

Prison research paper examples

[Law](#), [Security](#)



Research paper

Written by name .

Abstract page

With the natural progress and development of human society arose the necessity of its better organization. States were established, appeared towns in which the people started to organize their personal and social life. They started not only to produce food and goods but also started to exchange them. The private property appeared the basic form of property and arose the need to preserve it. There were established rules and norms of personal and social behavior. There were determined rules for exchanging goods, marriage, public behavior etc. Human life attained importance.

Because when there are rules always there is one who breaks them, appeared the necessity of punishment as a retribution once and as a warning to the rest of people for the consequences of such behavior. Retribution and prevention – These were the basic qualities of the punishment , which arose the need to determine what was crime and what punishment corresponded to different crimes. With the better organization of the society the inflict of punishment and its serving also needed better and more civilized organization.

Prisons appeared to be one of the most effective places to serve the punishment and they had to be constructed and developed in accordance to society and time.

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Prison is a place where the person is detained and usually put in prison. This is a legal punishment which may be imposed only by the state for committing a crime. Imprisonment may be proceeded in execution of verdict which came in force or for people accused for committing crimes who are waiting for trial or verdict or for persons according to whom legal measures have to be applied (arrested).

Prison's origin can be traced back in the time when the state came into being and the first states were established. Along with the invention of the scripts it was possible to write down the laws with the help of which the ruling of the state was possible and based on.

One of the oldest known nowadays is Code of Hammurabi(1), written in Babylon about 1750 BC. Punishments included in Code of Hammurabi were based on the principle *lex talionis* or the law of revenge according to which the people who committed crime were punished in the form of revenge often by the victims themselves. This idea of revenge could be found also in other written legal documents of the early civilizations.

Some of the early greek philosophers like Plato came to the idea that the law breakers could be corrected instead of simply punished as a revenge. At the beginning were imprisoned only those who could not pay the fines they were imposed on. For them different terms of detention were established. Where these places for detention were we do not know today.

The Romans were the first to establish the prison officially as a place for serving a term of imprisonment as a form of punishment. We know about the famous at that time Mamertine

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prison who was founded in 640 BC by Ancus Marcius. Another kind of punishment at that time was also hard serf labour on public projects.

In the middle ages the punishment was a privilege of the ruling classes and showed who possessed the authority to rule the state. These were Kings, regional courts, city councils etc. The castles and the basements of the public buildings were often used as prisons. Another commonly used punishment was the galley slavery. The people were chained together at the bottom of the ship and forced to row all the time. They served on either trade or naval ships of the country they came from.

In the 18 century the public executions and tortures were still common practice but the people of the society started to discontent against it. The discontent increased every day and made the authorities to look for another way for punishing e. g. detaining them in special places called prisons.

Britain practiced to sentence their criminals to exile in the British colonies like America till the revolution in 1770 and Australia after that. France used to send them to French Guiana or the famous Ile du Diable (Devil's Island) where they were forced to hard labour .

The first prisons in United States(2) were projected according to model of Jeremy Bentham's " panopticon". The building represented individual cells placed around a well centered construction for observation from which the prisoners could be supervised secretly. Later this construction was replaced with rectangular one well-known as " Auburn system" in which the individual cells were placed in them. Italy reformed the inherited from the previous regime

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prisons into more liberal and secular facilities in 1861 after the unification of the state. Unfortunately no reforms took place in women's prisons which remained under the jurisdiction of the catholic church.

A great role in prison reforms in Italy played Cesare Lombroso (1835 - 1909) who is famous with his interesting theory about the anthropological features of a person showing his susceptibility of committing a crime.

Prisons are designed to prevent the inmates from escape. They are built in places with natural obstacles and good field of vision. They are equipped with the last achievements of all branches of science and industry. In distinction with 19 century when the security relied more on mechanical solutions the modern nowadays prisons are supplied with electronic devices which ensure the full observation of prisoners on the part of the staff.

