Reflection Journal

[Name of the Student:]

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**Summary**

Societies have formal and informal ways to control negative behaviours (harmful, destructive, irritating, or abusive) that originate in individuals or groups. A Sociology Professor at Princeton University, Sarah Mclanahan, disagrees with the fact that a family's disruption leads to increase crime rates. She associates crimes with the effects of long-term social contacts and ties that they establish with others in their lifetime (WeTransfer, n.d.). Negative behaviours can be classified as deviance or crime. Deviance and crime are two distinctive words that may be confused, however, with each other sometimes. Deviance can be any divergent behaviour against the established norms and moral principles of a society. Crime is a violation of the law enacted in a particular region or state. James Houston, Associate Professor at Appalachian State University, has done extensive research on gang psychology and activities. He comments that individuals in a gang have the goals the same way as other social groups do. He argues that the gang members innovate things, like other people do. The difference emerges when a dispute arises about the acceptable or unacceptable behaviours. Deviant behaviours are controlled by society’s powerful groups, or through informal social control, that is, common people’s appreciation or depreciation, referred to as cultural transmission. Crime is controlled through formal social control, such as power of state, police, court, employers, and administration. An individual or group is given law-defined punishment (physical, financial, or other) for committing a crime. Both deviance and crime commonly share 'stigma' as a response of the society toward an individual or group that is an expression of disgrace, shame, and devaluation (Witt, 2012). Research indicates that disrupting interpersonal social relationships can lead to deviance or serious crimes. Michelle Jensen, a teenage girl, was murdered by her six fellows in 1993, who got enraged by her denial of lending her car for a convenience store robbery. The culprits were all teenagers, showed no regret at the time of arrest, were high school dropouts, and only one of them lived with both parents. Experts suggest that young teenagers should be affiliated with some responsible adults who could guide them in interacting with the society. The young ones should be nourished with moral values that get deep-rooted in their psychology. Gang prevention programs must originate on the local levels.

**Reflection**

The reading and the ‘gang’ movie provide ample insight into the social issues of deviance and crime. The two terms have been differentiated through definitions, implications, and instances. Experts, in the video, have given valuable comments to disclose the facts relating to crime and gang practices. It provides explanations by professionals with different backgrounds, enabling the viewer to understand the issue from different perspectives. The reading gives explanations to plenty of related, interesting terms such as control theory, stigma, anomie, social disorganization theory, labelling theory, white-collar crime, victimless crime, and others. It makes useful connections between the causes, treatments, and effects of the two social phenomenon, deviance and crime. The interesting thing in this module was learning about the topic through various media and getting informed on the topic by the expert inputs of various seasoned professionals. Another interesting information was the suggestion of movies related to deviance and crime. Evidence presented in support of the arguments was informative as well as heart-wrenching. It created serious, committed, and thoughtful attitude toward the issue. The learning in this module provokes certain questions that should be thought of as well. What initiatives organize the social ties and relationships between individuals in a way that prevents any deviance or crime to occur? How values be inflicted in the minds of young people such that they avoid any negative behaviours on their own? Why do the present law and order in the country not successfully mitigate the rate of crimes?

Works Cited

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Witt, J. (2012). *SOC 2013*. McGraw-Hill Higher Education.