

PRISON LIFE

Prison Life

- The prison is often considered a “total institution”.
 - Prisons hold complete control over the lives of those incarcerated in the facility.
 - Prisoners often lose and/or have difficulty maintaining their individual identities.
 - Prisoners often suffer physical and/or mental abuse from those in charge.

Early Prison Life

- Walnut Street Jail
 - First public institution to use imprisonment as the primary means of punishing and reforming criminals
 - Isolation and silence were necessary for offender’s reflection, reformation, and rehabilitation

Pennsylvania System

- Eastern State Penitentiary
 - Inmates ate, slept, worked, and studied the Bible in solitary
 - No communication with inmates or visitors and no access to news sources

Auburn System

- Inmates were confined separately at night but during the day they congregated for meals and work
 - the *congregate system*
- Inmates produced goods for private sector entities
 - Contract system
 - Convict lease system

Contemporary Corrections

- Focus on punishment
- Inmates have limited privileges and conditions are harsh, including use of chain gangs
- Determinate, longer, and harsher sentencing
 - Discretionary parole has been significantly limited throughout the state and federal prison systems.
- Other “get tough” initiatives have resulted in growth of the inmate population.

- The last 40 years have seen a 400% increase in the U.S. prison population (2.3 million)

Solitary Confinement

- Eliminates or significantly reduces prisoner interactions
- Inmates stay in their cells for 23 hours/day
- Punishment and/or protection
- 18.1% of prison inmates and 17.4% of local jail inmates spent time in solitary between 2011-12.

Contemporary Jails and Lockup

- Jails hold those convicted of crimes (misdemeanors), those awaiting sentencing, those awaiting prison assignment, and those who have not been convicted of a crime.
- Lockup is a facility is used to detain individuals for 24–48 hours
 - Waiting on a transfer
 - Law enforcement may be gathering facts of a case
- In 2016, 727,400 people were confined in a city or county jail.

Contemporary Prisons

- House offenders who have been sentenced for a felony offense.
- In 2016...
 - 1,228,800 individuals were incarcerated in state prisons
 - 183,300 individuals were incarcerated in federal prisons
- After sentencing, an initial classification review is conducted to identify the risk level and needs of the offender.
 - Considers offender dangerousness, escape risk, sentence length, gang affiliation, mental or physical health needs, and treatment needs

Institutional Security Levels

- Super-maximum security
 - Most secure and restrictive of all and reserved for the most dangerous and ruthless
 - May be a stand-alone prison or a specialized unit within a larger prison campus
 - Prisoners have longer sentences, are under constant surveillance, are confined to their cells, and have no access to prison activities
- Maximum security
 - Most secure prison facilities in most states

- Usually long sentences 25 years or more
 - Violent and disruptive offenders
- Medium security
 - Less serious criminals
 - Generally housed in cells and allowed greater interpersonal interaction
 - Access to work and treatment programs
- Minimum security
 - House mainly nonviolent, white-collar criminals who pose little or no physical risk to the community
 - Housing is in the form of dormitories with communal bathrooms

Private Prisons

- Private prison companies are generally paid per-inmate basis
 - If the prison is not full, the state still pays for inmates that do not exist (ghost inmates)
 - In public prisons, empty beds mean more taxpayers savings
 - Private agencies hire less qualified staff
 - Public correctional officers = 12-16 weeks of training
 - Private correctional officers = 3 weeks training

The Costs of Prison

- It is extremely expensive to operate prisons.
 - Housing one inmate in a minimum security federal prison costs an average of \$21,000 annually
 - Housing one inmate in a maximum security federal prison costs an average of \$33,000 annually
 - These costs do not account for the costs of treatment, education, training, etc.

The Pains of Imprisonment

- Loss of liberty
- Loss of goods and services
- Loss of romantic relationships
- Loss of autonomy
- Loss of security

Prison Reentry

- A criminal record can make it difficult...
 - To obtain gainful employment
 - To obtain employment with adequate wages
 - To secure adequate housing
 - To gain access to education
 - To gain access to vocational training