

Who is to blame for crime: the individual or society essay



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With a big amount of criminal's records, people are now more concerning about the reason for committing crime. However, who should we blame for the increasing number of crimes? Is it the individual problems or social problems? Should we say it is people problems in society or people in problem society? According to Gottfredson and Hirschi, lack of self-control and a lack of individual responsibility are at the root of all criminal responsibility. (Gottfredson and Hirschi, 1990) However, social blame is the most popular explanative of poverty in nearly all of the twenty countries studied. A. Freda, Gerhard O. W. Muller, William S. Laufer, 2007).

The following essay is going to discuss about individual and social explanations of causing crime and hence, we might know more about who is to blame for crime. Individual and social are two main points in the causes of crimes. In individual explanation, family and personal causes are considered and it is defined as internal factors. In classicism, crime was believed to be the result of choice. People were thought to have free will so if they committed crimes; it was because they were bad and chose to break the law.

External factors, which are also social explanation, are including government problems and society problems. Positivists believe that human behaviour is determined by external factors and we do not have free will. Both internal and external factors are important in analyzing the causes of crimes: most offenders committed crime is because of the external problems at the beginning. For example, X loses much money while gambling; X then develop a desperate need for money, because rent and other bills are due' other individuals refuse to lend X money; and X later robs someone.

The external problem in this case is X do not have enough money as long as failed to seek for helps, therefore X intends to rob in order to pay for the bills. In discussing individual factors, Group Socialization (GS) theory (Harris, 1995) argues that parents and peers are both important. As we spent most of our time with our families, the ways which our parents taught will definitely affect our choices in future. Parents through poor socialization processes are said to encourage the development of delinquent and adult offending behaviour. (Lisa M. McCartan, 2007)

And as we know culture, religion and knowledge are three main categories which affect individual behaviours the most through out their life especially during the formative year. If a family is poor and not well educated, they do not realize that the future of their child is highly influence by educations and they do not know how to teach their children in a proper way or even do not know how to solve problems without violence. Then, a bad model was shown to their children and hence their children are more likely to solve problems in an inappropriate way such as fighting.

Besides, caring from parents is also one of the issues affecting the causes of crime. As in developing children's mental health, parents' care is very important and it is easier for them to commit crime if they were lack of guidance and supports. Also, low expectations from parents may leads to a decrease in their self-discipline. They might easily try something which they thought is exciting such as stealing, drugs, etc. In addition, as teenagers are defined as the period of rebels, therefore suitable cares and guidance from parents would increase their senses of crime and hence reduce the number of crimes.

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Moreover, broken families do have great impacts on children mentally health. Some researches had shown that compared to children from intact families, children living in single-parent families participate in more delinquency, have lower educational achievements and demonstrate poorer overall adjustment as adults. (Acock, A. C. , & Kiecolt, K. , 1989) These children were actually facing a discourage problem and they tend to blame their parents for not having a perfect family, so they need more cares from others and guidance in order to lead their lives more healthy.

Also, lack of communication between parents and children is another important cause. Since parents and children may have different point of views, this will lead to a generational value conflicts. For example, in adult values, they wish to have stability, responsibility, achievement, efficiency, etc. However, in youth values, pleasure, excitement, adventure and freedoms are more important to them. Therefore, teenagers may feel their parents were too stubborn in controlling their life.

This could be explained by attachment style, according to Hirschi (1969), attachment between parent and child is paramount and that the strength of this relationship is the most important factor in deterring delinquency behaviours. The stronger affective attachment style they have to parents, the fewer chances they will participate in delinquency. Hirschi (1969) version of social bonding theory contends that individuals participate in delinquency because they lack strong affective attachments to parents, stakes in conformity, involvement in conventional activities and belief in conventional norms. (Mack, K. , Leiber, M.. Featherstone, R. , & Monserud, M. (2007))

Because of inadequate sharing, misunderstanding will easily rise between them. Children may start against parents' opinions and not willing to listen to their advises or feel annoying while talking with their parents. It is, however, a vicious circle starts as there is no one correcting them from mistakes. On the other hand, they might feel lonely at home and this feelings will keep on accumulate. The children might run away from home as they do not have enough sense of belongings. Consequently, it gives children more chances to involve in vandalism and other crimes with their friends.

