain time, it can change its symbolic meaning. Therefore, the perception of colors also depends on the culture (Lovgren, 1996, p. 20). That is, from the meaning they have in a certain culture and are therefore also a means of expressing social identity (Jelavic, 2009, p.

8). The clothes of the nobility, the clergy, and the togas of the senators in Rome were of specific colors and those colors could not be worn by those who did not belong to that social class. *"Colors were often subject to luxury laws that protected the privileged classes from the attempts of others to imitate them... Lepers, dimwits, prostitutes, executioners, heretics, Roma, Jews, Muslims, all of them were forced at a certain time to wear clothes or marks that distinguished them from society"* (Pastoureau, 2003; Sarti, 2006, pp. 234-235; Jelavic, 2009, p. 9).

Psychologists point out that colors affect human behavior, stimulate us to action, stimulate our senses or cause certain moods, influence the visual, aesthetic and spatial perception of the world around us, have a psychological effect (Nadarevic, 2021, p. 216). E. Annen (2017) claims that colors "are in the head" of a person and they are something very personal for each person. Therefore, the communicative value of color cannot be observed without context, its "background" (the same). In our specific case, the gray color associates prisoners with prison walls.

"So based on the above, we can define colors as the energy of electromagnetic waves whose physical dimension provokes chemical reactions that create a subjective experience in the human brain that depends on the culture and social identity of the person and as such have a symbolic meaning that influences behavior, encourages action, stimulates the senses and causes certain moods" (Nadarevic, 2019, pp. 111-112).

A complicated definition for something that seems very simple to us. However, precisely because we consider color to be some everyday-thing, we usually do not pay enough attention to its influence on humans.

1. PSYCHOLOGICAL AND SYMBOLIC MEANING OF COLORS

Colors have always had a great symbolic value. E.g. the golden color (especially in Christian painting) represents the radiance of the spirit and holiness, while purple (purple or porphyry) is the ruling color because the Roman emperors who inherited the title were given the addition "Porphyrogenet" (born in porphyry) because of the rare purple stone - porphyry that for the emperors was brought from distant Egypt" (Kairos, 2009). Furthermore, the symbolism of colors depends on the environment, red is the color of love but also communism, green is the color of hope, Islam, the movement for environmental protection, yellow is the color of Judaism but the Vatican, black is the color of fascism, pink is optimism, etc. The meaning given to a color is the result of the agreement or perception of several people trying to generalize and associate the color with something known. What the response to color will be depends on experience, but also on inherited traditions. Thus, Palmer and Schlos (2010) study color preferences within their ecological valence theory, according to which, for example, brown color was less popular than blue because the former reminds them of faeces and the latter of a clear sky, etc.

The influence of colors on humans is studied by color psychology. Knowledge about the influence of colors on humans is important in marketing, but the symbolism and meaning of colors are also part of a broader communication process (Nadarevic, 2019). T. Whitfield and T. Wiltshire (1990) discuss the basic principles of color psychology that we must be aware of when trying to explain their influence on humans:

- The meaning of color is based on either a learned meaning or a biological innate sense,
- Color can carry a specific meaning,
- We usually notice the effect of color immediately,
- The perception of color causes an automatic evaluation by the observer,
- Color meaning and effect are related to the context in which they are found.

Trstenjaka (1996) gives psychological, physiological and symbolic significance to colors and talks about their influence on health. For our subject of research, it is interesting how to use certain colors in the decoration of the interior of the prison.

Red is the color of emotions, it encourages activity and violent reactions. It acts on the body as a psychophysical stimulant. In space, it is usually used to furnish hallways, staircases, kitchens and playrooms (Bilban, 2015, 29). In a prison, it is not recommended, except when furnishing the rooms with an accent, that is, in order to break the monotony of a space with a detail of red color, say a part of the wall, a piece of furniture.

Blue color has a relaxing effect (not all tones, too much is depressing). Blue clothes symbolize loyalty and trust. It is interesting that in most countries the police uniform is blue. Prisoners hate "blues", however a room painted in blue, especially a lighter tone, will have a calming effect on them and reduce anxiety.

