

Abstract

The dissertation deals with the issue of physical modifications, especially tattoos, in the environment of Czech male prisons. It is based on ethnographic research conducted between 2013 and 2017 in a total of five Czech men's security prisons. The aim of the thesis is to describe the phenomenon of decorating the body of inmates sentenced to serve prison sentences in Czech male prisons and to present the interpretative and meaningful potential of body treatments, especially tattooing, in relation to the so-called second life of the convicted.

As a part of the thesis, the design of ethnographic research in the environment of Czech male prisons, including its limits and pitfalls, is presented, while the specificity of this research field in the field of socio-scientific research is demonstrated. Attention is paid to the issue and importance of body in the prison environment and, in consequence, to body modifications that are used at the prison level to resist against the attempt to discipline convicts' bodies through unified institutional practices. Emphasis is placed primarily on tattooing as the most frequent and the most significant physical modification of the criminal subculture in the Czech prison environment. The final chapter and the pivotal part of this thesis brings the categorization of prison tattoos, including the explanation of its specific meanings in the reflection of specific life in the prison environment as a total institution.

Keywords

Deviation, second life of inmates, criminal subculture, symbolism, tattoo, body modification, body, total institution, jail.