

**Criminals are a  
product of their  
environment**



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This essay will concern criminals in regards to their ecology. Ecological criminology is the observing of criminality, crime and victimization in relation to the area of individuals and organizations and how it forms and affects them.

In broad terms crime is seen to evolve in 'pathological' conditions of certain communities and areas. This association between crime and certain parts of a city namely areas with pathological conditions has a long past. Theorists such as Fregier (1840), Mayhew(1862) and The Chicago School of Sociology have contributed substantially to the debate of crime and the environment.

Through Clifford Shaw and Henry McKay's (1942) book[1]and other sociologist work such as Park and Burgess(1925)[2]comes the zonal hypothesis. It was found that cities develop concentric zones of life and activity. This is called this the concentric zone model. The model consist of five zones in the following order , the center is the Central business district, the transition zone of mixed residential and commercial uses, low-class residential homes (inner suburbs), better quality middle-class homes (Outer Suburbs) and the commuters zone. Baldwin and Bottoms also point out that offences are gathered nearby the city center

According to Chicago School each district in concentric zones yield's on something of the traits and abilities of the occupants. Through this knowledge it became known evident that there was a large amount of 'pathological behavior' such as juvenile delinquency and alcoholism in the zone of transition.

It also seems that the zone of transition adapted its own social organization such as cheaper rents, an unsettled population, and a few settled institutions and also tended to house recent peers of immigrants which seemed to yield the same forms of behavior including crime.

Before one looks at the explanations of why the zone of transition is a problematic zone there are some methodological problems one must look at. There may be a distinction between the offence and the offender rate e. g. one person may be the cause of majority of specific crimes in a certain area. The rationality of authorized figures in relation to area based data may be brought into question.

In the explanation given to define the zone of transition by the Chicago school it was alleged that the zone accommodated people unfamiliar to each other, urban life and to America also their surroundings seemed fluid which is also termed ' social disorganization'.

Social disorganization was based on three flexible elements such as poverty (unlike Sutherland which will be discussed further on), as the poor societies do not possess satisfactory funds to handle the difficulties occurring. The increase of residential mobility and racial diversity causes deterioration of community control through the deficiency of mutual beliefs which is viewed as permitting illicit conduct to advance and be transferred from one generation to the next.

Similar to the social disorganization thesis Schuerman and Kobrin (1986) alleged a three phase procedure which denotes the evolving of high offender rate areas. These were " shifts in land" which meant increase in renting,"

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changes in population” which signified a decrease in people and increase in quantity of dissimilar beings as well as “ Changes in socio-economic statues” which means additional inexperienced beings and advanced quantity of jobless people.

In contrast to the idea that area of residence takes on character and quality of inhabitation, it is also noted that the inhabitants of an area take on characteristics and value of the area. This means the societal life of a zone can stimulate illicit inspiration. The societal life of a zone may have long term impact on the individual's personality, social activities, though processes a daily routines.

As opposed to ideas such as certain areas influence individuals and vice versa, the theory of differential association according to Shaw and McKay, may illustrate how delinquent activities are ethnically transferred from one person to another. Edwin Sutherland (1924 and 1939) it was claimed that illicit conduct is cultured in contact through other individuals predominantly in ‘ intimate personal settings’.

This kind of knowledge not merely instructs the person about the detailed practices of performing delinquency, but similarly guides their ‘ drives, motives, attitudes and definitions of the law’ (Jones 2006).

Wherever an individual is exposed to ‘ excess definitions favorable to violation of the law over definitions unfavorable to violation of the law’ they are more probable to turn out to be a criminal. The probability is ascertained by discrepancies in regularity, concentration, significance and period of the relationship. An exemplification of this is as Orcutt (1987) states ‘ that <https://assignbuster.com/criminals-are-a-product-of-their-environment/>

students were more likely to smoke marijuana if one of their four closest friends did'.

Alike Social disorganization Wolfgang and Ferracuti (1967) state that 'subcultures of violence' can often be found in poor zones, they also state that individuals from such backgrounds learn positive approaches towards vehemence though 'a process of differential learning, association or identification'. Wolfgang and Ferracuti also claim that such a procedure might aid to dispel any outlooks of culpability that might perhaps arise as of inside such individuals.

The fortes of Sutherland's theory lay in its capability to demonstrate delinquencies are not related to poverty. For instance Sutherland applied the concept to white-collar and professional crime, asserting that people turn into white collar criminals since they became engaged into a business culture that deemed unlawful practices as lawful

Sutherland reasoned that numerous clusters of people in civilization varied in their views as to what caused suitable conduct and out of this multiplicity of opinions, culture conflict turns into the most definite proof of the social disorganization within society, and an underlying cause of differential association.

For the purpose of criticism and analysis in regards to the ideas given by the Chicago school of sociology, the image of urban life assumed by the Chicago school is no longer the same. This is because it assumes an even, unchanging landscape. An Additional reproach of the Chicago school is that British capitals post Second World War did not look like the Chicago

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concentric ring pattern due to people fleeing away from the city's in fear.

The theory is also insubstantial on individuals as it doesn't institute enough for decisions made by individuals such as " highly emotive crimes such as ' crimes of passion' e. g. serial killer which doesn't associate with no one to learn his modus operandi also known as method of operating.

Theorist such as Tittle et al. (1986) claim that it is not the mocking of specific methods or the learning of illicit outlooks that is significant, but the learning of enthusiasms to participate in delinquency that create distinct relations.

McCarthy (1996) revealed compelling proof of ' tutelage' in techniques of delinquency between homeless youths

Haynie (2002) establish that the quantity of criminal contacts in a person's network not individual had a strong optimistic outcome on that character's following criminality, but was also a stronger effect than the contacts' total levels of criminality. Meaning and individual which has more criminal minded friends then an individual which only has one extreme criminal friend is more likely to be influenced.

In light of everything mentioned what can be understood is that different theorist have different views and ideas on factors and elements which condition a person to act in a criminal way. Therefore some theorist claim people are the product of certain areas whereas others believe that the areas are the product of the people living in it, which effectively means there is a two way presses going on. On the other hand some theorist believe that poverty is the underlining cause of delinquency where as some theorist believe that poverty plays no role and that it is merely the individuals

motivation which is fuelled by engaging with delinquent people in an close intimate setting.