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Chapter 02: Explanations for Organized Crime

Multiple Choice

1. Social Strain theorist Robert Merton hypothesized that organized crime was:
- a. the result of sociopathic opportunism.
 - b. adaptive innovation by educationally and financially disadvantaged elements.
 - c. a normal response to pressures exerted on certain persons by the social structure.
 - d. an abnormal response to peer pressure exerted by one's own ethnic group.

ANSWER: c

2. Merton used the term *pathological materialism* to describe:
- a. the human compulsion for financial security.
 - b. organized crime's singular pursuit of financial goals.
 - c. an American preoccupation with economic success.
 - d. emphasis on goal achievement with little regard for the means of achievement.

ANSWER: c

3. _____ refers to the study of society, social institutions, human interaction, collective behavior, and the behavior of organized groups.
- a. Psychology
 - b. Sociology
 - c. Criminal anthropology
 - d. Criminology

ANSWER: b

4. According to strain theorists, which of the following may result if a number of people are confronted by the contradiction between goals and means, and as a result become estranged from society?
- a. war
 - b. anomie
 - c. psychological disorders
 - d. materialism

ANSWER: b

5. Which of the following is NOT one of Merton's suggested modes of adaptation to deal with strain?
- a. rebellion
 - b. retreatism
 - c. conformity
 - d. hedonism

ANSWER: d

6. Which of the following modes of Merton's adaptation includes organized criminal activity for those who would play the game differently?
- a. innovation
 - b. conformity
 - c. retreatism

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d. rebellion

ANSWER: a

7. Who theorized that all behavior—lawful and criminal—is learned?

- a. Robert Merton
- b. Sigmund Freud
- c. Edwin Sutherland
- d. Robert Agnew

ANSWER: c

8. _____ theory argues that criminals organize their behavior according to the norms of a delinquent or criminal group to which they belong or with which they identify.

- a. Differential association
- b. Strain
- c. Social control
- d. Conflict

ANSWER: a

9. _____ refers to a source of patterning in human conduct; it is the sum of patterns of social relationships and shared meanings by which people give order, expression, and value to common experiences.

- a. Subculture
- b. Culture
- c. Norm
- d. Social interaction

ANSWER: b

10. _____ implies that there are value judgments, or a social value system, which lie apart from a larger or central value system.

- a. Subculture
- b. Culture
- c. Norm
- d. Social interaction

ANSWER: a

11. Central to the issue of culture versus subculture is/are _____: group-held prescriptions for, or prohibitions against, certain conduct.

- a. ethics
- b. values
- c. norms
- d. interactions

ANSWER: c

12. The _____ is characterized principally by conduct that reflects values antithetical to the surrounding culture.

- a. delinquent subculture
- b. mainstream subculture

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- c. conventional subculture
- d. violent subculture

ANSWER: a

13. Which scholars discovered that certain clearly identifiable neighborhoods maintained a high level of criminality over many decades despite changes in ethnic composition?

- a. Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung
- b. Robert Merton and Emile Durkheim
- c. Edwin Sutherland and Donald Cressey
- d. Clifford R. Shaw and Henry D. McKay

ANSWER: d

14. Sociologists Clifford R. Shaw and Henry D. McKay suggested that the attitudes, values, and techniques of organized criminality are transmitted through all of the following ways *except* for:

- a. economic necessity.
- b. formalized and ritualistic processes.
- c. culturally.
- d. religiously

ANSWER: d

15. Inadequate familial socialization prevents some persons from:

- a. progressing in an organized crime family to achieve “made guy” status.
- b. conforming to the conventional norms of the wider society.
- c. conforming to the norms of a delinquent or criminal subculture.
- d. none of these.

ANSWER: b

16. In order for an organized crime group to survive, it must have a(n) _____ process for inducting new members and inculcating them with the values and ways of behaving prescribed by the social system.

