

Reading Reflection: Corrections in America

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Author Note

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Reading *Corrections in America* by Todd R. made me aware of several issues plaguing the system while placing these issues in their adequate historical context.

Corrections in America are riddled with several problems ranging from the reconciliation of contradictory goals to funding while also dealing with the intricate issues of unity, diversity, and attainment of justice within a polarized society.

The first chapter introduced what corrections mean and how the system in America is facing a unique mix of problems (Clear, 2018). The history of the corrections system begins in the second chapter of the book, where the different theories put forth in the earliest times of corrections were addressed. This history then focuses on America in the third chapter, and everything from the colonial times to the civil rights era has been discussed (Clear, 2018). Reading this taught me that the history of corrections in America is a long journey from slavery and corporal punishment to the current liberal and progressive rehabilitation system over retribution. Different types of sentencing are discussed in chapter 4, while a critical analysis of unjust punishments, the factors leading to them, and the social impact can also be found. Chapter 5 was especially interesting for highlighting the constitutional rights of the incarcerated and inducing the idea that the human rights of prisoners must be the major topic of attention for any reform in the corrections system (Clear, 2018). Different categories of people under correctional authority have been discussed in the sixth chapter. This also taught me about the interesting historicization of the relationship between immigration and the criminal justice system.

Jails, their primary use in the corrections system in America, the history behind jails, and the current administration and system of prisons across America are addressed in the seventh chapter (Clear, 2018). One of the book's most interesting parts was the detailed description of probation as used in the corrections system of America in the eighth chapter of

the book (Clear, 2018). The journey taken by probation in America and the current state in which it exists have all been discussed here. Important topics like recidivism and evidence-based practice in this chapter were also interesting to explore. Another very interesting topic was the concept of community corrections in the book's ninth chapter, where the different types of non-incarceration penalties focusing on community justice have been discussed (Clear, 2018). Intermediate sanctions and community corrections were fascinating topics for me to read and understand while reading this chapter.

Out of the various topics I read and learned from in this book, the topics of probation and community justice were especially captivating. Probation is a progressive concept in a world where retribution is still believed to be a credible motive for incarceration. Non-incarceration penalties, which have to be served in an environment that is not a jail, come under community corrections (Kurki, 2000). Probation falls under the umbrella of this definition and therefore has a very deep-rooted relationship with the concept of community justice. Effective practice of probation which leads to rehabilitation and assimilation of the person back into society is rooted in community justice. Probation, linked with community justice and overlooked by the community corrections instead of the formal criminal justice system, is much likelier to reduce recidivism and inculcate the desire for conformity in the previously deviant (Harding, 2000).

It is, therefore, clear that corrections in America face a wide range of problems coming from a unique historical context. The current system needs to move in a more progressive direction towards community justice, and the link between effective probation and community corrections is crucial.

References

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