

# Psychological theories of delinquent causation

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Psychological Theories of Delinquent Causation Psychological Theories of Delinquent Causation Juvenile Justice Melissa Skinner Carl Sandburg College February 18, 2013 Psychological Theories of Delinquent Causation In choosing theories of causation to get a better understanding of why delinquent behavior occurs, one should approach the psychological theories. Within the psychological theories, are two theories we will to further explore. The first is the psychoanalytic theory. The second is the personality theory. We will use these theories to help us look for causation in a juvenile delinquency criminal case that has recently been in the news. This juvenile is being charged with first-degree murder and sexual assault. Let us begin by learning more about the juvenile and the psychological state at the time of the crimes in question. Using the facts of this case, can we implement these two theories into the reasons this juvenile did these horrible crimes? Cristian Fernandez, a 13-year-old Florida boy, killed his two--year-old half-brother and sexually assaulted his five-year-old half-brother. According to news articles, this boy has had a very difficult upbringing. His mother gave birth to him when she was only 12-years-old herself, becoming pregnant with him, after being a victim of sexual assault. The biological father was arrested and sentenced to prison for this crime. When Cristian was merely two-years-old, he, along with his 14-year-old mother, was shuffled between foster homes. Authorities placed them in homes after discovering the grandmother, whom they was living with, was addicted to drugs and incapable of taking care of them. Upon further investigations, it was discovered that he was sexually assaulted by one of his older cousins. Then a few years later, his step-father beat him so bad, he had to seek medical attention. During that time, his

step-father committed suicide to avoid being prosecuted for his actions.

( With having these facts, we will look more in depth at the psychoanalytic theory. This theory is a general approach regarding what causes such criminal behavior within an individuals mind. Sigmund Freud, who, relied on psychoanalysis to help uncover unconscious issues of individuals, stated that the human personality is made from three components. The id, ego and the superego. Although Freud discovered delinquent behavior within the personality, it was later added by August Aichorn, that there was correlation between criminality and psychoanalytic concepts, which detected delinquent behaviors. Even more recently, C. G. Schoenfeld suggested that most juvenile delinquent acts are due to a weak or underdeveloped superego, which has been explained to be caused from things such as the lack of parenting or failing to show the child warmth or affection. When the superego is weak or underdeveloped, the individual will sometimes repress their thoughts and emotions from their past experiences, due to the pain they previously encountered. As a result, the individual tends to turn those thoughts and emotions into behaviors, some of which may be criminal. Psychoanalytic theorists believe that human behavior is unconscious, instinctual and not of free will, unlike many of the other theories of causation. Theorists also describe psychoanalytic individuals as having sexual and aggressive drives. One could also take a closer look into the personality theory. This theory has major significance in causing delinquent behaviors, as well. The personality theory states that an individual has a defective or inadequate personality or personality traits. This theory should also consider social factors which form behaviors, which help make up an

individuals personality. One social factor in particular, is the environment one has been exposed to, which encompasses our personality. Whether the environmental stimuli is good or bad, we use environmental factors to help us develop our personalities. After all, we learn behaviors from what is going on around us. According to personality theorists, an individual with a defective personality, does not have the capability of feeling guilt, remorse, shame or even empathy for their actions. Also, these theorists claim that personality disorder theories are used for explaining juvenile delinquency. Other related issues regarding the personality disorder theories are criminal-personality theory, psychopathic theory and IQ theory. With these explanations of these theories of causation, we could say both, the psychoanalytic theory and the personality theory fit. Thus, being the cause of his delinquent behavior. After a more in depth look at these two theories, it would seem plausible to say that the cause of delinquent behaviors stem from these psychological theories. References (2013, 02). Retrieved 02, 2013, from Crime Causation: Psychological Theories - Family Influences, Individual Influences, More Comprehensive Theories, Conclusions, Bibliography (2013, 02). Retrieved 02, 2013, from [http://www.sagepub.com/upm-data/4880\\_Martin\\_Chapter\\_3\\_Juvenile\\_Delinquency.pdf](http://www.sagepub.com/upm-data/4880_Martin_Chapter_3_Juvenile_Delinquency.pdf). (2013, 02). Retrieved 02, 2013, from [http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-504083\\_162-57514490-504083/cristian-fernandez-13-year-old-fla-boy-faces-life-in-prison-for-allegedly-murdering-his-2-year-old-half-brother/](http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-504083_162-57514490-504083/cristian-fernandez-13-year-old-fla-boy-faces-life-in-prison-for-allegedly-murdering-his-2-year-old-half-brother/)