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## The Influence of High-Rise Buildings on Crime in Urban Environments

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**Abstract:**

**Purpose:** The purpose of this paper is to comprehensively show how the presence and characteristics of high-rise buildings in urban environments influence the incidence and patterns of different types of crimes, including property crimes, violent crimes, and how it affects the quality of life.

**Design/Methodology/Approach:** The article is a review nature. It adopts a literature review which uses mixed-methods research design, combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a comprehensive understanding of the influence of high-rise buildings on crime in urban environments.

**Findings:** This article shows: the role of architectural design of high-rise buildings in crime dynamics; Residents living in high-rise buildings expressed a heightened fear of crime, which impacted their quality of life; These offenses, while less severe, contributed to residents' perceptions of disorder and decreased well-being; Positive community engagement and social programs within high-rise building communities were associated with lower crime rates and enhanced safety perceptions. Residents who felt connected to their neighbors and engaged in collective activities reported a greater sense of security; Urban planning strategies, such as Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles and mixed land use, were found to be effective in reducing crime and fostering safer high-rise environments. Well-lit common areas, security cameras, and access control systems were associated with lower crime rates.

**Practical Implications:** The practical implications of this study are significant for urban planners, policymakers, and residents in high-rise building areas. The findings underscore the importance of designing and maintaining high-rise environments with a focus on crime prevention, including the implementation of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles. Additionally, fostering community engagement and social programs can play a pivotal role in enhancing safety perceptions and reducing crime, ultimately improving the quality of life for high-rise residents.

**Originality/Value:** This paper highlights the impact of architectural design, community engagement, and urban planning strategies on crime rates and residents' quality of life, it offers actionable insights for policymakers and urban planners aiming to create safer and more livable high-rise communities.

**Keywords:** High-rise buildings, Crime rates, Urban safety, Quality of life, Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED).

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## **1. Introduction**

The rapid urbanization observed worldwide has led to the construction of high-rise buildings to accommodate the growing population and maximize land use efficiency. High-rise buildings, defined as structures with multiple floors and elevators, have transformed urban skylines, offering diverse uses such as residential, commercial, and mixed-use spaces. While high-rise buildings offer numerous advantages, they also present unique challenges concerning crime and safety.

Crime has a significant influence on the quality of life in high-rise building areas, impacting both residents and the broader community. Residents of high-rise buildings, often attracted by modern amenities and urban living, can experience a diminished quality of life when crime becomes a prevalent concern.

Research has shown that individuals living in areas characterized by high-rise buildings may be more vulnerable to crime due to factors such as limited natural surveillance, social isolation, and a sense of anonymity (Perkins and Taylor, 1996). In these environments, residents may fear for their safety, which can lead to decreased overall well-being (Taylor and Shumaker, 1990).

Furthermore, the pervasive fear of crime can disrupt daily routines and limit residents' use of shared spaces, eroding the sense of community and social engagement often associated with high-rise living (Jackson and Stafford, 2009). This fear can extend beyond residents to impact potential investors, reducing the attractiveness of high-rise developments and affecting property values in the area (Sampson and Raudenbush, 2004).

To enhance the quality of life in high-rise building areas, comprehensive crime prevention measures and community-building initiatives are essential, addressing both the objective safety concerns and the subjective sense of security among residents.

The influence of high-rise buildings on crime rates is a complex and multifaceted topic. There are two influential theoretical frameworks which explain this phenomenon: Routine Activity Theory and Social Disorganization Theory.

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Routine Activity Theory, as proposed by Cohen and Felson (1979), posits that crime occurs when three elements converge: a motivated offender, a suitable target, and a lack of capable guardianship. In the context of high-rise buildings, this theory suggests that certain aspects of these structures may facilitate criminal opportunities.

For instance, the vertical density of residents and limited natural surveillance in high-rise buildings might create an environment which is very suitable for property crimes, such as burglaries or property thefts. Research has shown that the concentration of valuable assets in high-rise residential buildings, coupled with reduced guardianship due to factors like anonymity, can attract offenders seeking opportunities for property crime.

Social Disorganization Theory, as developed by Sampson, Raudenbush, and Earls (1997), emphasizes the role of social factors in crime causation. According to this theory, areas with weakened social cohesion and informal social control mechanisms are more likely to experience higher crime rates.

In the context of high-rise buildings, this theory suggests that the weak or missing of social relations at the level of neighborhood and the potential isolation of residents within these structures may contribute to increased crime rates. When social cohesion is weak, residents may be less inclined to report crimes or cooperate with law enforcement, making it easier for criminal activities to persist.

## **2. The Influence of High-Rise Building on Different Types of Crime**

Empirical research has provided valuable insights into the relationship between high-rise buildings and property crimes. Studies have consistently shown that these buildings can be more susceptible to property crimes, such as burglaries or property thefts.

This susceptibility is often attributed to the concentration of valuable assets within high-rise structures, including apartments, condominiums, and commercial and service facilities (Brantingham and Brantingham, 1993). Additionally, the limited natural surveillance within these buildings can reduce the presence of capable guardianship, further increasing the attractiveness of such locations to potential offenders (Taylor and Harrell, 1996).

