

Investigation into the Implementation of Rehabilitation in the Penal System

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Abstract

The implementation of rehabilitation programs in the penal system has garnered significant attention to address the root causes of criminal behavior and facilitate the successful reintegration of offenders into society. However, the effectiveness of rehabilitation in prisons remains a subject of debate. Specifically, it is disputed what factors influence rehabilitation effectiveness, with particular attention given to psychological and educational rehabilitation approaches, as well as factors affecting socio-demographic groups like age, race, and gender. The project conducted in-depth interviews with Ukrainian and Canadian university students to explore this issue further. Studies on rehabilitation effectiveness have produced varying results, with some indicating positive changes in inmates' psychological well-being and easier societal reintegration. In contrast, others have shown limited or no significant improvements. Their insight highlighted the need for improvements in the rehabilitation process to ensure public safety and reduce recidivism rates. By addressing these concerns, society can have greater confidence in the rehabilitative efforts undertaken in correctional facilities, ultimately fostering a safer environment for all.

Introduction

Imprisonment rates in Western nations have grown exponentially, becoming a highly contested societal issue. Decades of research on imprisonment as a punishment have suggested that the punitive approach is exacerbating rather than addressing the issue. Thus, a demand for reform and rehabilitative processes has arisen due to a societal shift in the perception of the punitive aspect of the criminal justice system (Day, 1992; Roberts and Hough, 2005). The rehabilitative approach centers on the assumption that the correctional system should do more than punish and condemn offenders; indeed, for the system to succeed, the focus should be on minimizing crime and improving more on the public's protection (Lipsey and Cullen, 2007). Throughout history, prison has served one purpose to punish and condemn those who have committed crimes. The current rehabilitative approach relies on the medical model, which aims to treat criminals as patients needing therapeutic care. Within

the system of rehabilitation, there should be consideration of the age, race and gender of the offender, which can determine the effectiveness of rehabilitation; these factors are often not considered when rehabilitation takes place. In this paper, we tackle rehabilitation practices within the penal system to uncover if the current methods produce viable outcomes and offer a critique of these practices and outcomes.

Literature Review

History of Approaches to the Study and Reformation of the Penal System

The modern prison and the problem surrounding it is not something new. The problem is within the institution itself, as it has been evident in modern society that aims to reform prisons have appeared ineffective. Prison continues to be a place of torture and violence, yet there has been an effort to make it more humane. In 1777, the English activist John Howard

published "The State of the Prison," describing the situation within many prisons in Great Britain. Through his work and based on his ideas, the Howard League for Penal Reform was founded, which focused on reforming prisons and made significant breakthroughs. However, as a society, our continuous chase of momentary gains in late-stage capitalism and capitalizing on free labour has created a prison industrial complex that values free human labour more than inmates' well-being and transforms them into active citizens (Gordon, 1999). The focus on free and cheap labour offered through the bodies of incarcerated individuals has led to capitalizing on their bodies rather than helping incarcerated individuals re-integrate back into society. Therefore, the main focus of rehabilitation has been pushed to the side in favour of taking advantage of incarcerated individuals for their free labour. For instance, Angela Davis has been a vocal critic of the prison industrial complex, argues that gender and age are factors that affect how well former offenders integrate back into society, exacerbate symptoms of hostility, and engrain offenders within defiance theory (Bloom and Bradshaw, 2022, p.142), highlighting the ineffectiveness of punishment. Therefore, as Davis (2011) and other scholars such as Van Ness, Braithwaite have suggested, a new approach to rehabilitation should be explored, such as utilizing a restorative justice method.

Forms of Rehabilitation

Psychological Treatment. Prisons seek to rehabilitate individuals in order to help them reintegrate into society. Although some people perceive the prison system this way, it often appears more punitive than rehabilitative. By focusing more on punishment than rehabilitation, the system leaves the prisoners alienated and traumatized once released. It increases their chances of re-offending and re-entering prison, which is known as criminal recidivism (Beaudry et al., 2021). One of the ways to reduce recidivism rates is the medical model approach used to help inmates address underlying issues of mental health. The medical model is characterized by careful training of people with psychiatric disabilities on a range of skills so they can handle real-world demands before placing them in work and independent living situations (Corrigan & McCracken, 2005). This is in line with a sociological perspective since it places people with psychiatric

disorders in real-world settings. Such as allowing them to experience the benefits, as well as the challenges of these situations, and then provide the necessary training and support to successfully maintain these placements (Corrigan & McCracken, 2005).

However, psychological treatments in prison do not always appear to be effective (Beaudry et al., 2021). The reason for that lies in the quality of the psychological programs themselves and the lack of consideration of offenders' problems post-release. As the study of (Gannon et al., 2019) has shown, the presence of qualified psychologists during the treatment process turns out to be a crucial variable in the programs' effectiveness in reducing recidivism (Gannon et al., 2019). Another explanation of the unclear effectiveness of the psychological rehabilitation programs, suggested by Beaudry et al., is that treatments focused on mental health do not address the issues inmates face after serving their sentence, such as employment, accommodation, and financial troubles (Beaudry et al., 2021). The mentioned observations call for a comprehensive approach to increase prison rehabilitation effectiveness.

