

The Danger of ‘Collective illusions’ About Crime

By Daniel Pollack and Robert Reiser | May 24, 2022

Take a look at the two well-circulated graphs below.

If you agree with them, you are in alignment not just with the law, but with contemporary mores that stipulate the sole cause of rape and domestic violence is the individual perpetrator.

It is not caused by the victim. It is not caused by society. It is caused by a criminal.



Figure 1

CAUSES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

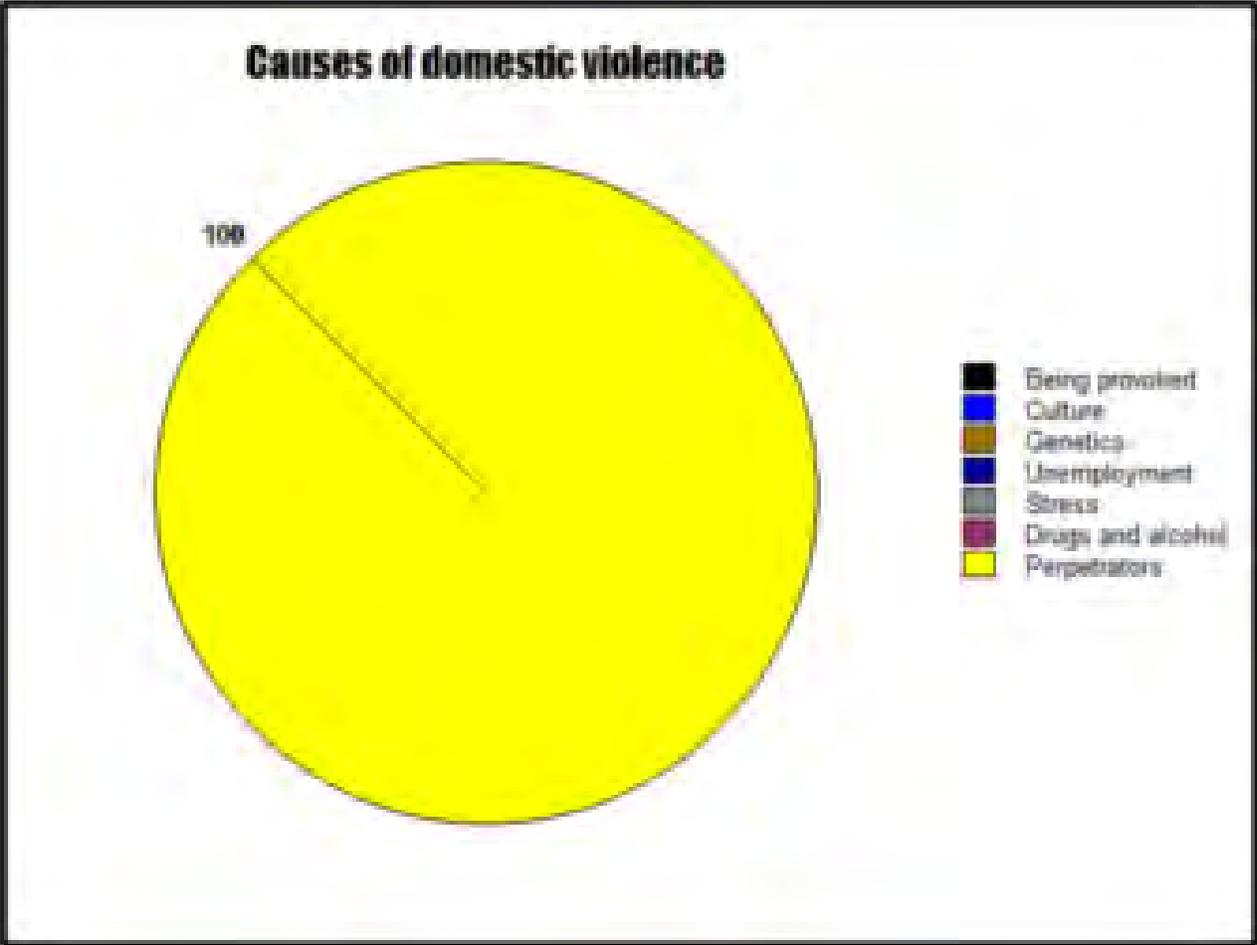


Figure 2

Now look at the third and fourth graphs below. When the subject turns to crime in general, some people see Figure 3 as accurate. They search for explanations to help criminals shed the blame.

