

# Making a connection between social structure and crime

[Sociology](#), [Poverty](#)



Title of Term Paper: Social Structure Theory: Making A Connection Between Social Structure and Crime Theories regarding social structure and crime are usually automatically assumed to form some type of relationship between poverty and crime. More specifically, these models suggest that forces operating in lower class settings lead inhabitants to commit crime. The primary focus is on the criminal behavior of youth. Evidence indicates that environmental forces are probably more likely to generate law-violating behaviors than such factors as individual choice, biological characteristics, or psychological dysfunction would be. In fact, if the last two listed were significant factors, one might predict that crime frequency statistics would be the same across social structures. Research demonstrates that they are not when it comes to social structure and crime. Basically, there are three specific social structure and crime theories. These include social disorganization theory, strain theory, and cultural deviance theory. It is the culture and social structures including customs, traditions, languages, and even morals that make up these ethnicities that allow for the identity of its people to grow. Within cultures, social structures are often set up from birth and which groups that people are born into actually have an impact onto the social and economic standing of the person throughout their lives. Many people are born into a particular status and the particular social status that a person is born into often comes with stereotyping and either disadvantages or advantages. These differences are often hard to overcome. The relationship between poverty and crime has been a controversial subject over the years. Many scholars argue that poverty does not have a causal relationship to crime because there are countries in which poverty is very

high but the crime rate is relatively low. I would say that in this country it would be hard to argue that there is not a relationship between crime and poverty. Poor people make up the overwhelming majority of those behind bars as 53% of those in prison earned less than \$10,000 per year before incarceration. Sociologists and criminal justice scholars have found a direct correlation between poverty and crime. One economic theory of crime assumes that people weigh the consequences of committing crime. They resort to crime only if the cost or consequences are outweighed by the potential benefits to be gained. The logical conclusion to this theory is that people living in poverty are far more likely to commit property crimes such as burglary, larceny, or theft. The rising levels of poverty, then, should alarm those of us engaged in ministry to prisoners, ex-prisoners and their families. It follows that as goes the poverty rates, so go the crime rates and subsequently the prison rates.