

Probation

Business



Abstract This study looks into probation relating it to criminal justice. It also seeks to give a general overview of the statistics of individuals on probation. It is important to note that, probation is a very common type of sentencing in the United States of America. This study is of importance to those involved with probation. It is an issue that affects the American Crime and Judicial system.

There have been various research carried out by individuals, and institutions on this topic of probation. The scholars have more or less agreed about my topic, however, this study argues for a better interpretation. For a better understanding of this research topic, the American Correctional Association defines probation as: “ A court-ordered dispositional alternative through which an adjudicated offender is placed under control, supervision and care of a probation staff member in lieu of imprisonment, so long as the probation meets certain standards of contacts.” **Methodology** This study has utilized a comparative case study as the methodology. It has utilized the benefits associated with the use of comparative case studies in the topic; probation. There is a lot of information on the topic of research.

By taking a look at previous researches, this study ascertains the various data given about individuals who face probation in one way or another. What are the figures of those on probation in the United States? **Research findings** This study has found out that, probation refers to the release of a defendant found guilty of a crime into the community, but under certain conditions. When these conditions are violated in any way, the defendant may face incarceration. This is the time, during which an offender is usually supervised by a probation officer. It is important to note that, during this time, the

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offender reports to the officer on a regular basis; it is part of the judicial process. A sentence by a judge usually requires that a defendant remains free of arrest for a certain period of time.

Individuals on probation are also required to stick to certain terms and conditions while they are being supervised by government agencies dealing with the justice system (Petersilia, 3-15). The study has also ascertained that, when the probation is successfully completed, the sentence may be discharged forever. However, if the defendant does not complete the probation, he or she will be subjected to incarceration for the time that had already been given. This study examines the number of adults who are under community supervision by the year 2008. About five million adults were being supervised from 2000 to 2008.

This translates to about one in every forty six adults in the United States who were under community supervision. Into more details among the incarcerated, those on probation were about four million individuals, that is, eighty percent (2008). Those on probation represented about slightly lower than one percent of the population. During the same year, about thirty six thousand probationers increased the numbers of those individuals on probation. This study looks at statistics from previous years.

In the year 2005, probationers made up about sixty percent of adults under correctional supervision. On a more large scale, there were about two and a half million adults who had undergone probation each year between 1995 and 1997. This represents about one and half percent of the adult population. Three-quarters of them were male, forty percent in the youngest

adult bracket (18-25). About seven percent were fifty and above years of age. Majority of them (sixty five percent) were white, eighteen percent black and fourteen percent Hispanic.

In regional, probationers were more prevalent in the South (44 %), 11% in the North East. However, there were no major differences in looking at population density. Forty four percent of probationers never graduated high school. This means that, probationers were less likely to complete a college degree. Petersilia has given a number of ideas and suggestion dealing with the revision of probation.

This study looks into some of her arguments, and looks into which policy revision seems to be the most important. The study has found out that, community correction has undertaken a revolution recently. The numbers of individuals on probation have increased tremendously over the past years (Petersilia, 35-45). This can be attributed to the fact that offenders in the society keep on committing more crimes that are serious in nature. However, the funding for probation programs has never increased.

This places pressure on these programs. It means that they have to be tough and cheap at the same time. It is important to note that, probation is supposed to keep the communities, which these individuals on probation live in, safe (Crowe, 28). Most importantly, the programs are supposed to rehabilitate the offenders. As a result, newer programs have been put in place; some have been successful while others have not. Examples of these programs include boot camps, electronic monitoring, and house arrest.

Despite the fact that probation receives a lot of attention, there have been little discussions about it. Petersilia looks at the harsh realities of prisoners' reentry and gives ideas on how to solve this crisis. She confronts the thorny issue of dealing with prisoners the moment they arrive back to the society. Very few of the convicts get stable employment, and most of them end up going back to jails. Petersilia points out that, the current correctional system has turned into being a form of punishment rather than be rehabilitative. There is a lack of follow-ups for released convicts.

Probation officers provide few services, and only see them a few times. In my own view, I agree with the fact that correctional facilities and programs need to address the pertinent issues of safety in the society, as well as, making sure that probationers get a chance to change their criminal ways, and not just go back to jail. The criminal justice department needs to get more funding and increase the number of probation officers, who will in turn work effectively in reforming individuals on probation. There is an urgent need of addressing the right issues when dealing with convicts. Why were they convicted in the first place? Do they feel left out of the society? These are some of the questions that need to be asked by the criminal justice department.

The current system needs to be rehabilitative in nature (Crowe, 29).

Conclusion Probation is supposed to protect the community by always monitoring the offender, and also aid the offenders in upholding the law. Intensive probation is the type where individuals on probation are closely monitored by GPS or home detention. Others are supposed to report to

probation officers after some designated time. There are also those who could go unsupervised.

Research has it that, probation can be an effective program in rehabilitating some of the offenders in the community. If they are designed properly and implemented successfully, probation programs can reduce cases of drug abuse and recidivism. The public seems to be in favor of probation. This is because some probation programs seem to be more effective than short term prison sentences. The criminal and justice department needs to do a lot of research and also evaluation to determine whether probation, which is funded adequately, can rehabilitate offenders or protect the society at large.