CRITICAL EVALUATION OF THE RELEVANCE OF REHABILITATION THEORY OF REDUCTIVISM TO CONTEMPORARY CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM.

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Abstract.

The concept of rehabilitation of offenders as a tool for tackling recidivism and controlling crime has been one of the most contentious issues among different schools of thought in criminology, criminal justice jurisprudence, political leaders, and criminal justice administrators. There are those who argue that because human beings are rational thinkers, have free will and are utilitarian in nature, they deserve punishment for any felony. However, there are others who contend that because there are factors that are beyond some people's control which cause them to commit crime, they deserve to be treated or reformed and rehabilitated rather than punished. Using secondary research, the study evaluated rehabilitation theory of Reductivism and assessed its relevance to contemporary criminal justice systems around the world. In doing so it reviewed criminological theories that support rehabilitation theory of Reductivism, history of rehabilitation paradigm, the role of justice paradigm in increasing prison population exponentially around the world and the capacity of rehabilitation paradigm to reduce criminal recidivism and crime rates. The findings indicate that although rehabilitation theory of Reductivism suffered some setbacks, researchers in penology have proven that it works and is a more efficient and humane way of combating crime by reducing recidivism. These researchers are also restructuring treatment models to make them more result oriented. Consequently, many criminal justice systems around the world, seem to have realised that rehabilitation is a better penal option and, appear to be reverting to the rehabilitation theory of Reductivism rather than the justice model or "just desert".

Key words: Rehabilitation, Reductivism, Recidivism, Rational, Predestined, Punishment, Crime, Utilitarian.

Background of the study

Reductivism is a theory of rehabilitation which seeks to rationalise punishment for the purpose of its future consequences; therefore, it advocates the reduction of crime through deterrence, incapacitation, and rehabilitation (Cavadino and Dignan, 2007). The concept of rehabilitation of offenders refers to the reformation of the character of offenders with a view to readying such offenders to re-join society, as useful and law-aiding members of the community (Craig *et al.*, 2003). Although the rehabilitation theory of Reductivism was enunciated by the predestined actor model of criminological theories (Cavadino and Dignan, 2007), it was Cesare Beccaria; an enlightenment thinker, who first contemplated the idea by arguing that punishment should be used to "requalify" offenders as members of the society, even though he advocated a utilitarian concept of rehabilitation (Craig, *et al.*, 2003).

The concept of rehabilitation of offenders as a tool for tackling criminal recidivism and controlling crime has been one of the most divisive issues among different schools of thought in criminology, criminal justice jurisprudence, political leaders, and policy makers. There are those who rely on the rational actor model of criminological theories and argue that because human beings are rational thinkers, possess free will and are utilitarian in nature, they deserve punishmentfor any felony (Akers *et al.*, 2017). For them "punishment should be based on the social harm of the act and not on the intention of the offender. Therefore, like offences should receive like punishment, punishment should fit the crime and not the criminal" (Bentham, 1961, quoted in Cullen and Gilbert, 1982.p.30). They also contend that the certainty and celerity of punishment should be guaranteed (Akers, *et al.*, 2017).

However, there are others who relying on the predestined actor model of criminological theories contend that because there are factors both internal, external, and situational which are beyond some people's control which cause them to commit criminal acts, they deserve to be treated or reformed and rehabilitated rather than being punished (Burke, 2014). Among them, there still exists divergent opinions over the modalities for accomplishing this goal, such as the use of custodial or non-custodial sentences, determinate, or indeterminate sentences etc.Cullen, et al., 1982).

Objectives of the study.

The objectives of this study are to.

- Review the historical antecedents of rehabilitation paradigm.
- Review the relevance of rehabilitation paradigm in contemporary criminal justice systems around the world.

Overarching Research Question.

• Is the justice paradigm a more effective alternative to the rehabilitation paradigm with respect to reducing criminal recidivism and controlling crime?

Sub Research Question.

What works with rehabilitation?

Review of extant literature.

Although the rational actor model made enormous contributions towards understanding crime, dismantled the harsh criminal justice system of the premodernity era characterised by spirituality, demonisation and the ecclesiastical court system; developed an egalitarian, modern and robust criminal justice system among other things, it was unable to arrest the rising rates of recidivism and controlling crime. This failure would lead to the rise of the predestined actor model (Burke, 2014).

