

Housebreaking crimes and offences of burglary criminology essay



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Burglary known also as housebreaking is a crime, the quintessence of which is an entry into premises for the intentions of committing an offence.

Typically, that offence will be a form of theft, but many jurisdictions stipulate others, which fall same case within the realm of burglary. Burglary can be explained using two theories including Social ecology: Crime and place theory and Strain and sub cultural theories. The two theories are significant in explaining Burglary as a crime but espouse the ideas differently. This paper critically compares and contrasts the two theories as well as how differently they explain Burglary. It details many concepts surrounding the explanations of burglary with differentiation of particulars of each theory. This leads us to the next part on literature review of some of the works written on this topic.

Crime and place theory explains Burglary in the context of the location of the crime itself. Theories of crime can be sub divided into the theories seeking to explain the criminal offenders' development, and the theories seeking to explain the criminal events development (Brantingham & Brantingham, 1995). Theories on Burglary have been overriding in criminology development. Most research on crime as well as crime prevention focus mainly on why certain types of persons commit crime and exactly what can be, done about it. It is only in recent times that serious attention has been paid to explain crimes such as Burglary rather than the people's criminality (Anderson, 1998). Concern with the place is much central to this effective approach (Capone & Nichols 1996). While theories of criminality and crime such as Burglary are often seen to compete in explaining the Burglary problem, it practical to begin with the concept that offender as well as event

explanations complements each other considerably than competitors (Carter & Hill, 1996).

Many other works explain the main reason why there is need to use theories in crime is to understand the reason why the perpetrators of crime do it and where and how they are likely to do it. Offenders may be motivated highly, but unless they facilitate the creation of a crime event, there is surely nothing to explain (Cromwell & Olson, 1991). In the same way, given a criminal act such as Burglary, the etiology of the event should in some manner, have an explanation of the respective offender (Brantingham & Brantingham, 1995). Theories of Offender should tell us eventually how people develop to be criminal offenders, and the situation where the same criminals desist from offending. Theories such as these may insinuate crime prevention strategies focused on the individuals likely to become solemn violent criminals, or high-rate criminals committing less grave crimes (Roncek, 1991). However, to date many theories about criminality development do not provide a strong basis for making predictions such as these, and there is miniature consensus as to what a theory in the future would be like in explaining criminal acts (Capone & Nichols 1996).

Other literature makes it possible to link crime such as burglary with place and situations. A place is a small area, typically a street corner, building, address, or street segment. A focus on places contrasts with a concentrating on neighborhoods. Neighborhood theories regularly highlight the offenders' development, while place level explanations give emphasis to crime events.

Three perspectives imply the relevance of places for understanding criminal acts including routine activity theory, rational choice and crime pattern

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theory (Brantingham & Brantingham, 1995). However, these perspectives are equally supportive; crime pattern theory and routine activity theory provide varying explanations for crime happening at different places. Five research areas help us understand the relevance of places in explaining crime (Capone & Nichols 1996). Crime intensity about scrupulous facilities, for example, bars, the high crime concentration at some addresses and crime absence at others; the precautionary effects of a variety of place features; the offenders' mobility; and studies of the way offenders select their targets. The following examples provide just a glimpse of the mounting recognition of the place role in crime as well as crime control. Lawsuits hinging on the claimants ability to show that parking lots and buildings are gratuitously dangerous abound in the civil courts (White, 1990). Local newspapers contain community protests in opposition to drinking establishments, 24-hour stores or sex shops, seen as magnets for criminals. Community advocates propose taking legal action against place owners that disrupt neighborhoods (Anderson, 1998).

To add more on places and situations, more literature prevails in this context. Police programs focusing on where burglary happens rather than the people committing them are developing in towns; at the same time that a number of academic studies reveal that is concentrated at particular places even in neighborhoods that have high burglary rates (Capone & Nichols 1996). Concern with the affiliation between burglary and the place is not new. As early as the nineteenth century, scholars analyzed the distribution burglary across regions with differing social characteristics and ecological (Brantingham & Brantingham, 1995). In the U. S., pioneering

advocates of sociology examined carefully the burglary location in the city of Chicago (White, 1990). They argued that distinctiveness of the urban environment is relevant to explain the emergence of burglary in specific communities (White, 1990). On the other hand, these early attempts of understanding the correlation between burglary and place took a “macro” approach considering aggregates of places such as states, cities, regions, communities and neighborhoods instead of a “micro” approach examining the places themselves.

