

**IMPRISONMENT AND STIGMATIZATION:
A discussion of Robert Martinson's "Nothing Works" Dictum**

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Abstract

The underlying philosophy of the custodial sentencing world is the safe custody, protection, reformation and rehabilitation of the offender, and the protection of the society. However, reports of studies conducted on prisoner reentry and re-offending indicate that custodial sentencing which is being used with increasing frequency in countries like Britain and Nigeria has failed to achieve these positive rehabilitative objectives. Not only is recidivism high but so too are other adverse outcomes, including, unemployment stigmatization, mental illness, and drug addiction. Through the content analysis of available data on custodial sentencing in Nigeria, this paper examined the veracity of the reformation philosophy of imprisonment.

Further, the paper proposed a new paradigm that seeks to identify causes that determine the propensity for criminal behavior and a new range of non-custodial intervention programmes for character reformation of the offenders.

Keywords: *Imprisonment, Stigmatization and Reformation*

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