The predestined actor model disagrees with the notion that because every human being is endowed with the capacity to reason, possesses free will, and is pleasure loving, calculates rewards and cost before undertaking any action, chooses those actions that will maximise pleasure over actions that will bring pain, they deserve punishment, if they choose crime, to deter them and others from committing crime. It also rejects the proposition that the proportion and severity of punishment should be determined by the gravity of the offence, and that certainty and celerity of punishment should be guaranteed (Akers, et al., 2017). However, this model contends that although human beings are endowed with reasoning capacity, have free will and are utilitarian, the ability of some people to make rational decisions or to calculate rewards and cost before undertaking any action is inhibited by their position within the social structure, and argues that criminal behaviour is caused by factors which are situational and either internal or external or both, and are beyond the control of such people. "Thus, in some way, it is the destiny of the individual to become a criminal" (Burke, 2014. p.81). Therefore, since the factors causing people to offend are beyond them, they require help rather than punishment to get over these problems, to be able to lead a pro social lifestyle(Burke, 2014).

Consequently, it believes that "one way of preventing crime is the reduction of re-offending by treating or reforming and rehabilitating offenders" (Crow, 2001.p.9). Hence it advocates a reductivist approach to punishment, wherein, the criminal justice system applies punishment as a correctional measure, by pursuing treatment or reformation and rehabilitation. For them prisons should not exist solely for incapacitation, deprivation of freedom and deterrence, but should avail prisoners the opportunity of receiving some form

of vocational training, education, and assistance aimed at making them law abiding citizens as they return to the community(Crow, 2001).

The predestined actor model of criminological theories can be classified into biological, psychological, and sociological theoretical frameworks. The biological theories argue that criminality arises from some physiological defects, and that these predispose individuals to crime, and contend that because of these defects these individuals are fundamentally different from the normal population (Akers, et al., 2017). However, by undergoing a series of treatments, they can be cured of these predisposing conditions, thereby enabling them to live a law-abiding life (Cullen and Gilbert, 1982). The psychological theories contend that crime results from psychic instabilities in individuals (Curran and Renzetti, 2001) and posits that criminals can be helped by offering them mental and emotional treatment (Burke, 2014). Sociological theories postulate that crime arises from society's inability to apply informal mechanisms of social control to regulate the conduct of its members, and that though the individual is endowed with the capacity to make choices, these choices are constrained by their position within the social structure. However, through a process of assimilation, access to education, acquisition, employment, access to material resources and resocialisation people so affected can be returned to law-abiding ways (Burke, 2014).

The biological positivists were the first to initiate rehabilitation which they termed treatment because they perceived criminal behaviour as a symptom of mental imbalance. Treatment then, was mainly medical in nature, including surgical procedures, administration of drugs, and the reason for incarceration

was not only to incapacitate and punish the offenders, but to make sure they were always available for treatment (Cullen and Gilbert, 1982).

In the United Kingdom, penal reformations were driven by spiritual and moral good, which has as its central focus the overall health of the individual and was guided by psychiatric, and legal frameworks, developed independent of Lombroso's positivism(Garland, 1988). A turning point was marked when Birmingham Justices appointed Hamblin Smith and W. A. Potts, both psychiatric prison medics, in 1919, to establish a permanent scheme for clinical examination of adult offenders who came before the courts, marking a new penological emphasis upon individual character and specialised treatment (Garland, 1988). This framework thrived till after the Second World War and recorded great success. However, in the late 1960s and early 1970s it was attacked based on theoretical, ethical, and empirical grounding(Crow, 2001).

Due to failure of the wide use of prison sentences as a means of punishing offenders; the huge financial cost of catering for inmates; the incubation of crime in prisons and the custodial nightmares it created, the concept of the penitentiary was inaugurated in America. This was believed to have the capacity to enable restoration of offenders to law abiding ways, by removing them from criminal influence, inculcating virtues of discipline and hard work in them, and offering them religious enlightenment (Cullen and Gilbert, 1982). These ideas were based on two classic designs: the Pennsylvania "solitary" model and the Auburn "congregate" model. (Garland, 1988). This idea later gave way to the concept of "new penology", which challenged the thought that merely locking-up offenders within the walls of an orderly and regimented setting will reform such persons, and advocated cognitive

treatment, indeterminate sentencing and granting of wide-ranging powers to correctional officials, believing that it would secure willingness of convicts to participate in rehabilitation programmes(Cullen and Gilbert, 1982). These views were supported by the "progressives" who further endorsed that offenders' rehabilitation should be treated on a case-by-case basis; unrestricted powers for criminal justice officers regarding type of sentence and date of release, creation of community service and parole boards as well as the separation of juveniles from adult offenders (Cullen and Gilbert, 1982).

