

## HOW THE ROUTINE ACTIVITY THEORY CAN HELP POLICE UNDERSTAND AND PREVENT BURGLARY?

### Rutin Aktivite Teorisi Polisin Kapalı Mekânlardan Hırsızlık Suçunu Anlamasına ve Önlemesine Nasıl Yardım Edebilir?

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#### Özet

Suç bütün toplumlarda görülen tahrip edici sosyal bir problemdir. Kapalı mekânlardan hırsızlık suçu ise mala karşı islenen bir suç olup yaygın olarak bütün ülkelerde görülmektedir. Kapalı mekânlardan hırsızlık suçu Türkiye’de en sık görülen suç türüdür. 2006 yılında 146,238 tane kapalı mekânlardan hırsızlık suçu işlenmiştir. Bu suç türü hem mağdurlarının mallarına hem de duygularına zarar vermektedir. Bu zararları önlemek ve toplum için güvenli bir ortam sağlamak için kapalı mekânlardan hırsızlık suçu minimuma indirilmelidir. Bunun makul yolu da bu suçun gerçeklerini iyi anlamaktan geçmektedir. Bu amaç için en uygun araçlar ise suç ve suçluları konu alan teorilerdir. Rutin Aktivite Teorisi (RAT) nispeten yeni bir teori olmasına rağmen kapalı mekânlardan hırsızlık suçunu başarılı bir şekilde açıklayabilir. İncelendiği zaman bu suçun gerçekleri ile RAT’nin örtüştüğü görülecektir. Bu sebeple, bu teori politika yapıcılara, uygulayıcılara ve polislere kapalı mekânlardan hırsızlık suçunu önlemek için etkili politikalar ve uygulamalar üretmek ve geliştirmek konusunda yol gösterici olabilir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Rutin aktivite teorisi, RAT, Hırsızlık, Polis, Suç.

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### Abstract

Crime is a devastating social problem, which is seen in every society. Burglary is a property crime and it is widespread in almost every country. Burglary is the most frequent property crime in Turkey. 146,238 burglary cases happened in 2006. Burglaries cause property loss for their victims and hurt the victims' feelings. To thwart these damages and provide a safe and secure community, burglary cases should be reduced to the minimum. The reasonable way to fulfill this is to understand the facts of burglary well. Crime and delinquent theories are the best tool for this purpose. Although the routine activity theory (RAT) is a relatively new one, it can successfully explain burglary. When examined, it is clearly seen that the facts of burglary fit perfectly with the definitions of the RAT about the crime. Therefore, the theory can guide policy makers, practitioners and police organizations to develop and generate effective policies and applications to reduce burglary rates.

**Key Words:** The routine activity theory, RAT, Burglary, Police, Crime.

### Introduction

Crime is a devastating social problem, which is seen in every society. In order to fight crimes and reduce crime rates, the factors causing criminal activities must be identified. Crime and delinquent theories are suitable tools to identify and understand these factors. These theories try to clarify the conditions under which criminal activities emerge. Policy makers generate laws and practices in accordance with these theories. Successes of the laws and practices depend on the successes of theories. However, while applying a theory into the fields, cautions should be taken. A theory cannot be implied to all fields of practices. Each theory might be suitable for different application. If a theory is consistence with a type of crime, it is better to utilize the rules of the theory for the crime prevention practices of that type of crime.

Burglary is a property crime, which is widespread in almost every society. According to the Turkish National Police Headquarter (2009), 146,238 burglary cases happened in Turkey in 2006. Burglary is the most frequent property crime in Turkey. Two individuals in every 1,000

become burglary victims annually. The number of burglary cases has been increasing (Turkish National Police Headquarter, 2009). In the United States, more than 2 million burglary cases were detected in 2009.

Burglary causes two types of damages on its victims. Burglary victims lose their possessions. They also feel a great amount of fear of crime. These two types of damages devastate the victims' life. To thwart these damages and to provide a safe and secure community for the citizens, burglary cases should be reduced to the minimum. The reasonable way to fulfill this is to understand the facts of burglary well. Crime and delinquent theories are the best tool for this purpose.

Although the routine activity theory (RAT) is a new one, it can successfully explain a great number of crimes. The theory is particularly successful in explaining burglary. When examined, it is clearly seen that the facts of burglary fit perfectly with the definitions of the RAT.

