It is accepted knowledge among criminologists that the breakdown of the family has led to a rise in the rate of delinquency and criminal activities later in adulthood. However, the exact results from the rise of single parent households and how they have aided in increasing criminal behaviour is still debatable. Some argue that the increase in single-parent households in the 1980s and 1990s also saw a rise in the level of crime. However, some still counter that in the late 1990s, the rate of crime dropped significantly despite the number of single parent households not dropping. However, within this analysis, the research done will clearly support the claim that single parent home increases the rate of crime.

Children who grow up in homes with single parents, especially those with single mothers are at a greater risk of being exposed to a societal situation that will leave them more predisposed to resort to criminal activities. According to a survey of the youth in custody in 1987, 70 percent of the persons in imprisonment at that moment were from single parent households. This is a striking figure in comparison with the number of those who were in custody at that time from families with married parents which was 13 per cent (McLanahan and Sandefur, 2009). This shows a clear disparity and trend in the likelihood of children from single parents to resort to delinquency and criminal activities later in life. The study also brought to light the fact that it is children from single mothers that have the most trouble with criminal behaviour. This can be attributed to the factors below.

The main reason identified that makes these children more prone to criminal activities is due to the lack of a stable father figure in their lives. Men are traditionally the providers and protectors of their households. Being brought up without this figure in one's life means that the children lack the adequate financial provisions and they may resort to criminal activities to compensate for these deficiencies (McLanahan and Sandefur, 2009). This can lead to criminal activities such as selling drugs and armed robbery to try and make ends meet or to attempt to provide for oneself the things that they feel like their mother has not been able to provide.

Fathers also play the role of protecting their families from harm. A single mother bringing up children in a ghetto community may be the target of many gangs as they may perceive not only her but also her children as being vulnerable. Thus, these children are forced to learn how to toughen up and to defend themselves at an early age. This means that they have to engage with tough situations and due to the lack of guidance; they may find themselves swallowed up by the life of crime. The lack of another parent also means that the children get less guidance, this is because the available parent is dedicating all their time to be able to make ends meet. In return, there isn't enough time to devote to leading the children in the right direction and thus, they will find role models that will be detrimental to their general growth within the ghetto (Jencks and Mayer, 1990).

There are various criminology theories that support the sentiments expressed above on the causes of criminal behaviour. The strain theory and the various methods of coping that are used clearly shows the stress that the children raised up in these households especially those that are brought up in inherently poor backgrounds have to face. The strain experienced from the lack of economic capacity from their households as well as the lack of protection is what leads them ultimately to take up unconventional methods of coping with the strain (Agnew, 1992).

The theory of social learning also elaborates further why these children may be more predisposed to criminal activities. This is so since they are not actively parented due to the busy nature of the only parent available. This leads them to seek out role models in the community that are not a wise choice and since they are young and impressionable, these individuals who are most likely also involved in criminal activities will lead these children into crime (Akers, 2011).

The observations from the above data and theories show that it is practical to claim that there is indeed a link between single-parent households and the rate of crime. However, a question that needs to be put into mind as we make this observation is that most of these children from families with single parents are so due to many reasons and key among them is the incarceration of the other parent. This means that the correctional system is playing a part in increasing the number of those who are incarcerated in the long run. This raises the question, is the system in need of revision? And what are some of the ways that the system Canberra revised to ensure that it does not lead to more levels of crime due to the lack of a stable household?

In conclusion, it is evident from the basic research on the situation on the ground and the available data that being in single parent households leaves children more predisposed to criminal activities. The applied researching this analysis puts together the basic research and the theories of criminology to see how the information is applicable within theories in the discipline and the other support that can be given for the findings of the study. The paper also goes further to make observations and ask questions beyond the immediate topic that affect the rate of single parenthood.

References

McLanahan, S., & Sandefur, G. (2009). *Growing up with a single parent: What hurts, what helps*. Harvard University Press.

Jencks, C., & Mayer, S. E. (1990). The social consequences of growing up in a poor neighborhood. *Inner-city poverty in the United States*, *111*, 186.

Agnew, R. (1992). Foundation for a general strain theory of crime and delinquency. *Criminology*, *30*(1), 47-88.

Akers, R. L. (2011). *Social learning and social structure: A general theory of crime and deviance*. Transaction Publishers.