Course Essay

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**Introduction**

The white-collar crimes are those criminal acts that are carried out by the government professionals and various businesses. They are the kind of crimes that mostly go undetected because of the people involved. These crimes are financially motivated most of the time. The nature of these crimes is usually nonviolent. Edwin Sutherland defined white-collared crime as the criminal activity carried out by a person who holds great respect and social stature. Such people mostly commit these crimes in their workplace. Common white-collar crimes are inclusive of cybercrime, bribery, fraud, wage theft, embezzlement, money laundering, Ponzi schemes, forgery, labour racketeering and identity theft, and so on. Many lawyers specialize in these kinds of criminal cases. The attitude that most people have about white-collar crimes is fascinating. At one side of the spectrum, it intrigues people and makes them ponder on the issue that why do people with good jobs commit crimes, and why do their coworkers support them. On the other side, some people find white-collar crimes boring and hard to understand. This paper will discuss in-depth the perpetrators of white-collar crime, why does it go undetected most of the time and what can be done to stop it.

**Discussion**

It is unfortunate that most of the times, both the victims and perpetrators of white-collar crimes are unclear. That is why these crimes get done and dusted with swiftly. The reason why most people do not follow the white-collar crimes is that they can get complicated and intricate (Sutherland, 2017). No one knows what happens when a company shifts the numbers on the spreadsheet. There are usually numerous employees in a company and many coats of bureaucracy. There are times when one can identify the perpetrator but there is always a question on how can they be punished. For instance, there are certain complications in finding out if the perpetrator knew that the actions they took were illegal or not. The main factor over here is the intention of the perpetrator. If they claim that they were not aware of the fact that their actions are illegal, there are chances that they will not be charged. That is why most of the white-collar crime cases are dodgy, and at times, even the people who are not innocent get away with it. It is not that fraud was not committed; it has more to do with the fact that the fraudster was not aware that they were doing something illegal. Fraudulent behaviour, in general, is part of the business world.

There are many acts in the world of business which are said to be legal regardless of having a greedy nature. This is where things get tricky, as people go overboard and cross the lines set by the law while trying to abide by it. The perpetrators always have the counter answer of claiming that they were not aware of the datum that the act being committed has crossed the line and entered the unlawful domain. So, punishing bigger companies with heavy fines or putting their owners in jail is not the answer (Holmes, 2017). The reason behind it is the impact that is caused by taking such adverse actions. Many innocent people suffer because of a company law suit as there is a ripple impact on the customers, economy, and society as well. There is no set answer to why white-collar crimes are ignored or undetected. Furthermore, even the government only takes those cases of fraud which they are sure of winning. However, there has been great progress in fraud cases since 1996.

One of the main reasons why white-collar crimes go undetected is that the system protects individuals who commit such felonies. The amount of attention that is given to street crime would make people think that they are the most costly form of criminal activity. That is far from the truth because white-collar crimes like stock manipulations and embezzlement are much more costly than blue-collar and street crimes. In accordance with an FBI report, the annual cost of street crime is around fifteen billion dollars and compared to that the cost of the white-collar crimes is a whopping one trillion dollars (Hirschi & Gottfredson, 2017). There is so much attention put on street crimes that the common man is not even aware of the magnitude of white-collar crimes.

Furthermore, the elite criminals make use of the regulatory policies, institutionalized non-enforcement practices and legal representation by seasoned lawyers. These perks are not present for the people who commit street crimes. This is why it is very difficult to catch and sue the white-collar crimes regardless of the loss and harm these criminal activities have caused the society. Many individuals believe that white-collar crimes are victimless and such people need to be given more awareness (Hirschi & Gottfredson, 2017). A single act of fraud done by an individual can take down a whole company and not to mention, have an adverse impact on the employees and customers. Nowadays, white-collar crimes are more sophisticated than before, like Bernie Medoff's Ponzi scheme.

Elite criminals like Madoff and Bernie can hire world-class defence attorneys to represent them in court. Moreover, the prestigious public relations industries represent them as saints who are doing everything for the sake of charity and the well-being of the community. The people who commit street crimes are usually very poor, and they cannot even dream of such luxuries. The crimes that are committed by privileged individuals also go undetected because of the social standing that they have (Holmes, 2017). These people are protected by corporate law and powerful people who have similar greedy interests. This fact makes it more difficult to catch the perpetrator; it makes them untouchable.

The biggest irony of the white-collar criminals is that these people commit crimes against the laws that they swear to protect. There are also times where these crimes are committed because of peer pressure. That is very difficult to undermine since these criminal acts are to cement the social standing that these people hold. One of the main reasons why these crimes happen in the first place is the structure of the political, corporate and military intelligence institutes. They are mainly structured as complex bureaucracies (Smith, 2017). The bureaucratic organizations are structured in a manner that they normalize deviance and criminal activities. The white-collar criminals do not have to prove their morality to anyone as the general public expects them to function and do things on their behalf. Hence, there is next to no accountability of the acts these criminals are doing are in favour of the general public or not. Since there is a lack of awareness and faults in the system itself, white-collar crimes go on undetected. Further, these crimes do not get the same media coverage as the blue-collar and street crimes; that is why the general public still does not have enough exposure.

The best way to stop these white-collar criminals is to make the system within the organization better. There should be a constant check on the people who are responsible for the finances and the outer relations of the company. The best way to do that is to keep tabs on people working on all the levels of the company. Furthermore, there should be a background check on the individuals who are being hired as leaders. It should be made sure that the people who are being hired as leaders have integrity and clean past. Examples should be created by giving warning to even the senior executives if they do something shady or sketchy. The junior managers and employees are not the only ones who should be shown the red flag on wrong-doings. Employees should be asked to make tough decisions in groups, so there is no window for criminal activities (Gottschalk, 2017). The company leaders who are serious about stopping white-collar crimes should support journalists and also give their employees transparency. The Transparency Initiative (EITI) is a good example of how white-collar crimes can be reduced and tackled.

**Conclusion**

When an organization is big, there can be mistakes and things tend to get messy. However, normalizing these mistakes on the basis of social status that a perpetrator holds is wrong. There needs to be a change in every organization’s structure in order to make an impact on a bigger scale. That can only be done if the leaders of the organizations believe in integrity. That can be done if the leader of the organization tries to understand the issues that are below the surface. Yet it is still tricky to know and understand the problems that are passing by through the compliance procedures and their internal hold. The survey data can help with getting a better understanding of the definite amount of delinquencies in the organization. This survey will also help in finding out the misdemeanour that is not getting reported. These steps will help the senior leaders get a clearer idea of the violations and integrity issues that go on undetected. These acts will help finesse the structure and if not stop, then surely minimize white-collar crimes.

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