Research conducted by Braga et al. (2010) in urban settings has demonstrated that the concentration and stability of property crimes, including residential burglaries, can vary significantly across micro places within high-rise buildings. The spatial distribution of crimes within and around these buildings further highlights the importance of understanding the specific crime dynamics associated with vertical density.

While property crimes have received significant attention in the context of high-rise buildings, the relationship between these structures and violent crimes is also a topic of interest. Research on violent crimes in high-rise buildings yields mixed findings, suggesting that the influence of vertical density may vary depending on the specific type of violent crime under consideration.

For instance, some studies have suggested that factors such as social isolation, anonymity, and access to escape routes within high-rise buildings may contribute to an increased risk of certain violent offenses, such as domestic violence or sexual assault (Braga *et al.*, 2010).

The vertical nature of these buildings may make it more challenging for residents to escape from violent situations, potentially intensifying the risk associated with certain crimes. However, it is important to note that the relationship between high-rise buildings and violent crimes is complex and context-dependent, with other factors such as neighborhood characteristics and social services availability playing critical roles.

High-rise buildings may also experience a higher incidence of quality of life offenses, which include offenses like vandalism, public disturbances, loitering, and disorderly conduct. These offenses, while typically less severe than violent or property crimes, can negatively impact the quality of life for residents and contribute to perceptions of insecurity in high-rise environments (Cozens and Hillier, 2016).

Factors such as anonymity, overcrowding, and limited natural surveillance within high-rise buildings can contribute to the occurrence of quality of life offenses (Perkins and Taylor, 1996). The lack of informal social control and the potential detachment from traditional neighborhood networks may reduce the sense of community responsibility for maintaining order. As a result, these offenses may become more prevalent in certain high-rise settings.

### **3. Mitigating Strategies and Crime Prevention**

Understanding the relationship between high-rise buildings and crime rates is essential for urban planners, architects, and policymakers play a crucial role in shaping the built environment and can implement strategies to mitigate the potential negative influence of high-rise structures on crime.

One key consideration in urban planning is the design of high-rise buildings to enhance safety and security. Implementing Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles can improve the physical environment's ability to deter criminal activity (Clarke, 1983).

For instance, well-lit common areas, security cameras, secure access control systems, and well-maintained landscaping can contribute to enhanced surveillance

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and a reduced risk of criminal incidents within high-rise buildings. Promoting a sense of community within high-rise buildings is another strategy for crime prevention. Social programs, community-building activities, and initiatives that foster positive social interactions among residents can strengthen informal social control (Perkins and Taylor, 1996).

When residents feel connected to their neighbors and invested in the well-being of their community, they are more likely to collaborate on crime prevention efforts and report suspicious activities.

Balancing the mix of land uses within high-rise buildings and their immediate surroundings is another effective urban planning strategy. Combining residential, commercial, and recreational spaces within the same building or complex can increase the presence of people throughout the day and night, reducing opportunities for criminal activity (Eck, 1994). The diversity of activities and functions can enhance natural surveillance and contribute to a safer environment.

Addressing the influence of high-rise buildings on crime rates requires a multifaceted approach involving policymakers, urban planners, and law enforcement agencies.

Here are some strategies for mitigating the potential negative effects of high-rise structures on urban crime:

- (a) implementing CPTED principles to enhance the safety and security features of high-rise buildings is a fundamental strategy. This approach involves designing buildings and their surroundings to maximize natural surveillance, minimize hiding places, and create a sense of ownership among residents (Clarke, 1983). Elements such as well-lit public spaces, clear sightlines, and secure access control systems can contribute to crime prevention efforts;
- (b) strengthening community policing efforts in high-rise neighborhoods is crucial for building positive relationships between law enforcement and residents. Community policing encourages law enforcement officers to work collaboratively with community members, enhancing trust and cooperation (Taylor, 2001). Residents who feel connected to their local law enforcement agencies are more likely to report crimes and engage in proactive crime prevention;
- (c) providing access to social services, mental health resources, and substance abuse treatment within high-rise communities is essential to addressing underlying factors that contribute to criminal behavior (Taylor and Harrell, 1996). By addressing social and economic inequalities and supporting vulnerable populations, urban planners and policymakers can create conditions less conducive to criminal activities.

#### **4. Conclusions**

The relationship between high-rise buildings and crime in urban environments is a multifaceted issue that warrants careful consideration by researchers, urban planners, and policymakers. While these structures offer numerous benefits in terms of efficient land use and accommodating growing populations, they also present unique challenges related to crime prevention.

Understanding the complex interplay of factors that can influence crime rates in high-rise environments is essential for crafting effective strategies to mitigate potential negative effects. Theoretical frameworks like Routine Activity Theory and Social Disorganization Theory provide valuable insights, while empirical evidence highlights the varying influence of high-rise buildings on different types of crimes.

Urban planning considerations, such as architectural design, community engagement, and mixed land use, can play pivotal roles in enhancing the safety and security of high-rise environments. Implementing Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design principles and fostering a sense of community responsibility are integral to reducing crime risks within these structures.

Finally, addressing the influence of high-rise buildings on crime requires a collaborative effort among stakeholders, including residents, law enforcement agencies, urban planners, and policymakers. By adopting evidence-based strategies and focusing on community well-being, cities can benefit of vertical density while minimizing the associated challenges related to crime.

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