



CAPITAL PUNISHMENT / DEATH PENALTY

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1 Pros and Cons of the death penalty

1.1 Pros

- Deterrent to those who might commit a crime
 - No one wants to die
 - Death penalty being the punishment for murder prevents murder
- Makes sure that criminals don't strike again
 - Therefore: death penalty saves lives
 - Putting murderers to death could save future lives
- Overcrowding in jails
 - Overcrowding in jails has become a big problem recently
 - Many inmates cost a lot of money
 - Often criminals considered to be of low danger are released early
 - That is to deal with jail overcrowding
 - If the death penalty procedure would be faster, there would be less inmates
- Justice
 - Many people feel that killing convicted murderers will satisfy their need for justice and/or vengeance

1.2 Cons

- Costs of putting someone to death
 - Death penalty is 2.5 times more costly than to put someone in prison for life
 - Trials are costly
- Chance of putting someone to death who is innocent
 - Someone who is put to death could be falsely accused
 - 130 people in the last 40 years have been released
 - Due to evidence that shows their wrongful conviction
- Poor people are more often executed
 - That is because they can't afford lawyers

2 Methods of Execution

Most common methods of execution.

2.1 Hanging

- Suspension of a person by a noose around the neck
- Has been a type of capital punishment since medieval times
- Still one of the most common methods in a number of countries
- Three types of hanging
 - Short drop
 - Prisoner is placed on a vehicle with the noose around the neck
 - Vehicle moves away
 - Person dangles from the rope and strangles to death

- Standard drop
 - Drop between 4 and 6 feet (1.2 and 1.8m)
 - Humane improvement on the short drop
 - Because the drop as enough to break the person's neck
 - That causes immediate paralysis and unconsciousness
- Long drop
 - Instead of everyone falling the same distance
 - Height and weight of a person were used to determine the distance that breaks the neck for sure

2.2 Shooting

Execution by shooting is the most common execution method worldwide.

2.2.1 Execution by firing squad

- Common in the military and times of war
- A firing squad is composed of several military personnel or law enforcement officers
- Gunshot to a vital organ
 - Kills relatively quickly
- To avoid the deformation of the head, shooters aim at the heart

2.2.2 Execution by a single shot

- Often done by a neck shot
- Often performed on a kneeling prisoner
- If the prisoner wants to donate organs after his death
 - Shot into the brain stem

2.3 Lethal injection

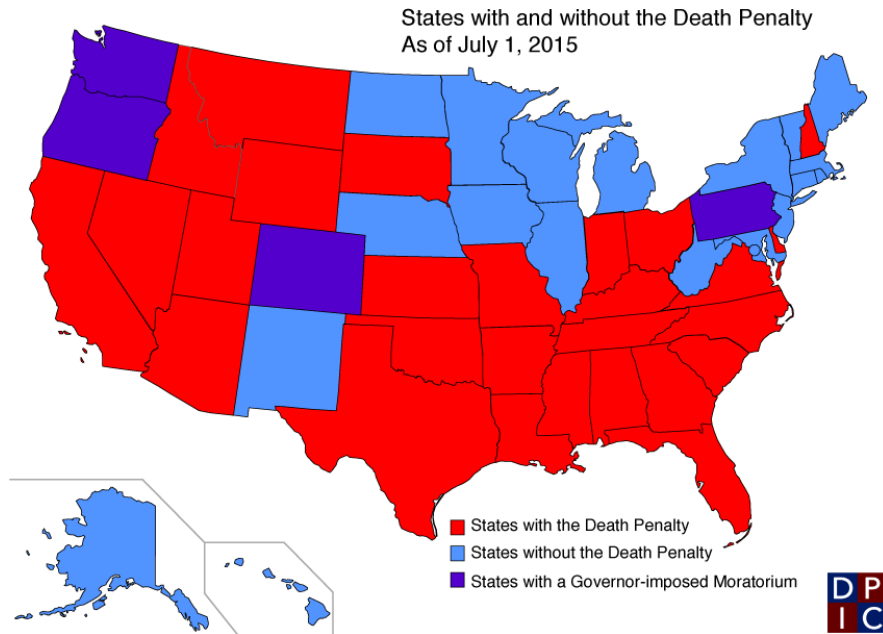
- Injecting drugs into a person, that cause instant death
- Kills the person by
 - Putting them to sleep
 - Stopping breathing and heart
 - That is achieved by using three separate injections in a fixed order
- Often used in the U.S. and China

3 Capital punishment around the world

- Almost all First World nations have abolished capital punishment
 - Notable exceptions are: US, China, most Islamic states



- China
 - China executes more prisoners than the rest of the world combined
 - Around 2500 persons were executed
 - Due to state secrets the true figure of executions is not known
- Iran
 - Almost 1000 people were executed in Iran during the last two years.
 - Stoning is a legal execution method in Iran and often inflicted on women
 - Homosexuality can be punished by death
- US
 - Seven states have not conducted executions during the last 10 years
 - Lethal injection is the most common method of execution
 - Gas chamber, hanging and firing squad are backup options where lethal injection is not a possibility
 - Not all states in the US use capital punishment



- Austria
 - Capital punishment for murder was abolished on June 30, 1950
 - The method of execution in Austria was hanging until WW2
 - Afterwards it was replaced by the guillotine

4 Opponents of death penalty

- Martin Luther King
 - Thought that God does not approve the death penalty for any crime
 - States that any killing of a human being is against the nature of God
 - After a young man was sentenced to death he stated
 - How wrong the death penalty is because you can never be 100% sure that the victim committed the crime
 - That is unfair, that mostly black people are sentenced to death

5 Religious views

- Christianity
 - Bible states different things
 - You shall not kill
 - A murderer should be punished with death
 - There are multiple aspects, but it is not clear whether Christianity supports death penalty or not
- Islam
 - Family of a murder victim can decide what happens to the murderer
 - Can pardon him
 - Can sentence him to death
 - Therefore death penalty is allowed in the Islam
- Judaism

- The official teachings of Judaism approve the death penalty
- Oral laws of Judaism state that death penalty was hardly used

6 Register

English	German
noose	Schlinge
deterrent	Abschreckung

7 Sources

<http://www.deathpenaltyinfo.org/>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Capital_punishment