Education. Employment is commonly considered an indication of success during the reintegration process. Social bonds created at work form a system of informal social control, thus reducing former prisoners' chances of reoffending (Sampson & Laub, 1993). Since prisoners generally are less qualified, less skilled, and come from more difficult educational backgrounds, they experience struggles seeking employment (Ellison et al., 2017). With that in mind, prisons provide special services to prepare inmates for work post-release. These services include education and vocational training programs focused on developing offenders' qualifications and skills for their post-prison employment. Besides formal qualifications and competence, education in prison gives inmates a feeling of mastering something, helps to avoid stigmatization, and gives them the motivation to change (Tønseth & Bergsland, 2019, p. 11). This indicates the huge importance of education in the rehabilitation process (Tønseth & Bergsland, 2019, p. 11).

However, Newton et al. (2016) question the significance of educational and vocational programs' impact on lowering recidivism due to the lack of research on the issue. Additionally, the work made by

Visher, Debus-Sherrill, and Yahner (2010) suggests that education and vocational training were not a key factor that predicted employment post-release. Instead, the results have shown that non-white race, mental or physical health problems, older age, and substance abuse were the most common predictors of unstable employment of former inmates. Therefore, as Newton et al. (2016) suggest, a more complex approach is needed. Continuing his argument, vocational education and training programs should be accompanied by drug and alcohol rehabilitation, housing assistance, mental health support, and other services to ensure prisoners' reintegration into society post-release.

Overall, the consideration of the personal circumstances that cause an individual to re-enter the prison system can contribute to making it an effectual institution in assisting in the offender's healing process.

Factors Affecting Rehabilitation

Age. Rehabilitation can take many forms within prison walls, for instance, vocation training programs, education, mental health help, or other forms of management of inmates that aim to transform or normalize criminals back into society. At the center of this is that offenders can be changed for the better with the proper support. However, examining the effectiveness of rehabilitation through recidivism rates of marginalized people paints a different story. For instance, juvenile rehabilitation is viewed as a separate system for youth due to the adult prison system not addressing the needs of youth and thus being deemed inappropriate. However, studies show that juvenile and adult offenders have more in common than differences, particularly in their patterns of thinking and decision-making (Simpson, 1976). The current view of the juvenile justice system considers youth more impressionable and responsive toward rehabilitation efforts (Moon et al., 2000). This view of juvenile and adult offenders as separate groups neglects the fact that these offenders share an important characteristic that affects their responsiveness to rehabilitation. Yet, juveniles are viewed as vulnerable; thus, the state should act as the parent to redirect the child and help them reintegrate into society. Juvenile rehabilitation aims to save the youth and protect the community (Moon et al., 2000). However, the juvenile justice system has been rife with problems stemming from critics calling the system as being too lenient on delinquents or too harsh on the youth (Moon et al.,

2000). The juvenile justice system is seen as an instrument in youth's social control and lacks rehabilitation efforts as the ideal is far from reality (Moon et al., 2000). Currently, insufficient research has examined the effectiveness of rehabilitation on youth and their subsequent chance of re-offending post-rehabilitation. Yet, society is more hopeful about youth rehabilitation and believes it is much more effective because youth appear as promising candidates. Despite this, there is a lack of evidence showing that youth offenders are more responsive than adult offenders as it currently stands. The assumption that youth are better suited for rehabilitation is the reason there has been more investment into programs and services that are aimed at youth rehabilitation within the detention centre. For instance, Simpson (1976) argues that adult offenders appear to have similar cognitive functioning as their juvenile counterparts, such as impulsivity and immaturity in moral reasoning and decision-making (1012). Therefore, the popular belief that youth are more amenable to rehabilitation is not supported, yet there is a huge support for rehabilitation for youth while raising punishment for adults. It appears rehabilitation is affected by age as it currently stands because there is support and adequate resources targeted toward youth rather than adults when it comes to implementing rehabilitation.

Race. Another factor that influences rehabilitation effectiveness is race. This variable is often contested in how much impact it has on the individual's rehabilitation process, considering that race and ethnic minorities are often overrepresented in prisons. For instance, in the USA, the percentage of black inmates is almost one-half of the prison population while making up only one-eighth of the general population (Blumstein, 1982). Moreover, incarceration rates among black men and women are significantly higher than those of racial majority people. This indicates systematic discrimination of ethnic and racial minority groups within the criminal justice system (Smith and Campbell, 2018, p. 373). Hurwitz and Peffley (1997) argue that the cause for such attitudes lies in stereotypes, which portray black people as more "violent" and prone to crime (p. 380).

Furthermore, they argue that these stereotypes tend to shape society's political judgment in favour of punitive policies rather than rehabilitation (Hurwitz and Peffley, 1997, p. 380). Therefore, as Johnson et al. (2005) argue, despite reforms in the prison system that resulted

in the shift of their purpose from punishment to correction, existing rehabilitation programs fail to deliver benefits for the imprisoned (36). The failure in the lack of proper implementation of rehabilitation programs often impacts racialized prisoners more often than their white counterparts. Often this may result in the spread of violence between ethnic groups, making prisons dangerous for the most vulnerable parts of society (Johnson et al., 2005, p. 38). Ethnic minorities come from subcultures and backgrounds where violence is occurring. Thus, prior exposure to violence makes it likely it will happen in prison because of the type of environment that prison fosters (Harer & Steffensmeier, 1996; Berg & DeLisi, 2006).

