

Theories of crime causation

[Law](#), [Crime](#)



American Intercontinental University Unit 1 Individual Project CRJS 105 – Theories of Crime Causation November 11th, 2010 Abstract The following will examine the differences between criminalists, criminologists and forensic psychologists. It will then transition into how what exactly is a white collar crime and a blue collar crime. Lastly the paper will discuss the differences between index-one and index-two crimes as defined by the UCR. Media Portrayal of Crime Introduction With the prevalence of crime being portrayed in the media world, it can be difficult for the modern American to decipher all the aspects of crime.

Criminology, the study of crime and its causes, is an excellent way to find out just what makes a criminal's mind tick. Although it may be hard to know just what makes a person commit a crime, having a better understanding of the base of criminal justice aspects may be of assistance. Criminologists, Criminalists, and Forensic Psychologists With a plethora of jobs out there relating to the field of criminal justice, it may become overwhelming to try and decide who does what and how they do it. To have a better understanding of such fields one must know exactly what each field does separately from the other.

A criminologist uses sociological theories and methods to study criminal behavior and how societies respond to crime (Hall, 2010). This means the criminologist seeks to find out the mentality behind a crime and how that thinking affects the society as a whole. By creating theories as to why or how this crime was committed the criminologist can form a wide array of possible answers for the crime. A criminologist would most likely be in an office but

regularly would attend a crime scene to interview witnesses and others to gather sociological data about the crime.

A criminalist examines physical evidence using investigative skills and practical experience. A criminalist is forced to look at nothing but the physical evidence of a crime without prejudice of the person or persons involved. This type of crime evaluation allows for an individual to make findings based on what is physically presented before them. In way you can say that evidence doesn't lie so the criminalist should not be able to either as they are required to follow the evidence. A criminalist would be most commonly found at the site of the crime collecting physical evidence related to the crime.

After the collection a criminalist would be typically found at a crime laboratory, analyzing the collected evidence. Forensic Psychology is the application of the science and profession of psychology to questions and issues relating to law and the legal system (abfp.com, 2010). This side of the criminal justice world refers to strictly the legal side of a crime. In this profession and individual would focus primarily on the criminal/person/persons on trial, as well as any other individual as it related to the case and would be required to provide an expert opinion on topics such as sanity, and competency.

The psychologist enters the mind of the individual through a series of interviews and allows a better understanding of the person beneath what we see on the surface. Criminologists are typically found at interviews and trials related to the crime. This would typically be at the police station or in a

courtroom. Misconceptions of such fields With constant development of new television shows relating to police work, as well as media portrayal of the criminal justice field, there can often be misconceptions placed upon these fields of work.

A common misconception related to the field of criminology (criminologist) is that they live a life of danger and unpredictability. While the criminal mind can be unpredictable criminologists often stay low key and behind the scenes as they are analyzing the criminal mind and would not want to compromise that by running around in the field. In the life of a criminalist, the most common misconception has been brought on by the onslaught of television shows such as CSI and all its spin offs. The typical criminalist doesn't run around shooting at bad guys in the newest designer jeans, or analyzing evidence in seconds.

A criminalist is usually in a decontaminated suit and gloves doing nothing but collecting evidence. They are not there to fight crime nor solve it, they are there specifically for evidence collection (Criminalist, 2009). And as for the seconds long analysis, it's more like weeks for a result to be returned, sorry to burst your bubble! Finally, a forensic psychologist may look like a cool job on the television show Profiler, but in actuality, there is much more to it than what is portrayed. While criminal profiling is one aspect of this field, there are many more unseen.

They work in a wide variety of settings connected to law, depending on their prominence in forensic psychology. Clinical psychologists in the forensic field, for example, may work in a mentalhealthcenter, a hospital, a prison, or

a private agency. Developmental psychologists are found in both medical and academic settings, as well as give consults in court in regards to the behavior or testimony of children. So as you can see the media skews our view of what these individuals actually do and are responsible for. White Collar Crime vs. Blue Collar Crime

When you first hear the terms white collar crime and blue collar crime, you may think, “ People who commit crime are classified by the color of their collars? ” On the contrary that is not the case. The terms White Collar and Blue Collar refer to the class of society in which a crime is committed. Blue collar crime typically refers to such crimes that are most likely committed by individuals in a lower class of society. Crimes of this nature are typically unplanned, spontaneous and sometimes involve direct harm to a person or property of others.

An example of a blue collar crime would be an armed robbery of a bank of store by a person who is desperate. On the contrary, white collar crime is usually found among a higher class in society and consists of corporate, state and high tech crimes (Mojolaw. com, 2010). A good example of white collar crimes would be things such as Ponzi schemes, pyramid schemes, and the Enron debacle. White collar crimes are most often planned and well thought out as they take a lot of attention to commit. Often the person/persons involved have a lot of money to provide a defense for themselves if caught.

For this student, who watches media quite regularly it is hard to make a determination as to which type of crime is more prevalent. You constantly

hear of more and more people desperate for money in these hard times so, blue collar crimes are being committed more. But it can also be argued that the white collar side is hurting to so there are more stories of fraud and schemes taking place. This student would have to say though, blue collar crime tends to be more focused on because it usually involves a form of violence which the media seems to gravitate towards.

Index-One vs. Index-Two Crime

As defined by the Uniform Crime Reporting Handbook of 2004, Index-One crimes are considered to be the most heinous. The crimes include but are not limited to, Criminal Homicide, Forcible Rape, Robbery and Aggravated Assault. It can be assumed that all serious felonies will fall under an index-one crime. Index-Two crimes are all other crimes that do not constitute a classification in Index-One. These crimes consist of less serious offenses such as fraud, vandalism, disorderly conduct, and DUI. These would be all arrestable offenses that are reported to the FBI's statistics center.

These crime indexes have no fine line, as there is a huge difference between the two. Index one crimes often involve physical harm to an individual whereas index two crimes are typically considered petty. When making a judgment as to which crimes that fall under Index one are violent or not, that can be left up to ones interpretation of violence. You have to consider each situation differently because, although motor vehicle theft in of itself is not violent, if aggravated assault occurs than that theft becomes violent.

This student would have to conclude that in most cases all crimes listed under Index one offenses, they would be considered violent. Conclusion The

media will continue to skew the aspects of crime, and that has been happening for years. It is up to the public to want to obtain the truth about what a specific job or career actually entails. If a person lives their life believing everything they hear from someone else, then they are simply uninformed of the truth.

Crime will always be a hot topic throughout society, so society must become educated in all facets of the criminal world (without committing crime itself).

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