- a. institutionalized
- b. religiously-centered
- c. culture-focused
- d. ritualized

ANSWER: a

17. According to Fredric Thrasher, “Experience in a predatory gang develops in the boy _____ law and order.”

- a. a respect for
- b. an indifference to
- c. a hatred for
- d. a preference for

ANSWER: b

18. Leaders of organized criminal enterprises maintain formal and informal political, economic, and religious ties that provide:

- a. legitimate opportunities.

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- b. illegitimate opportunities.
- c. both illegitimate and legitimate opportunities.
- d. gangster chic.

ANSWER: c

19. Which of the following scholars stated that “American preoccupation with economic success, coupled with socioeconomic stratification, causes strain”?

- a. Clifford Shaw and Henry McKay
- b. Edwin Sutherland and Donald Cressey
- c. Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung
- d. Richard Cloward and Lloyd Ohlin

ANSWER: d

20. According to _____ theory, each successive immigrant group experienced *strain* to which some members reacted by *innovating* in accord with a tradition that had been established by earlier American entrepreneurs.

- a. ethnic succession
- b. strain
- c. social control
- d. differential association

ANSWER: a

21. During the era known as _____ during the 1920s and 30s, the illegal sale and distribution of liquor in America acted as catalyst for the development of organized crime.

- a. Proscription
- b. Prohibition
- c. Proliferation
- d. Promulgation

ANSWER: b

22. Clinical psychology is based, to various extents, on psychoanalytic theory, a body of work fathered by:

- a. Robert K. Merton.
- b. Edwin Sutherland.
- c. Sigmund Freud.
- d. Émile Durkheim.

ANSWER: c

23. Central to the psychoanalytic explanation for crime is the _____, a conscience-like mechanism whose function is to restrain the person from antisocial behavior.

- a. id
- b. superego
- c. ego
- d. superid

ANSWER: b

24. Persons with _____ have a poorly developed superego—they are psychopaths or sociopaths—and are

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restrained only by the fear of punishment.

- a. schizophrenia
- b. depression
- c. psychosis
- d. antisocial personality disorder

ANSWER: d

25. According to behavioral psychology, behavior is acquired through _____—a method of learning that occurs through rewards and punishments for behavior, which occurs through interaction with the environment.

- a. operant conditioning
- b. classical conditioning
- c. education
- d. operant conditioning, classical conditioning, and education

ANSWER: a

26. Recent biological theories of crime identify which of the following as playing a part in criminal behavior?

- a. a criminal recessive gene
- b. neurotransmitters
- c. bone structure
- d. country of origin

ANSWER: b

True / False

27. Edwin Sutherland described *pathological materialism* as an American preoccupation with economic success.

- a. True
- b. False

ANSWER: False

28. According to Edwin Sutherland, all behavior—lawful and criminal—is learned.

- a. True
- b. False

ANSWER: True

29. According to Durkheim, *retreatism* refers to a state of normlessness which is the result of dramatic societal change.

- a. True
- b. False

ANSWER: False

30. Ethnic succession theory posits that organized crime provides a “queer ladder of social mobility” for disadvantaged groups who eventually leave organized crime, making way for the next wave.

- a. True
- b. False

ANSWER: True

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31. Clifford R. Shaw and Henry D. McKay found that certain clearly identifiable Chicago neighborhoods maintained a high level of criminality over many decades despite changes in ethnic composition.

- a. True
- b. False

ANSWER: True

32. The connection between criminal organizations of southern Italy and the American *Mafia* are the *Zips*, a term used describe recent immigrants.

- a. True
- b. False

ANSWER: True

33. According to ethnic succession, persons involved in organized crime are not committed to a deviant subculture but are merely using available, albeit illegal, opportunity to achieve economic success.

- a. True
- b. False

ANSWER: True

34. Persons with an antisocial personality disorder suffer little or no guilt as a result of engaging in socially harmful behavior.

- a. True
- b. False

ANSWER: True

35. According to psychoanalytic theorists, criminal behavior is related to the superego function.

- a. True
- b. False

ANSWER: True

36. According to learning theory, antisocial behavior is sometimes the result of learning—positive and negative reinforcement—directly from others.