In this article, the relevance of burglary and the RAT is explained. First, the RAT is summarized. Second, burglary is described with some statistics about it, and how the RAT and realities about burglary cases are coherent is explained. Third, research studies supporting the RAT and burglary relationship are succinctly presented. Finally, how the RAT can be implemented on police applications is discussed.

## **1. The Routine Activity Theory**

The RAT was first developed by Lawrence Cohen and Marcus Felson in 1979 (Paternoster & Bachman, 2001). The RAT varies from other crime and delinquent theories. While other theories examine the causes of crimes and characteristics of criminals, the RAT focuses on the questions how do routine activities of people affect their rates of victimization and what attracts offenders to engage in crimes (Arnold et al., 2005:346). The RAT has been accepted like a theory of victimization risk (Bernburg and Thorlindsson, 2001:544).

According to the theory, three elements are necessary for a crime: a motivated offender, a suitable target, and the absence of guardians (Gaetz, 2004:427). These three elements constitute a tripod holding a platform on which crimes occur (Dolu, 2009:4). If one of the legs of this tripod is broken, the platform fall down; thus crimes cannot emerge. Similar to classical theories, the RAT accepts the offender as a free

individual who decides on crimes about his or her self-interest. Offenders look for specific targets, which can cause lucrative gain but fewer risks. For instance, offenders prefer expensive and lightweight items. Any guardian protecting the possible targets increases the risk of being caught. Therefore, these kinds of targets are not preferable. Guardians refer not only to the official law enforcement employees, but also to other people, animal, or devices. For example, anybody staying at home or a dog is the guardian for a possible burglary target. Additionally, a wheel lock or a car alarm device might be the guardian for a possible car-theft target.

Gaetz (2004) explained the high level of crime victimization of Canadian homeless youths with the RAT. Gaetz (2004:432) interviewed 208 homeless youths in Toronto. According to his findings, while approximately 25% of Canadian people are victims of any kinds of crimes, victimization percentage for homeless youths averages 82%. When the factor that homeless people refrain to report their victimization to police because they are afraid of them was taken in to account, the high level of victimization of homeless youths is more likely to be worse. Gaetz (2004: 446) argued that the RAT can exactly explain the high level victimization of homeless youths. According to the theory, people who are outside of their homes are most likely to become victims of crimes. Homeless youths do not have houses, so they are generally on the streets. The theory articulates that motivated offenders seek safe targets. They prefer targets which can induce many benefits, but few risks. Also, offenders particularly choose unguarded targets. According to the findings of Gaetz (2004:441), 44% of street youths carry their possessions at all times, they are often alone, and they do not report their victimization to police. All these characteristics make them a perfect target for motivated offenders.

The RAT posits that victims and offenders are related (Cohen and Felson, 1979). Routine activities of people in a daily life make them a suitable target (Arnold et al., 2005:358). These activities range from formal work to leisure activities, to the methods that people utilize to acquire food, shelter, education and other basic needs. If anybody often goes out at night for a drink, and she or he chooses a bar close to downtown, she or he is more likely to become a victim of a crime. Besides this, the house of the individual is a suitable target of burglary because there is no guardian for it at that night. If anybody chooses the local bus to go to work rather than an automobile, she or he is more likely to become a victim of a crime such as theft, pick-pocketing, assault, or

harassment intimidation. This choice increases the chance of facing any type of criminals because the individuals must walk to the bus stop, wait for the bus, travel with other passengers, and finally walk to the place of his or her work. Each of these steps might contain a probability of coming across a criminal or a crime. In accordance with the RAT, studies show that being a drinker, having limited income, and frequently going out in the evening increase the probability of victimization (Arnold et al., 2005:359).

The RAT also explains the variation of crime rates in hours of day and the seasons of year (Hipp et al., 2004:1334; Rotton and Cohn, 2003:803). According to the theory, people mostly go out for different purposes, such as for a dinner, drink, picnic, and other entertainment, in warm and hot seasons. Staying out long in these seasons particularly increases the probability of being a victim. Offenders' opportunities increase to commit a crime as well. In the absence of guardianship, properties of the people who are out become attractive targets for the offenders of property crimes. In contrast, when it is cold, people prefer to stay home. Thus, opportunities for burglars are limited. Besides the weather changes, some specific times of day induce a rise in crime rates in the daily cycle (Paternoster and Bachman, 2001). When people are in their offices during the day and they are out at night, crime rates are higher at these specific periods. According to Hipp et al. (2004:1335), because the number of women in the labor market has increased, a great number of houses have become unattended during office hours. Therefore, property crime rates have risen in the entire United States.

