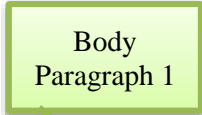


Application of Penological Principles in the US Criminal System

The criminal justice system in the United States has been historically focused on the principle of recidivism, or the likelihood of offenders to re-offend. This focus is evident in the way that prisons are operated in the US and in the way that offenders are monitored after they are released from prison. However, evidence suggests that this focus on recidivism may be misplaced. The criminal justice system in the United States has always been a subject of debate. One area of disagreement is what the focus of the system should be. A study by (Alper et al.) looks back at a 9-year-old study done by the Bureau of Justice Statistics, which found that only about 5% of prisoners released in 2005 were rearrested for a new crime within a year of their release. This suggests that recidivism is certainly a concern, but it may not be as big of a problem as the criminal justice system believes it to be. In recent years, there has been a growing movement to shift the criminal justice system's focus away from recidivism and towards other principles, such as rehabilitation and reentry.



There are several reasons why the criminal justice system is beginning to shift its focus to recidivism. First and foremost among these is that recidivism rates are quite low. As mentioned above, only about 5% of prisoners released in 2005 were rearrested for a new crime within a year of their release. This low recidivism rate raises questions about whether the current approach to incarceration is unnecessarily harsh and punitive. If most offenders are not going to re-offend, then locking them up for long periods may do more harm than good.

There is also growing evidence to suggest that the current approach of the criminal system to handle incarceration does little to improve public safety. A 2015 study by (Gramlich) found that states in the US with high levels of incarceration did not experience any reduction in crime rates between 2000 and 2010. In fact, in some states, crime rates increased during this period despite high levels of incarceration. One possibility is that the current approach prevents offenders from successfully reintegrating into society after their release from prison. If ex-offenders cannot secure jobs or housing after release, they may be more likely to resort to criminal activity to survive. Furthermore, incarceration also increases the likelihood of offenders developing mental health problems or substance abuse issues while in prison. These problems can make it even harder for offenders to reenter society and lead law-abiding lives after they are released. Finally, the government's current approach to incarceration disproportionately affects certain groups of people, such as minorities and low-income individuals. This unequal treatment can foster resentment and further alienate groups already feeling alienated from society.

There are several ways the criminal justice system can refocus its approach away from recidivism and towards other principles such as rehabilitation and reentry—firstly, increasing access to job training and education programs for incarcerated offenders. These programs allow offenders to transition back to normal society and learn the skills needed to find jobs after they are released. This reduces the chances of ex-offenders resorting to criminal activity out of desperation. Given the high rate of mental health problems among offenders, increasing access to mental health services is also critical. An article by (Tullock) indicates that punishment has seen a rise in criminals in the country. However, offenders who receive treatment for mental health issues while incarcerated are less likely than those who do not receive treatment to experience homelessness or unemployment after they are released. They are also less likely to commit new

crimes or violate their parole conditions. Finally, increasing access to housing options for former offenders can also help reduce recidivism rates. Former offenders with stable housing arrangements are less likely than those who do not have stable housing arrangements to commit new crimes or violate their parole conditions. They are also more likely to find employment and become economically self-sufficient.

All of this indicates that rehabilitation is the most obvious shift that can be made to the American criminal system because rehabilitation is an effective penological principle in modern American society. It can act as a deterrent to crime by providing opportunities for offenders to reform their behavior. Rehabilitation can also help reduce recidivism rates, which benefits both the individual and society. Moreover, it can provide offenders with the tools and resources necessary to become productive members of society when released from prison. Rehabilitation can involve several activities, including job training, counseling, substance abuse treatment, and educational programs. In addition to these direct interventions, rehabilitation provides opportunities for socialization and reintegration into the community after incarceration. Therefore, rehabilitation is an important component of the American criminal justice system, but it should be noted that it is not a one-size-fits-all solution. It must be tailored to meet the unique needs of each offender in order to maximize its effectiveness.

In conclusion, the criminal justice system in America has historically focused on recidivism, but there is evidence suggesting that this focus may be misplaced. In addition, there is also evidence suggesting that our current approach to incarceration does more harm than good. For these reasons, there has been a movement to shift the criminal justice system's focus away from recidivism and towards other principles, such as rehabilitation and reentry. By shifting focus towards the importance and application of rehabilitation, increasing access to job training

and education programs, mental health services, and housing options for former offenders, the justice system can begin reducing recidivism rates and making the communities safer places for everyone.



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