**Routine Activities Theory**

There are various theories that analyze the factors likely to victimize an individual. Routine activities theory is a leading theory of crime but it differs from many of the other theories of crime because of its focus on victim activity. Indeed, while most theories focus on the potential motivations of offenders in relation to the social structure that they encounter, routine activities theory assumes that there are always potentially motivated offenders who will take advantage of the "right" situations.

In other words, crime does not change because of environmental stimulants that create more criminals. Crime changes because of the actions of potential victims that allow motivated offenders to commit crime. The actions may include taking the same secluded route home every day or keeping the window of the bedroom open every night. These actions may encourage a potential offender to commit crimes such as mugging or burgling.

Therefore, the focus of routine activities theory is not on why criminals become motivated to commit crime, but rather on how victims increase or decrease crime through their actions.

According to routine activities theory, two critical factors affect the amount of crime in an area. They are:

**Suitable Targets**: These factors can make an area or an individual more enticing to potential criminals.

**Capable Guardians**: These factors can deter potentially motivated criminals from attempting to commit crime.

According to routine activities theory, crime in an area increases when there is an increase in the number of suitable targets and a decrease in the presence of capable guardians in the area. Moreover, people's likelihood of victimization increases when they do not avoid the factors that make them suitable targets and do not surround themselves with capable guardians or factors that lead to a perception that capable guardians are present.

**Rational Choice Theory**

Rational choice theory focuses on the criminal as a rational and motivated individual who assesses potential victims or neighborhoods, and rationally calculates the crime situation. Accordingly, neighborhoods, businesses, and individuals must react in a way that minimizes the likelihood of payoff for crime and maximizes the likelihood of punishment. Criminals are always on the lookout for targets and might examine a neighborhood, using the following cues:

Newspapers or milk bottles piling up at the front door

 Mail lying unretrieved in the mailbox for a couple of days

A house being dark for a couple of evenings

Neighbors can effectively reduce the chances of crime by undertaking the following activities:

 Starting neighborhood watch schemes or activities

 Installing Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) systems in the area

 Employing security guards in the neighborhood

Asking neighbors not to let mail lie in mailboxes or milk bottles and newspapers pile up at the front door when away

 Installing a home alarm system

**Lifestyle Theory**

Lifestyle theory is, in many ways, an extension of the original premises of rational choice theory. "Lifestyle" can be defined as an individual's way of livelihood as expressed by the individual's actions, interests, and attitude. The term lifestyle denotes the way people choose to lead their lives, be it in their style of clothing, the people they hang out with, or the way they work.

Lifestyle theory focuses on situational crime prevention, or things that a neighborhood or an individual can do to decrease crime. It focuses on the lifestyle patterns that a person could change.

For example, leaving a partner who is violent or not keeping company with friends who are addicted to drugs is a change in the lifestyle. A woman who is being followed while walking home after work might change her work hours, take a different route home, or bring someone with her the next night. Moreover, she might change other habits in her life so that her behavior does not become predictable to a potential offender who may be monitoring it.

Lifestyle theory also focuses on an individual's peers and social networks. It tries to examine situations that might place that individual in danger. Individuals who lead deviant lifestyles, such as those who use drugs or associate with deviant peers, are more likely to be victimized.

For example, Pete goes to the bar every day to spend time with his friends and drink. He walks home and takes the same route every day. He is more likely to be victimized by an offender because after consuming alcohol, he is too weak to protect himself in case of an attack.