

## **Prisoners' Perception of Legitimacy of the Prison Staff in Slovenia**

**Gorazd Meško, Ph.D.**, Professor of Criminology and Head of the Institute of Criminal Justice and Security, Faculty of Criminal Justice and Security, University of Maribor, Slovenia. E-mail: [gorazd.mesko@fvv.uni-mb.si](mailto:gorazd.mesko@fvv.uni-mb.si)

**Rok Hacin, Ph.D.**, Assistant Professor of Criminology, Faculty of Criminal Justice and Security, University of Maribor, Slovenia. E-mail: [rok.hacin@fvv.uni-mb.si](mailto:rok.hacin@fvv.uni-mb.si)

This paper focuses on prisoners' perception of legitimacy of the prison staff in Slovenian prisons. The primary aim of this study is to identify those factors that influence perceptions of legitimacy of prison workers by prisoners who are in prison for the first time, and those who had previous experience with the prison system. Results from OLS regression analyses showed that trust in authority, relations with the prison staff, procedural justice, distributive justice, and effectiveness of the prison staff, influence perception of legitimacy of prison workers in both groups of prisoners. The results of discriminant analysis highlighted statistically significant differences between prisoners who are in prison for the first time and those who had previous experience with the prison system in their perceptions of legitimacy, trust in authority, relations with the prison staff, obligation to obey, effectiveness of the prison staff, and prison subculture.

Prisoners who were in prison for the first time perceived legitimacy of the prison staff more positively than those who had previous experiences with the prison system. Consistency and professionalism of prison workers, which is reflected in an honest and respectful treatment of prisoners, affects prisoners' perception of legitimacy.

**Key words:** prisoners, legitimacy, justice, prison, Slovenia

**UDC:** 343.8