

The prisoner's dilemma by stephen chapman

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The Prisoner's Dilemma by Stephen Chapman

Introduction

Having graduated from Harvard University, Stephen Chapman (1954) has worked as an associate publisher of the New Republic. He has penned many articles to a number of reputable magazines such as Reason, Harper's and The Atlantic. However, the Prisoner's Dilemma is one of Chapman's critical pieces. In it, he discusses the most appropriate penal code that should be used, as shall be seen forthwith.

Whether Chapman's Essay Works or Not

By far and wide, Chapman's essay successfully works. Chapman's essay convincingly contrasts the penal systems of the US and those of the Islamic countries. Through the use of critical analysis, Chapman shows that the US penal system is one that is failed in its five primary functions (retribution, specific deterrence, general deterrence, prevention and rehabilitation).

Inconsistency in the degree of the penalty, overcrowding in prisons, outbreaks of diseases such as tuberculosis and hepatitis, unsanitary conditions, poor and inadequate medical care and prison violence are aptly discussed as some of the indicators of these failures. Specific details and statistics are used and thereby differentiating Chapman's work from a mere conjecture. This quality makes Chapman's work and assertions compelling and authentic (Cole and Grossman, 220).

Whether Chapman's Use of Comparison/ Contrast Builds an Effective Argument or Not

One of the factors that make Chapman's work an effective argument is the use of contrasts or comparisons. For instance, Chapman contrasts the penal system in the Islamic world and the US. While Chapman covertly admits that <https://assignbuster.com/the-prisoners-dilemma-by-stephen-chapman/>

the use of punishment as prescribed in the Koran and Islamic traditions seems somewhat archaic, he shows that it works fully well in ensuring deterrence. For instance, one with an amputated limb is openly known to have stolen and will harbor very strong compunctions towards any wrongdoing.

On the other hand is the American penal system which is totally ineffective in fostering the purposes of criminal justice system. An apt example of a prison in Tennessee with a capacity of 806 but houses 2, 300 inmates makes Chapman's argument totally effective. The comparison of the penal system across the states in America also underscores the veracity of Chapman's argument that American justice system is ineffectively unequal. While a habitual offender in Kentucky can be given a life sentence, his counterpart in California can be granted only 12 years, as is seen in the case of George Jackson. The matter is not any better when the issue of parole is introduced in the discussion.

Work Cited

Cole, Daniel and Peter Grossman. "Institutions Matter: Why the Herder Problem Is Not a Prisoner's Dilemma." *Theory & Decision*, 69. 2 (2010), 219-31. Print.