# Criminal Homicide

## Introduction

Criminology involves the study of criminal behavior in the society to enable one to comprehend on some of the concepts associated with crime. The concepts include the extent, nature, control, causes, management, and prevention of the social crimes. The study of criminal behavior is important since one can identify why people choose to engage in it and how it can be prevented from future occurrence (Miller, 2009). Criminologists focus on analyzing why criminals opt to commit crimes where they have developed some theories that provide more information regarding the social disorder. Some examples of crime in the modern world include rape, homicide, and robbery where they represent violent crimes. Property crimes include arson and burglary. This paper will critically analyze the homicide crime and explain why offenders prefer to commit it. The paper will also provide three theories that will be used to indicate the features of the criminal behavior and its trend in the society.

## Homicide

Homicide is identified as murder since it involves an individual engaging in activities that aim at killing other individuals. Some examples of the crime include assassinations, human or child sacrifice, poisoning, mass shooting, cannibalism, and torture murder. For instance, the September 11 attack in the United States is a good example of homicide where terrorists hijacked four planes and used them to execute the criminal activity. The terror attack led to the deaths of about 3000 Americans; hence, being the deadliest homicide activity in the country’s history (Galea, et al., 2002). This attack was organized and led by Al-Qaeda due to some political interests the group had in some regions invaded by the US troops. Homicide is conducted for self-gains since people who engage in the criminal activity eliminate other individuals to satisfy personal interests such as wealth acquisition or a decision-making process in their favor. Homicide cases have risen over the years due to technological advancement which has led to the emergence of new killing techniques. This is because the technology has facilitated the innovation of weapons that have made the killing process easy and fast; hence, leading to the rise in murder. For instance, the rate in which nuclear weapons are being manufactured globally has increased compared to previous years where they pose a serious threat to the lives of many people. This is because they can be used by enemies to promote manslaughter; hence, increasing the rate of deaths through homicide. In the United States, the criminal behavior has been in existence and can be attributed to the disparities that exist among the people. Due to the increase in the rate of immigration in the US, the population has increased and it comprises of people of different backgrounds. Therefore, this has contributed to the rise in criminal homicide where people of different backgrounds are considered as enemies due to their cultures, race, color, age, and gender (Papachristos & Wildeman, 2014). However, the Justice Department has over the years implemented laws and policies that seek to promote social equality in the country, which has led to a decline of the rivalry between races. Therefore, governments are responsible for managing homicide rates through effective regulation to discourage individuals from engaging in the act. Criminologists have strived to address the topic on homicide through establishing the reasons why offenders opt to murder other individuals. Through the intensive study, some theories have emerged where they indicate how the crime should be managed and prevented.

## Rational Choice Theory

The rational choice theory has been addressed under criminology where it states that personal interests influence how individuals behave in the society. It further indicates that people choose to engage in criminal behavior after comparing the potential risks and rewards that may occur after executing the crime. It is from the comparison that they choose to conduct the criminal activity based on if the rewards are greater than the potential risks. This is because people are viewed as rational; that is, they will always strive to maximize the benefits and minimize risks. Therefore, this theory is based on rationality in explaining why criminal homicide has been in existence. Criminals commit murder based on some set goals and targets that influence them into forgetting about the potential risks. The risks, in this case, include being caught by the law enforcement agencies and charged in a court of law. The rewards, on the other hand, are the payments the offenders expect to receive after committing the crime; hence, the criminals being third parties. Therefore, the offenders weigh between the two factors to determine whether they will practice the criminal behavior (McShane, 2013). According to this theory, the rewards and benefits influence the offenders into committing the offense since they are likely to be protected by other external forces. For instance, in some regions, government officials are involved in extra-judicial killings despite knowing that it is a criminal offense, but since they are in government the law cannot affect them. Other criminals are promised huge amounts of money to kill a specific individual; hence, the monetary benefits encourage them to act. Therefore, the rational choice theory is important in analyzing homicide for it recognizes the rationality nature of individuals.

## Strain Theory

Criminologists also address the strain theory where people have a similarity regarding their aspirations, but not all receive the same opportunities or possess the same abilities. Due to the disparities in abilities and opportunities, some become successful and achieve society’s expectations while others experience poverty since they fail to work hard in their operations. This, on the other hand, means inequalities in wealth distribution where the successful individuals become rich while the others experience poverty. The frustration from poverty may lead them into engaging in crime to enable them to achieve success. Therefore, the strain theory is based on wealth and poverty, indicating that the rise in homicide can be attributed to high unemployment levels (Pratt & Godsey, 2003). This means that the offenders, in this case, have to practice murder to obtain the wealth they deserve. Robbery with violence is an example of a crime under this theory since the thieves engage in murdering the victims before obtaining their assets such as money, or cars. Homicide has also been experienced at homes where disputes involving property lead family members into killing each other. The purpose of the homicide, in this case, is to acquire wealth and avoid poverty. Therefore, criminologists identify that the inequity in the distribution of wealth in the society is a major factor contributing to the criminal behavior.

## Biology and Evolution

The theory of biology and evolution is used in criminology to indicate that criminal behavior by individuals can be attributed to their personality traits. Factors such as mental illness or poor diet during an individual’s development process may lead him or her into engaging in criminal behavior. The theory emphasizes on traits being the major factor why criminals choose to practice criminal activities. The offenders, in this case, may also be influenced by their backgrounds where some of their family members have been practicing crime over the years; hence, the transferring of the genetics to their children. The genes are likely to lead them into crime since they are inspired and motivated by their families. Therefore, this theory focuses on nature indicating that people commit homicide due to their evolution. For instance, some individuals practice cannibalism due to their nature; hence, are involved in murdering people to satisfy their hunger. This is a challenge that can only be attributed to biology and nature of the criminals.

## Conclusion

The rational choice theory is the most useful in explaining the September 11 terrorist attack in the US. This is because the terrorists had self-interests when organizing the attack; that is, political interests in some of the regions the US had invaded. The theory emphasizes on individuals being rational where they would do anything to maximize the benefits regardless of the potential risks. In this case, the terrorists had to risk their lives for Al-Qaeda to benefit from the homicide. It is the responsibility of governments; that is, Criminal Justice Departments to address the issue on homicide and protect the people from it. This may be through implementation of effective policies that will discourage the criminals from committing the crime.

## References

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