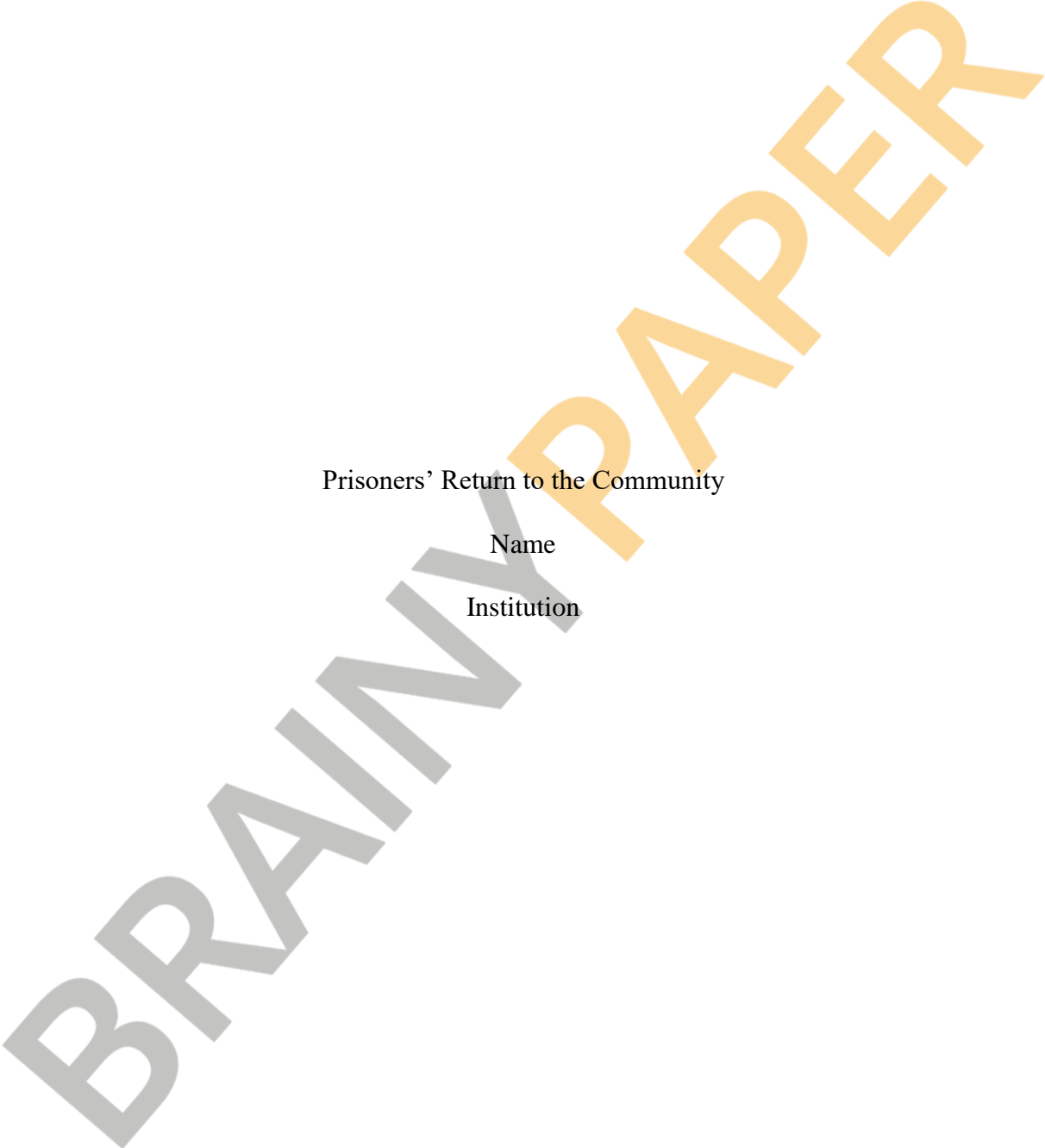


Prisoners' Return to the Community

Name

Institution



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Granting temporary freedom in form of parole to a prisoner with set conditions on their mannerisms has experienced its fair share of success as well as failures in law. The freedom that comes with parole is said to be limited because it is only there as long as subject follows strict rules of conduct and regularly checks in with their parole officer.