Green color is a color that relaxes, calms, acts harmoniously, contributes to self-control and harmony, but also has a pronounced emotional value resulting from religious commitment, which should be taken into account in environments where that religious moment is emphasized. Green color is acceptable for decorating prisons. It often comes in shades of blue. If the rooms are not painted with this color, at least part of the wall should be painted with an oily green color to make it easier to maintain, so that it is almost the "official" color of total institutions.

Yellow, like other intense colors, has extreme meanings. Due to its warm effect, it promotes cheerfulness, optimism, intellectual activity, creates muscle energy, but in excessive doses it has a disturbing effect (children cry more in rooms painted yellow). It is also the color of marginalization, which is probably related to the influence of religious symbolism, but also the materials from which this color was made in the past. In the gray environment of the prison, the color yellow breaks the monotony,

creates a memory of warmth and closeness. However, over time it becomes saturated and becomes disturbing.

Purple is not recommended for coloring a prisoner's bedroom. However, in rooms where counseling, psychotherapy, etc. take place because of its mysticism, it creates an atmosphere of authoritarianism and competence of the therapist. Thus, the walls of the educator's office painted purple can affect the communication climate during work with the prisoner.

Orange is suitable for dining rooms, bedrooms. The flame of the candle gives an orange color which gives a feeling of warmth, security and comfort (Bilban, 2015: 32). Similar to yellow, it is suitable for furnishing rooms where prisoners spend most of the day, the so-called living rooms, rooms for hobbies, etc.

Pink is suitable for the bedroom. However, after a certain time it becomes saturated and encourages aggressiveness. Its symbolism is especially problematic in the prison environment, where even the slightest hint of homosexuality leads to violent reactions among the prisoners.

Black in prison is associated with authority, usually the special police unit wears a black uniform. The space is not painted in this color, however the furniture in the offices can be black. Authors Hubinkova and Kirinic (2020) claim that the symbolism of the color black ranges from elegance, fashion or status, to mourning, protest, anarchism. The results of the research they conducted indicate that "... a high percentage of respondents associate the color black with a rationalizing style of communication based on facts, rational phrases, arguments and evidence. Also, they indicate that business people really consider the color black in business communication to be a symbol of quality business communication and the choice of black clothes for important business moments is not accidental. Likewise, they indicate the meaning and certain power of the color black in resolving conflicts" (Ibid., 2020, p. 443).

White color has a purifying effect on the body because it prevents emotional distress and hopelessness. If the space is white, it seems cold and lonely. In the prison, it is the most common color, the walls, bedding, tablecloths are usually white. It indicates officialdom, asceticism and seriousness, cleanliness, order, but also social mortification and a new beginning.

The floors can be painted *brown* in the prison, but the upholstery of the furniture is acceptable because of the warmth and closeness that this color creates. However, in that case, there must be some accent, warm, color in the space that will "break" the gloom of the environment and the position in which the prisoners are.

Gray is the predominant color of prisons, it is the color of concrete walls, the basic color for iron, concrete blocks, etc. Its color suits no other space as well as the gray color of the prison. The feeling of fear, alienation, uncertainty is, among other things, a consequence of the gray color of the walls.

These are just some of the interpretations of the meaning of colors. An attempt was made to look at it from different aspects without pretensions to give a comprehensive analysis. There are also different interpretations and studies of different aspects of colors (heraldry, fashion, design, etc.). The goal was to point out the complexity of the problem and the need to deal with it when dealing with interpersonal relationships in different environments (Nadarevic, 2019, pp. 117-132).