It follows that present rehabilitation programs either do not serve the needs of non-white inmates or their effectiveness can be undermined by racism. Consequently, it can be said that by making rehabilitation programs more responsive to race and ethnic minorities and fighting racism against those groups, a more inclusive and effective correction system can be established.

Gender. Women in prison experience different needs than male prisoners that are often ignored or inadequately addressed. Women end up in prison for various reasons, often due to factors outside their control, such as domestic abuse, substance abuse, etc. Thus, an adequate response must be implemented by the criminal justice system and by other social institutions to minimize the percentage of women in prison facilities. For instance, "the detention system in El Valle gives the girls a second chance, including receiving three meals a day, not having to worry about transportation, having access to showers, and having a relatively safe place to sleep (Flores et al., 2020, p. 5). As illustrated by Flores et al. (2020) is that prison can become a space for women because it protects them from the outside world. This is a significant revelation in how prison differs for women inmates because the penal system is not considering the benefit it could offer women inmates. The research demonstrates that considering the gender differences among offenders is crucial for effective rehabilitation. Consequently, rehabilitation strategies for men and women should differ, and what may be effective for men could have the opposite effect for women. Among the main barriers to rehabilitation for women are a higher level

of violence against women in prisons, society's harsher treatment of women who have committed crimes compared to men, lower mental health stability and quicker deterioration after entering prison, and ultimately, the lower social status of women in society due to pervasive gender discrimination (Daly and Tonry, 1997). The institution of the penal system has been interested in making prison rehabilitation more equitable for various socio-demographic groups. Nevertheless, as highlighted throughout this paper is that factors such as age, race, and gender determine the effectiveness of rehabilitation that are dismissed or largely ignored, which results in these socio-demographic groups receiving inadequate and improper rehabilitation, thus making them less responsive to rehabilitation programs and efforts.

The efforts to capitalize on this revelation should be a priority and precede rehabilitation model investments. Moreover, the rehabilitation model is designed to respond to men's needs and the risk factors they face. Women often do not respond well to rehabilitation for these reasons. There needs to be a change in how rehabilitation is performed because the gender of the individual is not considered, which has a huge impact on the effectiveness of the rehabilitation.

Rehabilitation models should be tailored to the needs of the individual, especially for women, when their struggles differ drastically from the males whose rehabilitation has been developed within the mind. Thus, to make rehabilitation effective, the prison system must examine women's issues before considering rehabilitation.

Intersectionality. The current research suggests that age, race and gender can significantly impact the effectiveness of prison rehabilitation for these groups. Generally, the public supports youth rehabilitation based on the assumption that younger offenders are more likely to acquire new knowledge and skills. Juveniles tend to be more open to making changes in their lives and more receptive to taking advice regarding reevaluating their values and perspectives. Young individuals are likely to be more willing to work with professionals. An empirical study by Piquero and Steinberg (2010) found that the public strongly supported juvenile rehabilitation and was open to paying more taxes for more rehabilitation. Programs

and resources would mean youth will be less incarcerated (5).

On the other hand, older inmates may be more attached to conservative views and less inclined towards personal growth (Moon et al., 2000). Thus, this is more likely to impact their likelihood of being rehabilitated and their chances of reoffending. The longer offenders stay in prison, the more they learn from other offenders, which teaches them to be better criminals rather than becoming better citizens. As indicated by Piquero and Steinberg's study, the focus should be on rehabilitation by spending money on rehabilitation programs, which results in less time in prison and helping young inmates become active citizens.

The research conducted by Daly and Tonry in their work "Gender, Race, and Sentencing" demonstrates that women and Black prisoners in the United States primarily assume subordinate roles, occupying lower social status positions within the prison system. Consequently, women and individuals belonging to racial minorities have significantly lower chances of receiving effective rehabilitation than men or individuals from the racial majority (Daly and Tonry, 1997). The rehabilitation effort for women and racial minorities carries with it carceral logics and strategies, thus, its shift away from transforming their ways, where the focus for these prisoners is punishment just as the traditional punitive system has carried with it (McKim, 2017). A reason for this outlined by McKim is that the penal system initially conducted rehabilitation tailored to the needs of male offenders and had to incorporate rehabilitation for women later on (McKim, 2017, p.51). The penal system went about this change by claiming that women's criminality stemmed from them swaying from gender norms and concluded that their rehabilitation needed to center around domestication and gender roles (McKim, 2017, p.51). However, with an increased onus on gender roles and domesticity being the desired outcome of rehabilitation, when the moral panic started up by black women's increased utilization of the welfare system became noticed, the penal system again pivoted its position and started to focus its rehabilitation upon employment. This was because black women and poor women were receiving welfare assistance from the state, which transformed its position and put increased importance on women's employment and not

domesticity. As a means to curtail public outcry regarding the welfare system, this left female offenders without proper rehabilitation that dealt effectively with the factors that caused their criminality. Previously the sexist and patriarchal rehabilitation standards left women without effective rehabilitation that dealt with their criminality. Under the new requirements caused by racial biases of black women's utilization of the welfare system, they are still left without effective outcomes.

