
To what extent can crime in society be linked to the pressure of modern life?

Introduction

As our society makes progressive development in various aspects, the demand from the society increases and creates a tremendous pressure on the individuals. The exerted pressure can be so detrimental that it may negatively influence the values and behaviours of the individuals as their acts to counter these pressures in their lives make them succumb to crimes. However, some may criticize that such a link between the crime in the society and the pressure of modern life is too conveniently created if we have properly examined the reasons for the rise of crimes. Though we cannot deny that the crime in society may be linked to the pressure of modern life, the extent of this link may not be subjected to questioning.

Main body

Supporting view 1

Social pressure imposed on us due to the complexity of our social lives creates the vulnerability in us to resort to criminal offences as we seek to resolve the pressure in our lives temporarily. Especially for individuals with poor family backgrounds, the support by close-knitted friend groups provide the individual with a sense of belonging and care. Consequently, one would not want to lose such social bonds and would cave in to peer pressure so as to maintain a sense of group belonging. A very typical example would be seen in the proliferation of drugs. As social pressure piles on us, we find the urge to seek solace with the misuse of illegal synthetic drugs like ecstasy and prescribed drugs like domincon to feel a sense of attachment to the group. We drown ourselves in the tranquility effect these drugs can offer, ignoring the criminal infringement that we have violated at the expense of group belonging.

EOA 1

Though we can see a link between the pressure of a modern society and the crime in our society, the link is quite weak if we examine the true cause of crime in society. Crimes mainly arise due to the absence of supportive social upbringings especially for the youths whose young minds are easily misguided and easily influenced by social pressure. The rise of juvenile delinquency reported by the authority supports the need for proper family upbringings and social guidance. If there is proper influence on these young people, they will be imbued with the moral acumen to distance themselves from crime. According to Robert Rector of the Heritage Foundation, children

without a father are more than twice as likely to be arrested for a juvenile crime and are three times more likely to go to jail by the time they reach age 30 than are children raised in intact families. Thus, it can be noted that the cause of crime is the absence of proper social guidance and family upbringing, not due to the pressure of our society.

Supporting view 2

Economically, the pressure to sustain a livelihood under an inflated cost of living without corresponding rising wages may create the motive to resort to crime in order to meet one's basic needs. In such impoverished circumstances, the struggle to meet the basic necessities of life could coerce individuals to adopt a path of crime. In their minds, crime is seen as a justified means to earn quick money and instantly meet their needs with much consideration of the abysmal situation they are in. For example, the UN and the World Bank both rank crime high on the list of obstacles to a country's development. This means that governments trying to deal with poverty often also have to face the issue of crime as they try to develop their country's economy and society with poverty a crucial determinant for crime being committed.

EOA 2

However, one can also argue that crime in society cannot be linked to the pressure of modern society to sustain expenses as weak government laws and policies induce individuals to commit crime without the fear of severe consequences. Economic pressure and strain may motivate individuals to commit crime but ultimately it is the lax rule of law in society that reaffirms their decision as they have much to gain and little to lose from the act of crime. Research by UCLA professor Jeff Gorgger found that crime rates fell in nearly all categories between 1982 and 1984, even though wages fell for low-income workers during the same period. On closer inspection, he concluded that starting in the early 1980s, the punishment a criminal could expect for a crime began to rise in most states after a 30-year decline. In short, many more crooks are behind bars with better policies and laws.

Supporting view 3

From a cultural perspective, crime in society can be linked to the pressure of modern society due to the process of enculturation that indoctrinates malicious thinking and influences behaviour of individuals. In the modern society of today, individuals are exposed to conformed values and cultures that emphasises hedonism and individualism. As such, youths adopt an individualistic mindset and may be coerced to

fulfil their dark desires to commit an act of crime for individual gains and pleasure. For example in China, the shift from a classless socialist society to a competitive free market economy comparable to what is seen in America today, has indirectly driven crime rates substantially higher with homicides increasing by 71% and assaults by 171%. Therefore, it can be argued that crime in society can be linked to the pressure of modern life.

EOA 3

However such a view holds a modicum of truth as certain individuals possess the moral decency to discern pressure from society and not engage in criminal activities. In some societies, individuals possess a strong moral compass to tell good from evil and engage in good decision making when faced with many choices. As such, they are not easily influenced by the views and values of mainstream society and act according to their conscience. For example, in countries such as Singapore and Denmark where crime rate is virtually non-existent, individuals act as responsible citizens and participate in neighbourhood watch programmes to keep a vigilant eye out for crime in society. These individuals have an unshackled sense of conscience and go out of the way to keep the community safe.

Conclusion

In retrospect, crime in society is dependent on the extent of pressure of modern life, the robustness of state laws and the strength of moral foundations of an individual. In instances where the individual has a strong moral character with good social upbringing, the individual is able to withstand the forces of modernity and engage in socially acceptable behaviour.