

# Assessing the techniques of neutralization theory sociology



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Techniques of Neutralization, besides called Neutralization theory is an independent theory of pervert and offense. It is foremost introduced by Gresham. M. Sykes and David Matza in 1957. They attempted to clear up Surthland ' s theory of differential association. They stated that when people participate in aberrant behaviours, we will decidedly happen ways to apologize our Acts of the Apostless or neutralize their guilt associated with it. In this essay, we will make a critically reappraisal on Sykes and Matza ' s work " Techniques of Neutralization: A Theory of Delinquency " .

For the first portion of the statement, they attempted to clear up surtherland ' s thought about subculture and they claimed that the delinquents are most likely conformed with the dominant societal values and norms it is of import to detect that their work was particularly focus on " Juvenile delinquents " . For Sykes and Matza ( 1957 ) they believes all people know how to separate right and incorrect, particularly juvenile delinquents, they are able to avoid or aware to make something incorrect. They farther explain why people know they need to perpetrate to the dominant societal order and they still do something which is opposed the order. ( Maruna and Copes, 2005 )

With the construct of " neutralisation " , Sykes and Matza ( 1957 ) claims that justification is besides a sort of rationalisation as to do aberrant behaviour possible. " It is our statement that much delinquency is based on what is basically an unrecognised extension of defences to offenses, in the signifier of justifications for aberrance that are seen as valid by the

delinquent but non by the legal system or society at big. ” ( Sykes & A ; Matza, 1957, p. 666 ) Criminals will utilize these to neutralize their errors and protecting themselves from self-blame and the incrimination of others after the Acts of the Apostless.

Now we will briefly speak about Sykes and Matza ‘ s ( 1957 ) elucidations made for Surtherland ‘ s ( 1966 ) theory of differential association. First, they believe delinquents have the sense of guilt and shame. Second, “ juvenile delinquent often accords esteem and regard to observant individuals. ” ( Sykes & A ; Matza, 1957, p. 665 ) . Third, delinquent make clear differentiation between who can be victimized and who can non. Forth, harmonizing to Sykes and Matza ( 1957 ) , delinquent have the demands for conformance but they will internalise the demands or to estrange the societal values and norms

Sykes and Matza ( 1957 ) strongly emphasized everyone has the demands for conformance. When immature wrongdoers face their conforming figures, they have the sense of guilt and shame. For the ground why people have the demands for conformance but they still choose to perpetrate offense, it ‘ s the affair of grade, as different people will hold different grade of committedness to the uses of conformance ( Sykes & A ; Matza, 1957 ) .

About the 2nd portion of statement, Sykes and Matza ( 1957 ) proposed 5 major types of aberrant behaviour techniques of neutralisation. The first 1 is “ denial of duty ” , perverts will claim that their aberrant behaviours are out of control or it is an accident. They are “ deficient duty for their aberrant actions ” ( Sykes & A ; Matza, 1957, p. 667 ) Deviants normally have

personal job and feel helpless, so they see themselves as victims and these makes or even coerce them to prosecute in aberrant Acts of the Apostless.

The most common alibi they use to denial is " It ' s non my mistake. "

The 2nd technique is " denial of hurt " . The manner of condemnable jurisprudence distinct an act is offense or non, it focus on " hurt and injuries caused by the aberrant Acts of the Apostless " . This technique is normally usage by car larcenies, they will claim that no 1 is hurt by their Acts of the Apostless and they are merely " borrowing " .

The 3rd technique is " denial of victims " , felons use this techniques are willing to acknowledge their Acts of the Apostless involve hurts, but they deny the victim. They views their Acts of the Apostless as signifiers of " rightful revenge or penalty " ( Sykes & A ; Matza, 1957, p. 668 ) and the people deserve it.

The Forth one is called " the disapprobation of the condemners " , that ' s what McCorkle and Kron ( 1954 ) called " a rejection of the rejectors " .

Delinquents switch the focal point of attending to the motives or behaviours of the people showing disapproval ( Maruna and Copes, 2005, p13 ) , they victimize themselves and view those condemners as " dissemblers, perverts in camouflage, or impelled by personal malice " ( Sykes & A ; Matza, 1957, p. 668 )

The last 1 is " the entreaty to higher truenesss " , it is used when " the internal and external societal controls may be neutralized by giving the demands of the larger society for the demands of the smaller societal groups to which the delinquent belongs. ( Sykes & A ; Matza, 1957, p. 669 )

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Delinquent feel their law-breaking Acts of the Apostless is deserving as to profit their group.