In terms of crime prevention methods, the RAT offers a simple solution that in order to reduce crimes, opportunities for committing crimes must be reduced (Paternoster & Bachman, 2001). When people prefer low-risk routine activities rather than high-risk routine activities, criminal victimization decreases. Simple changes in people's daily life can cause sharp decline in the crime rates (Arnold et al., 2005:347).

According to Fattah (1999:131), since classical crime prevention strategies have not worked and have not caused a salient decline in crime rate, new developments have generated in criminology regarding crime prevention. One of the important factors that cause this new trend derives from the most comprehensive study of crime prevention. The US Congress sponsored the study in order to determine the effectiveness of the 4.25 billion dollar fund, which was given to law enforcement agencies

to prevent crimes. The result of the study was disappointing and making many believe that nothing works to prevent crimes (Fattah, 1999:136). This new trend suggested that effective crime prevention strategies must be available to counter the motives for deviance, to reduce the temptations, to tighten the opportunities and to harden the targets (Fattah, 1999). This definition exactly fits the rules of the RAT. Other information in Fattah's (1999) report strongly supported the theory. According to him, victimization surveys showed that people from warmer climates are more likely to be victimized than people from colder climates. The numbers of persons in a house along with more employed mothers affect the victimization risk, too. Additionally, people who differ from others with their routine activities or lifestyles suffer from crimes more than others.

Fattah (1999:140) set forth that offenders do not choose their targets randomly. Even the non-professional offenders have selection criteria. In accordance with these criteria, they prefer accessible, manageable, unprotected, and insecure targets. Therefore, to get rid of being a victim of a crime, new crime prevention principles should be espoused. These are target hardening, access control, deflecting offenders, controlling facilitators, entry/exit screening, formal surveillance, surveillance by employees, natural surveillance, target removal, identifying property, removing inducements, and rule setting. In particular, the principles of target hardening, controlling facilitators, target removal, and removing inducements have direct relations with the RAT.

The report of Fattah (1999) and numerous other research studies have supported the RAT in explaining crimes successfully (Bernasco and Luykx, 2003; Hakim et al., 2001; Hipp et al., 2004; Rotton and Cohn, 2003; Rountree, 2000; Tseloni et al., 2004). Although it is a relatively new theory, these supports have made the theory stronger. Therefore, the rules of the RAT should be implied into practice more frequently.

## **2. Burglary from the Perspective of the Routine Activity Theory**

Burglary is a property crime. It is defined as "the unlawful entry of a structure to commit a felony or a theft (excludes tents, trailers, and other mobile units used for recreational purposes)" (Schmallegger, 2005:51). Burglary can be evident in three types: an unlawful entry of an unlocked structure, a breaking and entering of a secured structure, and an attempt of burglary (Schmallegger, 2005).

In 2006, the Turkish National Police Headquarter reported 146,238 burglary cases. According to the FBI's Uniform Crime Report (2010), 2,199,125 burglary cases were reported in the United States in the year 2009. These huge numbers of burglary cases caused \$4.6 billion damage to their victims (average loss per offense was \$2,096). According to Crime Victimization Reports (2009), the number of burglary cases constituted approximately 25% of property crimes. Statistics show that every 25 person in 1,000 was the victim of burglary in 2009.

Each crime and delinquent theory might offer several solutions to preclude burglaries. However, only the theory fitting the facts of burglary can provide efficient solutions. The RAT is more likely to fit the facts of burglary. In order to explain burglary from the perspective of the RAT, use of several variables can make the case more clear and understandable. These variables are (a) meticulous target selection and planning for burglary, (b) number of persons at home, (c) level of household income, (d) age, (e) climate changes, (f) lifestyle, and (h) prevention methods. These variables help to understand the relationship between burglary and RAT.

### ***2.1. Meticulous Target Selection and Planning for Burglary***

In accordance with the RAT, burglars choose their targets after a meticulous decision process (Hakim et al., 2001). According to Hakim et al. (2001:121), while burglars decide on a target, they assess the benefits from the burglaries and their risks. If they believe benefits outweigh the risks, they do their actions. In order to decrease the risk of burglary, offenders choose their target from their neighborhood since they know the area well. Also, they choose small houses and lightweight items because they spend less time in the activity. Similarly, Bernasco and Luykx (2003:983) argue that burglars choose their targets at two steps: at the first step they decide on a suitable area, and at the second step they select a suitable house. Attractiveness, opportunity, and accessibility are three effective elements in burglars' selection. Hakim et al. (2001:135) offered a solution very close to the RAT's approach: offenders always exist everywhere; therefore, rather than rehabilitate offenders, people should try to protect themselves against burglary and reduce the attractiveness of their houses.