2. HOW TO PAINT THE JAIL?

We often hear the term "color matching", whether it's about clothes, decorating one of the rooms, a bouquet of flowers, etc. It is actually about determining the group of colors that best match each other (Itten, 1973, p. 34). Some prefer warm colors, others pastel, light colors, darker shades, etc. When we furnish a space, a room in a house, a dormitory in a prison, an office, we must ask ourselves the following questions (Starmer, 2006):

- What will a certain room be used for?
- Who will use it the most?
- Which part of the day will be used the most?
- How much natural light does it receive?
- What are the architectural features of the room?
- How big are the pieces of furniture or will they be in the room?
- What colors were used in the adjacent rooms?
- What emotions and feelings should the room arouse?

Colors, therefore, give each space a special meaning. There are countless combinations of colors that can be used in a prison, from the colors of furniture, walls, ceilings, floors to the colors of bed sheets and other personal items. Everything together forms a kind of harmony, i.e. contrasts that are unique and give a special feeling (Nadarevic, 2019).

Our daily activities take place in different rooms. In one room we eat, in another we sleep, work, study, do some hobby, spend our free time. Accordingly, we "furnish" the space. An important factor of a pleasant feeling in a space are its colors, the colors of the walls, furniture, floor, etc. In our apartments and houses, we usually paint the spaces where we spend most of the time out and have fun (kitchen, dining room, living room) with warm colors (red, orange, yellow, brown). It is the opposite in the rooms where we relax and sleep (bedroom), which we paint with cold colors (blue, purple, green). When furnishing an apartment, red is the most appropriate color for the kitchen, etc. However, what is the situation in the prison? Prisons are total institutions where most activities take place in one place. Currently, due to a number of more or less justified reasons, white and gray prevail. Such an environment provides little information, i.e. it is insufficiently stimulating educational, if by

education we mean the maturation, growth, change... of prisoners (Nadarevic, 2019, p. 143).

However, discussions about how to paint prisons must first answer the following questions:

- what are prisons and what is their goal, the often asked question of the purpose of punishment - punishment or "rehabilitation", resocialization, re-education. Do prisoners need to "atone for their sins" or to learn, mature, grow, or both?
- is the threat of prison, intimidation, one of the ways to prevent crime or does the high standard of prisoners indicate the benevolence of society towards all its members and the willingness to help those who need help?
- does the similarity with the home atmosphere intensify the deprivations (at the same time he is deprived of a number of things that he would have at home, eg freedom, heterosexual relations, autonomy...)?
- how to evaluate individual influences of colors on an individual?
- how to meet safety standards, etc.? (Nadarevic, 2019, pp.144-145).

The answers to the above questions also determine the way the prison environment is arranged. Therefore, starting from the declarative goals of the execution of the prison sentence and the restrictions that affect their realization, some rules can be defined when arranging prison premises:

A. Entrance hall. When reporting to serve his sentence, the prisoner reports to the main duty officer of the prison. The sense of fear and uncertainty is given by the heavy metal door at the gate, wire, white walls, bars. Initial animosity and anxiety can be overcome by creating an atmosphere that exudes confidence and professionalism. In the hall, there must be a place where the prisoners will sit while they wait to be admitted, a place where they will put their things, possibly a table on which there will be magazines or an information leaflet about the institution.

Accent furniture in the form of brightly colored sofas with light colored walls is suggested, or considering that the corridors are only being passed through and the stay in them is short, bright wall colors can be used to facilitate orientation and attention. In this case, the furniture is lighter in color. Decorate the walls of the corridor with various suitable pictures or handicrafts of the prisoners. The reception area must fill the welcoming atmosphere: planters, greenery, flowers, decorative paintings... (Nadarevic, 2019, p. 145).

B. Day care centers should create a positive and relaxed atmosphere in order to make the stay there as pleasant as possible. Therapeutic meetings are usually held in them, which is why the walls should be painted green or blue. Due to the mysticism of the purple color, some therapeutic spaces are also found in that color, however,

considering that it is a multi-purpose room, it is not recommended to paint it in "heavy colors".