### **\*\*Goods of techniques of neutralisation ( 400 – 500 )**

It is no uncertainty that neutralisation theory had great influence power as it affects the development of criminology from the sociological positions for more than 50 old ages, and its consequence is sustainable boulder clay this century. Sykes and Matza made a long and deep research, it can be seen as an extension and polish of Surtherland ' s differential association theory. ( Maruna and Copes, 2005, p. 17 ) They concerned about the portion that Surtherland ' s neglected and their plants built up a foundation for future research.

“ Neutralization theory is one of the earliest, to the full articulated sociocognitive or narrative histories of aberrant behaviour. ” ( Maruna and Copes, 2005, p. 5 ) It gave a new position to explicate aberrance and offense. They clearly proposed five techniques and made clear accounts and illustrations, this makes the theory easier to understand and retrieve. Furthermore, we can utilize these techniques to explicate and understand both the serious condemnable behaviours, like slaying, and less serious offense like store lifting. These techniques are non limited to use to certain sort of offenses, but it can use to most offense by and large.

Different from the tradition, Sykes and Matza ' s research ( 1957 ) was aimed to concentrate on Juvenile delinquents. This raised the public attending at that minute and therefore opened a new way for future research. Besides, as Sykes and Matza ( 1957 ) mentioned most felons felt sorrow after their Acts

of the Apostless, because of these declinations, they will warrant their error with internalising their original norms and values. This account besides stated the altering psychological conditions of perverts which it can assist us to understand perverts in a different facet.

Apart from the field of criminology, Sykes and Matza besides had of import part to the field of societal scientific discipline. Mention to the Social Science Citation Index, the article " Techniques of neutralisation: A theory of delinquency " ( Sykes and Matza, 1957 ) is one of the most often cited original article, from 1957 to 2003, it has been cited over 700 times. ( Maruna and Copes, 2005, p. 3 ) Although the work was done over 50 old ages, we can see that Sykes and Matza ' s work still had great influence power on societal scientific discipline researches.

It is easy to happen researches about " techniques of neutralisation " . Many researches attempt to verify and give support for the neutralisation theory. Alexander Holsinger ( 1999 ) did a research which support Sykes and Matza ' s thoughts, and it helps to do the theory of neutralisation techniques valid. Besides, Volkan Topalli ( 2005 & A ; 2006 ) further studied about the techniques of neutralisation with the instances of street force and street hardcore piquing. We can see that neutralisation theory is widely accepted and many researches are started based on the construct of neutralisation theory.

Over times, neutralisation theory is about to turn as an independent theory. Although many theoreticians used to associate it to different theories, such as societal larning theory or rational pick theory, etc. It besides gave an

account for the “ secondary pervert ” , when they were seeking to neutralize and warrant their errors, they may utilize the techniques to give alibis and do denial of their mistakes. It is no uncertainty that its explanatory power of neutralisation theory has become greater and widely accepted in many facets.

### **\*\*Limits of techniques of neutralisation ( 400 – 500 )**

However, there are Numberss of unfavorable judgments have been made of the statement over the old ages and we are traveling to speak about them in the undermentioned portion.

Although Sykes and Matza aimed to concentrate on the facets of juvenile delinquents, Numerous criminologists argued that it is nonmeaningful for them to merely concentrate on juvenile as they merely mentioned small at the first portion of the article about the lower category immature males and they did n’t further explore, they did n’t concern much about the relationship between neutralisation theory and societal construction.

Travis Hirschi ( 1969 ) raised an of import unfavorable judgment against neutralisation theory. It is about “ whether perverts use the techniques to neutralize their Acts of the Apostless BEFORE or AFTER they do it ” Probably this is the job of “ chicken-or-egg ” , Sykes and Matza did n’t advert about this in their plants, and over old ages, many criminologists have made their sentiment about this, but no 1 could do a representative reply. Some theoreticians claimed this inquiry is really of import to neutralization theory as its reply decide it belong to the classs of control theory or larning theory. It will be a control theory if the alibis appear after they commit such

behaviours, we see it as post-hoc rationalizations. A If they exist with their original idea, it will be a learning theory. " ( O'Connor. T, 2006 ) With this obscure differentiation, Diane ( 1999 ) stated that neutralisation theory loses its credibleness as a theory if the delinquents neutralize before their Acts of the Apostless, it is merely to " depict reactions that juveniles incur due to their misbehaviors. "

With the use of those five techniques, neutralisation theory still fails to explicate " primary pervert " . Sykes and Matza besides realized one of this restriction in their positions. " There is a demand for more cognition refering the differential distribution of techniques of neutralisation, as operative forms of idea, by age, sex, societal category, cultural group, etc. " ( Sykes and Matza, 1957, p. 669 ) . They made a suggestion for future research as to farther analysis the relationship between neutralisation and wrongdoers backgrounds, like the age, sex and so on. The background and environment causes of aberrant behaviours are besides really of import to the cause of delinquency, besides the causes of primary perverts.