## ***2.2. Number of Person in a House***

RAT posits that when people are outside of their houses, their burglary victimization risk becomes higher. When the number of person in a house increases, the house becomes more guarded, and the risk of burglary decreases. According to Smith and Jarjoura (1989:622), findings of numerous studies support this approach. They argued that burglary victimization is higher in single adult households than in those occupied by two or more adults. Additionally, Rountree (2000) articulated that the number of persons in a household affects the burglary victimization risk. The greater the number of person in a household is, the lower the risk of burglary victimization.

## ***2.3. Level of Household Income***

This variable is related to attractiveness of the possible burglary targets. The RAT suggests that a suitable target is necessary for existence of a crime. Burglars look for lucrative targets and valuable items. Chiu and Madden (1998:124) argued that the quality and the appearance of a house are important for target selection of burglars. Therefore, rich people have more burglary victimization risk than poor people. Similarly, Smith and Jarjoura (1989) articulated when the level of household income increases, the burglary victimization risks increase, too. Higher income households are more attractive targets for burglars because of two reasons. First, offenders assume that there must be valuable items such as jewelry, TV, and laptops, in higher income households. Second, because higher income families have more leisure time and plenty of money, they are more likely to go out more frequently. These descriptions about the level of household income exactly fit the RAT's approach.

## ***2.4. Age***

Lifestyles of people vary according to their age. Younger people spend their leisure time outside more than older ones (Smith and Jarjoura, 1989:632). In this case, older people must have lower levels of burglary victimization rates. Smith and Jarjoura (1989:625) said that findings of several studies endorse this approach of the RAT. However, low levels of burglary victimization of older people might stem from the conditions of their neighborhood. According to the Smith and Jarjoura (1989:626), houses of older people are generally located in low crime areas.



### ***2.5. Climate Changes***

Climate changes are quite influential on the lifestyle of people. People generally go out in warmer days to eat or drink something and for entertainment such as picnic, movies, and sightseeing. Also, summer time is especially chosen for vacations. According to the RAT, burglary victimization must increase in these warmer days (seasons). In accordance with RAT, findings of several studies have showed that besides the number of burglaries, the number of deadly and serious assaults, rapes, robberies and motor vehicle thefts rises in warmer seasons (Hipp et al., 2004:1336; Rotton and Cohn, 2003:803).

### ***2.6. Prevention Methods***

According to the RAT, to thwart crimes, possible targets must be guarded adequately, and their attractiveness must be reduced (Gaetz, 2004). This approach is evident for burglary cases as well. As abovementioned, burglars do not select their targets randomly. In contrast, they seek the best one. Fattah (1999:145) claims that the most effective way to prevent crime is to reduce the attractiveness of possible targets and to make them safe and secure. According to Hakim et al. (2001:130), offenders of burglary skip the target if they believe it is secured appropriately. Burglars decide on a target if natural surveillance is limited, adequate escape routes are available, and the likelihood of obtaining valuable goods is high (Johnson and Bowers, 2004:55). Additionally, if there are one or more cars in front of the house and the mail box is empty, offenders stay away from these houses. In this way, offenders reduce the risks of being caught while increasing their likelihood profits.

### ***2.7. Lifestyle***

Indeed, most of the abovementioned variables have direct relationships with the lifestyle of a person. Richer and younger people, for instance, have different lifestyles than poorer and older people. Richer and younger people generally spend more time outside than others. Therefore, becoming a burglary victim is more probable for them. Supports from researches for the foregoing variables are evident for lifestyle variables thereto. In sum, in accordance with the RAT, findings of numerous studies have showed that people who have a lifestyle which keeps them

generally out of their houses become victims of burglary more than others (Rountree, 2000).

The abovementioned explanations have showed how the RAT fit in explaining burglary. Now several research studies will be summarized to support this idea.