Methods

Research Methodology

For this project, we conducted six 20-minute semi-structured interviews with third-year students from Ukrainian Catholic University and MacEwan University registered in this course. All participants volunteered to participate: four were Ukrainians, and two were Canadians. Interviews were conducted over Zoom or Google Meetings with the presence of two interviewers: one Ukrainian and one Canadian, to ensure language barriers would not impede results. All the interviews conducted were recorded, and confidentiality was ensured, with the recordings being stored securely at the end. Before the beginning of the interview, the interviewers clearly explained the procedure and asked for the interviewees' consent. The interviewer clarified what kinds of questions would be brought up, and if the interviewee did not feel comfortable answering the question, they could move on to the next question. Ukrainian interviewers were allowed to translate the question into Ukrainian if the interviewees had difficulty understanding the interviewer.

The interview consisted of 10 questions, which were all related to our study. Among the questions asked were the definition and purpose of punishment and rehabilitation. Also, the interviewees were asked how significant, in their opinion, the aspects of age, race, gender and connections with family and friends are in the rehabilitation process. In the end, the interviewees were asked how they see the prison system today. After the interviews were conducted, they were transcribed and coded. As part of the coding process, we reread the interview transcripts and highlighted the words that we considered the most relevant to our study. The coding was then organized in an orderly process.

Ethical Considerations

The general population for the study consisted of university students from Ukrainian Catholic and Grant MacEwan Universities. The one-on-one interviews were scheduled through Google Forms, and the students had the option to sign up for the interview. When conducting the face-to-face interview, the participants were given consent forms to sign before proceeding with the interview. Before beginning the interview, the interviewees were made aware that they could answer all questions or skip or back out anytime during the interview. The participants were informed that the interview was being recorded for data collection purposes. The recordings were only shared among the researchers, including notes taken during the interview and kept in a safe drive. The recordings were destroyed once the researchers had captured the necessary information for the research. There was no recording of the participants' personal information or description of the interviewees, and personal information that were shared during the interview were protected and not shared in our findings. There will be no mistreatment of the participants, and the opinions of the participants will be respected. The benefit of this research was that it provided the principal researchers with information regarding public opinions of the penal system. There were minimum risks in conducting the research apart from triggering the participants trauma related to criminalization they may have experienced.

Problems of Methodology

During our research, we encountered several challenges related to survey respondents. The first and most obvious problem was language-related. The study involved respondents and interviewers from Ukraine (Ukrainian language) and Canada (English language), respectively, and the primary language of the surveys was English. However, not all Ukrainian students had a sufficient level of English proficiency to provide detailed and comprehensive answers to the questions. Later on, it was noticed that when switching to the Ukrainian language, the answers became more thorough and well-founded compared to when they were provided in English. This raises questions about the representativeness of the answers from Ukrainian students, as many of them refrained from expressing all their thoughts due to the inability to articulate them in English. It is presumed that if the respondents could

freely choose the language for the interview, the answers would be more comprehensive and representative.

The second problem with the methodology was that the types of rehabilitation implemented in Ukraine and Canada differ. Therefore, students from the two countries had different knowledge and perceptions regarding the approach used within prisons. Thus, the answers of Ukrainian students, where the implementation of rehabilitation and its effectiveness is significantly less due to the punitive approach being applied within the Ukrainian prison system, which makes it challenging to generalize the answers from both students.

Results

Four main themes were uncovered during the research process, forming the results sections of this research paper 1) Punishment and Prisons, 2) Rehabilitation, 3) Release from Prisons, and 4) Alternatives to Prison.

Punishment and Prisons

Firstly, most people have a similar perspective regarding the actions and the consequences of committing crimes. As a society, people believe that we should protect ourselves from those who have committed crimes. Society should function according to the laws enacted: "the person should be responsible for his or her actions, and I guess that punishment must be in accordance with the law." Keeping in line with this thought process, criminals should be held responsible for their actions because this is the only way to ensure that justice and safety will be maintained: "if a person commits a crime, society must respond by following some laws and some processes to ensure justice for the safety of other citizens." Therefore, punishment is the consequence delivered to individuals who commit crimes as a method of social control to limit further criminality. An aspect of the process of criminal punishment is that, in theory, it should provide offenders with the ability to rethink their actions, and this introspection is seen as a way to correct a person: "I think the goal of punishment is to correct people... or adjust them to establish norms and morals" "in prison the person takes responsibility for her choice and for thinking what they did."

Moreover, punishment restricts a criminal from the real world and isolates the individual from society, whether in prison, house arrest or community service. For the rest of society, punishment is seen as being meant for criminals, but it also acts to deter other people from committing crimes and make the outside world feel better and safe. However, some people are critical of punishment and deterrence theory as these theories ignore the social factors contributing to crime and criminality, making them ineffective at preventing certain crimes that may be committed in the present or the future.

A prison is a place used to isolate criminals, re-educate and give them a chance for criminals to reflect upon their mistakes. In general, prisons are designed to rehabilitate prisoners to reintegrate them back into society while also housing those considered dangerous to society: "restrict a person who committed a lot of crimes from society, to limit her and maybe teach them" "prison is one form of punishment and the purpose of prison is to isolate and maybe in some way re-educate a person and also prison can be a place where prisoners can realize his or her mistakes."

