

Why Capital Punishment Needs to be Abolished

The topic of capital punishment, commonly referred to as the death penalty, has been the subject of extensive debate due to its contentious and multifaceted nature. Capital punishment pertains to the act of carrying out the sentence of death on individuals who have been found guilty of specific grave offenses, such as homicide, sedition, or spying. The utilization of capital punishment has a lengthy historical lineage that can be traced back to antiquity, with diverse civilizations implementing varying methodologies. In contemporary society, numerous nations have eliminated the use of capital punishment, whereas others continue to implement it. The discourse surrounding capital punishment centers on various aspects, such as its ethical implications, efficacy in discouraging criminal behavior, influence on communal security, and economic viability. Advocates of capital punishment contend that it functions as a preventive measure against prospective wrongdoers and that it is imperative to safeguard the community from hazardous perpetrators. Notwithstanding, adversaries contend that capital punishment constitutes a breach of human rights, fails to tackle the underlying reasons for criminal behavior, and is an inadequate means of enhancing public security.

This paper presents an argument advocating for the abolition of the death penalty based on multiple reasons. Initially, it is incongruous with the fundamental principles of equity and impartiality in society, as well as with basic human rights. Moreover, there is a lack of evidence to support the notion that it has effectively deterred criminal activity or enhanced the safety of the general public. Finally, the allocation of resources towards the maintenance of capital punishment could be more effectively utilized in alternative domains, such as providing aid to victims of criminal activity, deterring criminal behavior, or enhancing the criminal justice

infrastructure. This paper posits that capital punishment contravenes essential human rights, such as the right to life and protection from cruel and degrading treatment, is ineffective in deterring crime and violence, squanders scarce resources, and is frequently executed in an erroneous and inequitable manner, thus necessitating its abolition.

The foremost objective of any justice system should be the mitigation of crime and violence. To accomplish this objective, it is imperative to tackle the underlying causes of criminal conduct.

The efficacy of the death penalty as a crime prevention measure is questionable as it fails to address the root causes of criminal behavior. Furthermore, existing research suggests that it does not serve as a stronger deterrent to crime compared to life imprisonment. The argument posits that prioritizing the resolution of root causes of criminal conduct should be the primary focus of resource allocation, rather than emphasizing punitive measures (Hood & Hoyle, 2009). As per the Death Penalty Information Center, there exists no reliable evidence to suggest that the imposition of capital punishment serves as a more efficacious deterrent to criminal activity than a prison sentence. According to the organization, there is no significant difference in crime rates or murder rates between states that have implemented death penalty laws and those that have not (Center, 2019). This provides evidence in favor of the assertion that capital punishment is not an effective deterrent for criminal activity.

Moreover, investigations have indicated that variables such as poverty, inadequate access to education, and mental health disorders are among the fundamental determinants of delinquent conduct. According to psychologist Craig Haney's publication in the American Psychological Association's journal, *Monitor on Psychology*, a significant number of individuals on death row have encountered substantial social and economic hardships throughout their lifetimes (O'Hara,

2021). This proposition posits that tackling the fundamental factors that contribute to criminal conduct may prove to be a more efficacious strategy in mitigating crime than punitive measures.

Apart from the aforementioned arguments, capital punishment has garnered significant censure for its incongruity with fundamental human rights. The deprivation of an individual's life through the imposition of the death penalty is viewed as a violation of the most fundamental human right, namely the right to life. In addition, it is important to note that acts of torture and other types of cruel and inhumane treatment are in violation of the fundamental right to be free from such treatment. The death penalty is deemed to be incompatible with human rights and undermines human dignity (Center, 2023). As per the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, capital punishment is deemed unsuitable for the contemporary era. The United Nations asserts that the death penalty lacks a deterrent effect on criminal activity and fails to address the underlying causes of criminal behavior. The United Nations places emphasis on the significance of rehabilitation and the resolution of social and economic factors that contribute to criminal conduct (OHCHR, n.d.). Thus, it is evident that capital punishment is not only incongruous with fundamental human rights but also inefficacious in mitigating criminal activity.

