Hello, Dr. I and my Classmates,

Dr. Edwin Sutherland developed the following nine propositions that I will discuss. He created these propositions in response to a government report that stated the field of criminology was unscientific and poorly developed. His work on differential association is connected to the symbolic interactionist approach. The core of symbolic interaction is that people's opinion of themselves is designed on how they believe other people treat and react to them (Heidt & Wheeldon, 2015)

The first proposition is that criminal behavior is learned. Dr. Sutherland believed that a person had to be taught how to become a criminal via an example. Secondly, this learning had to occur with interaction and communication with other persons. Here a person would learn the physical techniques required for committing whatever crimes they were interested in (Heidt & Wheeldon, 2015).

Thirdly, intimate groups that the individual belongs to are where the prior learning of the criminal behavior happens. The more intimate and personal, the more likely the person is to internalize the motives, drives, and reasons for committing illegal activity. The initiate describes respect and admiration for those in their intimate circle teaching their craft (Heidt & Wheeldon, 2015). Because learning originates from groups, efforts to change group values and norms should be the focus rather than individuals (Cressey, 1955).

Fourth, the initiate becomes educated in the techniques during the learning, which is frequently complicated depending on the crime. During this learning phase, motives, drives, and rationalizations are also internalized (Heidt & Wheeldon, 2015). At the same time, the rationalizations allow them to justify their actions. It also provides a coping mechanism for guilt.

Fifth, the motivation and the drives that influence the initiate are derived from definitions of the legal codes as favorable or unfavorable. The environment in which a person interacts will teach and affect a person's actions. Positive and negative associations are trained as a person interacts with different persons (Heidt & Wheeldon, 2015).

Sixth, When the balance leans towards negative associations, a person may become a criminal. Dr. Sutherland expressed this as the definition of becoming favorable to the violation of the law driving criminal action (Heidt & Wheeldon, 2015). I feel that this is when the temptation to commit the crime supersedes the consequences or risk. This is the moment when a person decides to do it.

Seventh, differential associations vary in frequency, duration, priority, and intensity of their exposure to the initiate. The stronger the associations' frequency and power, the more likely the initiate is to internalize the learning (Heidt & Wheeldon, 2015). As Dr. Sutherland asserted, criminal education is no different from any other type of learning. As a student, I have found this assertion of the impact of frequency, duration, priority, and intensity to impact my learning in academia.

Eighth, Dr. Sutherland asserted that the initiate being educated in criminality via their association with criminal and noncriminal patterns involves the exact mechanisms involved in other types of learning. I believe this to be a correct observation as most behavior seems to be learned. What I thought was interesting here was that contradictory definitions may be discovered at different times from the same tutor (Cressey, 1960).

The ninth proposition is a bit complex to digest. It asserts that criminal behavior is an expression of general needs and values. However, the needs and values do not explain illegal activity since noncriminal behavior is also an expression of an individual's exact needs and values (Heidt & Wheeldon, 2015). Recent research argues that re-specification would strengthen the theory by improving predictability and empirical testing (Matsueda, 1988).

In conclusion, differential Association theory helps to explain criminal action by individuals. However, it downplays genetic or biological traits that may predispose a person to illegal activity. The significant contribution of this theory was that it laid the groundwork for other researchers to develop new and modern ideas regarding criminal behavior and its learning patterns. An example of this would be the theory of lower-class focal concerns, which was developed by research done in the lower-class communities in Boston. It argued that a subculture or lower class existed separately from the primary culture consisting of adolescents' criminal acts. As I read these propositions and the lower-class focal concerns, I was reminded of the code of the street's videos and how much the information correlated or aligned with each other. Ironically, the code of the streets was influenced by Dr. Sutherland's work.

Bobby

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