

book review

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Out of Control Criminal Justice

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Out of Control Criminal Justice

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Daniel Mears in his text “Out of Control Criminal Justice” focuses on the reformations of policies in the United States. Mears presents a logical and defined process on solving criminal justice issues including crime, accountability, and equity. The writer argues that the criminal justice regulations in the USA must be changed to improve the processes in the investigation procedures. Mears states that most criminal laws have weak evidence, but combine with punishment-based feedback to create a dysfunctional series. The author suggests that criminal justice institutions should establish policies after gathering adequate data. Systematic changes are essential for public safety, responsibility, and equity at lower costs (Mears, 2017). The system approach allows the criminal justice division to identify the weaknesses of the policies and develop improvement strategies. The United States government should pay attention to the improvement of criminal justice to reduce crime and improve fairness.

Crime, equity, performance, and responsibility are challenges for the criminal justice system. The United States government focuses on punishing criminals after they are found to be accountable for the crime. The residents in the country perceive that lack of punishment is the primary cause of crime. For instance, few states in the US have a division of public safety that focus on identifying the causes of crime (Mears, 2017). However, criminal justice institutions focus on developing policies and punishment rather than activities for improving public security. Policing and administering punishment are effective efforts for reducing crime, but the agencies pay little attention to activities for developing public safety. The operations performed in criminal justice institutions have a significant effect on elements that influence crime among people, households, learning institutions, or communities (Fagan & Buchanan, 2016). The government should determine the causes of crime to improve the justice structure.

The author states that justice is a challenge ⁴ in the criminal justice system. The United States focuses on the offender-based structure of justice. The justice system of the US involves fair treatment of minority groups including youths (Mears, 2017). However, in various instances, the juvenile department is unfair to ethnic groups. The justice system in the US focuses on providing counseling to the minority groups and improving community conditions surrounded by high crime neighborhoods. The criminal victims receive assistance from the government as compared to the previous cases (Cullen, Jonson, & Mears, 2017). The justice system in the country is not systematic because it focuses on factors that affect the administration of law and the areas of improvement. Mears states that policing is the perfect strategy for enhancing justice in the United States. Thus, there is a need for improving justice to enhance CJS.

The writer claims that accountability is a challenge to the criminal justice structure. Mears argues that the systems lack accountability due to the collection of inadequate data about performance. The states in the nation require institutionalized foundations to gather information on the performance of criminal justice structures. The justice structure develops laws that are not implemented which increases challenges on government's responsibility in assisting the community (Mears, 2017). Finally, Mears provides that efficiency is essential in achieving policy outcomes. Policymakers focus on the analysis of the costs of establishing the regulations. The writer argues that the government cannot demonstrate their ability to utilize the taxpayers without a system-based strategy to cost efficiency (Mears, 2017). Thus, the state needs to incorporate the system-based techniques with the activities in the CJS.

Mears claims that system challenges are not specific to safety and equity. The writer tries to explain to the audience that systems are essential in various areas outside the criminal justice system. Mears argues that the state needs to understand the external factors that affect the CJS to

enhance accountability, public safety, justice, and performance. The internal areas affect the decision of the CJS in the United States. The areas that influence the system include health, education, ecological protection, fight against terrorism, and production (Mears, 2017). First, the inefficiencies on the healthcare sector occur due to the dysfunctional systems in the nations. The reformation institutions such as the ACA do not address the system challenges which affect the performance of the medical sector (Mears, 2017). Secondly, Mears argues that schools performance can improve after the state establishes reformations in the systems. Also, the writer suggests that the systems change should be based on empirical analysis. Thirdly, the author states that the system changes in environmental safety are vital in the enhancement of long-term developments (Mears, 2017). Further, the changes have improved government and business partnerships in the country.

Fourthly, the fight against terrorism needs system reformation for the identification of terrorist activities. Mears claims that terrorist activities have reduced in the United States after the adaption of the systems thinking strategy. The safety division created the DHS to counter terrorist attacks in the country (Mears, 2017). Lastly, the writer claims that manufacturers must embrace a systems thinking strategy to remain relevant in the industry. The outcome of adopting the approach is similar where the firms can attain sustainability in the long-term. Mears claims that a few CJS are operated as businesses in the United States. The writer suggests that CJS that are treated as businesses have large research divisions where they can gather adequate data (Mears, 2017). Therefore, the firms can pay considerable attention to controlling, assessing, and enhancing all areas of criminal justice in the country.

