

**Factors Influencing the Attitudes of College Students Toward Rehabilitation or
Punishment of Criminal Offenders**

by

Angela A. Dozier

An Applied Research Project
(Political Science 5397)
Submitted to the Department of Political Science
Texas State University
In Partial Fulfillment for the Requirements for the Degree of
Masters of Public Administration
Spring 2009

Faculty Approval:

Dr. Hassan Tajalli

Dr. Kay Hofer

Dr. Bill DeSoto

Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to examine factors influencing the attitudes of college students toward rehabilitation or punishment for criminal offenders. More specifically, the study will examine attitudes toward the six common crimes listed below.

Method: Survey analysis was used to assess college students' attitudes toward the six common crimes (robbery, rape, molestation, burglary, drug sale, and drug possession) and potential factors that influence punitiveness. An individual's attitude toward each crime was measured on a punishment-rehabilitation continuum. A survey was given to 1,427, randomly-chosen Texas State University undergraduate and graduate students.

Findings: The study found that a student's level of conservatism is one of the most influential factors influencing attitude to rehabilitate or punish criminal offenders. Also, the study found that attitudes vary by the type of crime committed.

About the Author

Angela A. Dozier graduated from Texas State University–San Marcos with a Bachelor’s degree in Public Administration in 2007. Ms. Dozier continued her education at Texas State University and received the Master’s of Public Administration in August 2009. She also has served as a Graduate Instructional Assistant to Professor Sherri Mora for three semesters. She is a member of the American Society of Public Administrators (ASPA) as well. In the summer of 2008, she went to Washington D.C. to intern for Congressman Lloyd Doggett. Currently, she works for Congressman Doggett in his District Office in Austin, TX as a Constituent Services Representative. Below is contact information for the author:

512-916-5921

300 East 8th St. #763, Austin, TX 78701

Angela.Dozier@mail.house.gov or Angelann03@gmail.com

Author's Note

I feel truly blessed to have had so many people support me throughout my academic career. Above all, I would first like to thank my parents, Michael and Elizabeth Dozier, my brother Nick Dozier, my sister Candace Dozier, as well as my grandparents, Jerry and Sally Rosenberger. Without their unconditional love and continuous support, I would not have been able to achieve my goals.

In addition, I would like to thank Professor Sherri Mora. She has been a great mentor and friend throughout my education. I knew I could go to her with any problem whether it be academic, personal, or just a minor issue; she would always be there for me. Thank you for that.

Most importantly, I want to thank Dr. Hassan Tajalli for all his patience and help throughout this process. Words cannot describe how much I appreciate his help. Dr. Tajalli went out of his way on numerous occasions to assist me in completing my Applied Research Project and I am so grateful. Dr. Tajalli has all the attributes of a great professor: he is intelligent, funny, and patient and really cares about his students.

I would also like to thank Dr. Kay Hofer for being a great role model and always being supportive of me. Next, Jennifer Small for her guidance, advice, and editing my paper.

Finally, I want to thank Congressman Lloyd Doggett, Michael Mucchetti, Amanda Tyler, and especially Neocha Campbell for being so accommodating by allowing me to work while I completed my graduate studies. I have learned so much in the last year from them that cannot be taught in a classroom; therefore, I am forever grateful.

In the end, I am so thankful for all the people who have helped me get to this point. I know promising things are sure to come with such a great support system.

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	1
About the Author	2
Author’s Note	3
Introduction: Chapter 1	7
Why Study Attitudes about Punishment and Rehabilitation?.....	8
Research Purpose	9
Chapter Summaries	9
Literature Review: Chapter 2.....	10
History of Corrections Policy	11
Rehabilitation Ideal	13
What is Punitiveness?	15
“Get Tough” Approach to Crime	16
“Three Strikes and You’re Out”	17
War on Drugs	19
Reemergence of the Death Penalty	20
Loss of Amenities	20
Why Did this Punitive Shift Occur?	21
Does the Public Still Favor a Punitive System?.....	22
Measuring Public Support for Correctional Rehabilitation	23
Measuring Punitiveness	25
Examining Attitudes Among College Students	26
Factors Influencing Attitudes Toward Rehabilitation and Punitiveness	27
Education	27
Liberalism-Conservatism	29
Gender	31
Media	33
Race-Ethnicity.....	34
Income.....	34

Fear of Crime	35
Victimization.....	36
Size of town	37
Conceptual Framework.....	38
Chapter Summary	38
Methodology: Chapter 3.....	41
Components of the Operationalization table.....	42
Dependent Variables	42
The Rehabilitation-Punishment Continuum	46
Independent Variables	47
Method of Data Collection.....	48
Survey Construction.....	49
Sample.....	50
Procedures.....	50
Human Subjects Protection.....	51
Chapter Summary	52
Results: Chapter 4.....	53
Robbery.....	58
Rape	58
Molestation	59
Burglary	60
Drug Sale	61
Drug Possession	62
Chapter Summary	63
Review of the Findings, and Suggestions for Future Research: Chapter 5.....	65
Education	65
Liberalism-Conservatism.....	66
Gender.....	67
Media	68
Race-Ethnicity.....	68

Income.....	69
Fear of Crime	69
Victimization.....	70
Size of town	70
Conclusion	70
Bibliography	72
Appendix A.....	77
Appendix B	80
Consent Form	80

List of Tables

Table 2.1: Conceptual Framework Table: Linking the Hypotheses to the Literature	39
Table 3.1: Operationalization of the Conceptual Framework.....	44
Table 4.1: Descriptive Statistics: Describing the Sample	54
Table 4.2: Multiple Regression Results	56
Table 4.3: Punitive Averages	57

Chapter 1

Introduction

A recent study found that one in thirty-one adults are under some form of supervision (i.e., probation, parole, jails, and prisons) in the United States' criminal justice system (PEW Center on the States 2009). How did so many people enter the criminal justice system? Many scholars agree that the increase in the U.S. correctional system population is a result of strict policy decisions made in the past three decades that sent more people to prison and kept them there for longer periods of time. With prison populations increasing rapidly, there is an urgent need to examine what must be done about this rising population.

The recent financial crisis places even more pressure on Americans to reexamine the criminal justice system. The cost of corrections is often one of the largest portions in state budgets. The average daily cost to house one prison inmate in 2008 was \$78.95 (PEW 2009, 2). All across the country, tax dollars are spent building more and more prisons to place or "warehouse" criminals.

Before changes can be made in U.S. criminal justice systems, it is important for policymakers to examine the opinions of citizens regarding punishment and rehabilitation. Also, it is important for policymakers and researchers to understand why people feel the way they do. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to examine factors influencing the attitudes of individuals, more specifically college students, toward rehabilitation or punishment of criminal offenders. This research focuses on college students because they are most likely the next generation policymakers and professionals who will address this issue. It is important to recognize that most large scale studies on

attitudes regarding correctional rehabilitation and punishment are focused on the general public. Although college students are included in the general public, their attitudes are seldom the focus of this type of research. However, many attitudes that are held by the general public may be the same for college students (Hensley et al. 2003).

Why Study Attitudes about Punishment and Rehabilitation?

Flanagan and Longmire (1996, 5) noted that public opinion data regarding crime and the criminal justice system are important because these data can act as a “social barometer to measure satisfaction with important government services” and “illuminate the public’s mood and priorities for criminal justice reform”. Public opinion findings regarding crime and crime policy can be beneficial for both researchers and policymakers. Payne et al. (2004) present four reasons why studying punishment attitudes are important. First, studying punitive attitudes is important for policymakers to use public opinion as their guide in the decision making process. Second, studying punitive attitudes offers researchers a useful understanding about particular cultures’ basic values and beliefs. Third, widely held attitudes by the public will influence the way the justice system deals with criminals. Fourth, attitudes held by the public are linked to how an individual behaves. For example, these types of studies may indicate that individuals that hold more punitive attitudes are more likely to use corporal punishment when they discipline their children.

Research Purpose

The purpose of this study is to evaluate factors influencing college students' attitudes toward rehabilitation or punishment of criminal offenders. The study will examine the attitudes of students at Texas State University regarding robbery, rape, molestation, burglary, drug sale, and drug possession. This research attempts to explain why some college students tend to support more rehabilitative approaches to imprisonment rather than punitive approaches or vice versa. Several demographic factors such as gender, race, income, and political ideology are examined and reviewed as possible determinates of rehabilitative or punitive attitudes. Other factors such as prior victimization, fear of crime, amount of crime television viewed, student classification, and college major, are included in this study and are possible determinates of rehabilitative or punitive attitudes.

Chapter Summaries

Chapter two reviews the scholarly literature regarding punishment and rehabilitation. Also, this chapter describes past correctional policies that lead to current policies and practices. The chapter then explores several factors that previous studies indicate may influence attitudes toward rehabilitation or punishment. Chapter three describes the methodology used to find what factors most greatly influence students' attitudes. This chapter also explains the sampling method used in this study. Next, chapter four reviews the results and presents the findings. The final chapter discusses the findings and conclusions.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

How should society treat today's criminals? Is the answer punishment or reform? Or should the correctional system emphasize both? A citizen's opinion on this subject may be complex and often associated with his or her ideology and demographic characteristics. The purpose of this literature review is to examine factors influencing the attitudes of college students toward rehabilitation or punishment of criminal offenders. Attitudes may range from strictly punitive to strictly rehabilitative and can vary largely depending on specific crimes and criminals.

The literature reveals several factors as possible determinates that an individual will support either rehabilitation or more punitive measures for offenders. This review analyzes factors such as gender, race, income, and political ideology as possible determinates of rehabilitative or punitive attitudes. Other factors such as prior victimization, fear of crime, amount of crime television viewed, town size, year in college and major also may be determinates of rehabilitative or punitive attitudes. Overall, ten factors were chosen from the literature that may affect punitive or rehabilitative attitudes. Though, before these factors are examined, a review of the history of U.S. correctional policy will be presented.

History of Corrections Policy

To fully understand the problems faced in today's prison policies; one must look at where terms of punishment began. Randall G. Shelden, (2001, 153) in his book, *Controlling the Dangerous Classes* argues "the development of the prison as a place of punishment corresponds not to crime but to much larger structural changes in the surrounding society and the specific social and historical context."

In U.S. history, imprisonment was not always a method of punishment. Historically, imprisonment became a method of punishment in late eighteenth century America (Shelden 2001). Before imprisonment, punishment was very open to the public. Public humiliation was a common goal. For example, the use of the stocks and the pillory and branding were frequent. Confinement was a last resort and usually occurred in the form of workhouses (Shelden 2001).

After the American Revolution, a law passed in 1786 authorized sentencing of public labor in the city streets. However, offenders began to draw large crowds that were sympathetic to their plight. In 1788, a group called the Philadelphia Society for Alleviating the Miseries of Public Prisons advocated against the law and suggested that there be more private sentencing (Shelden 2001).

Gradually, imprisonment became the leading method for punishing offenders. The first state prison in America was the Walnut Street Jail in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in 1790. During the late eighteenth century different opinions toward criminals and how they should be punished surfaced. Some saw criminals as people who did not respect authority and lacked strong work habits. Therefore, these individuals favored a prison

system that emphasized hard work. The Auburn System was created for this purpose and began in New York in 1797 (Shelden 2001).

Others saw criminals as sinners and believed the offenders should feel remorse for their actions. They believed that solitary confinement and no social interaction between inmates was necessary for criminals to repent. This method of imprisonment became known as the Pennsylvania System. The first prison system set up under this model was the Western Penitentiary in Pittsburgh. The Pennsylvania model later became unpopular due to the large number of suicides and inmates who became insane (Shelden 2001) leading to the inception of the Auburn System. Although the Auburn System was the most dominant during the nineteenth century, it was far from perfect (Shelden 2001). The Auburn System became popular with the rise of capitalism. Inmates were often used as cheap labor (Shelden 2001).

The Auburn System was criticized for harsh and even brutal procedures. Under the control of Elan Lynds, the first warden at Auburn, inmates were regularly whipped. Shelden (2001, 164) argues that the Auburn System “attempted to produce an ideal worker for the factory system, a worker who was obedient, passive, silent, and who would not complain about the grueling work conditions”. Meithe and Lu (2005) noted that most states adopted the Auburn systems because it coincided with the industrialization initiatives of the time. However, due to apparent brutality in both systems, along with rising crime and disorder in America, the reformatory idea took hold (Shelden 2001).