Respondents expressed a positive outlook on prison, which is not the reality of prison, as it may appear that they are discussing prison in its ideal form, which does not exist. They acknowledged prison(s) as institutions that function to restrain certain individuals from society and punish them. However, they did not look past this to recognize the harm that punishment and isolation have on offenders and, with them, the goals of generating safer societies. There is a continued notion from respondents that offenders deserve to be punished for their wrongdoings and that by punishing offenders, they can be taught that their actions were not acceptable. This is a presumptive notion because it relies on the belief that offenders acted as rational beings when committing their offences. Which omits or ignores the possibility that offenders are acting criminally out of necessity caused by social strain. Respondents also failed to mention any of the downfalls of the penal system highlighted above throughout this body of work, such as lack of educational opportunities, overcrowding, lack of resources, and corruption.

Rehabilitation

Rehabilitation comes in many forms, such as psychological help for criminals, which addresses underlying mental health issues and sociological, which teaches offenders about the morals and values of society. Rehabilitation is concerned with helping a person return to everyday life and reintegrate into society: "rehabilitation is a process of preparing and supporting some psychological or social skills, and these skills can help a person to return to society and normalize." It is a long process of preparing and supporting a person to return to society. Furthermore, rehabilitation is concerned with stopping the cycle of punishment and the chance of inmates reoffending.

The effectiveness of rehabilitation in prisons depends on the crime a person committed as well as the individual offender. For instance, serious crimes such as murder, child abuse, or terrorism are assumed to be offences that cannot be rehabilitated; however, this is not the case. As demonstrated by Shoham et al., (2018), rehabilitation is quite effective in these instances, but its effectiveness depends on the strength of the rehabilitative program and the individual offender. Work conducted by DeMatteo et al. (2019) showcases the effectiveness of rehabilitation across a wide variety of violent offenders and the meaningful positive results this has on overall recidivism and community relations. Due to certain aspects, such as defiance theory, some offenders are less likely than others to be able to benefit meaningfully from rehabilitation. However, this individual failure of rehabilitation is not a failure of rehabilitation as a whole because successful rehabilitation of even a small margin of violent offenders is more beneficial to society than no rehabilitation of violent offenders where the current protocol is continued incarceration. The purpose of prison is to make criminals come to terms with their actions and the consequences of these actions: "I think that prison can be a tool that can help people to realize the consequences of their actions." It is a chance for criminals to restart their lives on the right path because of the proper support and reflection they engage in within prison; however, these concepts are part of an ideal reality. Meanwhile, some critics say that because of the state of modern prisons, people in prison are becoming worse rather than being rehabilitated because

these idealized statutes of prison do not occur effectively in reality.

Respondents expressed opinions that rehabilitation in prison does not appear to depend on age, race, or gender but admit that rehabilitation is the most effective for young people: "I don't think that gender, age can influence the effectiveness of rehabilitation and I don't think that for example women can be rehabilitated faster than men. Because these are not dependent variables", "I guess for younger people their rehabilitation will be more effective than for older people because older people say they know life better." Individuals suggest that because the youth are more malleable, easily influenced, and more willing to learn, they will be more likely to abandon criminal tendencies because they are not hardened in their resolve like their mature counterparts. Moreover, people, in general, view crime in different ways depending on who is committing it. Individuals have mentioned that nothing works equally well for every individual due to people having different needs and experiences.

Often people who commit crimes are viewed as less educated; thus, prisons can function as a tool to rehabilitate offenders by allowing inmates to receive an education. Education can help prisoners to rethink how they view the world through a more critical and nuanced lens. It also allows a prisoner to find a job after being released due to their advancement in education. Prisoners could utilize educational attainment as a chance to learn and keep themselves busy by learning something new: "I think education-training could help to find some new job and it could increase their chances of good rehabilitation, successful rehabilitation and to return to society and I think it could reduce their chances of returning to criminal life outside." People are different, and education can work differently for everyone, so educational programs need to be less over-arching and more tailored to the needs of individual offenders. Through increased educational instruction received while incarcerated, offenders will be better suited to find employment post-incarceration, which will limit a social factor that relates to criminality. Along with the new-found possibility of employment, an increased cognitive ability will benefit offenders through critical thinking skills that may diminish the odds of criminality through better decision-making skills.

Communication as a form of rehabilitation is vital to offenders as it decreases the likelihood of isolation. Prisoners should still communicate with their relatives and friends, but it depends on the crime the person committed. If individuals only communicate with other criminals, they will likely continue to engage in criminal acts. Also, prisoners' communications have to be checked, and communication should be controlled to a degree to ensure there are no nefarious communications. Nevertheless, there are many advantages for prisoners to communicate with their closest ones: it can help them feel supported and loved, and it improves their psychological well-being. Since they are being isolated from the outside world, they should still have a chance to connect with the outside world because that is the humane thing to do. It keeps their social bonds strong and active. It can limit the possibilities of alienation from the dominant social world, resulting in ostracism and labelling theory as an offender would start to view themselves as only a criminal and nothing more with no links to the outside world. If this occurred, there is the possibility for increased social bonds being built within the penal system. While it is not inherently dangerous for relationships to be built between offenders, it can be dangerous if these offenders are not engaging in positive pro-social activities. Instead, these newly built relationships can result in offenders being dragged farther into their criminality. It is a hazardous line to walk, but socialization is a crucial aspect of the human condition, and it cannot be forsaken.

