

Prison population growth assignment

Law



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The prison population has grown substantially in recent years, what is the explanation for this? Academic Integrity Statement: I have read and understood the Academic Integrity rules and regulations for Kaplan Open Learning and the University Of Essex, and declare that this assignment bides by all of the rules and regulations contained within it. Name: Michael Locke Module: Introduction to Online Learning Tutor: Byron Davies Submission Date: 6th May 2010 The prison population has grown substantially in recent years, what is the explanation for this?

Michael Locke CJ1LS0310A In this essay I will examine why the prison population has grown substantially in recent years, and the explanation for this. I will observe how the prison service has developed, examine the role the government has adopted, and attempt to see where the current policies will lead. British prisons were established over 200 years ago. They began life as holding cells for people awaiting trial or for those that could not pay fines. The Penitentiary Act of 1779 was passed by parliament which introduced the first state run prisons.

Although only two prisons were built and both were in London, this was the beginning of the Prison Service we know today. Around the mid 1700's many prisoners were held on ships called hulks awaiting transport to the new world. After the American Revolution more and more prisoners were held on permanently moored ships and the situation was getting out of control. The gaol act of 1823 allowed for the first statement of principles in prison management. It wasn't until 1853 that the idea of serving a sentence behind bars was conceived as an alternative to being transported to Australia or put to death.

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In 1877 prisons were nationalised and a prison commission was established to run them. With the advent of the commission came new attitudes to prisoner reform which began a development in the understanding of rehabilitation. This new ideology was a combination of religious salvation and humanitarian concerns. (Davies, Croall, Tyrer 2010: 432) It took until 1963 for the Prison Commission to be abolished in favour of 'The Prison Service' which was then overseen by the Home Office.

There have been many minor changes within the prison service but the next major overhaul was in 2004 when it was announced that the Prison service and probation service were to be amalgamated together as the National Offenders Management Service (NOMS) with overall control by the Ministry of Justice. Throughout the history of the Prison Service its role has often swung between that of punishment and rehabilitation. Public pressure has often dictated prison policy and of course, government philosophy.

An article written by David Green, the director of the Institute for the Study of Civil Society, in the Guardian made the following observations; in the early 80's the Tory government pursued an anti prison policy and cut the prison population by over 10%. Soon after, crime reached an historic high. When the Labor government took power they reversed the policy and between 1993 and 2001 the prison population increased by 45%. According to the British Crime Survey crime then dropped 19.1 million to 12.6 million. More people incarcerated results in reduced crime.

Estimates that have been drawn up suggest that for each prisoner incarcerated the result was a reduction of 140 crimes a year. It was also

suggested that for any inmate with a drug problem this figure could reach 257. If each prisoner carried out the average number of offences identified by the Home Office, then 2.8 million offences against the public would have been prevented by 12 months in jail. If they were high-rate offenders, the effect would have been 5.1 million offences. This would account for the fall from 19 million crimes to 12 million. (July 20th 2003)

This continuing zero tolerance to prison sentencing and continuing increase in inmate population cannot be sustained. Yes, the figures suggest that the public is awarded some comfort of fewer crimes but at some stage most inmates will be released to wreak havoc on the crime statistics once more. The National Offenders Management system is, in my opinion, a turning point in the history of the prison service. It joins together the prison service and probation service into one department. I have witnessed many cases of re-offending whilst a police officer.

On a personal note my brother has been imprisoned on at least four occasions that I am aware of. On each release it has taken him just a few days before he returned to a life of crime. I once asked him why. He informed me that it was a lack of support on the outside. Yes, he could attend lifeline meetings; yes, he could speak to his probation officer, but none of that mattered when he had no work, housing in the midst of other drug users and could see no way out but to return to using, crime to fund that use, and a hope he would not get caught again.

The first prison sentence he received was four months and he vowed never to go back. It was only 12 months later than he was sentenced again to one

year. Burglary, shoplifting, and robbery were his actions of choice. In conclusion I am well aware of how statistics can be seen to highlight a certain policy. It costs 42, 000 pound a year to house an inmate. The cost of all these rehabilitation programs could be allocated to house more inmates. But at what stage is the cost of incarcerating prisoners going to outweigh the cost of rehabilitation?

If we can both reduce the prison population and reduce recidivism not only would there be a reduction in crimes but it would also lessen the burden of public expense. ' Effective drug treatment lies at the heart of reducing reoffending. It directly addresses the harm to individuals, making communities safer and helping offenders to lead law-abiding and productive lives on release. ' Prisons Minister David Hanson – March 2008, from the Ministry of Justice Website.

I believe that any success in rehabilitation, however small, is more important than the lock up and forget policy of the past. Davies, Malcolm. Croall, Hazel. Tyrer, Jane. (2010) ' Prisons' Criminal Justice 4th Edition. Longman Green, David. (20th July 2003) ' Crime is falling – because prisons work' <http://www.insidetime.org/articleview.asp?a=716> can_rehabilitation_be_designed_into_a_prison. [Retrieved 6th May 2010] ' HM Prison service'. <http://www.hmprisonservice.gov.uk/abouttheservice/>. [Retrieved 6th May 2010] 28th June 2005) ' Prison Rehabilitation'. [http://www.politics.co.uk/briefings-guides/issue-briefs/public-services/prisons/prison-rehabilitation/prison-rehabilitation-\\$366690.htm](http://www.politics.co.uk/briefings-guides/issue-briefs/public-services/prisons/prison-rehabilitation/prison-rehabilitation-$366690.htm). [Retrieved 6th May 2010] (17th March 2008) ' Government boosts funding for prison drug treatment ' <http://www.https://assignbuster.com/prison-population-growth-assignment/>

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