According to Petersilia (2009), parole serves as an important avenue of getting an individual to the community while their conduct is closely monitored. Prisoners who are released to the community at the end of their sentence are not supervised and fail to attain the support offered through parole and other services such as probation (Petersilia, 2009). Those prisoners who join the community without supervision or some of the rehabilitative services offered in parole have a high probability of reoffending as put by Petersilia (2009).

The prisoners have several programs they can take part in during their parole term. Most of those include counseling, housing services, employment, mentoring programs, and support groups among others (Petersilia, 2009). These programs help the prisoners integrate back into society more quickly and efficiently, allowing them to get accustomed to living outside the confines of a penitentiary facility.

There is a certain risk that the prisoner may violate the terms of their probation period leading to a revoking of the said period and potentially extending one's incarceration term. Those on probation must be exceedingly careful when it comes to potential criminal activity in order not to violate the terms of their probation.

The most notable benefit of parole to any convict and to the society is the rehabilitation services. These services focus on behavioral change, changing one's behavioral patterns in the way that they can lead a normal life, and not be tempted by their criminal past. The community also benefits immensely from the rehabilitation as it helps eradicate unwanted behavior and encourage harmonic co-existence between all the members of the society.

Through the rehabilitative effect of parole, an individual also learns how to benefit the society by engaging in activities that have a direct positive impact or gaining skills that will, in the long run, be of use to the individual on parole.

A prisoner on parole is subjected to well-designed conditions with a minimized risk of committing a crime or reoffending. At the same time these conditions protect the convicted and help support them in their rehabilitation process. Prisoners are required to abide by the set conditions and are closely monitored to ensure that this transition is smooth (Petersilia, 2009). The parole period enables the prisoner to adjust to the environment outside the prison and therefore reduce the challenges that they may face when freed to return to the society. Most penitentiary facilities share a common characteristic: the highly restricted environment which makes it difficult for the prisoners to reintegrate into the society after they do their time. Releasing prisoners to the society with no supervision after a long period in jail has high chances of the convicts to repeat their crimes. Paroles, therefore, act as effective ways of increasing community safety and ensuring that individuals from prisons gain a smooth adaptation to their communities before actual freedom.

The life of a prisoner is always complex especially in relation to the society that he or she originates from and the kind of crime committed. Their behavior and transition in society determine the effect of prison as a rehabilitative unit. The society expects an individual who has been freed from prison to be different while at the same time have a certain percentage of fear that they might return to their criminal ways. Former prisoners, therefore, enter into the society and meet a community full of expectations and fear as supported by Petersilia (2009). Among the things that people fear former prisoners might do is revenge. In these cases the prisoners can get stigmatized and have a hard time reintegrating into the society, as the people would be prejudiced against them. These situations and the change of environment can make a freed prisoner or one on programs such as probation or parole feel that the world outside

prison is another jail. Ex-offenders re-enter the society only to face some obstacles that can encourage them to commit a crime and go back to jail.

While there are programs such as the parole system and probation that help ex-offenders re-enter society in a guided manner, some of the individuals enrolled in the programs face different problems. During the early interaction with the community after years of imprisonment, the prisoner on probation has a high chance of facing harsh reactions from their community (Petersilia, 2009). This can affect the offender as they try to undergo the transformation from the life in prison to one that has some freedom. In addition, these individuals face the problem of having to live within certain restrictions and having their moves watched at all times. Individuals on probation face the problem of lacking sustainable sources of income especially due to the long time spent in prison and a lack of experience with some of the available jobs. These problems can significantly reduce the effectiveness of the probation and parole systems and contribute to a rise in the number of individuals that re-enter prison.

To conclude, it is evident that the transition of a prisoner from jail to the community is challenging. Several programs such as probation and parole have been developed to ensure that the adjustment is smooth and less problematic. Due to its highly structured, restricted, and confined nature, prisons become a new environment for offenders and those serving long sentences replace most of their memories and way of life to adapt to this harsh and restricted environment. The nature of prisons and the adaptations that take place make it hard for the prisoners to connect freely with people after prison. This fact, therefore, leads to problems such as stigmatization, lack of sustained income, negative reacceptance by the community, and eventual re-entry into prison.

References

Petersilia, J. (2009). *When prisoners come home*. Oxford, OX: Oxford University Press.

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