

# The principal function and goals criminology essay

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Before the 18th Century individuals who were criminals were treated with severe and barbaric torture and majority of them were brutally executed in the public arena, this was called 'bloody code'. Near the end of the 1700's, individuals who committed criminal activities were dealt with very differently from the bloody code era. Foucault developed the concept of training and controlling the criminals, this was called the 'enlightment era'. (Foucault 1991). Throughout the biggest part of history, imprisonment was just a form of incarceration and segregation from society until capital punishment was ordered on the criminal for various deviant activities. Only in the 19th Century was the modern prison system founded, this was aided and guided by from Jeremy Bentham. Jeremy Bentham was respected philosopher and jurist born in London. After attempting to study law, Jeremy Bentham became extremely disillusioned with the law, especially after hearing various lectures analysing the current law. (Richardson 1986). Jeremy Bentham after several months of studying law decided instead that he would write about the law of the land and the penal system. Jeremy Bentham spent majority of his life criticising the ways of the law outlined by the leading lecturer of the law, Sir William Blackstone. For over forty years Jeremy Bentham produced manuscripts to suggest ways of improving the penal system that was governed. (Richardson et al 1987). Jeremy Bentham believed in the doctrine of Utilitarianism, and focused all of his manuscripts on the theory that most principles are the greatest happiness of the greatest number. This moral theory basically determines the concept that rightful or wrongful actions of an individual could be analysed by the individual's balance of good over evil. (Bentham 1948) Jeremy Bentham proposed several changes for society and

legal reform and was trying to improve the designs and structures of prison buildings to construct a concept of National Penitentiary that the government would develop and create a Governor based role for Bentham. (Bentham 1948). This idea was never implemented, but French Philosopher Foucault criticised this idea and this only emphasised 19th century disciplinary reforms within the penal system

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Prison is a place in which individuals are incarcerated and deprived of personal freedom for committed criminal activities in society and is a legal penalty that is imposed by the law of the land....." Her Majesty's Prison Service serves the public by keeping in custody those committed by the courts. Our duty is to look after them with humanity and to help them to lead law abiding and useful lives in custody and on release"..... (Cavadino & Dignan, 1997 p 114). The above quote emphasises the importance of the functions and goals of imprisonment for any individual who commits a deviant activity and is then incarcerated in prison. According to UK Prisons (2008), England and Wales has one of the highest rates of imprisonment in Western Europe along with Scotland. In 2011 an average of 152 people in every 100, 000 were incarcerated. Prisons in England & Wales have exceeded their functional capacity with just over 82, 000 prisoners (UK Prisons 2008)The primary function of imprisonment is to punish the individual for committing the deviant criminal activity in society. Imprisonment in today's society is the most popular punishment for individuals who commit crime throughout the world. Without a doubt, individuals who commit deviant criminal acts should be giving a custodial

sentence. The individual's deviant behaviour may disrupt society's social stability and therefore could have a serious effect on other law abiding individuals. Another factor in incarceration for individuals who commit deviant crimes, these individuals might have an effect on the country's economic status. These deviant individuals who commit crime may have a detrimental effect on society and individuals who are trying to improve themselves through law abiding concepts. Imprisonment can be seen as a governed relationship between the state and the individual who commits a deviant criminal activity, imprisonment can be seen as society's method of dealing with individual's who commit crime. Criminals who commit crimes must be managed in an environment that can be managed in an orderly way to preserve society. Imprisonment of an individual is primary based on the simple form of deprivation of an individual's liberty. By the method of incarceration and therefore, deprivation of their liberty is crucial for those who commit deviant criminal activities. However, according to Sykes (1958), incarceration is a place in which individuals are physically confined and therefore deprived of personal freedoms. The concept of "the pains of imprisonment" have analysed through many decades within prison sociology. Sykes (1958) states that one of the most obvious pains of imprisonment is the deprivation of liberty, with this deprivation being double sided, individuals are not only confined to incarceration. Being sent to prison can be extremely traumatic for individuals who could find it impossible to adjust to rules and harsh regimes in the penal system. Some individuals may feel that their problems are escalated and possibly more than they can physically and mentally cope with. The experiences of incarceration might

