

Abstract

This thesis is a study of a penal experiment in Ireland which involved an innovative architectural design and a new regime aimed at addressing the specific needs of incarcerated female offenders. The underlying intention was to create an environment where women would have a level of autonomy that encouraged them to take greater responsibility for their own lives. The change highlighted the inherent tension between the concept of self-determination and the needs of security and control within a setting of captivity. The focus of the study was to discover how the prisoners coped with their new conditions and how the officers reconciled the conflicting demands of the new regime with their more traditional role of discipline and control. Through a series of observations and interviews over a period of 30 months, the evolution of the experiment was tracked, from an initial period of turmoil and uncertainty created by the move, through a gradual period of adjustment to a state of equilibrium. The study revealed that despite initial setbacks, many of the ideals underlying the philosophy were realised. The main contributing factors included, enlightened and consistent leadership and the continuity of senior staff; an absence of major crises; a willingness to take risks by experimenting with new initiatives; the relative autonomy of the prison and its freedom from political or overly sensational media interference; physical conditions which facilitated informality and fostered amicable relationships among the prisoners and between the prisoners and the staff and the provision of a variety of programmes tailored to individual needs rather than treating the women as a homogeneous group. These findings contrasted with the outcomes of many other penal experiments and provide an encouraging example of how sustained commitment to an ideal can provide some level of success in an otherwise rather bleak picture of incarceration at the beginning of the 21st century.

Item Type: Thesis (PhD)

Uncontrolled Keywords: Sociology, Criminology and Penology

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with respect to psychological support and vocational-skills training. In addition, many will have been the primary caregivers for their children. The length of time for which an offender may be committed to prison for deliberate nonpayment of a fine depends on the amount outstanding, though in some cases this involves very short periods (such as one to two weeks). If offenders are able to pay the outstanding amount, they can gain immediate release, and if they pay a portion of the fine, the term of imprisonment can be reduced proportionately. Mason, Barbara (2004) Imprisoned freedom: A sociological study of a 21st century prison for women in Ireland. PhD thesis, London School of Economics and Political Science (United Kingdom). The underlying intention was to create an environment where women would have a level of autonomy that encouraged them to take greater responsibility for their own lives. The change highlighted the inherent tension between the concept of self-determination and the needs of security and control within a setting of captivity. The focus of the study was to discover how the prisoners coped with their new conditions and how the officers reconciled the conflicting demands of the new regime with their more traditional role of discipline and control. Supporting vulnerable women, girls, and families need not be a partisan cause.

Tweet This. Share. Glamour is right about one thing: much work remains on our way to full equality for women and girls. However, beyond tackling sexual assault, which I second, my priority list looks a bit different. If organized feminists truly wanted to unite and represent women across the political spectrum, here are seven issues they might consider addressing: Domestic Violence. Thanks for your interest in supporting the work of The Institute for Family Studies. Please mail support checks to the address below: The Institute for Family Studies P.O. Box 1502 Charlottesville, VA 22902.