

Society's response to crime impacts public policy assignment



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The latent trait theory proposes that there are certain traits or attributes that are present at birth (or established very early in life) that remain stable throughout life. Some of these traits can be viewed as negative or defective, and increase the likelihood that one engages in criminal activity. While parenting and opportunity can play a part in committing crimes, according to the latent trait theory, the propensity for an individual to commit a crime remains almost stable over a lifetime due to the negative or defective traits.

The latent trait theory seems to be supported by an assortment of evidence. Those who are involved in criminal activity at an early age in life tend to persist in their illegal ways well into adulthood and beyond. It is no secret that the majority of inmates in correctional facilities around the country are recidivists. According to a 2006 Organized Crime Digest, 56 of violent felons are repeat offenders. Anonymous, 2006) This seems to support the idea that something that has been well established is causing these individuals to engage in activities that they know are morally wrong or illegal. Many of the negative traits that remain stable over an individual's life can actually be attributed to personality disorders. Personality disorders are viewed in the psychological world as constant and very resilient to treatment. Some of these disorders, such as antisocial personality disorder and borderline personality disorder, are characterized by impulsive behavior.