The reformatory idea is based on the premise that offenders could be rehabilitated or reeducated and deserved to regain their freedom. The use of indeterminate sentencing

and parole emerged. Reformatories were prison systems designed to change the offender. Elmira Reformatory was the first reformatory prison and was established in 1877 in New York. This prison introduced several innovative programs for the time such as trade and academic education, religious services, library amenities, an institutional newspaper and gymnasiums (Shelden, 2001). However, the Elmira Reformatory was administered by coercive military-style discipline. Extensive beatings were common.

Rehabilitation Ideal

The rehabilitation ideal provides the “notion that the primary purpose of state sanctions should be to treat and cure offenders individually” (Cullen et al. 2000, 47). It is important to fully understand this model because this ideology dominated most of the twentieth century. Rehabilitation in correctional facilities may include vocational training, education, work, and physiological counseling (Cullen et al. 2000). Similarly, Flanagan (1996, 76) describes rehabilitation as “counseling, training, education, and treatment programs for offenders”. Overall, the main goal of rehabilitation is to change offenders into law-abiding citizens. Individuals who advocate rehabilitation in correctional facilities observe that many offenders are likely to leave prison with drug problems, poor education, poor health, and few job skills (Mackey et al. 2006, 151). Without these reform programs, offenders are likely to return to the correctional system (Mackey et al. 2006).

For most of the twentieth century, rehabilitation formed the main correctional ideology and was the primary goal of state and federal correctional facilities in the United States (Hensley et al. 2007). The rehabilitative ideal first appeared in the Progressive Era,

approximately the first two decades of the twentieth century, and dominated the correctional philosophy until the early 1970s (Cullen et al. 2000; Cullen and Gendreau. 2000). Several prison reforms occurred during this era. For example, reformers believed that prisons should be more like communities. Also, the concept of individualized treatment and the process of evaluating each offender emerged during this time. With individualized treatment, psychologists and psychiatrists were needed (Shelden 2001). Indeterminate sentencing for individual offenders and the use of parole also increased (Applegate 1997). Overall, the Progressive Era brought about major changes in the prison system and reintroduced a rehabilitative ideal.

In a 1968 Harris Poll, Americans were asked to choose between protection of society, punishment, and rehabilitation as the main goal of prisons. Over 48 percent of respondents selected rehabilitation as the most important goal of prisons, and an astonishing 72 percent believed prisons should emphasize rehabilitation (Applegate and Davis 2005, 94; Cullen and Gilbert 1982). As the results of the poll indicate, public confidence in the ability to reform and rehabilitate offenders was prominent.

Public confidence began to diminish beginning in the late 1970s as a paradigm shift occurred from rehabilitation to more punitive measures. The shift followed an increased crime rate, which caused public fear that the criminal justice system was failing (Cullen and Gilbert 1982). Since the main emphasis of the twentieth century was rehabilitation, the public blamed that approach (Cullen and Gilbert 1982). Both liberals and conservatives attacked the rehabilitative ideal. Conservatives saw rehabilitation as “coddling” offenders and believed this method was the reason for the growing crime rates. Cullen and Gilbert (1982, 9) note that liberals viewed rehabilitation as a “major

source of the coercive, discriminatory treatment suffered by prison inmates.” Although, liberals and conservatives had different reasons to criticize rehabilitation, both agreed it could not continue as the guiding philosophy for dealing with offenders (Cullen and Gilbert 1982). Fueling this change was new research that provided evidence that “nothing works” to cure offenders. However, Cullen and Gendreau (2000) argued that broader social changes left the public more willing to accept evidence that rehabilitation was ineffective.

What is Punitiveness?

Falco (2008, 7) defines punitiveness as a word derived from the word *punitive* which is an “adjective meaning ‘inflicting punishment’ (e.g., punitive laws)”. Falco (2008) indicates that one of the major problems in researching punitiveness is the lack of a conceptualized definition. For instance, Courtright and Mackey (2004) state that punitiveness is “an attitude toward sanctioning and punishment that includes retribution, incapacitation, and a lack of concern for offender rehabilitation” (Courtright and Mackey 2004, 317). However, Matthews (2005) proposes that punitiveness is commonly associated with the idea of retribution or “revenge”. Tyler and Boeckmann (1997) believe punitiveness is based on whether sentences are too lenient and how likely it is that the offender will be set free. In the most general terms, punitiveness consists of strict sanctions against offenders. A move toward more punitive measures can be found in the last three decades of the twentieth century.

“Get Tough” Approach to Crime

With a public shift toward more punitive attitudes in the late twentieth century, longer and determinate sentences became more common. In some states, the use of chain gangs became popular, and inmate services, programs, and amenities began to diminish (Hensley et al. 2007). Harsh public attitudes and legislation led many researchers to refer to this period as the “get tough” era (Cullen, Fisher and Applegate 2000; Falco 2008; Cullen and Gendreau 2000; Shichor 2000).

This period also gave way to a “seemingly endless rise of policies designed to inflict increasing amounts of pain on offenders” (Cullen, Fisher and Applegate 2000, 2). Rising prison populations; the increased use of mandatory sentencing, such as three-strikes-and-you-are-out legislation; harsher drug laws; the renewed use of the death penalty; the reduction of inmate amenities; and the invention of “scared straight” programs are just a few examples of punitive ideals in American correctional facilities during the “get tough” era (Cullen, Fisher and Applegate 2000).

Dickey and Hollenhort (1999) note that although crime rates were falling, the public concern about crime was at its peak. “The political push for three strikes built on the public's perception that offenders were receiving shorter sentences than they had in the past and that prisons had revolving doors” (Dickey and Hollenhort 1999, 3).

The presidential campaign of George H. W. Bush in 1988 brought national attention to rehabilitation initiatives with the case of Willie Horton, a convicted felon who was in a Massachusetts furlough program, a weekend rehabilitation release program, and never returned. While on furlough, Horton violently assaulted a man and raped and stabbed a woman (Newburn and Jones 2005). Newburn and Jones (2005) contend that

Michael Dukakis's 1988 presidential loss may have been due to Bush's campaign, which shed light on Dukakis's acceptance of the furlough program as Governor of Massachusetts, fueling the public's fear of crime. Newburn and Jones (2005, 77) quoted Susan Estrich (1998), Dukakis's former campaign manager stating "the best that can be said about political debate about crime in America is that it has nothing to do with crime. Politically speaking, crime is a values issue; the value is toughness. You can't be too tough, but you can get clobbered for being too soft". The national attention of the Willie Horton put more pressure on policy makers to act.

"Three Strikes and You're Out"

The most notorious modification to the criminal justice system during the 1990s was the three-strikes-and-you-are-out legislation. In 1993, this legislation was energized in Washington State by the tragic murder of Diane Ballasiotes, who was murdered by a rapist released from prison. Another similar event occurred in California soon after. Public outcry because of these tragic events led voters to authorize legislation that required third-time offenders of specific felonies be sentenced to life imprisonment without the possibility of parole. Most states included violent felonies such as murder, rape, robbery arson, and assaults; however, some states included non-violent felonies in their three-strikes legislation (Austin, et. al. 1997).

Such legislation grew in popularity across the country and was even publicly supported at the federal level by President Clinton during his 1994 State of the Union address (Austin, et. al. 1997). This legislation had both strong public and political appeal. Politicians who supported three-strikes legislation were perceived as been being "tough

on crime” and tough on criminal offenders. Dickey and Hollenhort (1999) evaluated the three-strikes-and-you’re-out legislation in California and found several unintended effects of this policy. One major unintentional effect of the policy was the rise in long-term sentences for less serious offenders. Dickey and Hollenhort (1999) claimed that such legislation may have aided in the overcrowding of many prisons.

According to Austin et al. (1997, 132) get-tough-on-crime campaigns have “widespread appeal to a disenchanted public who, through the media, have perceived the criminal justice system as overly lenient and incapable of protecting them from violent offenders.” Some scholars have questioned the cause behind this drastic shift. Cullen, et al. (2000) responds by stating that strict policies are just a reflection of the will of the people. The authors stipulate that the American public was frustrated by rising crime rates, tired of being victimized, and perceived offenders as being coddled (Cullen et al. 2000). Stinchcomb (2002) argued that the public was no longer willing to view criminal behavior as a result of factors beyond the offender’s control. There was a renewed focus on free will, rational choice, and individual responsibility (Stinchcomb 2002). Some, however, thought the dramatic shift toward punitive attitudes was more economically-driven (Hogan et al. 2005).

The shift toward stricter prison policy created headway for more government entities to move toward determinate sentencing. Determinate sentencing removes all discretion from the judges and prison administrators and forces mandated sentences for specific offenses. Determinate sentences remove the possibility of an inmate getting out early, even if they have shown improvement and good behavior (Haney and Zimbardo 1998).

War on Drugs

The “war on drugs” initiative is integral to fully explaining a more punitive system. Today, most Americans have heard of the “war on drugs”. Ronald Reagan pushed the slogan, “war on drugs”, as a tactic to strengthen crime control. However, scholars such as Jensen, et al. (2004) believe that the war on drugs movement dramatically increased our prison populations due to numerous drug offenses. Jensen, et al. (2004) cites that U.S. Department of Justice that found that the number of persons in state and federal prisons for drug offenses increased by approximately 1,300 percent between 1980 and 2001 (Cited from www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/prisons.htm).

Initiatives like “the war and drugs” and “three-strikes-and-you’re-out”, are considered major contributors to prison overcrowding. Also, scholars blame the war on drugs movement for the disproportionate number of minorities in prison populations (Jensen et al. 2004; Donzinger 1996; Shichor 2000). As cited in Jensen et al. (2004), Donzinger (1996) estimated that in 2020 more than six in ten African-American males between the ages of eighteen and thirty-four will be incarcerated if the current growth rate continues. The initiative toward more punitive measures in the past three decades has made many researchers question where Americans stand today in terms of punitiveness. Shichor (2000) argues that these laws contributed to the biases of punishment by race and class. For instance, focus turned to street crimes and drug offenses, which are most commonly committed by the poor and minorities.

Reemergence of the Death Penalty

Between 1967 and 1976, the use of capital punishment stopped, and not until the late 1970s did Americans form a renewed interest in the death penalty. Shichor (2000) argues that the death penalty is fueled by public sentiments and beliefs of increased violent crime, fear, and individual responsibility of criminals. However, in the early twenty-first century, the use of the death penalty slowed. Shichor (2000) presents the arguments that the public may have realized that many death sentences are later found to be based on questionable evidence. New technology, such as DNA testing, have exonerated several inmates on death row are innocent (Shichor 2000). For example, former Illinois Governor, George Ryan, called for a moratorium on executions due to the fact that “13 of the 25 inmates sent to death row between 1977 and 2000 were subsequently exonerated” (Young, 2004, 152 as cited in Unnever and Cullen 2005, 5). Offenders sentenced to death or executed who are later found to be innocent may influence public support for the death penalty (Unnever and Cullen 2005).

Loss of Amenities

Shichor (2000) argues that a more punitive public has pushed for the loss of amenities inside prisons. For instance, according to Shichor, many weight-lifting and exercise areas have been lost. Many perceive that prisoners live in luxury watching television, listening to the radio, and playing basketball. However, the author argues that when amenities are cut, it is out of frustration due to high crime rates and willingness to retaliate against convicted offenders. Hensley et al. (2003) states that overcrowding and major fiscal concerns to the public may result in the decrease of inmate privileges.

An amendment to the U.S. Department of Justice appropriations bill in 1996 called the “No Frills Prison Act” required the U.S. Attorney General to set specific standards in the federal prison system. Under this law, federal facilities were required to provide just enough amenities not to violate the constitution, prison order, and discipline (Hensley et al. 2003; Hensley et al. 2007). The act required the Bureau of Prisons to report to Congress a list of how much federal money was spent each year on prison expenses. Extras like coffee pots, televisions, computers, electronic instruments, and adult movies are just some of the items that were prohibited (Hensley, et al. 2003). Also, inmates who were convicted of certain violent crimes were denied television access and were allowed to exercise for only one hour a day (Hensley, et al. 2003). After this act passed, many state governments followed the federal government’s lead. All across the country, state prisons began to provide fewer amenities.

Why Did this Punitive Shift Occur?

Scholars have questioned the cause behind this drastic shift to more punitive measures. Cullen, et al. (2000) responds by stating that strict policies are just a reflection of the will of the people. Cullen, et al. (2000) stipulates that the American public was frustrated by rising crime rates and tired of being victimized. Also, some individuals felt offenders were being coddled (Cullen, et al. 2000). For example, Hogan et al. (2005) argued that popular and political culture leaned toward punitiveness because of resentment toward criminals, immigrants, welfare recipients, and those who benefited from affirmative action. To some, criminals were “getting something for nothing when so

many [were] either insecure in their positions or working harder for less” (Hogan et al. 2005, 393).