There have been new developments in the crime and place theory explaining further on the same topic. Recent interest crime and place focus on micro-level relationships. The studies begin with distinctive efforts of identifying the correlation between Places of Crime in Crime Theory particular aspects of urban design (Barr & Pease, 1990) or the architecture; and burglary as a crime, but broadened to account for a much larger set of physical space characteristics and criminal opportunity. These studies drew variations between the site in question and the geographical area (for example community, neighborhood, city or police beat), which surrounds it. Places in this micro perspective are particular locations within the broad social environment. They can be small as the area next to a teller machine or large as a strip shopping center, or a building. Often places thought as having particular types of businesses (Biron & Ladouceur, 1991).

Conversely, Sherman et al. (1989) proposes that this new focus on discrete areas is fundamental enough to be appropriately, seen as a separate new area of study in the area of burglary as a crime. He conducts a survey of some crime practices among the juveniles who ever participated in crime.
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Recent trends in the understanding of the relevance of opportunity in crime prevention (White, 1990) and the influence of crime displacement (Anderson, 1998) suggest additionally that place should be an essential component in crime prevention and crime theory.

Additionally, three recent perspectives including routine activity theory, rational choice, and crime pattern theory have influenced the understanding of the relevance of place in preventing burglary as a crime (Biron & Ladouceur, 1991). A rational choice perspective explains the basic rationale for define place as necessary, since it espouses that offenders should select targets as well as define means of achieving their goals in a way that can be explained (Anderson, 1998). Some scholars claim that this perspective in theory is to some degree not testable, as it is virtually always possible to interpret individual behavior as rational from the burglar's perspective (Anderson, 1998). Others have shown that it is possible to test several forms of rational choice (Anderson, 1998). Nonetheless, a rational choice perspective can be of use in developing testable propositions, which describe burglary crime events and burglar's behavior. This is particularly true if a rational choice perspective is of use in combinations with routine activity theory (Barr & Pease, 1990). Routine activity theory explains the occurrence of burglary crime events as the confluence of numerous circumstances (Biron & Ladouceur, 1991). First, there should be a motivated offender.

On the other hand, the development of motivated burglars is the goal of the theories. Second, there should be an enviable target. Third, the specific objective and the burglar must be in the same place and time (Brantingham & Brantingham, 1995). Finally, three types of controllers including guardians, <https://assignbuster.com/housebreaking-crimes-and-offences-of-burglary-criminology-essay/>

intimate handlers, and place managers should be ineffective or absent.

Intimate handlers are specifically people who hold a direct, personal influence relatively over a burglar (for example parents, coaches, friends, teachers, or employers). In the presence of these people, potential burglars do not commit burglary crimes. Many adults are away from such intimate handlers for the largest part of the day and many burglars, both adult and juvenile, have few or relatively no intimate handlers (Anderson, 1998).

To understand these concepts, it is good to dig deeper into the theories explanations. People taking care of the places are, named place managers. Place managers, (for instance apartment managers, janitors, and others) regulate individual behavior at the locations they have control over. For a burglary crime to occur, these people must be ineffective, absent or negligent (Anderson, 1998). Crime and place pattern theory is noteworthy particularly in developing, an understanding of burglary as a crime and place because it combines routine activity theory and rational choice to help explain the burglary distribution across places (White, 1990). The distribution of burglars, handlers, guardians, targets, and managers over the place and time describe burglary crime patterns (Brantingham & Brantingham, 1995). Changes in society are the main reason for the increased the number of targets while separating them relatively from the people who could make an effort of protecting them (guardians, handlers and managers). Reasonably rational burglars, while they engage in their routine activities, will eventually note places without managers and guardians as well as where their handlers have a less likelihood of being there (Biron & Ladouceur, 1991). Crime and

place theory looks into the interactions of burglars with their social and physical environments influencing burglar's choices of targets.

