Definition of Respect: Analytical Essay

Respect is an essential characteristic of how human beings interact and communicate towards each other. Hoban (1977) conceives respect as a way in which individuals have the ability to be open with others and have some sort of esteem for others. Respect between people can be thought of as the esteem paid by one human being to another; nevertheless, the object of this esteem is the focus of much academic debate (Darwall 1977, 2006).

There are many ways to define respect. Sensen (2011) explains that dignity within respect is dependent on an individual's ability to reason with another and have some measure of independence. This measure of independence and autonomy has raised many implications for respect (Bird 2010), balancing your own autonomy and infringing on another's autonomy is the way in which one determines their own self-respect (Roland and Foxx 2003). Liebling (2004a) also postulates that respect in prison is "An attitude of consideration; to pay proper attention to and not violate. Regard for the inherent dignity and value of the human person" (p212). Furthermore, McKinnon (2000) defined self-respect as the way in which one views themselves and the way in which they intend to be.

Another definition of respect comes from Quinton (1991a) who discusses that being recognised as a human being enough to be reasoned with and not manipulated are key factors of being respected. Honneth (1995) recognises that dignity is also a part of respect and he argues that it is extremely relevant to the topic of respect in regard to aspects like 'the dignity of the body', which would be respecting the hurt of another individual. Sennett (2003a) stipulates that respect is a form of 'expressive practice', these practices are described to be individual and distinct from the imbalances in society. This point is especially pertinent in a prison perspective as prison atmospheres are mostly based off of inequality and inequitable power (Sim 2008, Welch 2005).

Sennett (2003b) also discussed that there are three principles in which society sees people as worthy of respect through; self-development, caring for self and others, and helping others. Wacquant (2001) makes the argument that prison is an environment where trying to strive for these principles is difficult and thus make it harder for society to see inmates worthy of respect. Spears et al (2006) postulated that examining respect might be the most encouraging and favourable way to improve knowledge of how treatment by others impacts the constant advancement of the self-concept. Wrzesniewski, Dutton and Debebe (2003) explained that a vast amount of research shows that there is an association between the way others make individuals feel about their work and how they feel as individuals.

The Prison Service has dedicated itself to keeping an upheld reputation of 'treating prisoners with decency and with respect' (Prison Service, 2000). However, A small collective of individuals describe prisons as characterised by prisoner degradation, humiliation and 'casual cruelty' (Medlicott, 2001). Irwin (1985) also discusses the vast amount of inequalities and imbalances embedded in prison.

Laursen and Laws (2016) argued that there are three concepts that are important morals and beliefs for prisoners; respect, honour and dignity. They continue to explain how these principles

are often overlooked by certain prison programmes even though these values orientate the everyday lives of individuals in prison (Laursen and Laws 2016). Butler and Drake (2007) and Hulley et al (2011) make the interesting claim that respect in institutions like prisons have not been analysed and examined in depth.

This essay will discuss how the health of a prison should be measured according to respect and the extent to which this represents a critical element of imprisonment in contemporary society.