Does the Public Still Favor a Punitive System?

In the late twentieth century and early twenty-first century, many research studies have questioned whether the general public still holds strong punitive beliefs. There is some consensus among researchers that the general public is not strictly punitive. Applegate and Davis (2005, 94) noted, “Although lower than it once was, support for correctional treatment still exists among the public”. Similarly, Cullen et al. (2000) present four major conclusions regarding public support for rehabilitation. First, the authors acknowledge that support for rehabilitation has declined since the 1960s. Secondly, the general public still sees rehabilitation as an important function of the criminal justice system. Third, public support for juvenile rehabilitation is higher than for adult offenders. Lastly, the public often favors early-intervention programs for children and adolescents who appear more vulnerable to crime (Cullen et al. 2000). Despite criticism toward rehabilitation, the approach remains “an integral part of Americans’ correctional philosophy” (Cullen et al. 2000, 1).

Many public opinion researchers have found the public does not support a strictly punitive correctional system. Sims and Johnston (2004) suggest that the public is not as punitive as legislators and policymakers might think. According to McCorkle (1993), the public does not support an entirely punitive correctional system. McCorkle (1993) notes that because past studies focus primarily on attitudes toward general crime, punitiveness toward specific crimes is relatively unknown. Furthermore, Applegate and Davis (2005) observe that people are more likely to support rehabilitation for non-violent offenders.

However, it is important to recognize that "...public protection trumps the desire to reform offenders" (Applegate and Davis 2005, 94). When the public feels protected from offenders they are more willing to support correctional treatment.

Measuring Public Support for Correctional Rehabilitation

Numerous researchers have studied public support for correctional rehabilitation, assessing attitudes in a variety of ways. Most commonly, studies ask respondents to identify the most important goal of prisons (i.e. punishment, rehabilitation, retribution, or deterrence) (Applegate et al. 2000; Applegate et al. 2002; Flanagan 1996; Sims and Johnston 2004). Besides asking respondents about the most important goal of prisons, researchers have also questioned the public about specific types of rehabilitation, perceived effectiveness of rehabilitation programs and expansion of treatment programs (Applegate 1997). McCorkle (1993) used crime scenarios and evaluative statements to assess punitive attitudes and support for rehabilitation. Also, researchers have used multi-item scales to gauge support for rehabilitation (Applegate 1997). Applegate et al. (2000) measured support for rehabilitation in three different ways: first, by asking respondents to choose the primary purpose of prison, second by asking respondents to indicate how important each correctional goal was to them, and third, by a rehabilitation index¹. Although studies vary on how support is measured, Applegate (1997) concluded that the public supports both punitive and rehabilitative goals.

One of the most difficult aspects of summarizing of research public support for rehabilitation is inconsistent methodologies (Applegate 1997). The methodology used in these types of studies greatly influences the findings about public attitudes (Mackey

2006). How questions are presented create some inconsistencies within the literature. For example, when a respondent is given a list of goals (e.g. punishment, rehabilitation, retribution, and deterrence), his/her response may not represent support or rejection of rehabilitation as a goal of corrections because each respondent was forced to choose what they believe to be the most important goal (Cullen et al. 2000). Also, respondents may believe that the correctional system should accomplish multiple goals (Cullen et al. 2000).

When surveys ask for the most important goal of prisons, respondents are more likely to answer based on their understanding of each philosophy or what is more socially acceptable (Applegate 1997). Also, respondents are often asked to merely state what they believe to be the important goal of prisons without ranking priorities (Applegate 1997). Without ranking priorities, researchers have no way of knowing how respondents feel about the other goals of prisons.

According to McCorkle (1993), many studies have asked respondents about appropriate sentencing for specific criminals. However, few studies have examined punitive or rehabilitative attitudes toward specific crimes (McCorkle 1993). McCorkle (1993) expanded this type of research by seeking to find punitive or rehabilitative sentiments toward six common crimes (robbery, rape, molestation, burglary, drug sale, drug possession).

Applegate (1997) notes that the lack of specificity in existing research makes it extremely difficult to accurately gauge public attitudes toward rehabilitation. For example, when questions regarding rehabilitation are more specific, attitudes tend to be more lenient. However, when questions are geared toward general attitudes, responses

tend to be more punitive. Therefore, when respondents are given specific situations, support for rehabilitation may be higher (Applegate 1997). Cullen et al. (2000) acknowledge there are inconsistencies in several research studies' questions. However, most studies demonstrate that rehabilitation is still supported and is an important part of corrections.

Measuring Punitiveness

Falco (2008) states that in most studies, punitiveness is measured by support for the death penalty, harsher and longer sentencing, harsher courts, or strict legislation (i.e., three-strikes-and-you're-out legislation). Lack of support for rehabilitation is rarely a variable used to measure punitiveness. However, Langworthy and Whitehead (1986, 80) measured punitiveness by asking respondents "whether they thought the purpose of prison was to punish criminals or to teach them to be useful, law-abiding citizens". This type of question is forced-choice, and some respondents may believe that the purpose of prison is both to punish and rehabilitate. However, the authors acknowledge this controversy and argue that previous research shows that punishment and rehabilitation are inversely related. The methodologies of studies that measure punishment and/or rehabilitation vary; however, few studies have considered the variables as a continuum. To rectify this shortcoming, this research will assume that an individual's attitude toward the treatment of criminal offenders is a matter of degree on a continuum of punitiveness to rehabilitation. Furthermore, this research will assume that attitudes toward punishment and rehabilitation depend on specific types of crimes.

Examining Attitudes Among College Students

This research evaluates attitudes among undergraduate college students regarding rehabilitation and punitiveness. The general public is often the target for public opinion punishment and rehabilitation research. Hensley et al. (2003) argues that although college students are included in the general public, their attitudes are seldom the focus of this type of research. For example, one study (Hensley et al. 2003) examined college students' attitudes toward inmate privileges. The authors found that, just like the general public, students are more likely to support programs seen as rehabilitative. But such attitude consistency between the general public and college students may not hold true for all issues.

Research studies that focus on students' attitudes toward criminal justice issues were very rare prior to 1990 (Hensley et al. 2002). Farnworth, Longmire, and West (1998) state most studies that assess college students' attitudes and perceptions focused on law enforcement and police professionalism. Only a few studies have considered college students' attitudes toward crime and correctional policies (Courtright and Mackey 2004; Farnworth, Longmire, and West 1998; Hensley, Koscheski and Tewksbury 2003, 2007; Hensley et al. 2002; Hensley et al. 2003; Mackey and Courtright 2000; Mackey, Courtright, and Packard 2000; Miller, Tewksbury, and Hensley 2004).

According to Falco (2008), many studies that examine attitudes among undergraduate college students focus extensively on criminal justice/criminology students. Falco (2008) noted that it is important to look at criminology and criminal justice students because those students are more likely to become criminal justice

professionals in the future. Many students majoring in the field of criminal justice hope to become practitioners and administrators and one day influence or implement crime-control policy. The fact that these students hope to be future practitioners and administrators makes their opinions especially interesting for researchers (Farnworth et al. 1998). If criminal justice students appear to be more punitive than rehabilitative, subsequently there is a good chance those attitudes will transfer into their career as criminal justice practitioners.

Factors Influencing Attitudes Toward Rehabilitation and Punitiveness

Education

Numerous research studies have examined the relationship between education and punitiveness (Applegate, Cullen, Fisher 2002; Falco 2000; Langworthy and Whitehead 1986; Sims and Johnson 2004; Dowler 2003; Farnworth, Longmire, and West 1998; Eskridge 1999). Falco (2008) notes that most research suggests that people with higher levels of education tend to be less punitive. However, Langworthy and Whitehead (1986) did not find a direct relationship between education and punitiveness; instead, they found that education was indirectly related to punitiveness through liberal ideas and fear of victimization. Langworthy and Whitehead measured liberalism as support for government spending on social programs. The authors found that respondents with higher levels of education were less likely to support government spending on social programs and, therefore, more likely to support punitive policies. On the other hand, the authors found that respondents with higher education had less fear of crime and, therefore, were less likely to support punitive policies (Langworthy and Whitehead 1986).

Sims and Johnson (2004) found respondents with higher education to be more supportive of rehabilitation. Dowler (2003, 118) stated that individuals with higher education might be more likely to “recognize the inequalities of the justice system and determine that solutions to the ‘crime problem’ may lie in policies of reintegration and rehabilitation”.

Studies that review college students’ opinions often measure education by grade levels (freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior) and by the type of major (criminal justice vs. non-criminal justice). For example, Farnworth, Longmire, and West (1998) found seniors to hold less punitive views than freshmen. The authors attributed these results to the “liberalizing effect” of the college experience. The liberalizing effect is a theory that states students become more liberal during college. However, the “liberalizing effect” was not apparent when looking at criminal justice majors. In another study, Mackey and Courtright (2000) found a negative relationship between grade levels and punitiveness. They found that as grade level increases, punitive attitudes decrease. In all majors, punitiveness was slightly lower in upperclassman. However, Mackey and Courtright (2000) found criminal justice seniors to be less punitive than criminal justice freshman. Similar to other studies, these authors noted that liberal attitudes are correlated significantly with punitiveness.

Subsequently, Eskridge (1999, 292) criticized the “liberalizing effect” of the college experience by expressing that a longitude study would be needed in order to make definitive conclusions. He also argued that “students who survived until their senior year were more liberal to begin with; they maintained those liberal philosophies during their college years; and the more conservative students were more likely to drop out of

school.” Essentially, he argued that conservative students drop out of college more often and that could be a reason why so many upperclassman report to be liberal.

Some researchers have found that college students who major in criminal justice become more punitive by the end of their college career (Farnworth et al. 1998). The Courtright and Mackey study (2004) examined which career paths to which criminal justice students were most attracted and explored how ideology and punitiveness related to occupational attractiveness. Overall, they found punitiveness to be less among all upperclassman as compared to freshmen. They also found that most criminal justice students were interested in law enforcement careers, and students attracted to law enforcement careers were found to have a high level of punitiveness.

Liberalism-Conservatism

The conservative ideology stresses social order and the protection of society rather than assisting the offender. Conservatives believe that individuals are responsible for their own actions and are skeptical that the government can solve individual and social problems. Therefore, conservatives tend to favor punishment over rehabilitation as the primary goal of the criminal justice system (Cullen 1982).

On the other hand, liberal ideology emphasizes individual rights and stresses equal opportunities. Liberals recognize economic and social inequalities and believe these inequalities can be alleviated. They believe crime is influenced by structural conditions of society. Liberals have traditionally supported rehabilitation as a primary goal of the criminal justice system, but, in recent years, attitudes are divided. Some liberals feel that the criminal justice system has never fully implemented the

rehabilitative ideal and, therefore, support a full implementation of rehabilitative treatments. Other liberals feel rehabilitation does not reduce crime and believe the criminal justice system should focus on establishing more just penalties (Cullen 1982).

Political ideology and the relationship to punitive attitudes is a common factor in scholarly study. Falco (2008) notes that most studies measure political ideology by having a respondent identify with a particular political party (e.g. Democrat, Independent, or Republican) or by having respondents identify themselves as liberal, moderate, and conservative. Most research finds liberals and Democrats hold less punitive beliefs than conservatives and Republicans (Falco 2008). Similarly, Sims and Johnson (2004) found that Democrats and Independents are more likely than Republicans to choose rehabilitation as the most important goal of prisons. In addition, the researchers found that 25 percent of Republicans chose incapacitation, which removes a criminal from society thus eliminating a repeat offense, as the most important goal of prisons, as opposed to 16 percent of Democrats who shared this opinion. Langworthy and Whitehead (1986) found liberalism to be a significant predictor of punitive attitudes. Similarly, Applegate et al. (2000) found Democrats more supportive of rehabilitation efforts.

Unnever et al. (2007, 311) introduced the mugging thesis which suggests, “A liberal is someone who has not been mugged.” The authors note that this phrase is commonly repeated by conservative commentators. The statement suggests that people who have been victimized are more willing to follow conservative positions on crime and social policies. The authors tested the mugging thesis and found it to be inaccurate.

Gender

Several research studies have considered attitudinal differences between men and women (Applegate, Cullen, Fisher 2002; Haghghi and Lopez 1998; Hurwitz and Smithey 1998; Mackey and Courtright 2000; Falco 2008; Langworthy and Whitehead 1986; McCorkle 1993). Although gender is a common factor in research studies, in examining factors that influence punitiveness, findings are somewhat mixed.

Applegate et al. (2002) question whether a gender gap exists in crime views. They argued the “findings on women’s views suggests that women, compared to men, are more compassionate and more concerned about the well-being of others, especially the socially disadvantaged” (Applegate et al. 2002, 90). Overall, Applegate et al. (2002) found women, compared to men, offer less support for punishment and more support for offender treatment. Conversely, their findings indicated that large portions of both men and women rated rehabilitation as an important goal of prisons (Applegate et al. 2002). Similarly, a study by Applegate et al. (2000) found that women were more supportive of rehabilitation than men. However, Haghghi and Lopez (1998) found women strongly support punitive measures such as strict sentencing and early release. Interestingly, the authors found that women, more than men, slightly favored rehabilitation programs for offenders. Though the authors acknowledge the differences to be based more on race/ethnicity, education, income, source of crime news, and crime television shows watched than gender alone.

Hurwitz and Smithey (1998) suggest attitudes about crime and punishment can arise from feelings of vulnerability. Women tend to have a greater sense of vulnerability

due to fear of victimization. The authors note that vulnerability may increase the support for aggressive responses to crime. For instance, women may express more punitive attitudes because they feel a greater sense of vulnerability (Hurwitz and Smithey 1998). Hurwitz and Smithey's study found an empirical relationship between vulnerability and attitudes toward crime. However, the authors noted previous research has found women show more sympathy for the disadvantaged (Conover 1994 as cited by Hurwitz and Smithey 1998), and women compared to men tend to favor public expenditures for social welfare, education, and health care (Rhine et al. 1994; Stoper 1988; Burt 1986; Shapiro and Mahajan 1986 as cited by Hurwitz and Smithey 1998).

Examining women's attitudes toward punishment can be complex. For example, "women tend to be less punitive both directly and indirectly because they tend to favor government spending, but if they [women] worry about being a crime victim they may well be more punitive" (Langworthy and Whitehead 1986, 584).

Differences in attitudes between male and female college students are not well established (Falco 2008). A study by Mackey and Courtright (2000) hypothesized that male students would be more punitive than female students, but their results were not statistically significant. Falco (2008) concludes that "additional research is needed to examine the relationship between male and female students [,] and more specifically, between male and female criminal justice/criminology majors and non-majors" (Falco 2008, 20). Also, McCorkle (1993) finds that gender is unrelated to a support for rehabilitation among the general population.

Media

Public knowledge about crime and corrections policy often is derived from media outlets. Miller, Tewksbury, and Hensley (2004, 313) recognize that one of the most difficult tasks for criminal justice educators is to “identify, address, and correct the misconceptions students (and the public in general) hold regarding the scope of the crime problem and justice activities/cost/size.” The authors noted that most misconceptions are derived from the media. Similarly, Courtright and Mackey (2004) expressed deep concerns about the strong influence that the media has on college students. The authors note that popular shows like Crime Scene Investigation (CSI) have attracted many students to careers in criminal justice and forensic science.

Dowler’s (2003) study found that a regular viewer of crime drama shows reported being more fearful of crime. However, television and newspapers as a primary source of crime news did not show to be significantly related to fear of crime. Reith (1999) found a significant relationship between white male viewers of crime drama television shows and more punitiveness or aggression toward criminals.

Most of the time, the impact of crime television shows is measured by number of hours per week an individual watches crime television shows. Dowler (2003) notes a few limitations when measuring the media effect. First, there are several different types of crime television shows, and it is undetermined which type of show respondents are watching. Also, Dowler (2003) acknowledges that some crime shows are more realistic than others; therefore, it might be beneficial to ask which shows individuals are watching.

Race-Ethnicity

Sims and Johnson's (2004) study found statistically significant differences among races when asking respondents the most important goal of prisons. In their study they found that 43 percent of non-hispanics supported rehabilitation, and only 36 percent of Hispanics chose rehabilitation. Interestingly, 11% of non-hispanics chose retribution as the most important goal as compared to 18 percent of Hispanics.

Dowler's study (2003) found race as one of the strongest indicators of punitive attitudes. He found that African-Americans tend to hold the least punitive views. This finding could be the result of racial inequalities in the justice system. For instance, African-Americans are more likely to receive harsher punishments for similar crimes, sentenced to the death penalty, and are overrepresented in the prison population compared to their counterparts (Dowler 2003).

Income

McCorkle (1993) found strong support for non-punitive attitudes among minorities, the poor, and young people. The author suggested that this correlation might be due to the fact that the young and poor are more likely to find themselves in prison. Similarly, Dowler (2003, 118) suggested that the lowest income individuals (\$15,000 or less annually) are more likely to hold non-punitive attitudes. However, low-income respondents (\$15,000 to \$30,000 annually) when compared to average annual income (\$30,000 to \$60,000) respondents were more likely to hold punitive attitudes. Dowler (2003) suggests one reason for the difference is that low income respondents more likely

live in areas where crime is prevalent and view punitive policies as a way to “...prevent and reduce crime in their neighborhoods” (118).

Other studies have examined income and its influence on attitudes as they relate to most important goal of prisons. For instance, Sims and Johnson’s (2004) study found higher income respondents chose retribution as the most important goal of prisons. Lower income respondents, on the other hand, were more likely to choose deterrence as the most important goal. Deterrence focuses on preventing crime.

Fear of Crime

Sims and Johnson (2004) reviewed the Bureau of Justice Statistics and found Americans are more fearful about being victims of crime than they are about dying from cancer, heart disease, or being injured by a fire. Langworthy and Whitehead (1986) discuss how fear of crime can be derived from personal experience, political campaigns, and media. Ultimately, the authors hypothesized and concluded that people who are more fearful of crime tend to have more punitive attitudes.

Similarly, Sims and Johnson (2004) hypothesized that fear of crime would affect attitudes toward punishment and rehabilitation. However, their data concluded that fear of crime was not a strong predictor of attitudes about the most important goal of prisons. The authors did note that their findings were theoretically in-line. For example, individuals more fearful of crime will choose incapacitation, deterrence, and retribution over rehabilitation.

When it comes to college students, only a few studies examined fear of crime as a factor that could contribute to punitive attitudes. Dowler’s (2003) study had an

unanticipated result that showed college educated respondents to be more fearful of crime. Dowler suggests this result might be due to the fact that college educated individuals might feel they have more to lose if victimized. Also, the author found lower income respondents to be more fearful of crime.

Haghighi and Sorensen (1996, 17) acknowledge that fear of crime is very difficult to precisely measure. They note three common problems when measuring fear of crime, “interpreting perceived crime risks as fear of crime, emphasizing fear of violent crime while neglecting the more common nonviolent victimizations, and using ambiguous indicators of fear of crime.” Sims and Johnson (2004) state most studies that measure fear of crime ask respondents how fearful they are when walking home alone at night. Sims and Johnson (2004) argued that this question is altogether fear provoking. Also, the authors argue the question is not a direct measure of how fearful someone is about being a victim of crime because the respondent may be fearful of walking home at night for some other reason, perhaps even fear of the dark. To avoid this controversy, studies have asked about specific crimes. For example, Sims and Johnson’s (2004) study used specific crimes such as such as murder, robbery, assault, sexual assault, and burglary. Haghighi and Sorensen (1996) believe that researchers will get a more accurate depiction of fear of crime if respondents are asked how worried they are about becoming a victim of specific crimes.

Victimization

A few research studies questioned the relationship between prior victimization and attitudes toward rehabilitation and punitiveness. Most studies that include

victimization as a contributor to punitive attitudes asked respondents the number of times they were victimized by specific crimes. In most cases, a statistically significant relationship between victimization and support for rehabilitation was not found (Falco 2008; Langworthy and Whitehead 1986; McCorkle 1993). Falco (2008) suggests that many studies do not find significant relationships between victimization and punitiveness because respondents are unlikely to report incidences.

Unnever et al. (2007) explored whether crime victimization is related to support for punitive crime policies such as the death penalty and harsher sentences. Their findings were not statistically significant and did not prove any relationship between the two variables. Yet, Applegate et al. (2002) found that victimized female respondents are more punitive than victimized male respondents.

Size of town

The size of a student's hometown may be an important element when examining attitudes about criminal offenders. Mackey and Courtright (2000) found that that people from smaller towns, first -and second-year college students, and conservatives tend to hold more punitive views. The authors separated this variable into small towns (less than 25,000) and large towns (more that 25,000). Falco (2008) furthered the research by giving respondents the option of rural, suburban, and urban. Falco (2008) changed this format because in terms of numbers, some students may not know the population of their hometowns. Falco's (2008) findings were initially statistically significant; however, when causal attributes (i.e., beliefs about what causes crimes) were added, the size of town was no longer statistically significant.

Conceptual Framework

A review of the literature identified ten factors that may influence college students' support for rehabilitation in prisons and contribute as a basis for development of this research. The literature supports that grade level, college major, political ideology, gender, income, race, previous victimization, fear of crime, and crime television shows are factors influencing attitudes that do or do not support rehabilitation in prisons. The purpose of this research is to assess the degree to which these factors influence attitudes of college students on a continuum of pure punishment to pure rehabilitation. To more fully research these relationships, this project tests attitudes toward specific crimes. This research uses McCorkle's (1993) six types of common crimes which are: robbery, rape, molestation, burglary, drug sale, and drug possession. Ten formal hypotheses are developed and tested in this study. According to Shields and Tajalli's (2005) study, formal hypotheses should be used when the research purpose is to find causation between variables. The conceptual framework in Table 2.1 links the hypotheses to the literature.

Chapter Summary

After reviewing the history of correctional policies and the role public opinion plays in our criminal justice system, it is important for scholars to measure where public sentiment is today, as there remain a number of unanswered questions. Are policies still moving toward a more punitive system or to a more humanistic system that supports the benefits of offender rehabilitation? The feelings of college students are important because they are most likely to be future practitioners and policy makers. Are college students willing to support programs like education, substance abuse classes, and therapy that are

Table 2.1: Conceptual Framework Table: Linking the Hypotheses to the Literature

Hypotheses	Literature
H1: Junior and Senior college students tend to support rehabilitation for criminal offenders more than freshmen and sophomores do.	Applegate, Cullen, Fisher 2002; Falco 2000; Langworthy and Whitehead 1986; Sims and Johnson 2004; Dowler 2003; Farnworth, Longmire, and West 1998; Eskridge 1999
H2: Criminal justice majors tend to support more punitive measures for criminal offenders than non-criminal justice majors.	Falco 2000; Farnworth, Longmire, and West 1998; Mackey and Courtright 2000; Courtright and Mackey 2004
H3: Liberal students tend to support rehabilitation measures for criminal offenders more than conservative students.	Cullen 1982; Cullen and Gilbert 1984; Falco 2008; Applegate et al. 2000; Sims and Johnson 2004; Langworthy and Whitehead 1986; Unnever, Cullen, and Fisher 2007
H4: Female students tend to support rehabilitation measures for criminal offenders more than male students do.	Applegate, Cullen, Fisher 2002; Haghghi and Lopez 1998; Hurwitz and Smithy 1998; Mackey and Courtright 2000; Falco 2008; Langworthy and Whitehead 1986; McCorkle 1993
H5: Students who watch more crime television tend to support more punitive measures for criminal offenders than students who do not watch crime television shows.	Miller, Tewksbury, Hensley 2004; Courtright and Mackey 2004; Dowler 2003; Reith 1999
H6: Non-minority students tend to support rehabilitation measures for criminal offenders more than minority students.	Sims and Johnson 2004; Dowler 2003
H7: Students with a higher family income tend to support more punitive measures for criminal offenders than students with lower incomes.	McCorkle 1993; Sims and Johnson 2004
H8: Students who report higher levels of fear of crime tend to support more punitive measures for criminal offenders than students who have less fear of crime.	Sims and Johnson 2004; Langworthy and Whitehead 1986; Dowler 2003; Haghghi and Sorensen 1996
H9: Victimized students tend to support more punitive measures for criminal offenders than non-victimized students.	Applegate, Cullen, and Fisher 2002; Falco 2008; Langworthy and Whitehead, 1986 ; Unnever, Cullen, and Fisher 2007
H10: Students from rural areas support more punitive measures for criminal offenders than students from urban areas.	Falco 2008

aimed at improving the offender? Does support for rehabilitation depend on the crime committed? Specifically, this study will seek to answer which factors influence attitudes toward rehabilitation and punishment for criminal offenders.

The review of the literature identifies ten possible factors that may influence college students' attitudes toward rehabilitation or punitive measures in prison. It is important to measure the attitudes of college students because they will most likely make up the future practitioners, crime policymakers, and public administrators. This research project will help determine which factors most greatly influence punitive attitudes or support for rehabilitation. The next chapter will present the methodology used in this study.

Chapter 3

Methodology

The purpose of this study is to evaluate factors influencing college students' attitudes toward rehabilitation or punishment of criminal offenders. The study examines attitudes toward six common crimes. This research attempts to explain why some college students tend to support more rehabilitative approaches to imprisonment rather than punitive approaches. Several demographic factors such as gender, race, income, and conservatism are examined and reviewed as possible determinates of rehabilitative or punitive attitudes. Other factors such as prior victimization, fear of crime, amount of crime television viewed, student classification, and college major, are considered as possible determinates of rehabilitative or punitive attitudes.

The purpose of this chapter is to explain how the research measures attitudes of university students toward punishment and rehabilitation. This chapter includes descriptions on how each hypothesis is tested. The ten hypotheses are operationalized using specific survey questions. Table 3.1 illustrates how each hypothesis is operationalized by targeted survey questions. Listed below are ten hypotheses examined in this study:

- H1:** Junior and Senior college students tend to support rehabilitation for criminal offenders more so than freshmen and sophomores.
- H2:** Criminal justice majors tend to support more punitive measures for criminal offenders than non-criminal justice majors.
- H3:** Liberal students tend to support rehabilitation measures for criminal offenders more than conservative students.

- H4:** Female students tend to support rehabilitation measures for criminal offenders more so than male students.
- H5:** Students who watch more crime television tend to support more punitive measures for criminal offenders than students who do not watch crime television shows.
- H6:** Non-minority students tend to support rehabilitation measures for criminal offenders more than minority students.
- H7:** Students with a higher family income tend to support more punitive measures for criminal offenders than students with lower incomes.
- H8:** Students who report higher levels of fear of crime tend to support more punitive measures for criminal offenders than students who have less fear of crime.
- H9:** Victimized students tend to support more punitive measures for criminal offenders than non-victimized students.
- H10:** Students from rural areas support more punitive measures for criminal offenders than students from urban areas.

The operationalization table on pages 38-40 links the conceptual framework to the methods or techniques used in the research (Shields and Tajalli 2005). Table 3.1 describes how this study measures both the dependent variables and independent variables.

Components of the Operationalization table

Dependent Variables

Rather than looking at criminal offenses as a whole, this research examines attitudes of students toward specific common crimes. McCorkle (1993) identifies six types of common crimes: robbery, rape, molestation, burglary, drug sale, and drug possession. This study uses McCorkle's (1993) six crime scenarios for measuring punitive attitudes. Attitude is measured in this study on a continuum ranging from total

belief in rehabilitation of offenders in prison to total belief that the purpose of imprisonment should be punitive. The rehabilitation-punishment continuum scale is based on a standard Likert scale from one to eleven. This study uses a Likert scale to test attitudes toward rehabilitation and punishment of criminal offenders dependent upon the type of crime.

According to Jamieson (2004) a Likert scale is commonly used to measure attitudes and provides a range of responses to presented questions (Manion 2000 as cited in Jamieson 2004). A score of one on this continuum represents strictly rehabilitation. A score of eleven represents strictly punishment. To avoid confusion, the survey text define rehabilitation in this context as providing counseling, therapy, education, vocational training, and other programs in order to change the offender. Punishment is defined as offering no rehabilitative programs or assistance to the offender.

Table 3.1: Operationalization of the Conceptual Framework

Dependent Variables	Direction	Hypothesis	Measurement (Survey Questions)
1. Robbery 2. Rape 3. Molestation 4. Burglary 5. Drug Sale 6. Drug Possession			Respondents were presented six crime scenarios (See Appendix A, Q#3, Scenarios A-G)
Independent Variables			
Academic Classification	-	H1: Freshman and Sophomore students tend to support punitive measures for criminal offenders more than Junior and Senior students do.	Respondents were asked to identify their academic classification. Freshman, Sophomore, Junior, Senior, Graduate Student. Freshman/Sophomore=0 Junior/Senior=1
Academic Major		H2: Criminal Justice Majors tend to support more punitive measures for criminal offenders than non-criminal justice majors	Respondents were asked to identify their academic major.
Degree of Liberalism	-	H3: Conservative students tend to support more punitive measures for criminal offenders than do liberal students.	Respondents were asked to register identify their feelings about the following issues: 1) Strongly Disagree, 2) Disagree, 3) Neutral, 4) Agree, 5) Strongly Agree. Higher numbers will represent more conservatism. (Questions e, f, h, and j are reversed when averaging.) a. Any raise in the federal minimum wage is unnecessary and will hurt small business. b. Congress should propose and the states should approve a constitutional amendment to outlaw abortion. c. The death penalty is immoral and should never be used by the government. d. The government should cut taxes for citizens even if it means that some government programs will not be funded. e. There should be more money in our federal budget for environmental regulations. f. Universal right to healthcare is a fundamental right which government should guarantee for all citizens. g. Congress should propose and the states should ratify an amendment to the U.S. constitution outlawing gay marriage. h. I consider myself to be a liberal. i. I consider myself to be a conservative. J. It is the responsibility of government to provide welfare to the poor and needy.

Table 3.1: Operationalization of the Conceptual Framework Continued

Independent Variables	Direction	Hypothesis	Measurement (Survey Questions)
Sex		H4: Male students tend to support more punitive measures for criminal offenders than do female students.	Respondents were asked their sex. Male Female Male = 1 Female = 0
Crime Television Shows	+	H5: Students who watch more crime television tend to support more punitive measures for criminal offenders than students who do not watch crime television shows.	Respondents were asked about home many hours of crime television they watch per week.
Race		H6: Non-Minority students tend to support more punitive measures for criminal offenders than minority students.	Respondents were asked their race. White/Caucasian Black/African American Hispanic Asian American/Other White = Reference Group
Family Income	+	H7: Students with a higher family income tend to support more punitive measures for criminal offenders than students with lower incomes.	Respondents were asked to estimate their annual family income.
Fear of Crime	+	H8: Students who report higher levels of fear of crime will tend to support more punitive measures for criminal offenders than students who do not report fear of crime.	Respondents were asked how often they worry and provide the corresponding number. 1) Every day, 2) A few times a week, 3) A few times a month, 4) Seldom, 5) Never ____being physically assaulted? ____your being physically assaulted? ____your home being burglarized? ____having something taken from you through the use of force or through the threat of the use of force? ____yourself or someone in your family being sexually assaulted? Lower numbers = more fearful Worry Index= Average score for the 5 questions.

Table 3.1: Operationalization of the Conceptual Framework Continued

Independent Variables	Direction	Hypothesis	Measurement (Survey Questions)
Victimization	+	H9: Victimized students tend to support more punitive measures for criminal offenders than non-victimized students.	<p>Respondents were asked to indicate the number of times, if any, they were a victim of any of the following crimes within the past 12 months. (Students were asked to place a numerical response in the space provided.)</p> <p>_____ Someone broke into your home/apartment/dorm</p> <p>_____ Had property stolen from your house/apartment/dorm</p> <p>_____ Someone broke into your car</p> <p>_____ Had your wallet pick-pocketed or purse stolen</p> <p>_____ Had someone threaten to beat you and/or robbed you.</p> <p>_____ Someone beat you up in a fight that you did not start</p> <p>_____ Been a victim of sexual assault</p> <p>Larger numbers = more victimization The index represents the sum of the scores for the following questions.</p>
Hometown		H10: Students from rural areas support more punitive measures for criminal offenders than students from urban areas.	<p>Respondents were asked how they would classify the town in which they were primarily raised/grew up.</p> <p>Rural Suburban Urban Suburban = Reference Group</p>

The Rehabilitation-Punishment Continuum

In most studies, punitiveness is measured by support for the death penalty; harsher and longer sentencing; harsher courts; or strict legislation (e.g., three-strikes-and-you're-out legislation) (Falco 2008). However, only a few studies measure punitive attitudes by a lack of support for rehabilitation. For instance, Langworthy and Whitehead's study (1986, 80) measures punitiveness by asking respondents "whether they thought the purpose of prison was to punish criminals or to teach them to be useful,

law-abiding citizens.” This type of question forces respondents to choose one extreme or the other.

Langworthy and Whitehead (1986) acknowledge that previous research has shown punishment and rehabilitation to be inversely related. In fact, the authors state that most researchers have measured punishment and/or rehabilitation, separately, rather than by considering them as two ends of a continuum. To rectify this shortcoming, this research assumes that an individual’s attitude toward the treatment of criminal offenders is a matter of degree on a continuum of punitiveness to rehabilitation.

Furthermore, the research hypothesis assumes that attitudes toward punishment and rehabilitation depend on the specific types of crime. McCorkle (1993) argued that past studies were too general; therefore, he used six common crime scenarios to evaluate more accurate punitive attitudes. To measure punitiveness on the rehabilitation-punishment continuum, this study uses McCorkle’s six crime scenarios. Crime scenarios are beneficial in this type of research because the respondents are able to envision the crimes being committed, and researchers can obtain a more accurate depiction of attitudes.

Independent Variables

A review of the literature identified ten factors that may influence attitudes toward punishment and rehabilitation. Variables such as sex, income, race, political ideology, previous victimization, fear of crime, and exposure to crime television were common variables found in the literature. Studies that examine the attitudes of college students include variables such as hometown, academic classification, and college major. Basic

demographics such as sex, income, race, and political ideology, as well as variables from studies that examine the attitudes of college students are used in this study. A multiple regression equation determines how these independent variables influence attitudes. All independent variables except for income, and hours of crime television watched were dichotomously coded. Every other variable was coded 1 or 0 which produces a dummy variable (Weisberg et al. 1989).

Method of Data Collection

Since the purpose of this study is to examine factors that affect attitudes, survey research is an appropriate research technique for data collection. Babbie (2007, 244) notes surveys are “excellent instruments for looking at attitudes and orientations in large populations.” Similarly, Weisberg et al. (1989, 15) contends that surveys are “most often used to measure the frequency of specific attitudes, beliefs and behaviors”. Therefore, a survey was the best method to examine attitudes of college students in regard to punishment and rehabilitation. Babbie (2007) notes several strengths in survey research. First, survey research is an economically feasible way to research large populations and many times quicker than individual interviews. Also, surveys provide a way for researchers to gain information on what people are thinking and why they do things (Weisberg et al.1989). Also, people are more willing to express controversial attitudes in a survey as opposed to an interview (Babbie 2007).

Babbie (2007) also mentions some weaknesses in survey research. Surveys can be too standardized for the subject and inflexible. Also, surveys may present artificial responses when portraying real life contexts. Weisberg et al. (1989) also mentions some

limitations to survey research. The authors note that respondents may not be truthful when they answer survey questions, especially if questions are sensitive in nature.

Survey Construction

As shown in the operationalization table, each dependent variable is measured by a specific question presented in the survey. The survey used in this study can be found in Appendix A. A survey pre-test was administered to Dr. Tajalli's undergraduate statistics class and graduate instructional students to determine reliability and validity. Reliability means that each time a respondent is asked a similar question, they should answer in approximately the same way. Validity means that each question on the survey measures what it is meant to measure (Weisberg et al. 1989).

The questions included in this study were selected from those of previous studies and modified to fit the current research. For example, this study uses McCorkle's six common

crimes (1993). But instead of using McCorkle's dichotomy, rehabilitation-punishment was measured on a continuum. This continuum was not present in McCorkle's study. This study also borrowed the "fear of crime" or "worry" index that was developed by Sims and Johnson (2004). Sims and Johnson's index was chosen because past research indicated that the type of questions used by the scholars measured fear of crime more accurately than asking respondents about fear provoking situations (Haghighi and Sorensen 1996; Sims and Johnson 2004).

Sample

The unit of analysis for this study is individual college students, both undergraduate and graduate. One-thousand four-hundred twenty-seven Texas State University students were randomly chosen. The total student enrollment for the Fall semester of 2008 was 29,105. This population represents students from 226 of the 254 Texas counties, 46 states and 68 countries (<http://www.emm.txstate.edu> 2009). The sample consisted of many different demographics, majors, and classifications.

To obtain a realistic sample of the population of Texas State students, the university map was divided into four quadrants. Surveys were given in all four quadrants at different times of day (morning, afternoon, evening). Administering the surveys at different times of the day allowed the study to include undergraduate and graduate students. Undergraduates have classes in the morning and afternoon, while most graduate students have classes in the evening. The expected size of the sample was approximately 1,500 students. However, some students did not want to participate in the study and did not submit a survey. An important part of this study was to measure the attitudes of criminal justice students. Therefore, surveys were administered at the Hines Criminal Justice Department Building at various times.

Procedures

Once data were received, the results were entered into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) computer program for statistical analysis. The data from the survey were manually entered; then, the regression analysis option was used. This study uses descriptive statistics and multiple regression analysis to determine which factors

most influence punitive attitudes. Babbie (2007) defines multiple regression analysis as “a form of statistical analysis that seeks the equation representing the impact of two or more independent variables on a single dependent variable” (458). Since six different crimes were used as dependent variables, six separate multiple regressions were run. Once the six regressions were completed, the results were reviewed for possible relationships. Relationships between variables are discussed in Chapter Four. This study uses beta weights to compare the impact of different variables. According to Weisberg et al. (1989, 272) beta weights “compare the impact of different variables in different units and with different variances.”

Human Subjects Protection

The federal government requires all education, research, and medical institutions to have an Institutional Research Board (IRB) with a goal of protecting the rights and welfare of human research subjects. The IRB reviews proposed research to ensure that the proposed project follows federal guidelines and accepted ethical principles. This study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board, and the approval number is 2009E7736. Surveys were anonymous; records did not identify any student. Participation in this research was strictly voluntary, and no penalty or loss of benefits occurred to those unwilling to participate. All subjects were allowed to discontinue participation at any time. Students under the age of eighteen were not allowed to participate. Angela Dozier at ad1126@txstate.edu or Dr. Hassan Tajalli at tajalli@txstate.edu, can be contacted for more information regarding this research and about the subjects' rights.

Chapter Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to explain how attitudes of university students toward punishment and rehabilitation could be measured. This chapter describes how each hypothesis is tested and presented. The operationalization table illustrates how each hypothesis is measured by using specific survey questions. The next chapter presents the findings of the regression analysis.

Chapter 4

Results

The purpose of this chapter is to present and describe the findings of the statistical analysis. Six multiple regression analyses were completed for each dependent variable. The dependent variables in this study are McCorkle's (1993) six common crimes: robbery, rape, molestation, burglary, drug sale, and drug possession. Each dependent variable was tested against ten independent variables to find factors that influence attitudes toward various crimes. The ten independent variables in this study are academic classification, academic major, degree of liberalism, sex, crime television shows, minorities, family income, fear of crime, victimization, and hometown. The purpose of each regression analysis is to show which independent variables most influence college students' attitudes toward punishment and rehabilitation. Survey responses from Texas State University students were evaluated and analyzed. The total size of the sample is approximately 1,427 students from a population of 29,105 college students, 226 of the 254 Texas counties, 46 states and 68 countries (<http://www.emm.txstate.edu> 2009). Table 4.1 shows descriptive statistics found in the study.

The dummy variable, Freshman/Sophomore, is tested against juniors and seniors and graduate students, which is coded 1. Conservatism is measured on a scale of 1-5, and higher numbers represent stronger conservatism. The variable sex is coded by 1 for male and 0 for female. For the variable race, white is the dummy variable and is measured against African-Americans and Hispanics.

Table 4.1: Sample Characteristics

Variable	N	Percent
Sex		
Female	752	52.9%
Male	669	47.1%
Missing	6	0.4%
Classification		
Freshman	328	23.1%
Sophomore	302	21.2%
Junior	338	23.7%
Senior	335	23.6%
Grad Students	117	8.2%
Race		
White/Caucasian	936	68.6%
Black/African-American	139	10.2%
Hispanic/Latino	277	20.3%
Other	63	4.4%
Major		
Business	247	17.8%
Liberal Arts	381	27.4%
Education	84	6.1%
Fine Arts and Communications	197	14.2%
Math & Science	178	12.8%
Criminal justice	75	5.4%
Other	226	16.3%
Missing	39	2.7%
Town		
Rural	329	23.4%
Suburban	727	51.8%
Urban	348	24.8%
Missing	23	1.6%

The dummy variable, Freshman/Sophomore, is tested against juniors and seniors and graduate students, which is coded 1. Conservatism is measured on a scale of 1-5, and higher numbers represent stronger conservatism. The variable sex is coded by 1 for male and 0 for female. For the variable race, white is the dummy variable and is measured against African-Americans and Hispanics.

The worry index is measured on a scale of 1-5 with lower numbers representing higher levels of worry. The worry index created by Sims and Johnson (2004) was chosen for this study because the authors point out that asking a respondent how much they worry about being victims of certain crimes is more accurate way of measuring fear. The authors argued that past research used fear provoking situations, which could have showed statistical results (Haghighi and Sorensen 1996; Sims and Johnson 2004).

The victimization variable is measured by the number of times respondents reported being victims of certain crimes; therefore, larger numbers represent more victimization. To measure the size of a student's hometown, suburban is the dummy variable and is tested against rural and urban.

Table 4.2 illustrates the results of the six multiple regressions. The relationship between the independent and dependent variables and the variance by type of crime is examined. First, it should be noted again that punitiveness is measured on a scale of one to eleven with higher numbers represent stronger punitive attitude. The variable freshman/sophomore is the dummy variable and is coded 0 in this study.

Table 4.2: Multiple Regression Results †

	Robbery	Rape	Molestation	Burglary	Drug Sale	Drug Possession
Juniors/Seniors (1)	.079	.126	.074	.163	.086	-.085
Graduate Students (1)	-.878**	-.326	-.100	-.189	.205	.268
Criminal justice Majors	.412	.370	.595	-.134	-1.209**	-.970*
Conservatism (2)	.718**	.472**	.539**	.784**	1.043**	1.128**
Sex (3)	.046	-.203	-.166	-.409*	-.511**	-.618**
Crime television	.000	-.007	-.015	-.016	-.013	.015
Blacks (4)	-.200	-.004	-.050	-.397	.450*	.179
Hispanics (4)	.122	.011	-.192	-.159	.502*	.333
Worry Index (5)	.148	.160	-.224*	.326**	.351**	.113
Victimization (6)	-.010	.035	-.021	.078**	-.019	-.012
Rural (7)	.233	.181	.233	-.123	.020	-.017
Urban (7)	-.306	.294	.376*	.097	.083	.115
Income	-.000	.000	8.833*	-.000	-.000	-.000
R Square	.059	.025	.036	.053	.075	.069
F	5.312**	2.153**	3.133**	4.765**	6.860**	6.297**
Constant	5.839**	6.709**	6.367**	4.211**	2.149**	1.749**

* Significant at $\alpha < .05$ ** Significant at $\alpha < .01$

† Punitiveness is measured on a scale of 1-11 with higher numbers representing more punitiveness.

- (1) Freshman/Sophomore is the omitted reference group.
- (2) Measured on a scale of 1-5. Higher numbers represent conservatism.
- (3) Male is coded as 1.
- (4) White is the omitted reference group.
- (5) Measured on a scale of 1-5. Lower numbers represent more worry.
- (6) Larger numbers represent more victimization.
- (7) Suburban is the omitted reference group.

Table 4.3: Average Score on Rehabilitation-Punishment Continuum

	Robbery	Rape	Molestation	Burglary	Drug Sale	Drug Possession
Male	8.71	8.83	9.03	7.43	6.31	5.02
Female	8.28	8.62	8.73	7.33	6.34	5.31
Freshman	8.39	8.48	8.71	7.21	6.60	5.62
Sophomore	8.70	8.97	9.04	7.68	6.27	5.20
Junior	8.50	8.66	8.87	7.40	6.15	4.80
Senior	8.56	8.83	8.87	7.31	6.24	5.03
Graduate	7.86	8.49	8.85	7.13	6.45	5.35
Criminal Justice Majors	8.68	8.99	9.17	7.36	5.72	4.67
Other Majors	8.45	8.69	8.83	7.39	6.33	5.16
Rural	8.59	8.84	9.04	7.34	6.36	5.19
Suburban	8.38	8.61	8.74	7.39	6.26	5.11
Urban	8.55	8.85	8.99	7.33	6.39	5.25

* Strictly Rehabilitation = 1

* Strictly Punitive = 11

Robbery

The results show that graduate students are significantly less punitive toward robbery when compared to freshman/sophomore students. This finding supports the research from Mackey and Courtright (2000) and Farnworth, Longmire, and West (1998), which found a decrease in punitiveness as education levels rise. The current study predicted that freshman and sophomore students tend to support punitive measures for criminal offenders more than junior and senior students. The results of this study, however did not support this specific hypothesis but affirmed the underlying principle that as education levels increase punitive attitudes decrease. However, the variables juniors/seniors, criminal justice majors, sex, crime television, African-Americans, Hispanics, worry index, victimization, rural, and urban were not found to be statistically significant. Viewing crime television, income, and victimization did not show any relationship to attitudes about robbery.

Degree of conservatism is statistically significant at the less than .01 level. This finding supports the hypothesis that conservatives hold more punitive attitudes. The findings suggest that students with a higher degree of conservative attitudes are more likely to favor punitive treatment of criminal offenders for the crime of robbery.

Rape

The results in this study found that for the crime of rape a higher degree of conservatism is statistically significant at the less than .01 level. These results show that the more conservative a student is, the more he/she favors punishment as opposed to

rehabilitation. The hypothesis that conservative students will hold more punitive views than liberal students is supported by this finding for the crime of rape.

The other independent variables (academic classification, academic major, sex, crime television shows, minorities, family income, fear of crime, victimization, and hometown) in this study do not show any statistical significance for the crime of rape. These variables of race, crime television, and income do not demonstrate any relationship at all to attitudes of punishment for the crime of rape.

Molestation

Four variables, conservatism, fear of crime, hometown, and income have a statistically-significant impact on the punitive attitude of students toward the criminal act of molestation. The degree of conservatism is statistically significant at the less than .01 level indicating conservatism attitudes strongly correlate with punitive attitudes of students toward the criminal act of molestation. The results indicate that the more conservative a student is, the more he/she advocates punishment for criminals who engage in this act. The hypothesis that conservative students will hold more punitive views than liberal students is supported by this finding for the crime of molestation.

Fear of crime, hometown size, and income are found to be statistically significant at the less than .05 level. The results indicate that students who reported more worry about crime also reported more punitiveness toward molestation. This finding did support the study's hypothesis that fear of crime may increase punitiveness.

This study finds that hometown size has an impact on punitive attitudes of students toward molestation. Students who reported living in urban areas hold more punitive attitudes toward molestation than those who report living in the suburbs. This study hypothesizes that students from rural areas hold more punitive attitudes toward criminal offenders. This hypothesis is not supported for the crime of molestation. The relationship is, however, significant at less than .05 level for students from urban areas.

The study's results also demonstrate that income is statistically significant at the less than .05 level. The crime of molestation is the only crime in which income shows an impact. This result means that students with higher incomes report more punitive attitudes toward the crime of molestation. This study's hypothesis that students with higher family income would be more punitive is supported by these findings.

Burglary

Four variables, conservatism, sex, fear of crime, and prior victimization are statistically significant for the crime of burglary. The level of conservatism, fear of crime, and prior victimization were all statistically significant at the less than .01 level. The results show the more conservative students report more punitiveness toward burglary. Respondents who report higher fear of crime also report more punitiveness toward burglary. This finding supports the study's hypothesis that fear of crime increases punitiveness. Students who report that they were victims of past crimes are found to hold more punitive views toward burglary offenders. The variable sex is found to be statistically significant at the less than .05 level. Women report less punitive attitudes than men toward burglary offenders. The other independent variables such as academic

classification, crime television, race, hometown, and income do not indicate a significant relationship toward burglaries. In fact, income and crime television indicate little or no relationship to attitudes about punishment for burglary.

Drug Sale

Six variables-criminal justice majors, conservatism, sex, African-American, Hispanics, and fear of crime-are statically significant in the regression analysis for the crime of drug sale. Sex is found to influence attitudes toward punishment and rehabilitation for the crime of drug sale. Criminal justice students appear to show more support for rehabilitation than non-criminal justice students for the crime of drug sale.

The results show that more conservative students are statistically more punitive toward this crime. This finding supports the current study's hypothesis that more conservative students will hold more punitive views. Fear of crime is statistically significant at the less than .01 level. This outcome signifies that students who reported higher levels of fear also reported more punitiveness toward drug sale offenses. This finding supports the hypothesis presented in this study that students with higher levels of fear hold more punitive attitudes.

The crime of drug sale was the only crime that shows race as an influencing factor. Specifically, African-Americans, as compared to whites, appear to be more punitive toward the crime of drug sale. This finding is statistically significant at below the .05 level. Hispanics students are significantly more punitive toward these criminals than white students are.

The following independent variables do not show significant signs of influencing punitive attitudes toward drug sale: classification, crime television, victimization and hometown, and income. Specifically, this means that these variables have no significant impact on attitudes toward the crime of drug sale.

Drug Possession

The results indicate that criminal justice students, more than other students, support rehabilitation for those who are charged with drug possession. The level of conservatism is shown to be statistically significant below the .01 level. This finding supports this study's hypothesis that conservative students will report more punitive attitudes. The variable conservatism is significantly related to the punitive attitudes of students, indicating that the more conservative a student is, the stronger punitive attitudes he/she holds toward those who are charged with the crime of drug possession.

Three variables (academic major, conservatism, and sex) are found to be related to drug possession. When the relationship between drug possession and academic major is tested, criminal justice students tend to support rehabilitation more than non-criminal justice students. This relationship is found to be statistically significant at below the .05 level. This finding does not support this study's hypothesis that criminal justice students will hold more punitive attitudes than non-criminal justice students toward criminal offenders. In fact, the finding demonstrates an inverse relationship between criminal justice students and attitudes.

The variable sex is an influencing factor for attitudes toward drug possession. Sex is found to be statistically significant at below the .01 level. This finding indicates that

when attitudes of women and men are compared, women are found to be significantly less punitive toward these criminals than men. Other independent variables, such as classification, crime television, race, fear of crime, prior victimization, and hometown are found to have no significant impact on attitudes toward drug possession offenders.

Chapter Summary

This study uses punitiveness and rehabilitation as two extremes of the same continuum. Former studies have used a dichotomous variable not a continuum. Overall, the results show that each crime has factors that influence attitudes. For example, for the crime of robbery, graduate students and conservative students report more punitive attitudes. For the crime of rape, conservative students report more punitive attitudes than do liberals. For the crime of molestation, conservatism, fear of crime, hometown and income are found to influence punitive attitudes. Conservatism, sex, fear of crime, and victimization are found to influence attitudes toward rehabilitation and punishment for burglary. Income, crime television, victimization, and size of hometown appear to be almost completely unrelated to attitudes toward drug possession.

Attitudes toward offenders of drug sales were influenced by several factors such as academic major, conservatism, sex, race, and fear of crime. Academic major, conservatism, and sex are factors that influence attitudes toward rehabilitation and punishment for the crime of drug possession. Overall, this study finds that the level of conservatism is the most significant factor in each of the six crimes which implies respondents who report conservative attitudes also report more punitiveness. The next chapter discusses the findings of the study and compares this study's findings to past

studies. The next chapter also discusses possible improvements for this study and offers suggestions for future research.

Chapter 5

Conclusion, Review of the Findings, and Suggestions for Future Research

The purpose of this research was to examine which factors influence college students' support for punishment or rehabilitation for criminal offenders. This study examines the punitive attitudes of students toward six common crimes (robbery, rape, molestation, drug sale, and drug possession). One-thousand four-hundred twenty-seven college students are surveyed. The analysis finds that an individual's level of conservatism influences punitive attitudes toward criminals. The findings show that college students are more willing to support rehabilitation for less serious crimes than they are for crimes that are more severe.

Education

This study finds that graduate students hold less punitive attitudes than freshmen and sophomores. This finding supports Farnworth, Longmire, and West's (1998) finding that, in general, seniors hold less punitive views than freshmen. The authors attributed their results to the "liberalizing effect" of the college experience. The liberalizing effect is a theory that states students become more liberal during college. The results of this study show that graduate students hold less punitive views than freshman/sophomore students, particularly for the crime of robbery.

Eskridge (1999, 292), however, suggests that caution should be used when a relationship between academic level and liberalism is found. Eskridge argues that a longitude study provides more definitive conclusions. The author contends that "students who survived until their senior year were more liberal to begin with; they maintained

those liberal philosophies during their college years; and the more conservative students were more likely to drop out of school.” Essentially, Eskridge argues that conservative students drop out of college more often and that could be a reason why so many upperclassman report to be liberal.

Mackey and Courtright (2000) found a negative relationship between grade levels and punitiveness. They found that as grade level increases, punitive attitudes decrease. This study supports Mackey and Courtright’s (2000) research that graduate students hold less punitive attitudes than freshmen and sophomores.

Liberalism-Conservatism

The primary finding of this study is that level of conservatism is a strong factor that influences attitudes toward punishment and rehabilitation. Falco (2008) notes most studies of this nature find liberals and Democrats to hold less punitive beliefs than conservatives and Republicans. This study’s results support that claim and find that level of conservatism is significantly related to all six crimes examined at below the .01 level. Similarly, Langworthy and Whitehead (1986) found liberalism to be a significant predictor of punitive attitudes. Also, Applegate et al. (2000) found Democrats more supportive of rehabilitation efforts.

Based on the current findings, an individual’s level of conservatism strongly impacts sentiments toward criminal offenders. Therefore, future research should focus on a more in depth study of the relationship between political ideology and attitudes toward treatment of criminal offenders. One could argue that factors that influence conservatism

may also indirectly affect attitudes toward punishment and rehabilitation, but more research is needed to support this claim.

Gender

The study finds that gender has a significant impact on the punitive attitudes of students toward offenders of the crimes of burglary, drug sale and drug possession. The findings show that women hold less punitive attitudes than men for the crimes of drug sale and drug possession. These findings are statistically significant at the less than .01 level. This study's findings do not support Hurwitz and Smithey's (1998) thesis on vulnerability which states that women are more punitive due to feelings of vulnerability. This study supports previous studies that find women to be less punitive (Conover 1994 as cited by Hurwitz and Smithey 1998; Rhine et al. 1994; Stoper 1988; Burt 1986; Shapiro and Mahajan 1986 as cited by Hurwitz and Smithey 1998; Applegate et al. 2002; Haghghi and Lopez 1998).

Falco (2008) notes that differences in attitudes between male and female college students are not well established and concludes that "additional research is needed to examine the relationship [difference in attitudes] between male and female students [,] and more specifically, between male and female criminal justice/criminology majors and non-majors" (Falco 2008, 20). Similarly, McCorkle (1993) found that gender is unrelated to support for rehabilitation among the general population. However, for the crimes of burglary, drug sale, and drug possession, this study find that female students have less punitive attitudes than males, supporting the hypothesis that attitudes vary by gender and type of crime.

Media

The amount of crime television shows watched is not a factor that influences college students' attitudes toward support for punishment or rehabilitation. Dowler's (2003) suggests there are limitations on how this factor is measured. Dowler (2003) notes that asking respondents the amount of crime television shows per week they watch has several limitations. The author points out that there are several different types of crime television shows, and it is unknown which type of show respondents are watching. Also, Dowler (2003) acknowledges that some crime shows are more realistic than others; therefore it might be beneficial to ask which shows individuals are watching. In order to have a better understanding of the media's true effect on attitudes, perhaps future research should follow Dowler's suggestions. Also, future researchers should consider how college students' opinions about crime and punishment are related to their exposure to violent video and internet games.

Race-Ethnicity

This study found that race is a factor that influences attitudes toward support for punishment or rehabilitation for the crime of drug sale. African Americans are more punitive than whites toward the crime of drug sale. Hispanics/Latinos are found to hold more punitive attitudes than whites for criminal offenders who sold drugs. Dowler's study (2003) found that race was one of the strongest indicators of punitive attitudes. This study did not find race to be a strong factor influencing attitudes except for the crime of drug sale. This result may be due to the actual crime scenario that was presented in the

survey. This study's scenario depicts a man convicted of selling cocaine to an undercover law enforcement officer. Cocaine use is often stereotyped as a crime of the white, upper/middle class. Therefore, attitudes may vary between different races depending on the type of drug sold. However, further research is needed to substantiate this theory.

Income

Overall, this analysis did not show family income to be a strong factor that influences students' attitudes. However, there appears to be a significant relationship between affluence and punitiveness for the crime of molestation. This finding was statistically significant at below the .01 level. This finding may signify that as income increases, punitive attitudes increase for the crime of molestation.

Fear of Crime

This study found that fear of crime is a factor that influences attitudes toward support for punishment or rehabilitation for the crimes of molestation, burglary, and drug sale. Our findings show that college students who report more worry hold more punitive attitudes toward these three crimes. Langworthy and Whitehead (1986) hypothesized and concluded that people who are more fearful of crime tend to hold more punitive attitudes. However, the current study does not support their conclusion. Similarly, Sims and Johnson (2004) hypothesized that fear of crime would affect attitudes toward punishment and rehabilitation. However, their data concluded that fear of crime was not a strong predictor of attitudes about the most important goal of prisons.

Victimization

This study finds that prior victimization significantly influences attitudes toward burglary. Most studies do not find a statistically significant relationship between victimization and support for rehabilitation (Langworthy and Whitehead 1986; McCorkle 1993; Falco 2008). Falco (2008) suggests that many studies do not find significant relationships between victimization and punitiveness because respondents are unlikely to report previous victimization. Perhaps that is why the current study did not find any significant relationship between victimization and punitiveness.

Size of town

Mackey and Courtright (2000) found that people from smaller towns tend to hold more punitive views. The current study does not support their findings expect for the crime of molestation. Town size was found to influence punitive attitudes toward molestation. This study shows that students who report growing up in urban areas are more punitive toward molestation than those growing up in suburban areas. Further research is needed to explain the difference between urban and suburban attitudes toward the crime of molestation.

Conclusion

This research project helped determine which factors influence punitive attitudes or support for rehabilitation. Finding from this study reveal that conservatism is the most influential factor toward punishment opinions. Future research should explore why political ideology plays such a huge role in attitudes toward rehabilitation and

punishment. Also, future research should consider how costs alter opinions toward rehabilitation and punishment.

With prison system populations increasing at alarming rates, policy changes that limit growth will be needed in the future. Whether it is rehabilitation efforts, indeterminate sentencing, reducing the use of mandatory sentencing, increasing the use of parole, correctional policy will be a hot-button issue. This study found punitive opinions are strongly influenced by political leanings. However, the problem should not be viewed as merely an ideological battle, but rather as one that will continue to become more costly to society if changes are not made.

Bibliography

- Applegate, Brandon. 1997. Specifying public support for rehabilitation: A factorial survey approach. Unpublished dissertation, University of Cincinnati. Online available at <http://www.ncjrs.org/pdffiles1/nij/grants/184113.pdf>.
- Applegate, Brandon K., Francis T. Cullen, and Bonnie S. Fisher. 2002. Public views toward crime and correctional policies: Is there a gender gap? *Journal of Criminal Justice*. 30(2): 89-100.
- Applegate, Brandon and Robin K. Davis. 2005. Examining Public Support For "Correcting" Offenders. *Corrections Today*. Jun. 67(3): 94-95.
- Applegate, Brandon K., Francis T. Cullen, Bonnie S. Fisher and Thomas Vander Ven. 2000. Forgiveness and fundamentalism: Reconsidering the relationship between correctional attitudes and religion. *Criminology*. 38(3): 719-754.
- Austin, J., J. Clark, P. Hardyman and D. Henry. 1999. 'The Impact of Three Strikes and You're Out', *Punishment and Society* 1(2): 131-62.
- Babbie, Earl. 2007. *The Practice of Social Research*, 11th Edition. Thomson Wadsworth. USA.
- Courtright, K. E. and Mackey, D. A. 2004. Job desirability among criminal justice majors: Exploring relationships between personal characteristics and occupational attractiveness. *Journal of Criminal Justice Education*. 15 (2): 311-326.
- Cullen, Francis T. and Karen E. Gilbert. 1982. *Reaffirming Rehabilitation*. Cincinnati, OH: Anderson.
- Cullen, Francis. T., Bonnie S. Fisher and Brandon Applegate. 2000. Public Opinion about punishment and corrections. *Crime and Justice: A Review of Research*. 27: 1 - 79.
- Cullen, Francis. T., Gregory A. Clark and John F. Wozniak. 1985. Explaining the get tough movement: Can the public be blamed? *Federal Probation*, 49, 16- 24.
- Cullen Francis. T and P. Gendreau. 2000. *Assessing correctional rehabilitation: policy, practice and prospects*. In *Criminal justice 2000*, ed. J Horney, 3: 109- 76. Washington, DC: Natl. Inst. Justice., US Dep. Justice.
- Doehrman, Tessa Sue. 2007. "Factors Influencing States' Success in Reaching Healthy People 2000" *Applied Research Projects*. Paper 249. <http://ecommons.txstate.edu/arp/249>
- Dickey, W. and P. Hollenhurst. 1999. Three-strikes laws: Five years later. *Corrections Management*, 3(3), 1-18.