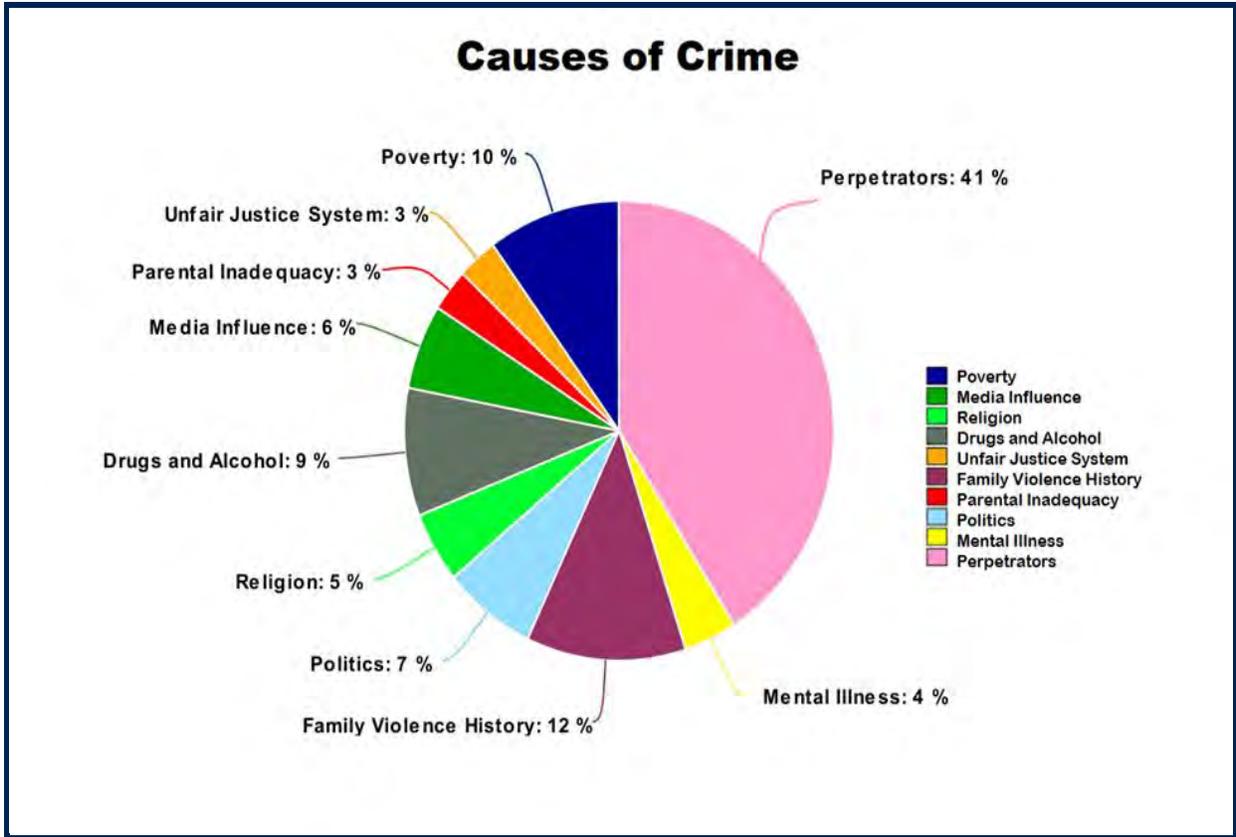


Figure 3

But the fourth graph is really the one that is consistent with the first two.