C. Rooms should be single, double and triple. Paint the walls of the room with bright, pastel, lively colors that seem warm, intimate, and create a feeling of a family atmosphere. White color should be avoided because it emphasizes institutionalism and separation from the family. Curtains in the room of light colors (pastel, blue, green or orange). Designs can be in the form of small patterns, cubes or stripes. Flowers or large patterns are not recommended. Floor surfaces must be smooth but not slippery, easy to maintain hygiene, disinfect, reduce noise and banging when walking, conduct heat, and have an aesthetically pleasing effect. You should not have any rug or if you already have a rug, the room should be completely covered. The floor must not be shiny and should contrast with the colors of the main wall surfaces.

In accordance with the Law on the Execution of Criminal Sanctions of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, every prisoner must have at least 4 square meters and 10 cubic meters of space in his room, however, ideally it would be about 7 square meters, with 40-50 cubic meters of space, without the height of the room be more than 3 meters. The room where the prisoner stays would be best if it faced east, if it were spacious, bright and clean. We have to pay attention to: room temperature (heating and cooling), air humidity, ventilation, lighting, smells in the room, tidiness, silence, safety of prisoners. The temperature of the room must be even, the permissible difference in temperature is up to 3 degrees. Central heating is the most economical. The room should not be overheated. A sufficient temperature is 18-22 degrees Celsius. In the summer period, it is difficult to maintain a lower temperature, and air conditioners should be provided for this. Windows must be opened for ventilation. Airing allows for fresh air, but also lowers the humidity of the room and removes odors (Ibid., pp. 145-148).

The lighting of the room should be natural (daily sunlight) because it is one of the basic stimulating factors of the environment and has a great biological impact. Well-adjusted natural or artificial lighting has a significant impact on various vital functions of the body and its psychological and physiological reactions. The standardization of natural lighting is based on the ratio of the window surface to the floor surface (photo coefficient 1/3 to 1/5 in schools and hospitals, 1/6 to 1/7 in office buildings and 1/6 to 1/8 in residential premises (Versic, 2007)). Artificial lighting must not be too strong or too weak, it must not glare, create strong shadows, it must be homogeneous and even, it must not flicker, it must have a color as close as possible to natural lighting, so as not to create stronger heat.

D. Educators' offices where the most treatment activities take place should exude warmth and creativity, and the colors should have a lively and calming effect, light enough but not too much to ensure privacy, also the size of the room provides an intimate space (Zulevic, 2016).

3. LIGHTING AND COLOR GAMES

The importance of light in the prison is particularly emphasized. "Lighting also helps shape our perception of an environment, and that perception can influence the type of messages we send. If we enter a dimly lit or candlelit room, we may speak more quietly, sit closer to each other, and expect more intimate communication' (Meer, 1985; Knapp and Hall, 2010, p. 126). The opposite is true when the light is stronger. "Lack of light seems to be the main problem for people suffering from "seasonal affective disorder" (eng. seasonal affective disorder, USA) a form of depression that is particularly acute in the winter months" (Rosenthal, 1993; Knapp and Hall, 2010, p. 16).

It is almost a rule that prisons do not have windows or the glass on the windows is thicker, often reinforced or impenetrable, which makes them less light permeable. Architectural solutions are sometimes difficult to change, however, with the planned use of colors and possibly artificial light, the darker areas of the prison can be "brightened". With color, we can influence the perception of space and emphasize or hide the size, lighting, depth of the space. So:

- A small space can be optically enlarged with cool, light tones (mainly light blue), with a white ceiling that gives the impression of spaciousness. On the other hand, let's reduce the space and make it more intimate with warm, darker colors.
- Optically shorten a long space by painting the farthest wall in a darker tone or by painting it with a warmer color that optically brings it closer. On the other hand, a short space can be optically extended if we paint the opposite wall in a light color or place a mirror on it.
- A high ceiling appears lower in a light or warm color, the effect is even greater if it is painted in a dark warm color (Psychology of colors in space, n.g. in Nadarevic, 2019, p.150).
- Bright colors optically narrow the space, while calm and unobtrusive colors offer a feeling of spaciousness. Cold colors such as blue, white, green, some shades of purple are unobtrusive and therefore more suitable when we want to increase the space. With very bright cold tones such as light blue, light green and light yellow we increase the dark and small space. Prisons are just such spaces. In addition, the color green is pleasant to the eyes, especially the shade of sage has a beneficial effect on the brain and reduces emotions. A room that is painted green has the effect of lowering the heart rate, blood pressure drops and muscles relax (Nikolic, 2013). Pink curbs aggressive tendencies and reduces physical pain. Belan (2016) points out that in America as many as 1,400 hospitals and correctional homes use the color pink because of its calming effect. However, other research concluded that this effect was only temporary and after a certain time it even increased the aggressiveness of the prisoners.