Furthermore, some research workers argued that those techniques do non hold clear differentiation, even " denial of victims " and " denial of hurt " are similar ( Landsheer, t'Hart, and Kox, 1994 ) . Also, with the measuring of the grade of fond regard and committedness to societal norms, it ' s hard to mensurate it accurately. In these instances, these make future research more hard as the class is excessively obscure for them to foster survey about and it can non assist to make much about offense bar.



In Topalli ' s ( 2006 ) research, it did an analysis about the hardcore wrongdoers and the use of the neutralisation techniques. Hardcore wrongdoers with nonconventional values, Topalli ( 2005 ) termed these people " guilt-free wrongdoers " , these people are non forced to perpetrate offense, but they feel more reasonable to make it at all. ( Topalli, 2006 ) It is found that the techniques are merely utile for them at the first phase, over a period of clip, the sense of guilt will be disappeared and changed to " enjoyment " . The techniques are no longer utile for these hardcore wrongdoers at the ulterior phase of their condemnable lives. ( Topalli, 2006 ) Using this research, we can see the restriction of Sykes and Matza " s ( 1957 ) work, its perspective explanatory ability is a spot narrow as it can merely use to those perverts who are attached to conventional norms and values, it can non explicate the felons who have no sense of guilt. For those who are non attach, their behaviours likely will non affected by the dominant values but merely their ain desires and motives, such as enjoyments and money. ( Topalli, 2006 )

Although neutralisation theory is widely known and respected both the Fieldss of criminology and sociology, we can non deny that there are legion restrictions when using to offense. I have shown legion reviews from the above subdivision. And now I am traveling to discourse about John E. Hamlin ' s reading as it tried to give a different account for neutralisation theory.

With the Rational pick theory, people will cipher the cost and benefits of an act.

Peoples are rational to do pick and this is besides one of the ground why most people do non perpetrate offense. To happen out why some people still choose to perpetrate offense, we can likely happen out the reply of John E. Hamlin ' s " The Misplaced Role of Rational Choice in Neutralization Theory " ( 1988 ) . " Motive is the existent cause ( means ) of action ( ends ) for the persons. ( Hamlin, 1988, p. 430 ) It is apprehensible that people commit offense is the " average " to run into their end, that ' s the " terminal " , they have their ain motivations for their action. Hamlin ( 1988 ) claimed that " motivations " is " techniques " that Sykes and Matza proposed. They are both used to warrant an action. He tried to reply the inquiry of " whether the neutralisation look before or after the delinquent Acts of the Apostless " , and he claimed that " motivations were expressed after the act " ( Hamlin, 1988, p. 426 ) . Hamlin ( 1988 ) made a really strong statement that most likely delinquents defined their Acts of the Apostless with motivations merely when others force them, like under the " inquiry state of affairs " . Furthermore, they will experience the sense of guilt merely after others told them they are incorrect.

One more of import enlargement of Hamlin ' s work about neutralisation is that he tried to spread out the thought of " classs of techniques " . He did n't reject the thought of Sykes and Matza ( 1957 ) , but he stated that the classs of techniques are the sorts of " vocabularies of motivations " which is related to different societal facets, like economic sciences, spiritual or political, etc. Sykes and Matza ( 1957 ) suggested that different people will take different neutralisation techniques, and it can be a more specific one. What Hamlin ( 1988, p. 38 ) mentioned is that during the neutralisation procedure, people

are merely seeking to happen out and do sense of their vocabularies of motivations, besides, he was seeking to associate these techniques/vocabularies to the societal construction.

We can see that Hamlin ( 1988 ) attempted to clear up and spread out Sykes and Matza ' s ( 1957 ) thoughts, and it is no uncertainty that it made a part on it as exploited a new facet for us to understand neutralisation theory.

Over 50 old ages, Sykes and Matza ' s work about techniques of neutralisation still placed an of import function in criminology. They made two chief statements in their plants, one is an enlargement of Surtherland ' s theory of differential association and the other is the proposition of five neutralisation techniques, these opened a new route for us to analyze about aberrant behaviours. They made a elucidation for Surtherland ' s work, nevertheless, legion reviews besides raised against their statements. Recent criminologists have tried to verify and back up their plants, but it merely received small support due to its ain bounds. Because of this, I do believe there are still suites for us to make more about neutralisation theory in the future research.