Apart from the above reasons, lack of responsibilities of parents towards society and their families is also a reason for cause of crime. In order to be a responsible parent, time management is very important. Parents should put enough time and effort on looking after their children apart from works. Some has pointed out that a sole parent may have less time to offer support, affection and counselling to their children, not because they are less caring than two parents, but because they find it more difficult to prioritize their children's needs above other life demands. Amato, 1987) Even though parents need to handle difficult stuffs and pressure in their life, they should not release their pressure by scolding their children or having family violence.

Since parents take an important role to children, if they have no sense of responsibilities, they may not mind what they have done or said and it will cause their children to have insufficiency trust on them. As a result, children are more likely to solve problems by themselves instead of seeking parents' helps. Some researchers (e. g. Plomin (1994), Rowe (1994) and Scarr ;

McCartney (1983)) had suggested that similarities between parent and child
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are the result of genetic influence. Thus, previous researchers have argued that genetic influence not only a child's behaviour but the behaviour of parent as well. Parent's role, hence, is very important in so many ways especially in being a good model to children. Except for the family causes, personal causes are other major issues. It is because it is their final decisions whether they are going to commit crime or not.

Basically, there are few factors affecting their choices. Schools take an important roles and responsibilities on the offenders. As school is a place where everyone learnt about moral and discipline during their formative years, therefore schools have a high influence over students. School has responsibilities to teach them the consequences of committing crime and lead them to solve the problems step by step. There are some researches studying schools difference and aimed to find out the phenomena of school practices and how schools affect pupil behaviours.

The study of 340 secondary schools in Chicago (Bryk et al, 1990) showed that better behaviour was associated with schools that develop collegial relations among adults and which bring teachers into frequent contact with other staff and with students in settings other than the classrooms. (Watkins, C. et al. , 2007) Therefore, lack of collaboration between school and family is another problem. School should have affiliate with family in order to know more about the students' background.

For example, if a student is growing in a broken family and his father/mother is an offender, this student should have more cares from school in order to prevent going astray. In other words, education is also necessary in the

process of reducing the number of crime as it provides the sense of right or wrong. Religion can be a factor affecting their choices as well. As religion have their own rules, those who believe in God will definitely obey the rules and the law as they can.

According to Hirschi and Stark's (1969) "hellfire" hypothesis, a theory posits that religion deters criminal behaviour by increasing the costs of delinquency through the promise of punishment in the afterlife. (Heaton P. , 2006) It does not means all of the offenders do not believe in God but it is less likely for them to commit crime if they are a religious believer. It is because they believe there is a high cost of committing crime and also they are supposed to have a good way on mind reposing and can manage to overcome emotional through religion.

Moreover, caring from brothers and sisters in church would help them much by counselling or giving some advises as their thinking is more positive and aggressive; it would definitely help them from sadness or stress. As a result, it helps to reduce the chances of committing crime as they can control themselves from impulses. More importantly, peer groups affect strongly in their choices. It is because they spend quite a lot of time to play and chat together in the life course; therefore their point of views will affect each other insidiously. Delinquency has long been described as a companionate activity that typically involves co-offenders.

Therefore if one of them misses their ways by mistakes, the rest of them are likely to follow. Eventually, there will be more chances for all of them to commit crime together, but it is hard for one of them to reject committing

crime together because of peers' pressure. Consequently, they will be more bravely to do so as they can gain supports from their friends and they might even feel success whenever they have committed a crime without being exposed. Then, they will offence more often and more seriously till the time they were arrested.

Last but not least, personalities are the most important thing affecting the number of crime. If they have a strong and favourable self-concept, it is less likely for them to offences. It is because if they have a strong sense of the consequences of criminal, they might fear of committing crime and behave well to reduce the opportunities to offence. Also, a positive thinking would help reduce their choice of committing crime as they always view positively, they will try to find their own values on different ways and their values to society even when they were facing failures.

Furthermore, it is important for them to have self-control. There are so many factors affecting their choice everyday, and there are so many opportunities for them to commit crime, if they are low in self-controlling, it is easier for them to offences. Hence, it is their own responsibilities to control themselves and to behave well. Contrasted with individual explanation, social explanations are also important in affecting their choice of commit crime. First of all, it is because of the economies factors.