have a psychological effect on the individual such as, suicide and self-harm. Some prisoners feel that being incarcerated was painful enough but Christmas and New Year made this pain unbearable. The only author to make specific reference to such pains is an ex prisoner named Boil 1985 (Sykes 1958), he writes on Boxing day 1980.... I'm locked up and shutting all of the emotions of this occasion keeping myself intact and together, I see everyone here struggling what is obviously a difficult period for the other prisoners'..... By the individual being imprisoned and therefore segregated from society Incarceration of an individual could be seen as a harsh form of punishment, but certain individuals might actually commit criminal activities, if there is no imprisonment or law enforcement at all. Another function and goals of imprisonment is the individual being segregated from society by being incarcerated, this could have a traumatic effect on the individual such as physical discomfort and/or psychological suffering. This is highlighted through ' the pains of imprisonment' (Sykes 1958). The adjustment to segregation of imprisonment can be extremely difficult for the prisoner and can affect the psychological thought processes of the individual. This can be dysfunctional during the imprisonment of an individual's concept of adjustment. The psychological effects on segregation and imprisonment need to be managed by the penal system's authority disciplinarians who are controlling the incarceration process. Prison service throughout England uses a care planning system called ACCT (Assessment, Care in Custody, and Teamwork. The ACCT document provides a tool to monitor the emotionally disturbed prisoner closely, involving and engaging the prisoner in implementing ways of minimalizing the prisoner's problems and aiding the

prisoner to utilise channels of actual support. (Ministry of Justice 2012). The prison system can learn from self-harm behaviour and is pivotal in collating and understanding prisoner's pattern of behaviour whilst being segregated from society. The analysing and close monitoring of prisoner's behaviour gives an indication into patterns, such as, triggers, timing, severity and psychological mood changes of the prisoner. The individual's that are most vulnerable are the prisoners that find 'the pains of imprisonment' unbearable to physically cope with. The prisoners that are in high risk category are those who have never been incarcerated, the prisoner with a lengthy custodial sentence, and also prisoners that have been targeted by other inmates who are basically asserting their masculinity over the much weaker, vulnerable prisoner. It is not only the prisoner who suffers from being imprisoned. Some theorists might argue that the individual who commits deviant criminal activities deserves to be segregated and incarcerated from society. But (Codd 1998) emphasises that punishment such as incarceration of a criminal, will inflict emotional suffering to the offenders family members, who have not been found guilty of any criminal activity. The final principle function and goals of imprisonment is the process of rehabilitation of the prisoner. Prisoner rehabilitation focuses on and refers to procedures that are implemented to reform the prisoner's character and hopefully to prevent them committing any further deviant criminal acts. The aim of rehabilitation is to restore the individual's thought processes to fit back into society through therapy and education. Rehabilitation aids the prisoner to accept and acknowledge their past mistakes and hopefully reform and hopefully adapt back into normal society behaviour. Rehabilitation

programmes can start from the beginning of a prisoner's custodial sentence, and is closely governed by prison staff and officials, with the primary function of the prisoner not reoffending and ending back in the prison system. One factor that emphasises this is the concept of deterrence which is the simplistic view that the rate of crime is minimalized, mainly people's fear of punishment if they commit a deviant act or indeed reoffend. Home Secretary (1993) states that...." Prison works...it makes many who are tempted to commit crime think twice".... In Conclusion the principle functions and goals of imprisonment are to punish an individual who commits a deviant criminal activity by the method of imprisonment, thus leading on to segregation from society. The next goal is then to rehabilitate the prisoner to avoid the individual reoffending and ending back being incarcerated. Today's penal system is completely different from Victorian penal system and even though it is without fault, it aims to treat all prisoners with humanity and dignity that every human being is entitled to. Even though the individual's committed the deviant criminal act, the principle function and goals of imprisonment are in place to protect society, the prisoner too needs protecting and guided from " the pains of imprisonment". Society and the penal system must ensure that individuals who commit deviant criminal acts are punished accordingly to their crimes, but the prisoner's mental and psychological well-being is fully cared for and not compromised for the goal of imprisonment.

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