Conversely, according to crime and place theory, how respective targets come to know of burglars influences the distribution of burglary crime events over time and space. This occurs because burglars engage in custom activities. Just like other non-burglars, burglars move among the spheres of work, shopping, school and recreation. As they engage in their normal and routine activities, they also become aware of crime opportunities (Anderson, 1998). Therefore, burglary criminal opportunities not near the areas burglars routinely move through have a less likelihood to come to their attention (Capone & Nichols 1996). A given burglar will be aware of only possible targets available. Criminal opportunities present at places coming to the attention of burglars have an increased risk of literally becoming targets (Barr & Pease, 1990). While a few burglars may aggressively look for uncharted areas, most conduct their searches precisely within the areas they are familiar in the event of their non-criminal activities.

In learning more on this, it is good to note that, the concept of place is essential to burglary theories. Not only are places rationally required (a burglar should be in a place when a burglary crime is committed), their individual characteristics influence the possibility of a burglary crime. Place characteristics discussed in the crime and place theory include the effectiveness and presence of managers and the being there of capable guardians. Crime and place theory links places with enviable targets and the context found by focusing on the way places come to the attention of burglars.

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Conversely, sub cultural theory explains burglary crime differently, arguing that certain subcultures or groups in the society have attitudes and values that are conducive to burglary crime, as well as violence (Biron & Ladouceur, 1991). The primary focus of this theory is, however, on juvenile delinquency because the supporting theorists believe that if this offending pattern can be, controlled and understood it will stop or minimize the possibilities of the transition from teenage offender to actually, experienced habitual criminal (Barr & Pease, 1990). This applies most in the context of burglary where it starts mostly at the teenage age and develops into an experienced burglar and a thief. Some theories are functionalist and assume that criminal activity such as burglary generates motivation from economic needs, while for other theorists; they posit a social class deviance rationale.

On the other hand, culture represents the customs values and norms, which guide behavior and act as a general framework of judging behavior by the majority. It transmits to individuals socially than biologically. The burglary crime in this case focuses on misplaced norms and values of particular individuals where they engage in the act through social influence. Unlike the crime and place theory, this is the case of social transmissions and not individual decisions (Barr & Pease, 1990). A subculture is an idiosyncratic culture within a given culture, so its values and norms differ from the broad culture but do not represent necessarily a culture deemed as deviant. This would represent a burglar's social culture within any given culture (Anderson, 1998). A subculture distinguishes itself from a counterculture operating in direct opposition to the broad culture meaning that, this is why burglars practice the same. Social Disorganization Theory and Cultural

Transmission Theory argue that, in the poorest city zones, certain behavioral forms become the cultural norm, which transmits from a generation to the other, as part of the socialization process (White, 1990). This is somehow similar with the place theory that posits a similar argument. Successful criminals are relatively the role models of the young, who demonstrate both the possibilities of success through burglary crime, and its normality.

There is also more literature detailing on Sub cultural Theory. Sub cultural Theory just like the crime and place theory proposes that the urban setting makes it difficult for people living there to find ways of creating a sound community because of the prevailing anonymity and alienation (Grandjean, 1990). The cultural structure experiences the majority norms forcing individuals to form communities quite different and new from the culture. This explains why burglars have a tendency to live a different life from the normal person in the same broad culture. More lately, Fischer (1995) through a case study conducted among few cities on the subject of crime projected that the size, heterogeneity and population of cities strengthens groups, encouraging the subcultures formation, which are more diverse in nature when comparing to the general culture (Biron & Ladouceur, 1991). Fischer refers a subculture as, "...a set of people sharing a defining trait, relate with one another, are the institution's members associated with their central trait, adhering to a set of values, sharing a set of tools and taking part in an ordinary way of life" (Anderson, 1998).

Conversely, it is possible to argue that for burglary, the practice is not exceedingly common in less densely populated areas as well as in less diverse environments. Generally, the creation of subcultures such as burglar
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groups would be almost impossible in such areas (Barr & Pease, 1990). Nevertheless, ethnic minorities, the artistic avant-garde, professionals, displaced agricultural families, among others come to live in cities typifying their lifestyles to that of cities, which is why burglary is increasing in the urban areas even with the same people coming from less practice areas. Albert K. Cohen (1955) looked at the general delinquency subculture, with a focus on gang delinquency among the youth working class in slum areas using a case study, which developed an idiosyncratic culture as a direct response to their lack of social and economic opportunity within the broad U. S. society. The features of the subculture were anti-utilitarian with many cases having no profit motive in burglary or other crimes. Their main intention was fostering peer bonding by sharing the breaking laws experience (Boggs, 1965). They also featured collective reaction formation with the gang inverting the values of the broad culture, deliberately practicing the American Dream mirror image. The other significant feature was malice with many acts of vandalism as well as property damage motivated by contempt, spite and personal intentions. Among other features was short-termism and group autonomy (White, 1990). This explains vividly the principal features of burglary groups as well as how they feature within the broad culture.