The modern prisons are designed in a way that allows to a group of 16 to 50 people to move within certain area called modul or pod. This makes possible for small number of staff, sometimes only one officer to control this group in the pod. The community services as food, laundry, educational activities, health care, gym training etc. are possible to be organized successfully within this area.

In the United States of America the name " jail" and " prison" have different meaning and they refer to detained with different terms of serving verdicts.

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With name " jail" are called those units which are inhabited with inmates sentenced with verdicts till one year imprisonment. Usually the jails are administrated by the county or the city.

Prisons are federal or states institutions for prisoners sentenced for longer than one year terms of serving and they consist of three categories according to the degree of security levels. The first category is of low security degree or the so called “ Prison camps”. The second category is of medium security degree called “ Correctional institution” and the third category is of maximum security degree and called “ Penitentiary”.

In the maximum security facilities serve the most dangerous for the national security prisoners as terrorists, political prisoners and prisoners moved from other prisons for violent behavior. They stay in individual locked cells with no permission for visits, with only one hour physical training alone. The meals are served in the cells and they have no right to meet other prisoners.

The prisons have all necessary units for leading normal everyday life such as religion area, educational area often with library, gym, yard, healthcare unit or hospital. They have service units as kitchens, laundries, areas for entertainment as TV rooms, pool table etc. In every prison there is administration area for the staff. They have also units for isolation where some prisoners are isolated from others for certain term as a punishment for bad behavior. The inmates with high risk of committing suicide there are special areas where they are under supervision 24 hours. One of the most important for the prisoners is the visiting area where they meet friends, family, lawyers and other people.

There are different versions of prisons.

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with their Juveniles detention units for people under 18 where the young people can go on education and professional orientation. Although the young

criminals could be put on trial as adults (Canada) , they will serve in youth facilities. When they reach the proper age of majority they may be moved to prisons for adults. The young people serve apart from the adult criminals who could have irretrievable influence upon the young minds of juveniles. There were military prisons which were part of the military order since the French revolution. France itself modernized its military system and prisons as part of it in 1852. The United States transferred its military prisons into civilian in order to include Alcatraz – former military prison during the American civil war. In the military prisons were detained military detainees and unlawful combatants who were considered as a high risk for the national security.

The worse was the situation of naval prisoners who were kept in old out-of-use ship hulks where they lived in unbearable conditions, suffering from heavy diseases and most of them died slowly.

Great number of criminals have variety of mental disorders. As they are considered dangerous for the surrounding people they are kept in psychiatric units which belong to the prisons or in special psychiatric clinics which also belong to that system.

Female prisoners serve in prisons only for women where unfortunately 70% of the staff are male. Very often they become subjects of rape and sexual abuse while serving the term they were sentenced to serve. For most of them it was not a new experience. The statistics in 2007(3) say that 5% of women enter the prison pregnant and that 6% of all female inmates are pregnant. The balance is obvious. Therefore the female prisons need their maternity units for pregnancy and

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childbirth. The women need also a proper healthcare which is usually not at the necessary level. The pregnant inmates suffer from high risk of miscarriage.

There exist some known alternatives to imprisonment where the offenders are not high risk law violators.

One of them is the so called “ conditional sentence” which has to be served outside prisons and was attempt to reduce the huge amount of prison inhabitants. It was first reported in 1996. In many countries we hear for them much earlier. It includes participating in community projects with some kind of restrictions and requirements such as participation in groups for drug and alcohol treatment, house arrest or electronic monitoring. Most of the sentenced to conditional sentence were drivers with violation of driver’s rules without death case. Serving that the offenders could see family, friends, go to work and many other privileges which were only dream for the regular prison inmates.

Another alternative of incarceration is the restorative justice. According to this method the offender should take responsibility for his/her actions and try

“ to repair the harm they’ve done – by apologizing, returning stolen money or community service”.

At this approach to justice the victims play great part in the process.

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References:

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