The belief that offenders can be made to conform to society's normative value system, through a process of rehabilitation provided the rationale behind some of the penal policies pursued by many criminal justice systems around the world from the beginning of the 20th century (Cavadino and Dignan, 2007). The prisons around this period were referred to as "correctional facilities"; reformatories were created to facilitate the separation of young offenders from adult offenders, and a framework for rehabilitation was set up (Cullen and Gilbert, 1982). Consequently, there was widespread belief that criminology would gradually determine the causes of crime and find remedies to the problem of criminals and juvenile delinquents (Cavadino and Dignan, 2007). However, this optimism that rehabilitation was going to cure offenders and return them to conformity, did not work as anticipated partly because the system lacked adequate qualified personnel; programmes lacked integrity; the theories upon which treatments were based were incorrect; indeterminate sentencing was used as coercive custodial weapon and doing harm to prisoners; the techniques applied were harmful and degrading; bias and discrimination on the part of judicial officials led to abuses of the wide discretionary powers allowed them; judges were not properly trained for the

purpose and the structure of the prisons posed great challenges (Cullen and Gilbert, 1982).

In 1974, the report of Robert Martinson's evaluation of the education and therapeutic intervention programmes offered to prisoners was published in the United States of America, where he declared that rehabilitation programmes have no significant effect on recidivism and that correctional officers could not articulate effective approaches (Gaudreau, et al., 2006). Also, in 1976 Brody's report was published in the United Kingdom, which subtly affirmed Martinson's report by concluding that information on rehabilitation cannot be substantiated due to ineffective methodologies and improper research designs, (Craig, et al., 2013). Nonetheless, Brody observed that intensive counselling and supervision models of treatment appear to be effective with some offenders (Crow, 2001). These reports dealt a devastating blow to the rehabilitation theory of reductivism. (Craig, et al., 2013). Therefore, most criminal justice systems around the world adopted the justice paradigm otherwise referred to "just deserts" and initiated tough policies on offenders, such as rigidity in sentencing and longer sentences, which led to an unprecedented rise in prison populations (Wexler, 2006).

Evidence abounds showing that there were more people in prison from the later part of the 20th Century to the first two decades of the 21st Century than at any other time in human history(Archibong, and Obikili, 2020). Prison population grew in Africa by 15%, in the Americas by 41%, in Asia by 29%, in Oceania by 59%, between 2000 and 2015 (Jacobson, *et al.*, 2017). In America, the rate of imprisonment increased from 313 to 726 per 100,000 people between 1985 and 2004 (Coley and Barton, 2006), and the prison population rose from 329,821 in 1980 to 1,302,019 in 1998(U.S. Department of Justice, 1999, cited in

Hooks, *et al.*, 2004). The prison population in Brazil increased from 30,000 to above 600,000 between 1973 and 2017, in Kenya from 35,000 to 57,000 between 2002 and 2015, in Thailand from 20,000 to 330,000 between 1960 and 2015 and in the United Kingdom to about 87,000 from 40,000 between 1975 and 2012(Jacobson, *et al.*, 2017). The current population of prisoners world widestands at about 11 million(Archibong, and Obikili, 2020).

In the United Kingdom, the proportion of the prison population comprised of sentenced adult males (aged21 and over) has increased over the past twenty years from 60% in June 1993 to 75% in March 2013 (Berman and Dar, 2013 p.4).

However, although most governments around the world embraced the justice paradigm, in the aftermath of Martinson's and Brody's reports, nothing took over the functions fulfilled by rehabilitation within the criminal justice systems around the world (Crow, 2001).

Findings

The findings show that the rise in recidivism and crime rates, as well as the exponential increase in prison population around the world during the later part of the 20th Century and the first two decades of the 21st Century were caused by the application of the justice paradigm which originates from the rational actor model of criminological theories and enthrones a "tough on crime attitude". Contrary to Martinson's and Brody's reports which suggested that nothing works with rehabilitation, the findings reveal that the rehabilitation theory of Reductivism works and presents a more efficient, effective and humane approach to controlling crime through the reduction of criminal recidivism, keeping communities safe, reducing the population of prison inmates and the huge financial burden of running prisons placed on the shoulders of governments around the world, particularly the low- and

medium-income countries who find it extremely difficult to make adequate provisions for prisons and prisoners' welfare usually due to paucity of funds.

