Both internal (pull) and external (push) factors, or a combination of pushes and pulls, provided the impetus and opportunity to leave the gang.

A major explanation for this “social fact” is social ecology theory. This theory seeks to explain why such patterns of criminal activity occur in specific geographical areas such as cities, and why they persist over time, even when the original members move out, mature into legitimate work, are incarcerated, or die.

Bellair examined the connection between crime and geographical space, are known as social or human ecologists. Their theory is based on the idea that the way plant and animal species colonize geographical space.

**The Historical Roots of Social Ecology Theory**

Social ecology theory examines the movement of people and their concentration in specific locations.

Henry Mayhew and Charles Booth who provided rich descriptions of the criminal areas of London known as “rookeries.”
Alihan argued that the use of plant ecology was based on a series of false analogies that resulted in the fallacious error of using aggregate level data to explain individual actions.

The major defect involves making assumptions about individuals based on group characteristics. The Chicago School primarily relied on aggregate, group level data to explain deviance.

They failed to show that residents living in low-income, desirable areas were more organized than their counterparts in high-crime areas.

Sampson and Groves found that structural factors produced:
- Weakened friendship networks
- Low participation in community organizations
- Unsupervised teens
- Crime rates were higher in such areas

Korbin pointed out the weakness of some of the data concerning the claims that a delinquent cultural tradition resulted from conflicting moralities.

The New Social Ecology Theories

Social Ecology theory went in three directions: