

Death penalty: Reasons for and against.

The death penalty (Capital punishment) has been used since ancient times. In the UK, the last forms of capital punishment were by hanging and that was in 1964 in which it was then abolished in 1969. It is a form of punishment that results in the death of the individual that the court has convicted. It is commonly given to people who have committed the crimes of murder, rape and treason, there are numerous forms of capital punishment in which the main form was by hanging, some of the other forms include lethal injection, electrocution and a firing squad. Some of the more inhumane ways date back to the middle ages which have since been abandoned include beheading, boiling to death, burning and crushed crucifixion which was mainly used in Medieval Europe but was later abolished due to it being too barbaric.

Reasons for:

- If someone is guilty of murder then their human rights are taken from them, including the one to stay alive. Many argue the point for murder of why should the criminal be allowed to live while the victim is deceased and their families are torn apart by the loss of a loved one. And for the rest of their lives they get to live in relatively comfortable conditions in a prison which everything is given to them for free knowing that someday they will be free but that of course depends on their age. Also the person who has committed the crime might have mental issues in which he/she doesn't feel any remorse, they get to take pride in their wrong doing which would infuriate the victim's family and friends.

- If you have killed someone then you should be killed too, in other words 'an eye for an eye'. But the punishment must fit the crime.
- It prevents the criminal from committing a crime ever again, it also restrains and deters others from committing similar crimes as a result of fear of dying. "Capital punishment is likely to deter more than other punishments because people fear death more than anything else" (Ernest van den Haag).
- It is seen as a way of relief and closure for the victims' families and the community knowing there is one less murderer in society. "Whatever your feelings are toward the death penalty, one thing most people will never know is the pain experienced when a family member, or in my case, family members are brutally tortured and murdered." (Kermit Alexander, 30th September, 2016). Also if the victim was involved in a personal or gang related crime and the criminal makes threats against the family for example, then other members of victims family could potentially be in danger, the death penalty would prevent that which would be a tremendous relief to the victims family, whereas if the criminal had a prison sentence given to them, they will eventually get out of prison still possessing a grudge against the victims family.

Reasons against:

- The death penalty goes against some of the most basic human rights, specifically the right to life.
- Often the death penalty is not a painless death, being electrocuted or being killed by lethal injection can be painful for the criminal and some argue that it is more or less the same thing as torture. Another thing is that it directly involves medical based individuals, which goes against medical practise.

- There are no statistics to show that killing murderers by the death penalty reduces or stops other people committing the same offence or similar crimes.
- Sometimes there are faults in the system which means that an innocent person is killed. Such as if a daughter or son has committed a murder and is being served the death penalty, a willing parent might take the blame for them because their love for their child is so overpowering. In addition to this, if an innocent person gets a prison sentence and is later found innocent, then they are released. However, if an innocent person gets served the death penalty, there is no putting it right "Society is no less safe, and justice is still served, but without the added risk of executing an innocent person." (Bharat Malkani, 13th August, 2014)

Conclusion:

My personal opinion on the death penalty is that it should be brought back. I have taken into account the pro's and con's but they do not equal out. The death penalty is a spectacular way of ridding society of any further potential threat, sometimes criminals are not found guilty and commit the crime again. It should most definitely 'fit the crime' and those crimes for me are, murder, rape, paedophilia and any sort of crime that would as a result cause harm to children both physically and mentally. For example, beating of a child would cause both physical and mental issues.

Reference list:

<https://deathpenalty.procon.org/view.resource.php?resourceID=002000>

<https://deathpenaltycurriculum.org/node/6> - © 2000 - 2012 Michigan State University

Comm Tech Lab and Death Penalty Information Center

http://www.bbc.co.uk/ethics/capitalpunishment/against_1.shtml BBC, 2014.

<http://theconversation.com/50-years-since-the-last-execution-can-the-uk-help-end-the-death-penalty-worldwide-30430> August 13, 2014.