Robert Martinson's denial of the efficacy of rehabilitation and Brody's tacit affirmation of the denial have been challenged, and using meta-analysis, researchers have proven that across evaluation studies, recidivism rate is lowered on the average by 10 percentage points. (Cullen and Gilbert, 1982). There is an emerging international consensus among scholars that rehabilitation is efficacious based on their reviews of results of treatment of thousands of offenders around the world, particularly in Canada, America, and United Kingdom (Gendreau, et al., 2006). Ironically, Robert Martinson later acknowledged that in some circumstances, rehabilitation is effective in reducing recidivism and renounced the declaration that "nothing works in rehabilitation" (Cullen and Gilbert, 1982).

Programmes employing cognitive behavioural treatment models, targeting known predictors of crime for change and which intervene mainly with high-risk offenders such as "multisystemic treatment" achieve greatest reductions in recidivism(Cullen and Gendreau, 2000). Researchers in penology apart from rolling out empirical evidence on the efficacy of rehabilitation, are urging practitioners to embrace programmes which emphasise educational and vocational training, prison based therapeutic communities for drug offenders and cognitive behavioural treatment, such as "reasoning and rehabilitation" model, which works for general offenders, drug offenders, and sex offenders (Wexler, 2006). Appropriately designed services averagely reduce recidivism by over 50 percent and out of 35 studies of "appropriate services" evaluated by researchers, only two failed to reduce recidivism (Andrews, et al., 1990).

Programmes focusing on factors which are both amenable to change and directly related to criminogenic needs, are most effective, and there has been an increase in the number of rehabilitation programmes for specific offending, such as sexual offending, violent offending, drug and alcohol use, and these programmes focus on the criminogenic needs of offenders(Andrews, et al., 1990). Most effective programmes are based on cognitive behavioural models and juveniles are more successfully rehabilitated than adult offenders because they are treated with cognitive behavioural technique; programmes applied to violent offenders excluding sex offenders show highest efficacy, and greater success is achieved in correctional institutions for youths, either at centres for delinquents or juvenile prisons (Redondo, et al., 1999). Evidence based research indicates that use of criminogenic needs approach to rehabilitation works, that and some types of programmes produce better outcomes than others(Howells and Day, 1999).

However, after several years "we seem finally to have turned the correctional corner, leaving behind a "nothing works" mentality, and finally embarking upon a more promising path" (Wexler, 2006, p. 111). Administrators of criminal justice system in America, have embraced the rehabilitation paradigm which promotes practices that have capacity to reduce risk of reoffending and there is overwhelming approval for evidence based correctional practices, which are swiftly being implemented by criminal justice system administrators with the aim of bringing more targeted services to incarcerated persons(Klingele, 2016). Judges now employ evidence-based sentencing; the determination of a defendant's recidivism risk by the application of actuarial assessment of such factors as criminal history, employment, marital status, age, sex, etc, during sentencing (Massie, 2015).

During sentencing, consideration is also given to convicts' criminogenic needs (Casey *et al.*, 2011). Magistrates and correctional officers regularly use deterrence-based sanction programmes, motivational interviews, counselling techniques, and actuarial risk evaluation tools in arriving at the decision to grantor deny bail to accused persons and to grant parole or otherwise, while probation officers now discuss their contacts with clients in terms of dosage (Carter and Sankovitz, 2014). The "Second Chance Act", which was passed in 2008 by American Congress approved hundreds of millions of dollars to finance programmes and research aimed at achieving fruitful results for convicts (Klingele, 2016).

Canadian government made far-reaching changes through the "Correctional and Conditional Release Act 2019", prompting a paradigm shift in policies and operations of Correctional Service Canada, geared towards facilitating rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders, reducing the risk of reoffending, and keeping communities safe. These changes aim to address specific needs and risks of offenders as well as provide more organised and real interventions to inmates (Public Safety Canada, 2020), while emphasising respect, fairness, collaboration, compassion, inclusiveness on the part of the criminal justice system and enables the criminal justice system to work collaboratively with other sectors to rehabilitate offenders(IRPP, 2018). Following these changes, the criminal justice system lays emphasis on the offender rather than the offence; addresses individual offender's surroundings and circumstances; and focuses on rehabilitation rather than punishment (IRPP, 2018). Judges now exercise discretion in offenders' trial by modifying sentences to suit specific offenders' circumstances and increasing the use of restorative justice (DOJ Canada, 2019). Consideration is also given to reconciliation between released offenders and the community into which they are returning, (IRPP, 2018).

