

TEENAGERS WHO ARE TRIED AS ADULTS: AFFECTING REHABILITATION AND FUTURE BEHAVIOR

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Annotation. It explores the consequences of the transfer of juveniles (typically adolescents aged 13–16) to the adult criminal justice systems for serious crimes such as murder. It concerns rehabilitation outcomes, recidivism rate and psychological effects. It focuses on the comparisons between juvenile and adult justice systems, also demonstrating that adult prosecution of juveniles adversely contributes to the rehabilitation of offenders and increases the occurrence of reoffending for juveniles. I base my conclusions based on comparative analyses of international studies and criminological accounts.

Key words: Juvenile justice, rehabilitation, recidivism, adult court, criminal behavior, adolescence, sentencing, correctional system.

Introduction. Juvenile offenders' responses to punishment in criminal justice systems have been a subject of international discussions. Youth justice, criminalization, and detention systems are highly debated; some say youth offenders are treated more humanely than adults. In many countries, the juvenile offender with a serious crime like homicide might transfer their case to adult court and receive punishment under adult law. Such an act is commonly justified by the rationale of deterrence or justice for victims or public safety. Yet contemporary criminology and developmental psychology indicate that adolescents vary in terms of cognitive development, emotional regulation and decision-making ability from adults. So there is likelihood it won't translate to effective rehabilitation or reducing crime, treating them like adults. This study looks at the research question:

How does treating teenagers as mature individuals influence their rehabilitation and potential behavior?

Theoretical Groundwork: Juvenile and Adult Justice. The juvenile justice system is designed to rehabilitate, not punish. And it focuses on education and corrective behavior rehabilitation, counseling and rehabilitation in addition to social reentry. The goal is to prevent recidivism by curing the underlying causes of bad behavior. The adult justice system, on the other hand, is primarily punitive. It emphasizes punishment, incarceration and deterrence. They have the same legal standards and prison conditions as adults in their adult years when they are shifted from juvenile to adult courts. This means how much emphasis the differences in approach puts forward of rehabilitation outcomes and criminal behavior later on.

Psychological and Educational Factors. According to findings by developmental psychologists, the human brain's growing processes date back to the mid-20s. Most notably, the prefrontal cortex, an area associated with impulse control, risk assessment, and decision-making, is not developed to full maturity during adolescence. Teenagers are thus more prone to impulsive and emotions driven behavior. On the other hand, they are also more neuroplastic, that is, flexible and better able to change in response to rehabilitation. Treating youth as responsible adults does not take into consideration such developmental factors and can hinder a child's potential for beneficial changes in behaviour.

Effects of Adult Incarceration on Young Youth. Youth offenders frequently spend many years in prisons with offenders to make them the cause of their own delinquency. Such settings may involve witnessing physical and psychological violence, psychological trauma and interaction with mature adult individuals. Under such conditions criminal socialization is likely, and juveniles will engage in worse criminal conduct. Also, there are generally not appropriate educational and psychological rehab programs in adult correctional institutions for the age group. Youth in adult prisons are, therefore, more susceptible to psychological harm and higher re-offending rates.

Empirical Studies and Comparative Analysis. There are also robust and credible studies from international research institutions such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and The Sentencing Project. These studies reveal that moving juveniles into adult courts does not substantially reduce crime rates. Instead, it correlates with increased recidivism rates and worse rehabilitation rates. By contrast, juveniles processed through the juvenile justice system achieve significantly better long-term outcomes in their education, employment and social reintegration.

An Institutional and Linguistic View. Both proverbs and legal norms speak to societal values. Juvenile justice systems mirror social attitudes toward youth responsibility and rehabilitation. This comparison between systems reveals a cardinal tenet of criminology: the effectiveness of punishment is less strong than using rehabilitation-based models in the treatment of teenagers.

Discussion. The research indicates that moving juveniles into adult courts is not an adequate deterrent to crime. It has punitive justice functions, but it does not solve the psychological and social problems affecting juvenile behavior. Long-term violence is less effective in those systems of rehabilitation. Good educational services, counseling, and a proper structure of social support are key factors in successful recidivism. As if this wasn't enough, jailing children also strengthens criminal identity and in doing so raises the possibility of reoffending longer. And long-term criminal behavior.

Conclusion. Finally, it is not possible to conclude that as a preventive measure against crime the trial of the adolescent as an adult for serious crime is as an effective one. It does not reduce recidivism and harms rehab outcome. A better solution is to develop more powerful juvenile justice systems that concentrate on education, psychological stabilization and rehabilitation efforts. That approach works in the best interests of both criminal offense and reintegration by reducing long-term rates of offending and by making re-integration more successful.

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