Justifying the same, Cohen (1958) in his survey on juveniles and crime argued this in terms extremely similar to Strain Theory. He said that general education taught the young to strive hard for social status through achievements academically but, when most of failed, this encouraged “ status frustration”, inverting middle-class norms and values and striking

back at the system, which initially let them down. In this context, burglary is similarly explained the same way (Barr & Pease, 1990). Out of desperation and following a feeling of regret, the population within the broad culture turns to practices such as burglary to earn a living and “ better their lives”. Middle class ideals stress success, independence, academic achievement, control of aggression, delayed gratification, and respect for property. Lower class guardians and parents encourage distinctive values and norms in their children. In lower class families, planning and ambition must give way to particularly pressing issues (Boggs, 1965).

Conversely, Miller (1958, 1959) did agree with Cohen after he did a case study on juvenile delinquency among the youth aged 15-20 years that there was a subculture of delinquency, but argued that this arose from the lower class life because of the dominant strains they experience. In this context, he was of the opinion that burglars are mostly among the low life individuals in an attempt to make a living (Buerger, 1992). There was a clear differentiation in values between the social classes. The middle class is social goal oriented and achievement, and the lower class guardian's foremost concern is that children stay out of trouble, because this was prominent among them (Maher & Sherman, 1992). In his argument, he explains that Boys are expected to be particularly tough as well as street-smart which is why they are the majority in the burglary acts than girls. This is a significant reason why boys join gangs more than the girls do because they have an incentive of joining a gang such as a burglary gang (Barr & Pease, 1990).

In making it clear, Barr & Pease (1990), conducted a focus group discussion and contribute d to the same by offering more explanations. They say that <https://assignbuster.com/housebreaking-crimes-and-offences-of-burglary-criminology-essay/>

given that the boy ordinary lives become boring, the excitement of criminal acts such as burglary becomes a welcome relief, which bring in a sense of autonomy denying any form of social controls, which are, imposed by the broad culture (Anderson, 1998). For the lower class group, another institution generally plays a crucial role the identical sex peer group is more pertinent to the individual than the family, school or work because it offers precisely a sense of belonging, and a route to achieve status, which they cannot achieve easily in mainstream society (Boggs, 1965). Therefore, the individuals can easily engage in gangs as burglar gangs to achieve some sense of identity. Thus, delinquency is actually not a reaction against established middle class values but generally as a means of living up to their expectations culturally for smartness and toughness (Buerger, 1992).

On the other hand, David Matza (1964) is another excellent scholar who used a case study on juvenile delinquency and its perpetrators arguing that, rather than committing to delinquency, people drift between unconventional and conventional behavior. The initial socialization introduces an understanding of expectations and a feeling of guilt if the expectations are not met, but that people develop techniques of neutralization, therefore, avoiding the guilt feeling (Hannah, 1992). To some extent, society helps to neutralize the guilt through passing blame to the parents for failing to supervise their children properly. Matza also argued that the rummage around for excitement is particularly classless. It is simply that the youth in the working class have fewer opportunities for precisely legitimate activities (Boggs, 1965). To him, therefore, burglary practice is prominent among

societies because the youth are idle and nothing to do for leisure therefore turning to crime (Buerger, 1992).

In other words, deviancy of such kind is fun for them, and they love being in such groups. There is a specific excitement in free will practice and breaking rules knowing well that there is little or no chance of being caught (Anderson, 1998). Therefore, the youth in the burglary practice care less of what happens next after they engage in such crimes. This implies a level of rational choice within particular structural constraints (Gabor, 1990). The burglars are individuals who generally feel powerless and want something to compensate for that meaning that they devote in doing such crimes. The same people are tired of being, pushed around simply feeling like defying the general system (White, 1990). Burglars in this context care less of the group they join just to facilitate their enjoyment.