In 2019, the Nigerian government enacted "Nigeria Correctional Service Act, 2019", turning prisons in the country to correctional facilities, and making sweeping changes in their "modus operandi". Some major highlights of this reform include upholding international human rights standards and good correctional practices, enhancing the focus of corrections and promoting reformation, rehabilitation, and reintegration of offenders. It also mandates the Correctional Service to provide opportunities for education, vocational training, training in modern farming techniques and animal husbandry for inmates, as well as to establish and run in designated custodial centres, industrial centres equipped with modern facilities for the enhancement of vocational skills training for inmates, with the aim of facilitating their reintegration into society (Nigeria Correctional Service Act, 2019).

The United Kingdom government in emphasising policies based on the rehabilitation theory of reductivism and deemphasising the policy of justice paradigm or "just desert" observe, "that the desert-based sentencing framework created by the *Criminal Justice Act 1991* was unsatisfactory, affording 'little opportunity to take into account how offenders respond to measures taken during their sentence which are designed to reduce their reoffending, nor the need for some form of reparation to society" (United Kingdom, Home Office, 2000: 1, cited in Lewis, 2005. p.121).

Recommendations

Although governments around the world seem to be turning to the rehabilitation theory of reductivism once more, care should be taken to avoid the mistakes of the past, which include overcrowding, underfunding, application of programmes that are punitive in nature, coerced correction, physical and psychological abuse of prisoners, inadequate and inexperienced staff etc, which had cast doubts over the efficacy of the rehabilitation paradigm. For instance, the vision of rehabilitation contained in recent United Kingdom policy documents and legislation is at variance with the accepted theoretical models, and current rehabilitative efforts appear to be based on punitive managerialist system(Lewis, 2005). The early signs from the community supervision and prisoner resettlement programme introduced in 2014, in England and Wales are not satisfying (Burke, et al., 2019).

Programmes, such as adult boot camps and psychotherapy for sex offenders which had been denounced in the past should be jettisoned(Wexler, 2006). effect Punishment-oriented programmes have no positive on recidivism(Cullen and Gendreau, 2000). Very harsh or too lenient punishments are not very effective (Berenji, et al., 2014) and "inappropriate services" lead to increased recidivism rates (Andrews, et al., 1990). Completion of an educational programme in prison can be positively and directly related to successful post release community adjustment(Hull, et al., 2000). An effective way to reduce recidivism is to make huge interventions for the exprisoners` resettlement at the early stages of their return to the society(Berenji, et al., 2014). The excessive use of imprisonment for punishing felons also creates enormous problems both for the individual as well as society and places huge financial burden on governments(Jacobson, et al., 2017), and therefore should be seriously reconsidered.

Conclusion

The concept of rehabilitation of offenders as a tool for crime control has been one of the most divisive issues in criminology, criminal justice jurisprudence and among political leaders. There are those who argue that because the human being is a rational thinker, possesses free will and is utilitarian in nature, he deserves punishment for any felony. There are others who contend that because there are factors which are beyond some people's control which cause them to commit crime, they deserve to be treated or reformed and rehabilitated. Among those who agree that rehabilitation is necessary for crime control, there still exists divergent opinions over the modalities for accomplishing this goal.

In the United Kingdom, penal reformations were driven by spiritual and moral good, which has as its central focus the overall health of the individual and was guided by psychiatric, and legal frameworks. In America, the penitentiary was created, and was believed to have the capacity to enable the restoration of offenders to conformity, by removing them from criminal influence, inculcating the virtues of discipline and hard work in them, and offering them religious enlightenment. These ideas were based on the two classic designs of the penitentiary in America, which are, the Pennsylvania "solitary" model and the Auburn "congregate" model which was successfully challenged by the "new penology" and the "progressives, leading to the adoption ofcognitive treatment for offenders among other changes.

However, Robert Martinson's and Brody's evaluation reports devastated the rehabilitation paradigm by doubting its efficacy and led most criminal justice systems and governments around the world to adopt the justice paradigm. Nonetheless, using meta-analysis, researchers in penology have proven that across evaluation studies, the recidivism rates have been lowered by rehabilitation. Many correctional treatment programmes are highly effective in reducing recidivism, such as rehabilitation programmes which employ

cognitive behavioural treatment targeting known predictors of crime for change. Consequently, in recent times criminal justice administrators have fully embraced the rehabilitative paradigm which promotes practices that reduce risk of re-offending by convicted persons and keeping communities safe.

Although governments and criminal justice administrators around the world appear to be turning to the rehabilitation theory of reductivism once more, the mistakes of the past should be abandoned by avoiding punishment-oriented programmes and the other shortcomings which had in the past caused denial of the efficacy of the rehabilitation paradigm. While excessive use of imprisonment for punishing felons also creates enormous financial burden on governments and therefore should be seriously reconsidered.

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