Public executions are widely regarded as uncivilized and incompatible with contemporary justice systems in modern societies. As societal advancements have been made, the utilization of corporeal forms of punishment, such as branding, has experienced a decline in prevalence. It is therefore reasonable to assert that a similar trend should be observed with regard to the implementation of capital punishment (Hood & Hoyle, 2009). The imposition of capital punishment in the United States is limited to a minor proportion of individuals who have been found guilty of homicide, and there is a lack of empirical support for the notion that the death penalty serves as a more effective deterrent to criminal activity than incarceration for life

(Center, 2023). Thus, it is imperative for society to shift its focus from capital punishment and adopt more compassionate and efficacious approaches to dispensing justice.

The cost of the death penalty is an important consideration when evaluating its effectiveness as a punishment. According to the Death Penalty Information Center, the cost of a death penalty case is typically more than double the cost of a case where life imprisonment is sought as the maximum penalty. The costs are driven up by the extensive appeals process, which can take decades to complete (Albuquerque Journal, 2013). These appeals are necessary to ensure that the defendant's rights are protected, but they come at a high financial and emotional cost to all involved.

Apart from its significant monetary expenses, capital punishment can also exert an adverse influence on the psychological welfare of the individuals implicated in the procedure. The prolonged appeals process may compel the families of the victims to undergo the distressing experience of reliving the trauma of the crime, whereas the families of the accused may encounter anxiety and ambiguity due to the legal proceedings. The allocation of resources towards the death penalty could be more effectively utilized towards addressing the underlying factors contributing to criminal behavior and enhancing the justice system. Research indicates that implementing initiatives that prioritize education, healthcare, and poverty alleviation can effectively decrease crime rates (Kashiwagi & Hirabayashi, 2018). Governments can potentially mitigate crime by investing in preventative programs, as opposed to solely administering punitive measures post-offense.

Troy Davis, a male individual, was subjected to capital punishment in the state of Georgia in 2011, despite the presence of substantial uncertainties regarding his culpability. Davis was found

guilty of the homicide of a law enforcement officer, however, his legal proceedings were marred by discrepancies in the accounts provided by witnesses and forensic data. Despite considerable public opposition, Davis was executed, and subsequent inquiries have raised questions about his culpability (Amnesty International UK, 2021). The Troy Davis case underscores the inadequacies of the capital punishment system and the possibility of erroneous verdicts.

The paper's conclusion advocates for the elimination of capital punishment, commonly referred to as the death penalty. The author posits that the implementation of capital punishment contravenes fundamental human rights, lacks substantiation to validate its effectiveness in discouraging criminal behavior or augmenting communal security, dissipates resources, and is frequently executed in a flawed and unequal fashion. The argument put forth by the author posits that the foremost aim of the justice system ought to be the reduction of crime and violence. This necessitates the identification and resolution of the root causes of criminal conduct. The article references scholarly studies that suggest that the efficacy of capital punishment as a crime deterrent is not superior to that of life imprisonment. Additionally, it highlights poverty, limited educational opportunities, and mental health issues as some of the key underlying factors contributing to criminal behavior. The author posits that allocating resources toward addressing the underlying causes of criminal behavior should take precedence over punitive measures. The conclusion of the paper posits that it is imperative for society to redirect its attention away from capital punishment and instead embrace more humane and effective methods of administering justice.

Upon careful examination of the arguments put forth in this paper, it is my personal conviction that the practice of capital punishment ought to be eliminated. The imposition of capital punishment is deemed to be a transgression of basic human rights, as it lacks substantial proof of

its effectiveness in discouraging criminal behavior, consumes limited resources, and is frequently executed in a flawed and unjust manner. It has been comprehended that prioritizing resource allocation toward addressing the root causes of criminal behavior, such as insufficient access to education, poverty, and mental health disorders, takes precedence over punitive measures. In addition, it is imperative to implement more empathetic and effective methods of administering justice in order to uphold the value of human dignity and foster advancements in society. The discourse pertaining to capital punishment remains a contentious and multifaceted issue. However, it is my contention that it is crucial for society to shift away from the death penalty towards more humane and efficacious alternatives.

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