Release from Prisons

After release from prison, the general public's attitude towards criminals is primarily negative because people fear them: "we're afraid of prisoners. And we don't give them the opportunity to really actually be reintegrated or free of their sentence." Due to rampant reports of high crime and violence in the media creating a society rife with moral panic, it is no wonder that the general public lives in fear of crime and criminals and is weary of them upon release: "like people don't really like other people who were in prison because they definitely did something bad that violated social rights and social rules and crossed the line. So, people will treat them badly because of it." This sentiment was reflected during the coding process of answers provided by respondents. However, this is detrimental to society's

overall goal of limiting criminality. Because of the ostracism criminals face upon release, they lack the necessary social skills, social bonds, and the ability to obtain employment. Prisoners often have difficulties finding a job due to a lack of resources. Often prisoners lose the communication skills required of individuals in society, making searching for a stable job even more difficult. Society appears to be divided into two groups in their attitude towards criminals: those who think criminals should not be integrated into society and those who think they should be.

There has to be some form of an institution responsible for enabling offenders post-incarceration to transition as easily as possible back into society, thus reducing the chance of recidivism: "we need some institutions watching these people, doing some research" "there should be some officer where in umm, where in the perpetrators or the people who have been released back into society, could report in I guess and they could monitor." To ensure that minor crimes will not happen again, we have to give access to the services that people need.

Alternatives to Prison

In general, most of the respondents were divided, with a small percentage favouring whether there should be alternatives to prison or reforming the prison system. Because of this divide, interesting responses were provided in this section regarding whether alternatives to the penal system were viable options. Some respondents who were against the idea of alternatives to the prison system raised concerns about safety for the general public as a reason for why they supported prisons. "Yes, I think the main purpose for most prisons, maybe in Ukraine, is to isolate dangerous people from society." They believed that criminals needed to be incarcerated as a punishment for their crimes and to ensure the general population's safety. This was an interesting piece of information because, throughout the interview process, respondents spoke about safety from violent offenders but were more lenient in their stance towards non-violent offenders. "I think yes, there should be some alternative to prison... I... it may include some I don't know like psychological programs or like some forms of supervision that could allow prisoners to remain in community and engage in work while serving their sentence. Of course, it's not for some crimes like

murder or something serious. I think when people... I don't know stole something; maybe it need no prison but some alternative form of punishment and rehabilitation, of course." Those in support of alternatives to the penal system frequently spoke about the failures of the penal system in its current form and saw alternatives as a method of improving the experiences of offenders. "I think that rehabilitation is not happening in that way in which it should be happening." "Our rehabilitation is not always human and effective."

These respondents believe criminality could be reduced by providing better experiences or a more utilitarian approach to justice. Respondents also mentioned providing offenders with tools that would enable them to limit the social factors contributing to criminality. These respondents are under the impression that by providing all the necessary tools to avoid crime, a society can limit the amount of criminality that members of its society engage in and, therefore, limit overall crime. "We as a society tend to go punishment forward. Um, and it really just doesn't work. Punishing somebody for committing a crime doesn't really get at the root of why they committed the crime, which is usually more important than what actually happened. We tend to be very punishment-based and I just, I don't think it works." Respondents frequently mentioned as well that the processes of the penal system need to be streamlined and better services offered to incarcerated individuals. This was a shared opinion that was mentioned by respondents who supported alternatives and by those who did not support alternatives. "I don't think that there could be other alternatives. Maybe we just need to improve the prison, do it with more control, government... better help the prisoners, like psychotherapists" Regardless of stance, these respondents recognize that the current system is insufficient to provide offenders with the best opportunity to engage in meaningful rehabilitation. If we consider real alternatives, the most appropriate alternative is psychological programs or restorative justice. "I really think restorative justice is a good way to go. I think it gives people the opportunity to accept the consequences. Cuz while I'm not punishment-focused, there are consequences to choices." "Because in my perfect world, things like restorative justice and alternative programs would eliminate the need for somebody to be rehabilitated"

However, these approaches appear to only work for less serious crimes; that is not to say that these methods could not work in the case of more serious offences. For the reasons that the success of these alternative approaches with less serious offences and not more serious offences could be caused by a lack of implementation in serious offences rather than by a failure of these alternative methods. Nonetheless, we do not know if these options would be successful in more serious crimes as this was not an area that the principal researchers focused on.

Discussion

This research aimed to evaluate the institution of the penal system and engage with literature in combination with interviews to evaluate the effectiveness of rehabilitation in this system and factors that affected the rehabilitative effectiveness. During conducting qualitative interviews, a noticeable sentiment became apparent in the responses provided by the interviewees, which was a belief in the justice system. The respondents believed in the justice system as a regulatory body responsible for doling out punishment to those who broke the law, providing criminals with accountability for their actions, and acting as a bulwark safeguarding society from these individuals. Corresponding with this protection sentiment is the long-standing belief that society should function according to the law.

