

Capital Punishment And Deterrence Of Crime

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Abstract

This document focuses on the vital role played by capital punishment in the deterrence of crime. The issue of capital punishment has been at the heart of the debate on measures to reduce the growing rate of crime. Some people argue against the death penalty on moral grounds. However, a majority of the criminals who are merely incarcerated show no signs of deterrence once they get out of prison. Hence, capital punishment is the only effective way to lower the rate of crime by instilling fear among criminals.

A contrasting analysis considers [whether the death penalty deters crime](#).

Introduction

Capital punishment plays an important role in the deterrence of crime within society. However, despite its effectiveness throughout the history of the world, the issue of the death penalty has been at the heart of the political and public debate in recent times. The opponents of capital punishment regard it as inhumane treatment and an infringement of the rights of people. But, contrary to popular belief, the truth is the opposite. While capital punishment is not exactly cost-effective, it is successful in the deterrence of crime. Capital punishment is also necessary to help the public feel safe and to feel that justice was righteously served.

Arguments

The death penalty has always been utilized throughout the world to punish the criminals involved in heinous crimes. Yes, it can be argued that it is a very severe form of punishment, but at the same time, it should also be kept in mind that the hardened criminals who are punished this way do not deserve even an ounce of kindness. Capital punishment is usually reserved for people convicted of the most serious crimes, such as murder. Therefore, the foremost argument in favor of capital punishment is the fact that such criminals disregard the sanctity of human life in the first place and, therefore, they do not deserve to be spared. The punishment they get should be befitting to the severity of the crime they committed.

Furthermore, a sense of justice requires that the offender who has deprived another person of her or

his life should be punished for this. Since the institution of the death penalty historically arose from the ancient principle of blood feud, “an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth,” only by destroying a villain would the victim’s relatives consider the incident exhausted.

Secondly, the death penalty is an effective enough method to prevent serious crimes. Therefore, intentional murders should be punished by depriving the offender of life in order to deter other potential criminals from such acts. At the same time, according to scientific research, the use of capital punishment has a high preventive indicator; the fear of a criminal before death sometimes causes her or him to be deterred from wrongful acts.

The followers of this argument believe that even if the death penalty does not stop other criminals, it will still benefit society in the form of one less brutal killer. The death penalty is undoubtedly a deterrent mechanism against the growth of serious crimes. From this point of view, it can be regarded as an instrument for the protection of society.

On the same note, as shown by numerous scientific studies on this issue, if capital punishment is abolished, the criminal committing a serious act expects that she or he will be able to avoid the highest punitive measure and, therefore, at the time of committing a crime she or he does not think that she or he will be condemned to death. Upon getting caught, these criminals hire the best available law experts to save them from life imprisonment, as the death penalty is already absent.

It is true that capital punishment may be costlier than other methods of punishment, but this fact merely cannot be utilized to argue against the effectiveness of the measure. As humans, it is the right of the affected families to seek retribution against the person responsible for causing them harm. One has to consider the case that if the sole breadearner of the family is murdered, then how can it be expected for the family of the murdered person to forgive the individual responsible for the crime? They will seek every possible way to make the murderer pay dearly, and the worst form of punishment in this regard is only the death penalty.

Moreover, according to statistical researchers, at present, there are more than 2800 people in prisons who are on death row. Furthermore, an estimated 250 people are added every year to death row. Although some people might state that there may be some innocent people among these prisoners, it is not a strong enough argument to abolish the death penalty. In this context, it is worthy to note that the process of determining the guilt of an individual before assigning her or him to death row is not a simple one. In fact, the trials of these people take a long time. In some cases, the trial may go on for years until the accused is finally convicted. Throughout the trial process, extensive evidence is presented before the jury and the judge; only after careful examination of the evidence is a person deemed appropriate to deserve capital punishment. Also, contrary to popular belief that the death penalty is losing the support of the American public, more than 70 percent of the American population supports capital punishment in one form or another. (National Research Council, 2012)

Still, it is highly imperative to consider the fact that although a majority of the American public is in favor of capital punishment, there are certain people who strongly oppose it. One of the main reasons

behind this thinking is that they consider the process of administering capital punishment inadequate. Such a concern has its roots in the notion that the process of application of the death penalty is not fair and certain factors play a significant role in assigning the death penalty to an individual. These factors may be related to race, gender, social or financial status, and other factors. Yet, despite these concerns, there is no concrete evidence that the death penalty is mostly reserved for people of lower status or belonging to races that are considered to be inferior.

Researchers have also insinuated that many people do not support capital punishment; instead, they are merely accepting the idea. They are noting that there is a difference between accepting something and supporting something. They also realized that 9 percent of the people who are in favor of capital punishment changed their response when presented with alternatives to capital punishment. Additionally, it was implicated that women are more likely to reject the idea of capital punishment than men.

In the modern United States, the issue of the application or abolition of the death penalty is one of the most discussed issues. Its significance is largely due to the fact that the evaluation of this type of punishment also gives the public consciousness. And now, especially after the rise in terrorism in the U.S., voices in favor of the institution of the death penalty for terrorists are heard more often. In general, this supreme measure of punishment is present in the legislation of 68 countries, including Japan, India, China, and Saudi Arabia.

In addition, one may argue that capital punishment eliminates the opportunity for rehabilitation. It is indeed the case. However, it should be noted that the perpetrators of heinous crimes do not deserve any opportunity for rehabilitation. Taking a human's life is not a matter to be taken lightly. Human life is the most sacred thing on earth, and the one responsible for taking it must pay dearly. Therefore, the presence of capital punishment acts as a warning for other people to never engage in such crimes as it would result in the end of their own lives. Hence, people are deterred from committing such crimes.

Conclusion

In conclusion, after examining the arguments stated above, it can efficiently be said that capital punishment plays an imperative role in the deterrence of crime. (Amnesty International, 2025) It instills the feeling of fear among the people desiring to commit heinous crimes by viewing the example of other such criminals losing their lives as punishment for their crimes. Also, a vast majority of the American people support capital punishment due to its effectiveness in the prevention of serious crimes.

References

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