

Blondine Desir

Instructor's Name

CCJ4014

15th July, 2019

Assignment 2 - Applying Opportunity Theory to Explain Homicide Rates

Introduction

Homicide is an act of taking human life. Homicide can be categorized into three groups: murder, manslaughter, and justifiable homicide. The United States experiences the highest homicide rate among developed countries. It is ironic to note, however, that the U.S. encounters lower cases of serious crime compared to other developed nations. This anomaly in crime statistics has attracted various schools of thoughts to try to explain why homicide crimes are higher in the U.S. In particular, the debate about gun control has elicited controversies with some opportunity crime theorists arguing that accessibility to guns results to more homicides. Some security experts, on the other hand, hold that reducing gun accessibility by members of the public would also create opportunities for criminals to attack the unarmed individuals easily (Kaufman 692). It is not true that accessibility to guns, especially handguns, results in more homicides because there are laws and measures to deal with homicide criminals.

Analysis of the Op-Ed Article

The article by David Frum, which appeared on 23 June 2015, on The Atlantic explains that no single law can prevent a mass shooting. There is a need for several laws and measures for identifying criminals and responding appropriately. Just like the fact that no "one law" can eliminate all house fires, homicides can be dealt with through several policies and laws.

Currently, there are well-elaborate policies for controlling gun ownership and access. The access to guns is not an issue, but the problem is about the moral degradation in American society.

Information-sharing between members of the public and the police force can help prevent many homicides. Officers usually respond quickly when they have adequate information regarding planned crimes.

Disagreeing with Opportunity Crime Theorists

Opportunity crime theorists argue that accessibility to guns result to more homicides. According to crime opportunity theory, criminals make rational choices in the sense that they select targets which provide a huge reward with less risk and effort (Kaufman et al. 696). A crime would, therefore, occur when there is a motivated individual who is willing to engage in crime and that the environment favors this act to happen. This argument by opportunity crime theorists suggests that individuals are triggered to engage in crime due to the availability of opportunity and little effort and risk involved in this activity. It can, however, be argued that any person who knows that murder and manslaughter are crimes would not commit such offenses even if the opportunity were to come knocking on their doors. The discussion should be about the moral principles of individuals and how they are informed about the need to maintain peace and unity in society. A morally upright person could not shot to kill their fellow human beings even if they were given rewards for doing such an act. Morality needs to be nurtured in families to reduce crime in the long run.

Changes in Law Enforcement in Dealing with Active Shooters

Various laws are being implemented in dealing with active shooters. Law enforcement has, in the recent past, stressed a quick response from the officer near the crime scene. These protocols are considered as more effective and can save lives. Police have also been training

regularly on how to react and take appropriate decisions in situations of an active shooting. Law enforcement has made it clear that stopping an active shooter should be the top priority of the police officers (Parkin, Jeff, and Elisabeth 86). There are gunshot detection systems used by security agencies and military to detect as well as convey the location of gunfire or gunshot by the use of specific sensors such as optical sensors. They have an array of microphones, a processing unit, and a user-interphase which portrays gunshot alerts. Most of these systems are applied in urban settings. Gunshot detection systems enable law enforcement to take decisive actions to stop crime before much damage is done. Police trace the location of gunshots and respond quickly to arrest the criminals (Kaufman et al., 693). Law enforcers require being deployed in high numbers. The qualified and well-equipped security officers in the U.S. can help eliminate criminal activities. There is the need for the agencies to collaborate in sharing the information.

Conclusion

It is not true that accessibility to guns, especially handguns, results in more homicides because there are various laws and measures to deal with homicide criminals. Homicides can be dealt with through a number of policies and laws. Currently, there are well-elaborate policies for controlling gun ownership and access. This argument by opportunity crime theorists suggests that individuals are triggered to engage in crime due to the availability of opportunity and little effort and risk involved in this activity. It can, however, be argued that any person who knows that murder and manslaughter are crimes would not commit such offenses even if the opportunity were to come knocking on their doors.

Work Cited

Frum, D. "Mass Shootings Are Preventable." *The Atlantic* 23, June 2015: 1. Print.

Kaufman, Elinore J., et al. "State firearm laws and interstate firearm deaths from homicide and suicide in the United States: a cross-sectional analysis of data by county." *JAMA internal medicine* 178.5 (2018): 692-700.

Parkin, William S., Jeff Gruenewald, and Elisabeth Jandro. "Extremist violence from the fatherland to the homeland: A comparison of far-right homicide in Germany and the United States." *International criminal justice review* 27.2 (2017): 85-107.