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Juvenile Recidivism

The subject of juvenile recidivism has long been regarded as one of the tensest in contemporary criminal justice debates, especially considering the absence of national figures for juvenile recidivism rates in the US. More precisely, juvenile recidivism refers to cases of reoffending crime by juvenile offenders before reaching adulthood. Since the American system of criminal justice prefers to allow states to have independence in choosing the methodology for tracking juvenile recidivism, the rates differ significantly across the US. The crucial point is that some states neglect to track and to assess data concerning recidivism rates among juveniles, meaning that the identification of a single statistical data is a troublesome task for researchers.

Nonetheless, the scale of juvenile recidivism seems to be worrying, which is often coupled with a variety of risk factors, including substance abuse and mental health issues. Therefore, it seems evident that under no circumstances should the external risk factors be neglected while reviewing the subject of juvenile recidivism. Although it may be speculated that the causes, rates, and implications of juvenile recidivism are similar to those of adults, risk factors, lengthy incarceration facilities, and the possible reassessment of the rehabilitation via computerized methodologies are essential aspects in the review of juvenile recidivism, which requires proper attention and analysis.

Importance of Risk Factors

One of the most vital notions regarding juvenile recidivism is the great extent of vulnerability among juveniles, resulting in the constant increase of juvenile recidivism rates. In particular, a study by Clarke (2017) revealed the two most noticeable risk factors, including mental health issues and substance abuse (1). Hence, the author points out that these two problems often lead to the commitment and reoffending of crimes in order to satisfy the need in substance use. Since the study of Clarke focuses merely on the youth's probation and juvenile recidivism in the state of Florida, this research is useful to determine the findings of the case study from at least one state.

As it was pointed out earlier, the unification of data at the national level is still a challenging task for the system of criminal justice. Judging from the available study by Clarke (2017), one may indicate that some researchers speculate that the rates and probabilities for reoffending crime among juveniles steadily decrease as they grow older (2). Also, the vast majority of researchers speculate over the role of risk factors in relation to juvenile recidivism without considering the full scale of how the risk factors impact the motivation for reoffending a crime among juveniles. As unveiled by Clarke, not only mental health and substance abuse should be reviewed but also family criminal history, academic achievement, peer influence, and the age of first offense (4-7). With regards to these risk factors, one may indicate their relevance in the reoffending motivation of juveniles.

As for mental health, disruptive or inappropriate behavior, which are common characteristics of juvenile crime, is a direct consequence of severe mental health disorders. Statistics represent that these disorders are high among juvenile delinquents, eventually affecting approximately half of the juvenile population (Clarke 4). Another noteworthy predictor for

reoffending cases among juveniles is family criminal background, which refers to whether paternal criminality was present. Thus, family criminality, and the paternal one in particular, stands out as a precursor for juvenile offenses and a further extent of recidivism. Clarke also underlines a peculiar correlation between academic achievement and juvenile recidivism, which is deemed to be reliant on one's commitment to an educational institution (Clarke 5). Negative academic attitudes in aggregate with poor academic performances predict higher chances of delinquent behavior and potential recidivism in the long-term perspective.

As for peer influence, it would be dubious to speculate that the social environment plays a small role in delinquent motives among juveniles. Lastly, research also emphasizes the age at first offense as the predictor of likelihood of recidivism. General tendency shows that the earlier age at which the first offense was conducted, the higher the rate recidivism can be spotted. Having reviewed the risk factors pertaining to juvenile reoffending cases, one may highlight their relevance in the research of juvenile recidivism as a whole.

Therapeutically Oriented Institutional Placements: Solution or Risk?

What stands out in the discourse of juvenile recidivism is the recollection of methods and solutions aimed to decrease risk factors, and hence reduce the rates of juvenile recidivism. One of the most widespread and actively applied treatment method is a lengthy stay in therapeutically oriented placements, which are uniquely designed for high-risk juvenile offenders. The research by Walker and Bishop assesses the usability and the implications of these stays by ultimately determining any marginal benefit of the length of stay in such institutional placements (Walker and Bishop 371). The choice of the placement for high-risk juvenile offenders is believed to be rational in terms of the most considerable rates of recidivism

and severity of offenses. Low-risk offenses are conventionally transitioned to the jurisdiction of juvenile custody, whereas high-risk ones are placed in long-term therapeutic facilities.

Notwithstanding, numerous research pieces have struggled with identifying any benefits of these stays from the perspective of recidivism rates. The current placement numbers are close to the rates of 1997, which was nearly 47% of total juvenile offenders (Walker and Bishop 355). As the most intensive of possible justice-related treatment methods, high-risk juvenile offenders are generally provided with comparable benefits if the quality of the program is decent. What is most commonly omitted in the review of the treatment methods is the length of stay in institutional placements, which is deemed to have a detrimental impact on juveniles' either prosocial or problem-solving skills (Walker and Bishop 371). With regards to these findings, it became evident that the elements of skill acquisition and prosocial skills should be valued more than lengthy stays based on criminal history alone, meaning that therapeutic factors should be reviewed in aggregate with social aspects of incarceration.

Will Computers Change Something?: Assessment of Predicting Tools

In the context of juvenile recidivism, the tensest debates revolve around how the probability of juvenile recidivism may be measured, estimated, or projected. The crucial point is modern researchers take into consideration the earlier identified risk factors by utilizing machine learning algorithms proposed by Ting and colleagues. In particular, the proposal investigates the use of predictive modeling and discrete level of analysis in relation to juvenile recidivism to determine who are most likely to reoffend (Ting et al. 631). Since the financial cost of incarcerations and individual therapeutic facilities are colossal, the recommended model emphasizes the use of computer modeling and discrete-level analyses, coupled with machine

learning algorithms to represent the data on juveniles' probability of recidivism.

Researchers have created a predictive model which was capable of presenting with unprecedented accuracy whether one or another juvenile would reoffend. The use of this methodology should not be perceived as a panacea due to the fact that predictive modeling may not be 100% accurate; however, its use may be justified for decreasing the financial costs of juvenile recidivism, at the same time, reducing the rates of high-risk reoffending instances by the preliminary tracking of intentions (Ting et al. 634). The proposed data-driven approach represented a noticeable accuracy, innovation in the methodology of tracking juvenile recidivism, and progress of the risk assessment processes in the criminal justice of Singapore. Therefore, it would be rational to enhance this approach and expand its operational capacity across the globe to make efforts to reduce juvenile delinquency and recidivism more cost-efficient, effective, and trackable.

Final Remarks

Having reviewed the subject of juvenile recidivism in its full extent, one may underline the relevance of risk factors, the inefficiency of existing incarcerating solutions, and the potential for changing methodology. The tense essence of juvenile recidivism traces back primarily to the absence of categorized data on the national level in the US, meaning that most of the existing analyses are focused on state-level data. Notwithstanding, the revealed above risk factors are believed to be crucial determinants of subsequent reoffending. As for existing therapeutic solutions, prolonged incarceration was investigated, and hence the period of stay among juveniles has detrimental consequences on prosocial skills of juveniles. As for the further development of the juvenile delinquency system, the Singapore-based machine algorithm model

proposes one of the most promising projects on how to determine the probability of recidivism among juveniles. Subsequently, the revealed bits of data may be of good use for those who find it mandatory to reduce the rates of juvenile recidivism or to implement categorization in gathering statistics.

Works Cited

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