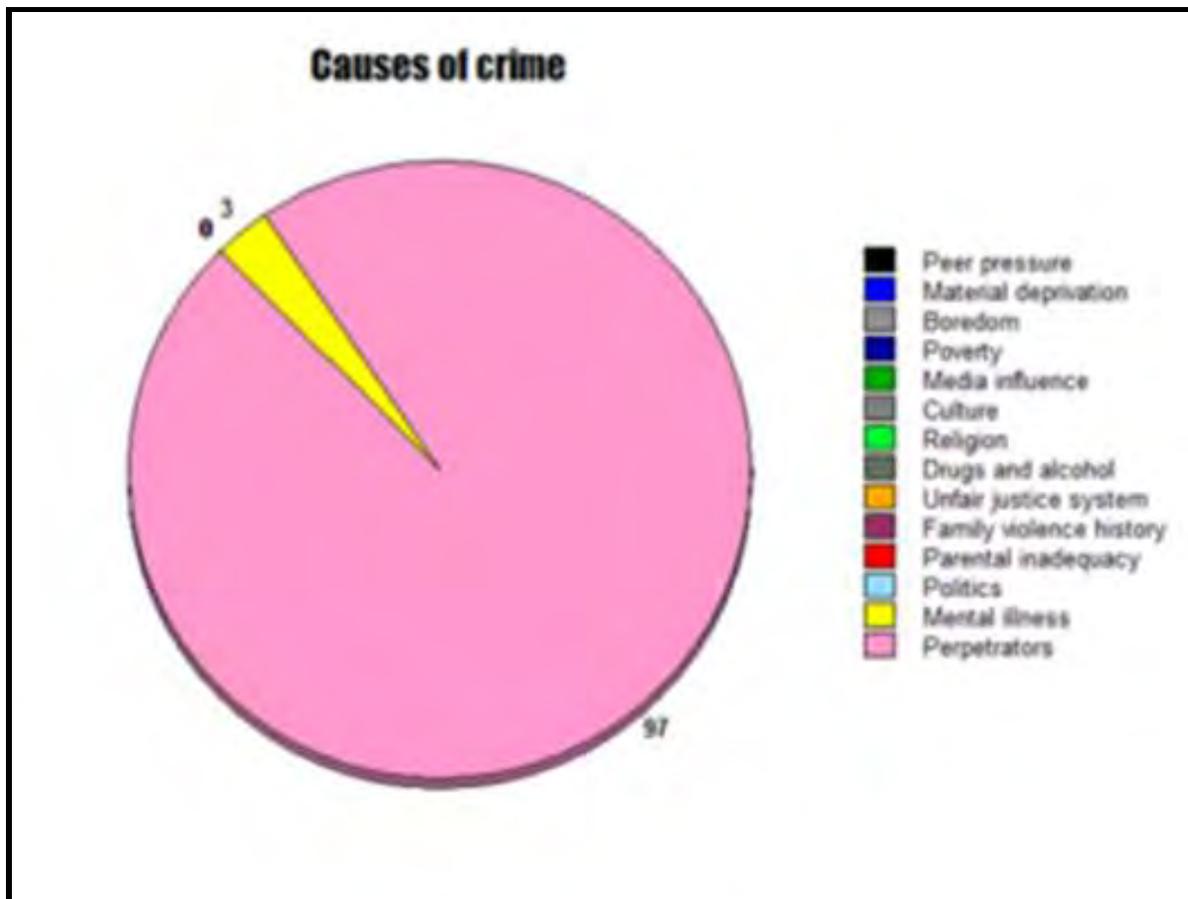


Figure 4

Social scientists are taught early in their training that correlation does not equal causation. So why do we create classes of crime deserving of punishment while others are not?

Beyond mental incapacity, when is a perpetrator wholly responsible (or not) for their actions?

Is it even possible to have an honest discussion about solutions to crime without first discussing whether criminals are in fact responsible for the crimes they commit?

Just as importantly, what makes this such a difficult discussion to have?

In his 2022 book, [*Collective Illusions*](#), Todd Rose refers to beliefs that one holds but fears to express due to the unfounded perceptions that such beliefs are out of step with the majority.

The perception ultimately becomes the reality, since we are not very good at guessing what the majority actually thinks.

The result is that we self-censor.

So, do criminals cause crime? Honestly, yes.

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