Therefore, criminals who violate these laws should be held responsible for their actions. Traditional criminal justice operates under the belief that the best way to ensure criminals understand the wrongfulness of their actions is punishment. Following this traditional train of thought, prison aims to isolate criminals from the social world, thus giving the prisoners time to understand their mistakes, educate themselves, and become rehabilitated. Rehabilitation aims to do everything to reform the habits of an individual that contributed to their criminality and change them along with the person so that they can re-enter society and abide by the norms of the dominant culture that regulates what is and what is not acceptable behaviour. However, the aforementioned sequence is the goal of an ideal world; unfortunately, the reality is not ideal, and these goals of the penal system are rarely met.

During this investigation, the research process led principal researchers to conclude that prison rehabilitation is ineffective. This is because the penal system is a system that is built upon the ideals of incarceration and retribution for wrongs caused through the commission of criminal acts. Nevertheless, this long-standing punitive approach to crime control has, like all things, transformed in practices since its onset and now is a system with a new goal, rehabilitation. While rehabilitation is the new focus of the penal system, it is still built upon these long-standing ideals; as previously mentioned, the punishment of offenders for their criminal acts is still a continued goal that functions alongside rehabilitation. However, now the penal system is focussed on two goals punishment and rehabilitation. Unfortunately, these positions are contradictory; one cannot function while having the other.

Moreover, the implementation of one while also implementing the other cannot result in viable outcomes because they elicit different results that do not coincide. The punishment of offenders undermines the effectiveness of the rehabilitation they receive, as mentioned in the above literature, and the rehabilitation they should receive would require a lack of punishment. Therefore, punishment cannot coexist with rehabilitation in the penal system unless the goal is a perfunctory commitment to both practices while fully expecting haphazard results that do not solve the problems of crime and criminality.

While the penal system has one foot in each camp, it positions itself to have no feet in either; by not fully committing itself to one practice, the penal system undermines itself and its goals by not being a fully participatory actor. If the goals of the penal system are to punish and isolate offenders, it should position itself to do such. Contrary to this, if the goal of the penal system is rehabilitation, it needs to restructure and commit to this. By taking on aspects of both of these goals, the penal system does not set itself up to fully accomplish either because rehabilitation and punishment are diametrically opposed ideologies with drastically different outcomes. Furthermore, implementing opposing ideologies with opposing practices and goals while hoping to elicit the same result is nothing more than quixotic romanticism.

Scholars have highlighted the ineffectiveness of punishment as a deterrent to crime and its ability to limit recidivism (Bloom and Bradshaw, 2022, p. 140). When society and social institutions perpetuate the punishment of offenders, they create a culture of punishment that serves the goal of alienating offenders and lays out the necessary requirements for labelling theory to come to fruition. Duff (2005) argues that punishment cannot coexist with rehabilitation because they are paradoxical and that if we believe in the effectiveness of rehabilitation, we should seek the abolition of punishment and embrace strictly rehabilitative practices (p. 18).

In arguing for the abolition of a punitive system, Duff (2005) relates to a more considerable sentiment pervasive in the discourse of rehabilitation, that social change or rehabilitation requires increased focus. When rehabilitation occurs effectively, it is through strengthening social relations and bonds between the individual and the community (Byrne and Taxman, 2006, p. 9), which appears, for example, in restorative justice practices. Wilson (Wilson, 1980, p.13) found that youth offenders placed in a group or community care saw the most significant reduction in recidivism rates compared to those in custodial care. These findings speak to the importance of healthy community relations in aiding rehabilitation. However, as aforementioned, rehabilitation theoretically cannot occur in penal institutions, which has led to increased support of restorative justice practices as an alternative method to rehabilitation and carceral options. Restorative justice seeks to operate within communities strengthening social bonds (Bonta et al. 1998, p. 20) while acting as an alternative to incarceration. Aliyu et al. (2017) express the benefits of restorative justice as an aid to overcrowding in Nigerian prisons (p. 147) because of how it allows for healing to occur outside of the penal system but also mitigates the risk of crimes occurring by healing the social world (p. 138).

In light of the research gathered while writing this paper, the principal researchers have concluded that current rehabilitation is not as effective as it could be. While public opinion still supports prisons as a societal safeguard, this hinders the penal system's ability to effectively rehabilitate individuals and return conforming members of society to the social world post-incarceration. A conflicting perspective also

emerged throughout the interview process that is prevalent in all discourse surrounding criminology: the intrinsic desire for punishment and how the social world craves retribution in the face of progress. Respondents mention that they believe some of the methods of the penal system contribute more harm than good to offenders and negatively affect the rehabilitation they receive in prison, which carries over to their post-incarceration experiences. Society generally stigmatizes these individuals, which, combined with the treatment and care they receive in prison, does little to mitigate the social strains that lead to criminality. Instead, it perpetuates these social factors that are catalysts to criminality.

