

Faculti Summary

<https://faculti.net/how-little-supervision-can-we-have/>

This video is a detailed discussion about the supervision system in the United States, particularly focusing on probation and parole. It begins by noting the significant number of people—about 4 million—under supervision, while highlighting the system's minimal academic and political scrutiny. The authors aim to critically examine the original purposes of probation and parole, finding they fail to fulfill their intended rehabilitative roles.

The paper discusses different jurisdictions that have attempted to downsize their supervision populations, notably California and New York City. In California, a series of legal reforms and advocacy efforts motivated by federal oversight led to a significant reduction in the prison population and related supervision without an increase in crime rates. Changes included lowering felony charges to misdemeanors and reinvesting savings into community-based alternatives that aid in rehabilitation.

In New York City, the change was driven more by internal agency dynamics rather than federal mandates, leading to innovative practices like using kiosks for check-ins that reduced the queues at probation offices.

The authors argue that the current supervision system often entraps individuals in a vicious cycle that does not aid rehabilitation and can lead to increased incarceration rates instead of reducing them. They suggest exploring abolishing or substantially downsizing such systems based on empirical evidence showing that supervision does not provide public safety or rehabilitation.

This video concludes with recommendations for reforming the system, stressing the need to reduce monetary sanctions and make supervision less onerous while promoting community-based alternatives that do not carry the same punitive connotations. Through these reforms, the authors believe a more compassionate and effective approach to community safety and rehabilitation can be achieved.