Additionally, Stanley Cohen (1972) did a study on the youth of London in the 1970s. His examination entailed the immediate context of determining how two different subcultures reacted to the respective changes, which occur in their community (Anderson, 1998). His suggestions were that the Mod reaction for the individuals was to the ideology of affluence. They wanted to illustrate that they had money and knew the way to spend it (Clarke, 1998). In contrast, skinheads generally looked back to the traditional working community. Each generation generally tries to find employment or relatively adapts to unemployment. However, the 1920s had different economic circumstances. Cohen reflected that youth in such situations develop a cultural style as a means to cope with their exacting circumstances and to

resist the dominant societal values (Buerger, 1992). This casts the youth working class as the standard-bearers of the relative class struggle.

After learning, this it is important to note that there is little that youth can do to change society in real terms, but continued resistance offers subjective satisfaction that is evident through style: haircuts, music, the clothes, and language of the distinctive youth cultures. Cohen argued that generally, these styles have a meaning. This is an application of Sub cultural Theory by Marx, which synthesized the structuralism with the Labeling Theory (Boggs, 1965). The approach places significant emphasis on the youth culture contents and on the differences from the class background. The assumption in this case is that a capitalist society tries to achieve hegemony through using the societal cultural values for their benefit. In the application, the sub cultural theory espouses that the burglary practice is different from one cultural group to the other. The social development features in each group distinctively and is, shared among the members.

Conversely, Frederic (1927: 46) studied criminal gangs in a systematic way, with an analysis of gang activity as well as behavior using a case study. He made a definition of gangs by the process that they go through in forming a group: " The criminal gang is an interstitial cultural group formed spontaneously originally, and then holds together through conflict. It has characteristics such as meeting face to face, conflict, milling, and planning (Boggs, 1965). The result of this behavior is collectively the development of tradition, esprit de corps, unreflective internal structure, solidarity, group awareness, morale, and local territory attachment." He maintained that criminal gangs naturally originate during the early adolescent years from <https://assignbuster.com/housebreaking-crimes-and-offences-of-burglary-criminology-essay/>

unprompted playgroups that get into various forms of mischief. They become criminal gangs when they stimulate opposition and disapproval, therefore, acquiring a more explicit group-consciousness (Duffala, 1996). Like Merton and Durkheim, Thrasher described the way the environment can be favorable to delinquent behavior, that criminal gang subcultures arose in the relative cracks, or “interstices,” of neglect combined with the cracks of identity occurring in the turbulent adolescence years (Carroll & Weaver, 1996).

Additionally, in application to the context, burglary groups form spontaneously and start early in the adolescence years. Shaw (1930) in a study on criminal gangs in Chicago described criminal delinquency as activity that transmitted from generally older to younger youth with the jails and streets of Chicago as their classrooms (Buerger, 1992). Thrasher did confirm the work of Shaw with most gangs in the transition zone with the chief incidence of unemployment, single-parent families, multiple family dwellings, low levels of education and welfare cases. These were the ghetto, the slums, and the barrios and his evidence of an approximated 1, 313 gangs with an approximated 25, 000 members found a distinct way of acquiring an identity. The gangs became a youth’s group of reference where main values, and goals were formed offering a sense of self-esteem. Under this context, the burglars form groups just to appreciate identity and develop some form of the contentions (Buerger, 1992).

Conclusion

Burglary can be explained using two theories of social ecology including Crime, place, Strain, and sub cultural theories. The two theories are significant in explaining Burglary as a crime but espouse the ideas differently. The theories critically compare and contrast in their explanation of burglary as a local crime. The common argument in these theories is that burglary practices are dependent of the area of operation, the individual as well as the routine activity, rational choice and crime pattern. The main difference is the reason why such crimes persist in different conditions. It is worth acknowledging that theories of burglary crime are mutually supportive in different respects, they give rise to divergent explanations of crime at particular locations. Given the prevalent high-crime locations, a crime theorist focus on how burglars gain and discover access to the place. The burglary explanations focus on the behaviors of the targets as well as the absence of controllers including place managers, guardians, and handlers. Generally, crime and place explains Burglary in the context of the location of the crime itself while sub cultural theory explains burglary crime differently, arguing that certain subcultures or groups in the society have attitudes and values that are conducive to burglary crime, as well as violence.