- Warm colors that contain a little black and red, such as burgundy, yellow, orange, brown, etc. they act as heavy colors and seem to reduce the real size of the space and bring the elements in the space closer together. The walls in the space can be in different colors and tones. When choosing colors, we must take into account the colors of the entire space, which means the colors of the floors, tiles, parquet and ceiling, which should be white to create the impression of spaciousness. Namely, darker colors on the ceiling reduce the space (Psychology of colors in space, n.g. in Nadarević, 2019, p. 151).

All these are "tricks" aimed at reducing the gloom of prison spaces. However, they must not be the only solution. When building a prison, one must strive to create bright, open areas, however "security-dangerous" that may seem. In the end, the pan-opticon concept itself is based on these principles, i.e. complete transparency of space (this was discussed in previous chapters).

The resocialization of prisoners largely depends on the psychological atmosphere in penitentiaries, and one of the factors that contributes to the imbalance between the inner and outer worlds is the living and working conditions of prisoners (Macanovic, 2011). The smell, colors, and sounds in prisons are often a reflection of the depressing state of such institutions, which often reflect on the communication and behavior of prisoners. Often the very balance of the formal and informal prison system depends on the communication and resocialization dimension in the prison. That is why, in addition to exogenous and endogenous factors that affect resocialization itself, it is important to adapt the conditions in prisons more and more to the conditions in freedom, and in such a way to more effectively influence the later reintegration into the social community (Macanovic, 2007).

CONCLUSION

The rattling of keys, iron doors, drafts, broken windows, cold, concrete, etc. are synonymous with prison. The colors are those "that don't get dirty", to make them easier to maintain, and the walls are white because of the need to show cleanliness (although they are never clean). It ignores the fact that colors have always had a great symbolic value, that they arose from the feelings we have towards objects of a certain color and as such evoke memories that can have different values. There are established color schemes to which people react in a similar way, i.e. color can create the atmosphere in the prison that we want. Based on the research carried out in the paper, we came to the conclusion that bright colors are recommended in the prison, with green and blue colors being the best rated because people perceive them as soothing, stimulating, pleasant and safe. Yellow is also acceptable because the prisoners perceive it as a bright and cheerful color. E.g. painting the walls of the room with soft shades of yellow and green (kiwi color) was seen by the prisoners as "refreshing". They interpreted these modifications positively and were actively involved in the

work related to the arrangement. They painted the walls themselves and often had very constructive suggestions. E.g. particularly interesting was the suggestion that they draw diagonal lines across the walls and thereby create fields in the form of geometric figures (triangles) that they would paint in different colors. A constructive communication climate between employees and prisoners was noticeable during the works, animosity was reduced. The prisoners got "their" space, something that they could personally influence and that, according to their statements, makes them satisfied.

Therefore, the prison environment must, as oxymoronic as it sounds, be in the function of "opening up" the prisoner, and not of his physical and (causally) consequent psychological "cocooning" because that way the prison cannot fulfill its task. Arriving in an environment that does not justify stigma can have a positive effect on overcoming animosity and making "useful" use of the time they spend in prison. The free choice of colors for the decoration of one's space can also indicate the "hidden" in the prisoner's personality, prevent the development of deprivations and make the prison a more pleasant place to live, but above all an educationally stimulating environment. The perception of prisons must change from a casemate to an institution to help people who need it, because they do not "fit" into socially established norms and laws. Colors can undoubtedly help with this.

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