Mears states that external systems affect the performance of systems. Although the external forces vary, they influence the supplies in the system. For instance, the education system

is controlled by the flow of students and the available facilities including building, teachers, equipment as well as books (Mears, 2017). Also, the education system can be affected by political activities or decisions including when the law provides that particular courses can be taught in various days allocated for examinations. The community can influence the education setting including the parents' expectations which affect the school policies (Mears, 2017). External conditions can facilitate, shape, or limit the activities of the systems. For example, the government can embrace across-the-board finance cuts to manage public agencies. As a result, it can reduce the high costs in public institutions and eliminate particular operations (Mears, 2017). The government can change the mission of organizations. For instance, in the 1990s some regions³ in the United States amended the juvenile system by changing the goals of incorporating punishment to the guilty minors (Feld & Bishop, 2012). The modern political and economic activities can change the objectives of the system.

Mears claims that the efforts to change and examine system focus on isolated areas rather than the major parts. The government establishes reforms that are inadequate to enhance the performance of the criminal justice system. An example is a research conducted by Alfred Blumstein in 1960s which became irrelevant in 1970s. However, the study was currently considered after scholars made comparisons between nations to identify the nature of CJS (Mears, 2017). Sheldon Messinger assessed the prison structure of California and determined that it focuses on significant sections of the CJS (Austin, 2016). The author claims that criminologists ignore tidal challenges because they are difficult to assess. However, the researchers focus on eddies that are easy to study (Mears, 2017). As a result, the criminal justice system encounters many challenges due to the limited information about the causes of the risks. Scholars are interested in analyzing sentencing choices and usefulness of specific programs to

reduce regression. Alternatively, the researchers disregard the effects of system dynamics on public security, cost reduction, responsibility, and justice (Mears, 2017). Mears added that policymakers have little knowledge about the criminal justice structure because they spend a few hours in the office. Further, the changes that the policymakers focus on limited areas in the system due to inadequate experience (Mears, 2017). The current criminal justice structure should be reformed to increase its performance.

The writer states that the systems improvement solution is the perfect strategy of improving the CJS in the United States. The SIS is significant in increasing security, responsibility, justice, and cost-effectiveness in the criminal justice agencies (Mears, 2017). The first action of the SIS is the consistent implementation of the assessment research levels and system examination. The evaluation of the research levels entails analyzing the theory, implementation strategies, and cost reduction policies (Mears, 2017). The scholars must assess the sections of the sub-system and the whole system. The multi-shareholders procedures should regulate the assessment of research and operations. Scholars, policymakers, and administration officials have no authority of determining the research scope (Bloomberg et al., 2016). However, the stakeholders are responsible for identifying the research scope.

The second action is to perform a multi-shareholder process. The members of criminal justice organizations discuss the research outcomes and determine the additional assessment that can be completed. Further, the members identify changes in regulations and programs that can be incorporated after collecting practical information (Mears, 2017). The third action is to implement changes and provide responses to multi-shareholders teams about the implementation risks and methods of improving the structure. The system reformations should be evidence-based

after assessing the hierarchy (Greenwood, 2014). Criminal justice organizations should implement solutions to enhance the processes of the system.

The author attests that the system improvement solution has significant benefits to the state. The recommendations are useful in increasing safety, accountability, performance, and justice in the criminal justice area. The strategies increase security rates because the agencies identify the causes of crime and develop mitigation strategies (Mears, 2017). The techniques improve justice where shareholders establish changes to the regulations. The additional advantages of the solution include increased participation of victims or communities, development of subsystem operations, and the decrease in discrimination (Mears, 2017). Also, the methods are useful in enhancing the understanding of crime causes and improving justice.

In conclusion, Mears has provided clear and detail information about the past and current state of the criminal justice area. Also, the authors provide the strategy for improving the CJS and the outcomes. The text is a reliable source of information for criminologists, policymakers, and scholars. The weakness of the publication is that the writer does not provide empirical data to support the arguments. The book contains conceptual and theoretical evidence to enhance the understanding of the audience. Therefore, the book can be used to provide arguments on the reformation ² of the criminal justice system. I learned that the current criminal justice is not performing well due to the challenges in establishing strategies. I agree that the current CJS needs changes to increase safety, responsibility, and equity. I would recommend students, policymakers, and criminal justice agencies to use the book.

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