- a. True
- b. False

ANSWER: True

37. According to learning theory, antisocial behavior is sometimes the result of a failure to learn how to discriminate between competing norms.

- a. True
- b. False

ANSWER: True

38. To a great extent, the environment inhabited by organized crime reinforces antisocial behavior and frequently ridicules conventional, conforming behavior.

- a. True
- b. False

ANSWER: True

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39. Research has shown that serotonin levels have no value as a predictor of criminal behavior.

- a. True
- b. False

ANSWER: False

40. Environmental factors can alter the expression of genes, thus influencing the behavior of the individual.

- a. True
- b. False

ANSWER: True

41. Psychopaths exhibit a strong conscience, which allows them to pacify their guilt in order to harm another.

- a. True
- b. False

ANSWER: False

Completion

42. _____ suggests a strain between societal expectations for success and limited opportunity causes certain persons to innovate in the form of organized crime.

ANSWER: Anomie

43. According to _____ theory, all behavior—lawful and criminal—is learned in intimate personal groups, although learning the techniques of sophisticated criminality requires the proper environment.

ANSWER: differential association

44. The theory of _____ asserts that illegitimate opportunity for success, like legitimate opportunity, is not equally distributed throughout society and access to criminal ladders of success is no more freely available than are noncriminal alternatives.

ANSWER: differential opportunity

45. According to _____ theorists, delinquent acts result when an individual's bond to society is weak or broken and the strength of this bond is determined by external and internal restraints.

ANSWER: social control

46. As the only theory developed to explain the continued existence of organized crime, _____ posits that organized crime provides a "queer ladder of social mobility" for disadvantaged groups who eventually leave organized crime, making way for the next wave.

ANSWER: ethnic succession

47. The connection between the criminal organizations of southern Italy—*Mafia*, *Camorra*, *'Ndrangheta*—and American organized crime are the _____, who are recent immigrants.

ANSWER: *Zips*

48. According to differential association theory, the principal part of _____ occurs within intimate personal groups.

ANSWER: learning

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49. Central to the psychoanalytic explanation for crime is the _____, a conscience-like mechanism whose function is to restrain the person from antisocial behavior.

ANSWER: superego

50. Central to behavioral psychology is that all behavior is shaped by _____.

ANSWER: consequences

51. Persons with low levels of the neurotransmitter _____ are more inclined toward aggression and violence than those with normal levels.

ANSWER: serotonin

Essay

52. Describe the theory of ethnic succession as it is used in the context of organized crime.

ANSWER: Ethnic succession results when a group experiences success in crime, and legitimate opportunities thereby become more readily available. According to the ethnic succession thesis, involvement in organized crime is simply a rational response to economic conditions: organized crime can be understood as a rational choice for responding to anomie. Italian organized crime figures who have gained economic status are not leaving organized crime and, in many instances, their progeny have followed them into organized crime.

53. What are Robert K. Merton's five modes of adaptation? Why is innovation most important when studying organized crime?

ANSWER: Merton states there are five modes of individual adaptation to this phenomenon: conformity, ritualism, rebellion, retreatism, and innovation. We are concerned only with the last adaptation—*innovation*—that includes organized criminal activity for those who would *play the game differently*. According to Ian Taylor, Paul Walton, and Jock Young (1973: 97), "The 'American Dream' urges all citizens to succeed whilst distributing the opportunity to succeed unequally: the result of this social and moral climate, inevitably, is innovation by the citizenry—the adoption of illegitimate means to pursue and obtain success." However, "routine" pedestrian criminal acts do not lead to any significant level of economic success. Innovation, then, is the adoption of sophisticated, well-planned, skilled, organized criminality.

54. How does the differential association theory explain why organized crime is more likely to occur in certain neighborhoods?

