

Caden Roberson

Sarah Gatton

CRJS215S

Final Project: Social Institutions

Criminology is the scientific study of crime, criminals, and motives. Criminology can consist of multiple theories or reasons that can explain why crime happens, some being natural, or others being learned. The type of reasoning I want to discuss is Social Institutions. Social Institutions are a framework that organizes different societal statuses that can impact society in different ways. The types of Social Institutions I will be writing about are education, family, and economy. Throughout this essay, I will explain how each of these social institutions matter and how they can contribute to crime.

The first social institution is education. Education is an essential part of the social institutions that can shape a person from a very young age. Education is the transmission of knowledge and skills from one generation to another where someone could learn practical, physical, mental, and emotional skills. Education institutions like schools and colleges can equip students with values such as hard work, respect for authority figures, and discipline which are vital for growing in a society. Being in a public learning institution can shape societal norms from an early age making it easier to be a healthy member of society. Education is important in society but negative outcomes can stem from not getting one. Just like every one of these social institutions, if someone grows up without them or grows up with them in a negative way, they can lead to higher crime rates. This correlates with education since those who don't pursue it may not be able to develop the skills needed to participate in a healthy society. According to the FBI

violent crime rates and the US Census Bureau reports, indicate that education correlates with crime rates. People who have completed high school or have attended a secondary school (college) are less likely to commit a crime than those who have dropped out of high school. States like California are ranked as one of the ten lowest-ranking states on education and therefore have a higher crime rate than states with a higher educational ranking.

The next social institution is family. Family is important for social reasons because it's usually the first place where social interactions will be held. A healthy family relationship builds emotional skills, social skills, and practical skills. Family members whether it's from a sibling or parent/guardian, will usually teach the recipient societal norms, culture, and traditions. Most families will have the same goal of raising and supporting their own to the best of their abilities but some families might raise themselves differently which can affect how they turn out in society. Some families might want to teach their children to be independent and self-sufficient, while others may want a stronger connection with peers and to be dependent on others and themselves to build a strong community. Since families are usually the first type of social interaction one might have, it is important to make sure they are raised well to be active in society. Kids are like sponges and will soak up any information, habit, or behavior that they see. The way someone may behave in the future will be dependent on how they're raised and what they've experienced during their childhood. Kids can pick up good habits and behavior traits from their parents but they can also learn bad habits from them. For example, if a parent smokes or drinks in front of their children, they may be more likely to do the same once they get older. This correlates with crime since parents aren't always responsible and may teach their kids bad habits as they get older which may lead to them committing a crime at some point. This same thing can also happen to households that don't have both parents present or none at all. People

who grow up without parents or with only one of them may not get as much as someone who has both of them. People who grew up without parents are more likely to absorb information, behavioral traits, and habits from outside sources that can negatively affect the way they act in society.

The last social institution that I want to address is the economy. Economics is the study of money and how it plays a role in society such as the way people earn it, spend it, and how much a country makes and does with it. Money is an important factor in every country since it determines how everything inside it functions. Inside each country are people working to obtain money so they can buy things that they need /want. “Needs” can consist of things that people need to survive such as food, water, clothing, and housing while everything else is listed as a “wan”t such as TVs, cars, and luxury items. People can have different jobs such as lawyers, surgeons, or IT jobs that can pay a decent amount of money. Other jobs however can pay a small amount of money to its employees which can make it harder for people to afford rent, food, water, and housing. This is where a correlation between economics and crime can occur. Those with less money tend to live in communities that resemble their income, therefore, causing crime rates to rise. People who have low-paying jobs or no jobs at all may be more likely to commit crimes such as robbery and theft.

Criminology can cover many different theories or reasons for why people commit crimes and some can be true while others are outdated and false. One of the reasons I wanted to expand on was social institutions. Social institutions are a framework of society that if poorly managed, can lead to higher crime rates.

Sources:

United Way NCA. (2023, May 18). *WHAT ARE SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS? LEARN WITH THE DEFINITION & EXAMPLES*. United Way.

The clear correlation between education and crime. Esfandi Law Group. (2022, June 24).

<https://esfandilawfirm.com/correlation-between-education-and-crime/#:~:text=FBI%20violent%20crime%20statistics%20and,ranking%20states%20on%20the%20educational>

Education - Social Institutions - MCAT content. Jack Westin. (2020, July 29).

<https://jackwestin.com/resources/mcat-content/social-institutions/education>