These societal perceptions have a pernicious effect on offenders' quality of rehabilitation. As a result of the way these perceptions influence conversations about crime, voting habits, and social institutions, to briefly mention a few. They affect the quality of rehabilitation offenders receive because mainstream society makes up social institutions and feeds public discourse while they are not adequately informed on the subject and, therefore, cannot make informed decisions. This leads the macro society to go about crime control in ways that are damaging to their goals. Mainstream society is still very much engaged in the idea of tough-on-crime approaches and that the answer to crime is to punish criminals and separate them from society to punish them but also to ensure safety. This was corroborated by responses gathered through qualitative interviews conducted by the principal researchers. However, by engaging in tough-on-crime approaches with the goal of incarceration and isolation, the root causes of the offenders' criminality are not taken into consideration. Instead, society wishes to see their perceived ideals of punishment carried out when they look in the media, newspaper, or watch TV. This idea of punishing criminals is so engrained in society that it has become a staple in all crime TV series where the show ends with the "bad guys" going to jail, and all the harm caused is simply resolved because retribution occurred. Macro society does not care to the same extent about effective rehabilitation as they do about retribution; if this were the case, the media consumed by macro society would reflect these ideals, but that is not what is reflected in the media. However, they care a tremendous amount about public safety and crime rates. What they fail to realize is that by focusing on the punitive aspect of the

penal system, they do not consider how punishment is harmful to the goals of rehabilitation. Offenders cannot be rehabilitated appropriately within the current system when they are being punished alongside receiving rehabilitative care, if they are even receiving care, to begin with. This means that nothing of substance has occurred upon release to ensure that the social causes that led offenders to commit crimes have been addressed. Therefore, these offenders are not appropriately equipped to not re-offend post-incarceration. This has a severe implication for public safety and crime rates, two areas that the macro society is focused on when it comes to crime.

In order for effective rehabilitation to become a reality, a widespread shift must occur in the perception of what crime and criminality are in macro society. Following this, a better lay understanding of factors of crime as well as what truly mitigates criminality, is needed. The use of scare tactics and tough-on-crime initiatives utilized by politicians and moral entrepreneurs has muddied the waters on the discourse of effective responses to crime. It has led to identity politics standing in the way of initiatives that would better serve the goals of a safe and healed society. Only when the macro society is better equipped to understand the causes of crime and what perpetuates criminality will they continue to be either willfully or plainly obtuse to the issue and continue to snub action that could mitigate crime and criminality. Importantly this affects the social institutions charged with the task of dealing with crime control and criminal reform that will remain stagnant until these societal shifts occur.

By understanding that contemporary lay beliefs of prison are inherently misguided and that critical scholarship is opposed to the current rehabilitation practices, this research has involved itself in the discourse revolving around how the penal system impacts all levels of the social world. By looking towards alternatives to traditional criminal justice, as suggested previously, we can shape the experiences of the individual at the micro level. By uprooting the current system and providing a better duty of care to offenders, the penal system can improve lives at a micro level. This has profound impacts on the individual offender but also translates to the habitus of the offender. They are now theoretically in a better position to end their criminality which affects the

macro level and society. When rehabilitation is done effectively, it is through strengthening social relations and bonds between the individual and their community. By building social relations within the micro-communities that these offenders occupy through the practices of norm clarification and reintegrative shaming, we can more effectively target crime and its social causes. As the micro-community heals and strengthens, its newly instilled values of just relationships can be dispersed through our webs of relationality and interconnectedness.

These newly instilled practices, beliefs, and methods that have worked their way through the micro and macro also carry a meaningful effect on the meso or social institutions. This is because social institutions comprise various individuals who occupy a multitude of habitus that result in them participating in multiple micro societies. This means for the meso that the work done in the micro is carried into the macro and, therefore, translated onto social institutions as a by-product of cultural or societal changes occurring. It also means that the change in institutions can come from inside sources as well and not just from outside pressure from societal shifts in the macro. The individuals who make up these large social institutions will bring what they engage in during their time away from the meso while occupying their micro-communities. Suppose the dispersion of these alternative ideals is able to permeate a large enough amount of micro societies. In that case, it will also be able to permeate the meso because of the interconnectedness of the social world and the fact that all social beings are intertwined in a web of relationality. This, in theory, would mean that a significant shift could occur in the practices of social institutions involved in the extensive web of crime control and criminality.

Examples of these institutions whose functional changes would affect crime and criminality are the court system, legislators, prisons, police agencies, politics, political parties, healthcare, education, social welfare, addiction, mental health, and housing services. By creating less adversarial courts, better treatment of offenders, increased focus on rehabilitation, increased funding for all levels of education, increased funding for healthcare, political reform to better address the social causes of crime, housing programs, safe drug use

sites, decriminalization of narcotics, increased integration of alternative justice models all of these institutions are either directly connected to the penal system or in some way influence the penal system and play a role in the social issue of crime. The direct impact of these changes on the social institution of the penal system is that a more corrective approach would be taken to offenders. More effective programs that specifically dealt with aggravative factors contributing to criminality would be a focus for the institution. A more humanitarian approach would be taken in the interactions between offenders and prison staff, who would have to forgo traditional adversarial and aggressive positions and tactics. This transformation can only take place, however, when social institutions engage in these alternative practices and begin to shift their operations.

While no clear-cut method is deemed best suited for solving the social problem of crime and crime control, it is evident that within the scholarly body of work surrounding criminality, there are options to be explored. Hopefully, through the continued study of this field, alternatives will continue to be explored and existing methodologies strengthened due to the impact that works such as this have on all levels of the social world.

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