### **3. Research Studies Supporting the Routine Activity Theory Regarding Burglary**

There are many research studies examining how successful the RAT is in explaining crimes. Findings from these studies have supported the fact that the theory is quite successful in explaining burglary. For instance, Bernasco and Luykx (2003) measured the effects of attractiveness, opportunity, and accessibility on burglary cases in urban neighborhoods in the Netherlands. In accordance with the RAT, the scholars found that offenders of burglary plan their acts and they have criteria for target selections. They search for attractive targets which offer more benefits, but fewer risk. They choose their targets from close neighborhoods and the areas with which they are familiar. Since a burglary target in an unfamiliar neighborhood requires more time and effort, this target lose their attractiveness. Findings of the study showed that whether or not the possible targets of burglars are located in unfamiliar areas, offenders focus on attractiveness and opportunity more than proximity (Bernasco and Luykx, 2003:994). So these findings exactly fit with the definitions of the RAT regarding the suitable target and the absence of guardians.

Hakim et al. (2001) investigated the factors regarding location of the home, physical appearance of it, demographic characteristics of the residents, and the security precautions present to determine whether these factors affect target selection of burglars, or not. The data was provided by a survey in Greenwich, Connecticut in the USA. Findings of the study reinforced the RAT. According to the findings, burglary incidences are mostly based on the type of houses. Single-family detached homes become burglary victims more than duplexes, townhouses or apartments. Also, findings showed that the location of a house is related to burglary victimization. If a house is located on a dead-end street, located at a corner, located within a quarter of a mile of an exit from a major thoroughfare, and is adjacent to woods or a playground, it is more prone to burglary. Additionally, the security precautions present reduces the

attractiveness of a house. For example, presence of an alarm decreases the probability of burglary 13%. If the owner of a house does something to make burglars believe that somebody is at home, such as parking a car in the drive way, leaving the lights on, and picking up mail and newspapers regularly, the probability of burglary is reduced by 50%. These findings are coherent with the facts of the RAT.

Rountree (2000) conducted a research to examine the effects of individual and environmental factors, which might cause burglary victimization. The data about burglary victimization came from 12,019 respondents across 60 neighborhoods in three different cities of the USA: Rochester, St. Louis, and Tampa. Findings of the study are quite supportive for the RAT. According to the findings, while race and family income do not have significant impacts on burglary victimization; age, living alone, and safety precautions do. As mentioned foregoing, younger individuals (because they go out more frequently than older individuals) and lone individuals (because of less guardianship) become burglary victims more often than others. The findings also showed that safety precautions decrease the risk of burglary victimization (Rountree, 2000), because safety precautions increase the level of guardianship.

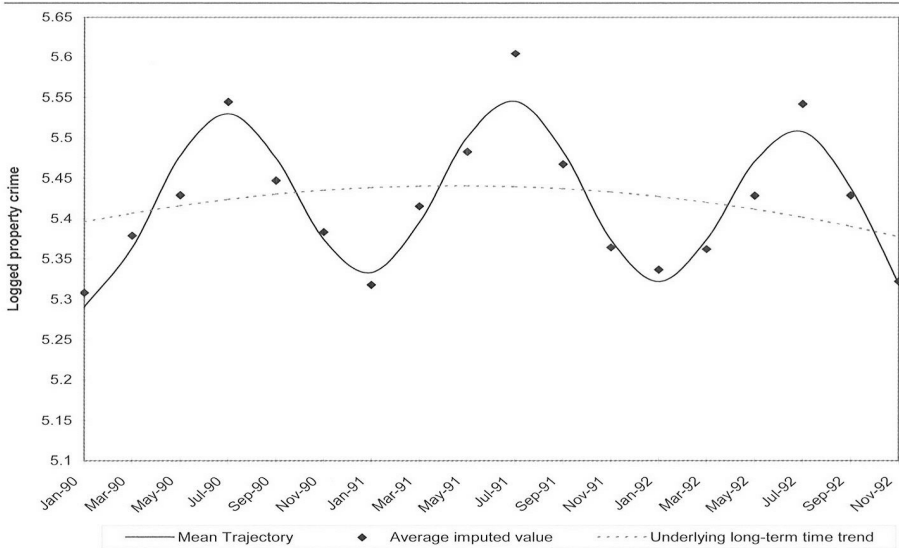
Another study was done by Tseloni et al. (2004) in order to test the RAT in terms of burglary. Burglary cases were used for the study from three different national data sets: England, the USA and the Netherlands. Findings of the study showed that households of lone parents (separated or divorced parents) are 90% more likely to be burgled than others. Additionally, households with children suffer 16% fewer burglaries. Empty houses have 40% greater burglary victimization than other houses which anybody stays in. All these findings regarding guardianship support the RAT because number of person in a household is quite related to guardianship. However, according to findings, houses protected with any method, such as a security alarm or a dog, have a higher rate of burglary victimization (16%). Regarding this result Tseloni et al. (2004: 86) articulated that burglars make careful selection, and they know that houses having security devices contain more valuable items than others. Therefore, this point at once reinforced the RAT. In terms of the age variable, this study reached almost the same result with the study of Rountree (2000). When age goes up, the rate of burglary victimization goes down gradually. The study found different results in each country about the effect of the level of family income on burglary. In the United States, family income does not affect burglary victimization, but in the