ANSWER: Differential association argues that you are who you "hang with." According to Sutherland (1973), all behavior—lawful and criminal—is learned. The principal part of learning occurs within intimate personal groups. What is learned depends on the intensity, frequency, and duration of the association. When these variables are sufficient and the associations are criminal, the actor learns the techniques of committing crime and the drives, attitudes, and rationalizations that add up to a favorable precondition to criminal behavior. The balance between noncriminal and criminal behaviors is tipped in favor of the latter. Learning the techniques of sophisticated criminality requires the proper environment—ecological niches or enclaves where delinquent or criminal subcultures (discussed later) flourish and this education is available. In a capitalist society, socioeconomic differentials relegate some persons to an environment wherein they experience a compelling sense of strain—*anomie*—as well as differential association. In the environment where organized crime has traditionally thrived, strain is intense. Conditions of severe deprivation are coupled with readily available success models and associations that are innovative, such as racketeers and drug dealers. This makes certain enclaves characterized by social disorganization and delinquent or criminal subcultures spawning grounds for organized crime.

55. Who are the Zips and what role have they played in spreading organized crime in the United States?

ANSWER: *Zips* provided an injection of youthful *Mafiosi* from Italy in the 1960s. The connection between the criminal

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organizations of southern Italy—*Mafia*, *Camorra*, *Ndrangheta*, *Sacra Corona Unita* (discussed in Chapter 4)—and the American *Mafia* are the Zips, recent immigrants from the *Mezzogiorno*. (The term Zip is an allusion to the immigrants' rapid speech in Italian dialect.) Many are *mafiosi* fleeing intense pressure from Italian law enforcement and murderous factional conflicts between competing *Mafia*, *Camorra*, and *Ndrangheta* groups. "Their entry into the United States was made particularly easy by the reversal of a restrictive immigration statute that had discriminated against southern and eastern Europeans" (PCOC 1986c: 53). Any number are related to members of the American *Mafia* in New York. According to police sources in New York City, some of these Zips have been admitted to membership in American *Mafia* families, and many more are operating in their own association's independent of, but in cooperation with, traditional crime groups. They have been particularly active in drug trafficking. Using drug profits, Zips have opened strip malls containing bakeries, tobacco shops, cafes, newspaper stands, and limousine service storefronts. They are essentially reproducing the small scale neighborhood life in which organized crime has traditionally felt most comfortable. The American *Mafia* has a demand for criminal labor, particularly in the highly rewarding but dangerous enterprise of drug trafficking. Southern Italy has provided a vast labor market for American *Mafia* drug trafficking operations. "In southern Italy, *mafia* and *Camorra* groups can rely on a 'reserve army' of individuals prepared to endanger their own—and other people's—lives in the execution of especially risky and violent tasks, because the problems of inner-city environment and youth unemployment are growing continually worse in the *Mezzogiorno*, so that the supply of criminal labour is continually increasing" (Arlacchi 1986: 194). Ties between the American *Mafia* and the Zips were highlighted during the "Pizza Connection" case concluded in 1987.

56. Define and explain what is meant by a "psychopath."

ANSWER: The psychopath does not experience the normal tripartite structure of id, ego, and superego. The absence of a superego is the result of "failures of internalization that often begin with imitation of the parents' behaviors, but then expand to include family, school and community norms and rules." In short, there is a failure to internalize values. "The psychopathic adult is a valueless person" (Meloy and Shiva 2007: 341). Psychopaths exhibit a lack of conscience, superficial charm, high verbal skills, and a lack of long-term interpersonal bonds. They are characterized by low arousal, a low resting heart rate, and fearlessness. There is speculation that psychopaths have been victims of child abuse who turn off their emotions to reduce the abuse impact. This muting strategy contributes to the development of a psychopath who as an adult appears as a "hardened" person with a strong/tough demeanor (Porter 1996). Psychopaths are restrained only by the fear of punishment, which alone cannot exercise adequate control over antisocial impulses. Such persons suffer little or no guilt as a result of engaging in socially harmful behavior. They are characterized by a combination of antisocial behavior and emotional detachment (Black with Larson 1999) exemplified by a willingness to murder persons against whom they harbor no personal animosity.