

Juvenile delinquency class

Sociology



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Analysis of an Op-ed Article This essay will analyze an op-ed article published at the Denver Post in 2008. The article is “ Politics, drugs and bloated prisons” (Navarrette 1). The essay talks about America’s war on drugs and the growing population inside prisons due to the numerous incarcerations of people accused of crimes related to drugs. The author is concerned about how the presidential candidates, Barack Obama and John McCain will address this burgeoning problem and whether this issue will be a focus of upcoming presidential debates. He mentioned that both candidates would be very careful in making a stand on this issue for fear of being labeled as “ soft on crime” (Navarrette , par 9). He however pointed out that among the two candidates it is Obama who seem to be the one who can introduce reforms on the policies on imprisonment of drug offenders given his background. Obama co-sponsored the Second Chance Act which provides support of up to \$360 million to inmates released (Navarrette , par 10).

Using the labeling theory to analyze this article, one observes that the problem with our society is we consider all offenders of crimes pertaining to drugs as hardcore criminals. This being the case, even the young nonviolent drug offenders are imprisoned; thus, contributing to the growing number of prisoners in the US. This is the reason why America has 25 percent of prisoners worldwide (Navarrette , par 2).

One thinks that the reason behind America’s stern action against drug offenders is that these people are labeled as persons who have already committed a crime; thus, the probability of committing another crime is high because he has proven to be without “ respect of the law” (Becker 81). They are already considered deviants even with one offense only. This labeling of drug offenders as being criminals makes it difficult for them to be accepted

by society once they are released from prison. There is a stigma attached to them because they are now ex-convicts. Companies will not accept them because they are considered deviants and as such cannot be trusted to take on jobs. If either McCain or Obama will be successful at providing support for these ex-prisoners, then it would be easier for them to assimilate back to society. Support for these ex-inmates can be in the form of counseling, job training and placement. Recidivism will be greatly reduced if a support system is in place for these offenders.

Because of the stereotyping of ex-prisoners, there is also a need to look deeply into the incarceration policies of the government. Since the dilemma of labeling poses adverse effects on the ex-drug offenders, the laws regarding imprisonment of these groups of people particularly the youth, should be scrutinized to prevent problems in relation to their integration to society once released from prison.

Foremost to the support system is the necessity to educate people, society in general, that not all drug offenders are criminals who are just waiting to commit another crime. There should be an end to the labeling of ex-drug offenders. The bulk of the responsibility will come from the country's leaders, policy and law-makers. Navarrette's argument that the issue on the spiraling problem of drugs and bloated prisons should be tackled by presidential candidates. It is indeed a national issue which cannot be ignored.