

Critical outweighed
the criminologist 8
most suggested



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Critical writing is one of the most interesting models of writing that exists. It involves presenting a problem by exposing unimaginable and hidden issues that emerge as the answers to those problems. This form of writing invites a lot of debate and possible opposition to the writer's assumptions.

It has been called freakonomics (DiNardo 1993). DiNardo continues to argue that Freakonomics is intended to entertain rather than to inform. There is a lack of "serious questions to ask and therefore it is even more impossible to imagine what serious answers would look like" thus becoming even the more entertaining (1993).

Despite this simplification by DiNardo, Baker argues that freakonomics presents a problem in a "new way, associating factors that seem unrelated to the problem in trying to come up with the solutions" and exposing uncertainties about the knowledge experts hold as conclusive (para 1). This leaves a lot of room for disagreements on the author's assumptions. In their 2005 book on freakonomics, they propose alternative conclusions on several problems the American society is facing.

Their arguments propose that just because "two things are correlated does not mean that one causes another." They use the analogy of X being related to Y. This correlation does not "offer further information of the direction of the relationship." They argue that maybe X causes Y or vice versa. Or maybe both X and Y are caused by another unseen factor (10).

In analyzing the causes of the unexpected sudden 50% decline in crimes in the late 1990s America, many experts proposed a number of reasons. Key among them was an improved economy, so many would be criminals were

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gainfully employed, and better policing initiative by the American police.

However Freakonomics view of this event point to a little insignificant event 20 years earlier. It all started when a young troubled 21 year old drug abusing alcoholic Norma McCorvey sought to abort her third pregnancy. Norma had previously given up her two other children for adoption.

Her plight was adopted by pro abortionist. The result is that abortion was legalized. Levitt & Dubner argue that so many would be criminal were therefore never born, thus the decrease in crime rates years later (4-6). But can this conclusions hold water? Freakonomists are very systematic writers. They follow a procedural criterion in seeking alternative solutions to the problem being defined.

They first collect Information that includes statistical data to support their arguments. In presenting their case for the reason why crime suddenly dropped in America, Levitt and Dubner first collected all the information they needed to support their otherwise illogical proposal. This information included statistical analysis for example crime dropped by 23% in five states the allowed abortion (p 140).

This statistically proven conclusion outweighed the criminologist 8 most suggested reasons for the drop in crime which they dismissed as inconclusive. In their arguments, expert's opinion is wrong most of the time because it basically focuses on and draws its conclusions from correlation, which just shows just a basic relationship and nothing more. Because this expert opinion is directly passed to the public for consumption through the media, without any debate it becomes the public truth (4, 5). The 8 experts

suggested alternatives were: innovative policing, which was cited 52 times, reliable prisons, decrease in drug markets, aging population, improved laws that control possession of guns, strong economy increased number of police officer and other such as capital punishment. But when Levitt and Dubner presented their alternative argument supported by statistical data, these expert opinions crumbled like a cookie in water. Upon closer analysis only three of the above causes had a logical sense of reducing crime. All the others were “Figments of someone’s imagination.” It was just “wishful thinking” (4, 5).

It is important to note that freakonomists always tend to present their alternative argument on the basis of what effect it will have on the economy since they are economist. Take the analysis of the effects of guns on crime control. They argue that tightening of gun control laws does not mean a decrease in crime. In Switzerland, every average male keeps an assault rifle for defense, yet it is the safest country to live. This is a stark contrast to America which has imposed tougher gun control laws, yet crime rates are much higher in America than in Switzerland. To further support their argument, they use the analogy of a girl confronted by a mugger.

If the girl had a gun, she would scare the mugger away and therefore the gun becomes necessary. But if the mugger had a gun he would accomplish his act therefore criminalizing gun possession. The conclusion of their argument opposes expert proposals of reducing guns the fewer the number of guns in the streets the lower the crime rate. Their conclusion is that societies need to have more guns in the streets, held by the right hands to control crime (131- 133).

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A safer economy therefore needs more guns but in the right hands, like the young girl confronted by a mugger. In conclusion, freakonomists have very systematic criteria for establishing an alternative proposal to any problem they are solving. Their priorities start with stating the problem at hand. They then highlight experts proposed alternatives before coming in with their own counter alternative. They support it with tangible examples that include statistical data. The result is that always they end up trivializing experts and their opinions as inconclusive.

A good example is their analogy of the causes of drops in crime in America. They first highlighted expert 8 most cited proposals for the decline before coming up with their own well statistically defended conclusion that nothing had reduced crime in 1990s America than the legalization of abortion.

Works Cited

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