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Theories of Crime

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Part 1

During my teenage life, one of the things my parents could not tolerate at all cost was me doing drugs of whatever nature. Therefore, to ensure that I lived straight, they both kept an eye on every friend I was close to and always insisted that I be home before dark. My parents were so strict that they never allowed me to go to house parties with my friends, for they believed that teenagers are most likely to get exposed to drug use from such environments. The challenging situation bothered me, and in my attempt to challenge the status quo, I ended up being a weed smoker. It started in school when my high school buddies, who knew my situation very well, started carrying packs of weed with them to school, and often, I was made to consume the major part of it whenever we were out of classes chilling away from people at the football court during every games time. The situation got worse because I became a weed addict. At home, often when my parents were out, I used to do it a lot. I started becoming very sensitive such that I only allowed few people into my room as I was not for the idea of my parents accessing the room. Later, they came to realize I was using the drug due to my behavior change. They then took me to rehab that lasted for only about 3 months and from then, I have been leading a healthy life.

Before I got to this form of delinquency, I used a technique of neutralization. I tried to justify my actions by arguing that I was now old enough to make judgments about life; I also argued that it was not a bad idea to take some few puffs since I viewed the idea as cool. Hence, there was nothing wrong with it as per me. Lastly, my justification for joining the weed-smoking group was that I found the group excellent, and I felt they best suited my social class in school. After all the lessons I learned from the experience, I agree with Sykes & Matza (2017) that the neutralization technique is one of the most lead to juvenile delinquency and crime. Also, Kaptein & Van Helvoort (2019) also find it well put that the neutralization technique is the most

important explanation for the rise and persistence of juvenile delinquency. My parents were well aware that allowing me to keep the wrong group around me could easily lead me to criminality. Also, I realized that their strictness came as a result of fear that if I started doing drugs at an early age, then I was likely to make impaired judgments that could, in turn, lead me to other more serious crimes. From my experience, I applied denial of responsibilities and appeal to higher loyalties as the neutralization technique I used to justify my involvement in teenage drinking. Sykes & Matza (2017) described such a situation as blaming others for criminal minds and trying to fit into a given group. You decide to do something to justify to the group that you are part of it. This is precisely what happened to my situation.

Part 2

I consider Danielle Allen's cousin to fit the paradigm of the general theory of crime. This theory of crime explains that individuals get involved in criminality because of a lack of self-control (Sampson & Laub, 2017). In connection to this, Michael started pilferage at the age of twelve when he stole about 10 dollars from a white family. Still, after the judge dropped his case with the surety of the mother flying him away, he could not control himself because he still got involved in criminality. Allen (2017) narrates how Michael was later reported to her father after he was again caught into stealing and how the habit grew to an extent he was imprisoned for a felony while he was still a juvenile. Michael lacked self-control. If he had had the art of self-control, he would have restrained himself from the destructive influence of street gangs and learned that the several changes offered to him by being pardoned for petty offenses were just ways of giving him time to change. Instead, he usually found himself on the wrong side of the law because he wanted to make quick money. Self-control would have made him realize that stealing from people was not a perfect way of making an income, and therefore, he ought to have

worked towards his ambitions of being a firefighter. An opportunity he blew away because of his impatient nature of having the urge to steal from people and make quick money.

From his criminal behavior, an explanation can be made that Michael had a biological aspect of criminality in him apart from lacking self-control. Allen (2017) described the situation about Michael's father that Karen divorced him because he had various criminal activities that he kept from her until such a time that he became abusive and irresponsible. In connection to this, Rafter (2017) clarifies that some people who are often delinquent may inherit such criminal traits from their parents or people of their lineage. The Lombroso school of thought also affirms that criminality may be inherited traits through genetic inheritance, making the criminals possess distinct criminal features from the rest of society. I consider this is also the case in Michael's story because he often involves himself in crime just like his father despite being warned severally by both the family and even the judge. However, he is very distinct from his immediate family members. His uncle, Danielle, and mother Karen all want the best for him. Still, seemingly, delinquent traits from his criminal father keep pushing him to criminality, making him get killed before achieving his childhood dream of being a firefighter.

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