

Violent Crime and Destiny Control: Theorizing a Missing Variable in Criminology

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U.S. citizens believe they can control their destinies at rates higher than any other nation. The U.S. is also a world leader in violent crimes. This article argues for correlations between these two trends. A theory is proposed based on three distinct trajectories related to destiny control. One trajectory involves persons modifying their destiny-control beliefs through turning points in the life course. On another trajectory, persons with low destiny-control beliefs are prone to anxiety/depression. The third track is that of high-rate offenders. Due to such things as attachment traumas, feelings of entitlement, internal/external barriers, and substance abuse they do not often modify their adolescent views that they are in complete control of their destinies. For some this translates into violent crimes. Implications for society and research are raised. *[Article copies available for a fee from The Transformative Studies Institute. E-mail address: journal@transformativestudies.org Website: <http://www.transformativestudies.org> ©2023 by The Transformative Studies Institute. All rights reserved.]*

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INTRODUCTION

Violent crimes, such as homicides, significantly increased in the U.S. during the Covid-19 pandemic (U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2020). Back in the early 1990's, homicides in the U.S. peaked at nearly 25,000 per year, according to Uniform Crime Reports. By 1996 the number of homicides had dropped to below 20,000 (U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2000). Through the Great Recession years of 2009 and 2010, annual homicide

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