

Single-parent Families and the Criminal Ramifications on Children in the United Kingdom; A Systematic Review

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Abstract : Under the construct of the 'traditional family' set-up (male and female parent) in the United Kingdom, the absence of a male parental figure remains a critical factor associated with an elevated risk of criminal behavior among youths. Empirical evidence suggests that father absence significantly correlates with increased rates of juvenile delinquency and criminality. For instance, data reveals that approximately 63% of young offenders in the United Kingdom originate from single-parent households, predominantly those without a father. Moreover, research displays that boys from father-absent homes are three times more likely to exhibit antisocial behavior compared to their peers from two-parent families. This absence can negatively impact educational attainment, with children from fatherless homes being twice as likely to leave school prematurely, thereby increasing their vulnerability to peer influence and gang affiliation- key pathways into criminal activities. Both legal frameworks and social policies in the United Kingdom acknowledge the pivotal role of family stability in crime prevention. Initiatives including parenting support programs, community-based interventions, and targeted youth services seek to address the challenges faced by single-parent families and mitigate the criminogenic effects of father absence. Despite these efforts, persistent challenges remain, including the need to address the broader socioeconomic determinants of family instability and to refine legal strategies that effectively address the root causes of youth offending linked to the absence of a male parental figure. A nuanced understanding of these dynamics is essential for developing more effective legal and social interventions aimed at reducing juvenile delinquency and supporting at-risk populations within the United Kingdom. This paper will highlight the significant impact of the absence of a male parental figure on youth crime rates in the United Kingdom, underlining the need for enhanced legal and social responses. By examining the interplay between family structure and juvenile offending, the paper will underline the importance of developing more comprehensive interventions that address both familial factors and the wider socioeconomic context. The findings aim to guide policymakers and practitioners in creating more effective strategies to reduce youth crime, ultimately strengthening support systems for vulnerable families and mitigating the adverse effects of father absence on young individuals.

Keywords : criminality, family law, legal framework, the united kingdom perspective

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