- Dowler, K. 2003. Media consumption and public attitudes toward crime and justice: The relationship between fear of crime, punitive attitudes, and perceived police effectiveness. *Journal of Criminal Justice and Popular Culture*. 10 (2): 109–126.
- Eskridge, C. W. 1999. A brief response to “Students’ views on criminal justice,” by Farnworth, Longmire, and West. *Journal of Criminal Justice Education*. 10(2): 291-295.
- Falco, Diana L. 2008. Assessing Student Views Toward Punishment: A Comparison of Punitiveness among criminology. PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania. Available on line at <http://hdl.handle.net/2069/120>.
- Farnworth, M., D. R Longmire and V. M. West. 1998. College students’ views on criminal justice. *Journal of Criminal Justice Education*. 9(1), 39-57.
- Flanagan, T. J. 1996. Reform or punishment: Americans’ view of the correctional system. In *Americans view crime and justice: A national public opinion survey*, eds. T. J. Flanagan and D. R. Longmire, 71-91. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Flanagan, T. J., and D. R Longmire. 1996. *Americans view crime and justice: A national public opinion survey*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Gravetter, Frederick J. and Larry B. Wallnau. 2004. *Statistics for the Behavioral Sciences*. 6th Edition. Thomson Wadsworth. USA.
- Haghighi, B. and A. Lopez. 1998. Gender and perception of prisons and prisoners. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 26(6): 453-464.
- Haghighi, B. and J. Sorensen. 1996. “America’s Fear of Crime.” *Americans View Crime and Justice: A National Public Opinion Survey*, eds. In T.J. Flanagan and D.R. Longmire. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage.
- Haney, C. and P. Zimbardo. 1998. The past and future of U.S. prison policy: Twenty-five years after the Stanford prison experiment. *American Psychologist*, 53, 709–727.
- Hensley, Christopher, Mary Koscheski, and Richard Tewksbury. 2007. A Critical Journal of Crime, Law and Society Examining Criminology Majors' and Non-Majors' Attitudes Toward Inmate Programs, Services, and Amenities. *Criminal Justice Studies*. (20)3: 217-230.
- Hensley, Christopher, Alexis Miller, Richard Tewksbury and Mary Koscheski. 2003. Student attitudes toward inmate privileges. *American Journal of Criminal Justice*, 27(2): 249-262.

- Hensley, Christopher, Richard Tewksbury, Alexis Miller and Mary Koscheski. 2002. Criminal justice and non-criminal justice students' views of U.S. correctional issues. *The Justice Professional*, 15(4), 303-311.
- Hogan, M. J., T Chiricos and M. Gertz. 2005. Economic insecurity, blame, and punitive attitudes. *Justice Quarterly*, 22(3): 392-412.
- Hurwitz, J. & Smithey, S. 1998. Gender differences on crime and punishment. *Political Research Quarterly*. 51(1): 89-115.
- Jensen, Eric L., Jurg Gerber and Clayton Mosher. 2004. Social consequences of the war on drugs: the legacy of failed policy. *Criminal Justice Policy Review*. 15:100-121.
- Jamieson Susan. 2004. Likert scales: how to (ab)use them. *Medical Education*. 38:1217-1218.
- Langworthy, Robert H., and John T. Whitehead. 1986. Liberalism and fear as explanations of punitiveness. *Criminology*. 24(3): 575-591.
- Mackey, David. A., and Kevin E. Courtright. 2000. Assessing punitiveness among college students: A comparison of criminal justice majors with other majors. *The Justice Professional*, 12: 423-441.
- Mackey, David. A., Kevin E. Courtright and Susan H. Packard. 2006. Testing the rehabilitative ideal among college students. *Criminal Justice Studies*, 19(2): 153-170.
- Matthews, R. (2005). The myth of punitiveness. *Theoretical Criminology*, 9(2), 175-201.
- McCorkle, R. C. (1993) Punish and rehabilitate? Public attitudes toward six common crimes. *Crime & Delinquency*, 39(2): 240-252.
- Miethe, Terance D. and Hong Lu. 2005. *Punishment: A Comparative Historical Perspective*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Miller, Alexis. J., Richard Tewksbury, and Christopher Hensley. 2004. College students' perceptions of crime, prison and prisoners. *The Justice Professional*. 17(3): 311-328.
- Newburn, T. and Jones, T. 2005. 'Symbolic Politics and Penal Populism: The Long Shadow of Willie Horton', *Crime, Media, Culture*, 1: 72-87.
- Payne, Brian K., Randy R. Gainey, Ruth A. Triplett, and Mona J. E. Danner. 2004. What drives punitive beliefs?: Demographic characteristics and justifications for sentencing. *Journal of Criminal Justice* 32(3): 195-206.

- PEW Center on the States. 2009. *One in 31: The Long Reach of American Corrections* (Washington, DC: The Pew Charitable Trusts, March 2009
<http://www.pewcenteronthestates.org/>
- Reith, M. 1999. Viewing of Crime Drama and Authoritarian Aggression: An Investigation of the Relationship between Crime Viewing, Fear and Aggression. *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media* 43(2): 211-221.
- Shields, Patricia M. 1998. Pragmatism as a philosophy of science: a tool for public administration. *Research in Public Administration* 4: 195-225. Available at <http://ecommons.txstate.edu/polsfacp/33/>
- Shields, Patricia M. and Hassan Tajalli. 2006. Intermediate theory: the missing link to successful student scholarship. *Journal of Public Affairs Education* 12(3): 313-334. Available at <http://ecommons.txstate.edu/polsfacp/39/>
- Shelden, Randall. G. 2001. *Controlling the dangerous classes*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Shichor, David. 2000. Penal policies at the threshold of the twenty-first century. *Criminal Justice Review*, 25: 1-30.
- Sims, Barbara and Eric Johnston. 2004. Examining Public Opinion about Crime and Justice: A Statewide Study *Criminal justice Policy Review*. 15(3): 270-293.
- Stinchcomb, Jeanne. B. 2002. From rehabilitation to retribution: Examining public policy paradigms and personnel education patterns in corrections. *American Journal of Criminal Justice*. 27(1): 1-16.
- Texas State University-San Marcos. 2009. Fall 2008 Enrollment Highlights.
<http://www.emm.txstate.edu> .
- Taylor, D. G., Scheppele, K. L., & Stinchombe, A. L. 1979. Salience of crime and support for harsher criminal sanctions. *Social Problems*, 26(4), 413-424.
- Unnever, James. D. and Francis T Cullen. 2005. Executing the innocent and support for capital punishment: Implications for public policy. *Criminology and Public Policy*, 4, 3-38.
- Unnever, James D., Francis T. Cullen and Bonnie S. Fisher. 2007. A Liberal Is Someone Who Has Not Been Mugged: Criminal Victimization and Political Beliefs. *Justice Quarterly* 24(2):309-334.
- Weisberg, Herbert F., Jon A. Krosnick, Bruce D. Bowen. 1989. *An Introduction to Survey Research and Data Analysis* 2nd ed. Glenview, Illinois: Scott, Foresman.

Appendix A

Students Attitude toward Criminal Offenders

Thank you very much for filling out this questionnaire. Data collected through this brief survey will collect data for an Applied Research Project. This survey is completely anonymous and voluntary.

1) How often do you worry about the following? (**Please provide corresponding number**)

		A few times a month	
Everyday			
Never			
1-----2-----3-----4-----			
----5			
	A few times a week		Seldom

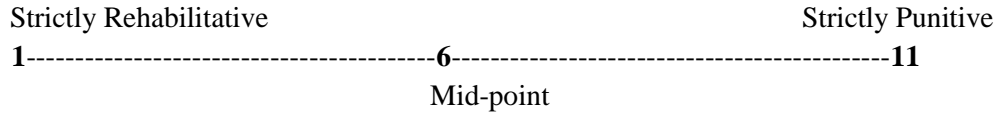
- ___a. being physically assaulted
- ___b. being murdered
- ___c. someone burglarizing your home
- ___d. someone taking something from you through using force or the threat of use of force
- ___e. someone sexually assaulting yourself or someone in your family being sexually assaulted

2) Please indicate the number of times, if any, that you were a victim of any of the following crimes within the past 12 months: (**Place your numerical response in the space provided**)

- ___a. Someone broke into your home/apartment/dorm
- ___b. Someone stole property from your house/apartment/dorm
- ___c. Someone broke into your car.
- ___d. Someone stole your wallet or purse.
- ___e. Someone threatened to beat you and/or robbed you.
- ___f. Someone beat you up in a fight that you did not start
- ___g. Someone sexual assaulted you.

3) Crime Scenarios

Please read the following crime scenarios and on a scale of 1 to 11 indicate how “rehabilitative” or “punitive” criminal offenders should be treated.



1 = Strictly rehabilitative (provide counseling, therapy, education, vocation training, and other programs that try to change the offender)

11 = Strictly punishment (no programs or assistance)

Scenario A

A man approaches a couple in a parking lot of a casino and demands their cash. They refuse, so he pulls a knife, stabbing and wounding them both. He then takes their money and runs away. Later he is arrested and brought to trial. *Your Numeric Answer* _____

Scenario B

A woman in a bar accepts a ride home from a man who bought her a drink. Instead of taking her home, he pulls into a deserted area and sexually assaults her. The woman later identifies the man in a police line-up. *Your Numeric Answer* _____

Scenario C

A male volunteer in a local boy’s group is convicted of molesting several boys during a weekend camping trip. *Your Numeric Answer* _____

Scenario D

A quiet neighborhood is struck by a rash of daytime burglaries in which thousands of dollars worth of valuable property are stolen. Police investigations later lead to the arrest of a man who lived in the area. *Your Numeric Answer* _____

Scenario F

As a result of a sting operation, a man is convicted of selling cocaine to an undercover police officer. *Your Numeric Answer* _____

Scenario G

During a routine traffic stop, a patrolman spots a small vial of cocaine in the back seat of the driver’s car. *Your Numeric Answer* _____

Appendix B

Consent Form

My name is Angela Dozier and I am a Masters candidate in the Public Administration program at Texas State University-San Marcos. I my e-mail is ad1126@txstate.edu. For my Applied Research Project (ARP) I have chosen to research college students' attitudes toward rehabilitation and punishment for criminal offenders. I am currently seeking your assistance in the data collection phase of my ARP. **By completing the survey you are indicating that you understand and accept the statements below.**

The purpose of my study is to examine attitudes toward rehabilitation and punishment among different types of students. I am seeking your participation in this research because you are currently a student at Texas State University. The survey consists of 10 main questions and several sub-questions and should only take about 10-15 minutes to complete.

The survey may be sensitive in nature. For example, you may be asked if you have been a victim of an assault or robbery. Some survey questions may cause psychological risks to those who are sensitive to violence or crime scenarios. Please note that the Texas State Counseling Center (512-245-2208 or counselingcenter@txstate.edu) offers mental health services that are free to registered students, though the number of sessions allowed may be limited. You should not receive any advantages for completing the survey. Also, you will not be disadvantaged if you do not participate. Participation in the study is completely voluntary and you may withdraw from the study at any time without prejudice or jeopardy to their standing with the University. Also, you may choose not to answer any question for any reason. If you have questions about the research, research participants' rights, and/or research-related injuries to participants you should contact the IRB chair, Dr. Jon Lasser (512-245-3413 lasser@txstate.edu), or Ms. Becky Northcut, Compliance Specialist (512-245-2102). Data collection in this study will be anonymous. Students who are under the age of 18 cannot participate.

If requested, a summary of the data findings may be provided. This study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board and the approval number is 2009E7736 . Data records will be anonymous. Data records will be kept and secured in Dr. Tajalli's office.

¹ The rehabilitation index consisted of ten statements regarding rehabilitation for criminal offenders. A six-point Likert scale was used to indicate level of support for respondents (1 = strongly agree 6 = strongly disagree)