European countries, UK and Netherlands, it does. In these countries, the level of family income and burglary victimization are positively correlated. In particular, this study is supportive for the RAT from the points of suitability of a target and the capability of guardianship (Tseloni et al., 2004:85).

Arnold et al. (2005) examined the effects of evening leisure activities on criminal victimizations in order to test the RAT. The data came from the Canadian General Social Survey of 1988, which contains the victimization reports of 15 year-old or older people in ten Canadian provinces. According to the findings, evening leisure activities are significantly effective on all types of crimes. Forty-four percent of the violent crime, 29% of theft, 22% of vehicle theft, and 19% burglary risks stem from evening leisure activities. Interestingly, the scholars argued that if people reduce their evening leisure activities, they reduce their victimization risk as well. For instance, if people make three reductions in a month for their evening leisure activities, their burglary victimization risk decreases 5%. In other words, by reducing evening leisure activities 169,831 burglary cases could be protected in the United States. This research provides a strong support for the RAT.

Another research area regarding the RAT is climate change and its effects on crimes. Hipp et al. (2004:1336) conducted a research study to examine the simultaneous changes of temperature and crime rates throughout four seasons. The data was gathered from 8,460 police units in the United States between the year 1990 and 1992. While this study reached a mixed result for violent crimes changing state to state, the findings showed that temperature changes throughout the seasons are one of the strongest factors causing a rise in property crime rates. The findings revealed that in summertime, property crimes (including burglary) rates are 24% higher than the number in winter. Additionally, property crime rates show salient changes in the states which have colder winters; however, the states having warmer winters do not show significant oscillations. Figure 1 clearly shows the effects of temperature changes on property crime rates. These scholars presented their study as one of the particular supporters of the RAT since the findings exactly fit the definitions of the theory.

**Figure 1:** Estimates of Property Crimes, 1990-92.



**Source:** Hipp et al., 2004:1351.

Similar to Hipp et al. (2004), Rotton and Cohn (2003) investigated how temperature changes affect crime rates. They used two data sets: annual average temperatures and annual violent and property crime rates of 50 states and Washington, D.C. Average temperatures for the years between 1950 and 1999 were obtained from the National Climatic Data Center, and the data for annual crime rates between the year of 1950 and 2000 was taken from the US Bureau of Justice Statistics. Rotton and Cohn (2003) reached similar results similar to Hipp et al.’s (2004). According to the findings, temperature was significantly related to burglary and larceny rates. Regarding these findings, the researchers argued that because more people stay away from their homes in hot temperature, homes are left unguarded; therefore, they become more attractive targets for burglars. This explanation perfectly fits the RAT.

#### 4. Implementation of the RAT on Police Applications

The abovementioned explanations evince that the RAT is successfully explain burglary. The definitions of the RAT and the facts of burglary are in coherence. Therefore, police should resort to the RAT for better understanding of burglary and combating the crime. The RAT posits that

three provisos are necessary for emergence of a crime: A motivated offender, a suitable target, and the absence of guardians (Gaetz, 2004:427). To preclude emergence of crimes, police should take care of at least one of these three elements. In terms of burglary it is easier for police to deal with the elements a suitable target and the absence of guardians. The RAT postulates that when attractiveness of houses reduced and the houses are guarded adequately, the number of burglary cases is more likely to decrease.

