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EXPLORING THE CRIMINAL MIND

In grappling with the multi-faceted dimensions of criminality, decision makers are still perplexed over the width of this phenomenon. The most recent exhortation revolves around the need for expanded spiritual involvement of the various religious leaders. While the input of prayers and socialization of denominational direction remains crucial, an understanding of the working and thinking of the criminal mind is absolutely necessary if corrective anti-crime planning is to be exercised.

As a society we must go beyond the confines of crime control and suppression and embrace the fact that it is absolutely necessary to explore the mind of the criminal to know the mental origin of his or her decision to engage in criminal conduct. What motivates or activates the individual to engage in serious law breaking behaviour? This article attempts to inquire into this quagmire with an emphasis on the internal aspects of behavioural convictions.

As far as blue-collar criminality is concerned, the thinking of the potential offender revolves around five (5) stimuli: firstly, the denial of responsibility, in that, regardless of the heinous nature of the act, the fault lies elsewhere, secondly, the removal of blame, and here is where the offender is concerned that the act (e.g., robbery) should be seen as equitable sharing, thus, the conscience of the offender is hereby consoled; Thirdly, victim blaming. Within the confines of this line of thinking, the offender is heavily motivated by the belief that the victim was the author of his or her own demise; the victim had it coming.

Fourthly and perhaps the most potent motivation of the criminal lies in the conviction that those who condemn him have no moral authority to engage in such criticism. Within this type of thinking the offenders conjure beliefs such as police and judicial officers are committing similar illegal acts; teachers in showing favouritism in the classroom thereby placing them at a disadvantage within an elite education system resulting in an unescapable direction of law breaking. And

finally, the decision-makers and the societal elites are just as guilty as they operate under the cover bureaucratic confidentiality; parents take out their frustration on them by inflicting physical pain on them during their formative years through the guise of discipline.

All of the factors listed above represent the issues and circumstances which propel the offender into the life of crime. It is posited that blue-collar criminals always employ the language of justifiability and survivability in sanctioning their behaviour.

With white-collar crime the motivating mental elements are quite different. The offenders operate from a space of protective confidence and the rationale of victimless offending. Arguably, the principal incentive is that of insatiable greed. What mentally motivates and activates the offender represents an interesting exploration.

In the case of perceived judicial insulation and exploitation the offender is convinced that because of financial buoyancy, he cannot only hire the most expensive lawyers, but also engage in the act of judicial longevity where the case can be dragged on for many years. Thus, because of societal status, there will be profound hesitation on the part of decision makers to take the requisite action in accordance with the rule of law. Further, another technical and sensitive aspect of motivation into white-collar criminality has to do with institutional or corporate culture. In this instance the potential offender is schooled into a clique of routine normative corrupt offending where he is convinced that such behaviour forms part of his location benefits. Arguably, there is also the need for ostentatious display of affluence in accordance with the belief of "arriving". There is a belief that the state apparatus is not effectively structured to facilitate the final episode of evidential conviction. In this regard judicial reachability is also a factor. In addition, there is the belief that there is a material link between sacrifice and wealth. The offender hereby is convinced that the greater the level of wealth, the stronger the justification to society that sacrifice

was the push factor. The thinking that as a result of a weakened bureaucracy and the slow pace of doing business, some state agents tend to internalize the belief that the “oiling of hands” is an inescapable process of the system. Some businesspeople also adapt to the fallacy that such criminal behaviour is routine and necessary.

Arguably, the deepest level of thinking on the part of the white-color criminal has to do with the extremely low level of detection by the state apparatus.

The exploration of the thinking of both the blue and white-color criminal must occupy the evaluative minds of the decision makers if crime prevention is to be an achievable objective. To this end state agencies of the criminal justice system must embrace and practice the functional operations of the rule of law as distinct and separate from the rule of status.

What is absolutely imperative, given the information embodied above, is that if any country is committed to the practice of safe and secure statecraft, equity of recognition of citizens must be at the epicenter of its existence.

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