The constrained residential choices perspective suggests that minority and poor individuals will be more likely to engage in violence largely because of residential constraints that concentrate them in disadvantage communities. (Stacy D. C, Karen H. and Stacy M. W. , 2006) But why they were poor? There

are some reasons to explain. First, it is because they do not have a well paid job as they are not well educated and lack of professional training, it is also a social phenomenon which will be discussed more in the following part of essay.

Also, it may be because they do not have a good health and they might be disabled. In some of the countries, those who are not healthy or disabled are not fully accepted by the society and they do not have enough support from the Government. Therefore, they are not able to continue their studies and were forced to work in order to cover their family living expenses. Under such pressures for children, they are more likely to commit violence to their parents or other people to release their tension. For those children who are not able to get a job, they may even try to steal from others.

Also, the rapid social changes bring more people to offence as well. As the culture changed the conditions in which young people are growing up, the ways of parents' teaching are changing as well. However, some of the parents might have no ideas on how to cope with the problems they faced in family. According to McLanahan and Sandefur (1994), they contend that "it is not just low income per se but the loss of economic resources associated with family disruption" that produces negative outcomes among children.

Without enough resources, parents could not offer extracurricular activities which might give youth less time to engage in delinquency. (K. Y. Mack et al. , 2007) Next, the social disorganisation is a factor as well. Social disorganisations refer to the ineffectiveness of informal methods of control to shape communal behaviour. It is a situation where some parts are out of

phase with one another and lead to many rules become inadequate or ineffective. There are more and more crime in society and the rates of suicide has also increased.

It can be seen that it becomes more common on committing crime which mean the social control is decreasing and less effectual. Moreover, there are some crimes in the society which are less likely to be discovered, it is also increasing the opportunity for offenders to commit more crimes.

Neighbourhood affect directly in the social disorganisation as well because neighbourhood control can also be thought of as encompassing unilateral and bilateral forms of social control. (Black, 1984; Horwitz, 1990) Beside that, economic inequality rises as a reason as well.

As the economic inequality in the society causes so many jealousies between people, they might easily compare themselves with others. " Delinquency among lower-class juveniles has been attributed to various forms of frustration (such as lack of money or failure to achieve respect) derived from economic disadvantage. " (Greenberg, 1977) As a result, social pressures defined as a factor of causing crime as well. Because of lack of opportunities in the society, it is easier for people to face failures. However, some of them have their own burdens in their families; poverty will causes them more nervous on their works.

Once they have some miner problems, they might be so depress and as their emotion keep staying at a lower level; it is easier for them to argue with their parents or families' members. Family conflicts start appears since then thus they do not have enough communications. However, their roots of causing

depress is still remain unchanged, they still have to face the same problems whenever a new day come to them. They might then change their targets of releasing their pressures from family to work or even someone they do not know.

Crime start appears as the improper ways of releasing pressures. Another factor is the media influences. The overexposure to television or movies as a mean of recreation do affect human's concept. For example, if violence can solve problems in the movie, children will easily misunderstand that is the way they should do when they have to face problems in the future.

Moreover, in some of the movies offenders do not arrested by the police, it seems that they do not have to take any responsibilities after committing crime but they can get what they want successfully.

It is because the media does not necessarily provide an accurate portrayal of these events and it will focus its attention on crimes that are 'newsworthy'. (Peter Joyce, 2006) Hence, media become a push factor for them to commit crime. What is more, Government have great responsibilities on crimes. As citizens are restrained from acting on emotions and "throw away the key" sentiments when they believe that there are principles of punishment-legal proportionality, predictions of dangerousness, and responsiveness to treatment- that require governmental expertise. Zimring, A. ; Johnson, D. , 2006) Government should consider is it the policy made them really uncomfortable on it and no other ways to solve their problems so they commit crime? Compare with both individual and social explanations of the causes of crime, I would agree that individual should be blame for crime. No doubt that there are so many causes in the society as well, however, it is <https://assignbuster.com/who-is-to-blame-for-crime-the-individual-or-society-essay/>

individual's choices at the end. If it is really the society problems, why there is only a small amount of citizens committing crime rather than all of them?

Moreover, they should have learnt that committing crime has a serious consequences, they should stand firm no matter what situations they are facing. Even though those social factors are affecting them but they should have self-control and self-concept of what they should do with their own situations. There should not be an excuse for them to commit crime.

Therefore I would say society factors are not the most convincing, but individual. To prevent the number of crimes keep on increasing, we should understand more about the roots of causing crime in order to find out a suitable method in preventing.