In accordance with the RAT, a great number of research studies have indicated that unattended households, households with few numbers of residents, and households with no prevention method are more likely to become burglary targets. The burglary risk of an empty household is 40% greater than another one in which at least one individual stays (Tseloni et al., 2004). Police should particularly be vigilant about the districts where these types of houses located. Police officers and police cars should be more visible in the streets. More frequent police patrolling in these areas might be pertinent. Most people do not stay home in the summer time and holiday seasons. Because households stay unattended for longer, burglary rates increases 24% in these times compared to other periods of a year (Hipp et al., 2004:1336). Police should increase the number of their patrolling units to prevent burglaries especially in these times. However, because police officers are prone to use their annual leaves in these times, police departments might be in personnel shortage. To find sufficient number of personnel to increase the number patrolling units, personnel from other units who are idle in holiday seasons can be rearranged. According to the RAT, another vulnerable burglary target might be the household occupied by working women. This type of households is more likely unattended during day time. Therefore, they are more likely to become a burglary target. Police also should be careful about the areas where this type of households located.

In the USA, police departments have an application that people who are going to stay away from their houses for several reasons, such as holiday or business trip, inform police about their situations, and police take care about the houses by patrolling frequently around the area during the absence of householders. Some police departments require payments for this service. Similar applications can be espoused in our country thereto. Police stations can get applications from the citizens who want police to take care about their houses throughout their absence. In

accordance to these applications, police can determine risky areas for burglary and imply their precaution tactics for these areas.

The main problem for these implementations might be the shortage of personnel and police cars. Careful planning of police resources for police application might be a solution for this problem. Also, it is known that the number of police officers per every 1000 citizens is insufficient in our country when compared to the European countries and the USA. This number should be increased.

Another police implementation inducing the risk of being burglary victim might be the education of the citizens by police concerning the facts of burglary. Herein community police can play a decisive role. In the last decade, community policing applications have pervaded all around the country, and many police departments from different cities reported satisfying results related to these applications. A great number of research findings have indicated that community policing applications induce declines on both violent and property crime rates (Karğın, 2010). For instance, city of Ziraat Police Department embarked on a community policing application educating citizens about how criminals work and how crimes happen, henceforward they recorded a crime rate decrease (Alpkan and Palacı, 2008). In this regard, police should educate the citizens about burglary withstanding the facts of the RAT. For instance, police should tell that if citizens protect their houses using security alarm or a camera system, they are less likely to become burglary victims. In this epoch, camera systems have become widespread and affordable for almost every budget. Therefore, a camera system visible to possible offenders is expedient for burglary protection. Moreover, fake cameras can be used for the same purpose.

Also, if citizens make burglary offenders believed that somebody home by emptying their mail boxes, leaving lights on and putting some shoes in front of house entrance, the probability of burglary is reduced by almost 50%. Police should take attention of the citizens that they should particularly be careful while they are out for evening leisure time activities because most of the burglary cases happens at this period of day (Arnold et al., 2005). Police should give a special care for the education of young and old citizens. Younger citizens' houses are probable burglary targets because they stay out many hours. Older citizens' houses are probable burglary targets thereto because they cannot appropriately protect themselves.

To epitomize, police should get benefits from the RAT, which can successfully explain burglary. Police can generate alternative tactics using the RAT for combating burglary. These tactics can include educating the citizens and making them more vigilant against becoming burglary victims. Using these alternative tactics can help police to reduce burglary rates.

## **Conclusion**

Crime and delinquent theories help understand reasons of criminality and the causes of crimes. Also, they help policy makers produce laws and rules. In practice, the successes of laws and rules depend on the empirical accuracy of crime and delinquent theories, which policy makers utilize. The RAT is one of the crime and delinquent theories. Although it is a relatively new theory, numerous empirical research studies have supported the theory. Supports for property crime, including burglary, are more significant. Findings of studies clearly have showed that the facts of burglary and the definitions of the RAT are related. For this account, it is wise to use the RAT to better understand burglary and to take proper actions against it. It can be advised that policy makers should generate laws and rules against burglary in accordance with the RAT.

Police managers also should take into account these facts while fighting against burglary. They should develop new applications using the facts of RAT. Police should learn and understand the underpinnings of the RAT; thereby police are more likely to reduce burglary rates. Additionally, in order to reduce their burglary victimization risk, citizens should be careful about their routine activities and lifestyle. Also they should decrease the attractiveness of their houses to burglars, and increase the precautions. Approaches of the RAT can keep people from the damages of burglary. Final implementation is for scholars. The RAT has not been sufficiently tested in Turkey. Scholars should test the theory more frequently using different data sets. The data from Turkey can reveal different results.



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