

The Effects of Social Support on Prisoner Reentry Outcomes in Emerging Adulthood

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Abstract

The United States is the world leader in incarceration with nearly a quarter of the global prison population. However, high recidivism rates demonstrate a lack of adequate support in successfully reintegrating formerly incarcerated individuals back into society. Additionally, despite well-documented links between age and crime as well as social support and rehabilitation, research on social support and reentry outcomes typically neglects an age group breakdown. Emerging adulthood, which describes a distinct developmental period characterized by self-discovery, change, and exploration in ages 18-25, has not been subject to comprehensive criminological research, particularly with regard to incarceration and reentry. The current study examines the relationship between age, social support, and prisoner reentry outcomes. Specifically, the research asks whether individuals aged 18-25 are more likely to recidivate than those in other age categories and whether social support influences this likelihood. Through analysis of a cross-sectional data set collected from previously incarcerated individuals, the findings indicated that individuals aged 18-25 were significantly more likely to experience rearrest and reincarceration. This study also found social support to be a significant factor in predicting rearrest, though it was not significant in predicting reincarceration. These results add to the growing body of literature on the factors that predict successful reentry to hopefully improve reentry programming.