

The city of god and the theories of criminology

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The movie City of God is based on true events that occurred during the 1960's and 1970's in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The film tells a story of organized crime being operated by youth and children in the Favelas. Favelas is an urban slum where there is extreme poverty, a high density of population, corrupt policemen and ruthless acts of delinquency. The movie starts off by one of the important scenes, "The Tender Trio" gang decided to rob the local brothel. Before they left to rob the hotel, they added a new member to their trio, a child named Li'l Dice but later to be known as Li'l Ze. The group entered the brothel armed with handguns, but left Li'l Ze behind to keep an eye for the police which made them frustrated. The trio stormed into the place, rubbing and threatening the visitors but shortly after they were surrounded by the police. They were able to escape but when they went outside to pick up Li'l Ze they discovered he wasn't where they left him. Li'l Ze entered the brothel with a pistol on his hand and a stupefying look on his eyes and loudly laughing shortly after the trio and the police were gone. Li'l Ze, about 9 - 10-year-old, started to shoot the people in the place in cold blood and at a short range. While he was killing them one by one, he was also robbing the money from the people and the place.

Li'l Ze was tempted for power from a very young age. He grew up without love or a positive role model and he was also a poor child from the City of God. The City of God is filled with remorseless, inhuman and barbaric delinquency and the city is basically in chaos. Due to this, "The Tender Trio" took Li'l Ze under their wing. He was surrounded with drug dealing and guns. Consequently, it led to the rise and fall of a sociopath gang leader Li'l Ze. Li'l Ze became the king of the drug lords during the 70's but not before he killed

the king before him, Goose. Goose was one of the "Tender Trio". His victory did not last long though, he was killed by the very kids who he used to control by intimidation. These kids were known as the "rants". When Li'l Ze had to deal with his enemies, he had no mercy or remorse. He lacked any normal social relationship. He had to grow up very quickly due to his actions. After he lost his best friend, Benny, on a shootout at a club the war began between him and another gang who was trying to take over. The City of God became a war zone which created more chaos than there was already.

The incident of a child massacring the people at the brothel is applicable to come of the criminological theory. Li'l Ze's behavior relates to the social disorganization and social theory as an explanation on why he has adapted criminality as his main behavioral trait.

The social disorganization theory is defined as the decline of influenced of existing social rules of behavior upon individuals within group. It basically means a community not being able to realize common values which result in the breakdown of effective social control within that community. The point of the social disorganization theory is that it claims it is normal response of normal individuals to abnormal social conditions. In the City of God, the only thing the people have in common and main goal is to find a way out of the city.

Throughout the whole movie, the residence of the city never worked together to restore justice and peace in the community. It clearly showed that the city was run by the most powerful drug lord who's only interested was more power and wealth for himself not the community. To add more to

the situation, the authority is not trying to restore the law back into the city because they use the wealth and power of the drug lord for their own personal gain. The people were basically forced to adapt to their environment in order to survive in the City of God.

The second theory that I notice was the Strain theory. The strain theory refers to the notion that some people react to the various stressors they experience in life via unhealthy coping mechanisms, such as turning to crime.

The two things that pressure for deviation is a combination of the cultural emphasis and the social structure. The class that is more vulnerable to this strain and on maintaining their economic aspiration is spite of frustration in the lower class. The City of God is a place where there is poverty and ruin. This makes it easier to see the connection to the strain theory.

A good example for the strain theory would be Rocket's brother. With everything happening around him, he basically gave up on trying to better himself the right way and turned to deviance.

The theories of Criminology were able to explain the criminal behavior in the movie, City of God. The residents of the City of God are forced to adapt to this type of environment in order to be able to survive. By watching the movie, I could see that people really didn't want to be involved in any criminal behavior but like I said, they had to in order to survive. It is the loss that being in a situation of not being able to do anything to better themselves that leaves a gap in so many of their lives that desperately

needs to be filled. Taking into consideration that a person's strain can also play a big part in turning the city into a nightmare.