

Forum: General Assembly 3

Issue: Measures to Decrease Crime Rates in Less Economically Developed Countries

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Introduction

Roman philosopher and emperor, Marcus Aurelius, once said: “Poverty is the mother of crime”. Crime, as of 2014, was the top problem in the list of problems occurring in emerging, and developing countries and very much like it was said 2000 years ago, poverty is a recurring issue in the countries where crime is most prevalent.

The decrease in [crime rates](#) in [less economically developed countries](#) (LEDCs) can and should be taken as one of the most ethically imperative measures to lead the world to a sustainable future. With the exponential growth of a population and the lack of education, more and more people fall into [poverty](#) and have to resort to [crime](#) as a source of income. It is well known that there is an economic gap between countries and the modernization of [criminology](#) as a scientific study where it is needed most, developing nations, is yet to occur.

Crime rates vary from country to country and so does the type of crimes that are committed in the country. The crimes committed vary in accordance with the social and economic situation the country lies in. The extent of the crimes committed varies. For example, shoplifting is a crime in which people aren't usually harmed however crimes such as genocide is a mass atrocity that calls for the loss of multiple lives.

Once crime and poverty are already prevalent in a country such as an LEDC, it is

increasingly difficult to eliminate it. The LEDC is unable to hire well-paid and trained law enforcement officers causing an automatic increase in crime rates. When crime rates increase in a country, money-making industries cannot be initiated there due to lack of safety causing the

country to maintain its economic downfall and this circle of crime and poverty continue in the countries.

Often LEDCs are deemed unsafe in relative comparison with [MEDCS](#). This is mainly because safety and crime go hand in hand. The two variables have a negative correlation which means LEDCs with high crime rates usually are known to be less safe. This causes countries to not perform as well as other countries in industries such as tourism calling for these countries to only very gradually come out of their state of a 'developing nation'.

Definition of Key Terms

Crime

Crime is an offensive or illegal act that can call for an individual being punished by the government. Crimes vary throughout the world as they are in perspective the breaking of law and laws also vary throughout the world.

Crime Rates

The number of crimes committed in a particular region or area in ratio to the population of the area. It is usually expressed in a percentage format.

Criminology

Criminology is a branch of sociology or rather a social study on crime. It investigates the type of people that commit a crime, they're reasons behind it, its impact, and how these crimes can be further prevented.

Corruption

Corruption can be simply known as the abuse of entrusted power for personal gain. It causes harm to others and only benefits those who are corrupt.

Deterioration

The process of losing functionality, becoming inferior, lowering quality. Deterioration is gradual harmful damage to anything or anyone.

Discrimination

The unfair treatment of individuals or a group based factor such as race, sex, etc calling for the group of categories to face unjust conditions posed on them by other entities.

Genocide

The United Nations defines genocide as "Any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such: killing members of the group; causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; [and] forcibly transferring children of the group to another group." If the word was to be broken into two it means the killing of a racial group or tribe.

Gross Domestic Product (GDP)

The gross domestic product of a country is the total monetary value of all goods and services produced by the specific nation.

Inequality

A situation in which unequal or uneven conditions are set causing one group of

people to have more benefits than the other.

Less Economically Developed Country (LEDC)

LEDCs can also be labeled as developing countries. They are relatively poorer countries. Here, 'developing' refers to the wealth of the country and the standard of living of the individuals.

More Economically Developed Country (MEDC)

MEDCs can also be labeled as developed countries. They are relatively richer countries. Here, 'developed' refers to the wealth of the country and standard of living of the individuals.

Mental Health

Mental health encompasses an individual's emotional and psychological well-being. It refers to how people feel, think, and behave as all of them are affected by mental health.

Modernization

In sociology, modernization can be defined simply as an area evolving from rural and old fashioned to urban and modernized. Modernization follows the path of industrialization of the specific region. This encompasses changes in culture, technology, social and economic norms.

Perpetrators

The group of people that victimize the victims and carry out illegal acts which can be harmful to people or the environment.

Poverty

Poverty can be defined as a state or condition where an individual lacks basic and financial resources to achieve the bare minimum standard of living. The threshold which determines if a certain individual is under the poverty line or living in poverty

varies from nation to nation.

Remittances

Remittances are usually amounts of money or funds sent by migrants back to their homeland. The word is derived from the word remit which means to send back.

Key Issues

Corruption

Ludwig von Mises, an Austrian sociologist, economist, and historian once said, “There is no more dangerous menace to civilization than a government of incompetent, corrupt, or vile men.” [Corruption](#) itself is a crime committed by officials which entails more crime to follow. Some of the countries with the highest crime rates are known to have corrupt governments such as Venezuela where, as of January of 2019, the overthrown former president has committed a list of crimes and violated a multitude of human rights.

Firstly, corrupt governments call for setting a rather bad example for their citizens as they are committing crimes. Corruption in governments also calls for corruption in law enforcement officers which can be the main cause of high crime rates as crime reporting is decreased through simple methods such as bribery. As mentioned before, crime is the top problem that developing countries face. Corruption is the second most prevalent problem in those countries and it can be not only assumed but confirmed that the two problems correlate.

Corruption can also leave the citizens of the country empty-handed as the governments have taken everything for themselves leaving their very own citizens lost. This calls for citizens often having no opportunities or income calling for them to fall into a life of crime to sustain themselves.

Transparency.org gives a perception index of corruption of 178 countries in the world and their degree of corruption. More than three-quarters of the 178 nations in 2010 had a score of lower than 5 where 0 is widespread corruption that is usually harmful and 10 being clean of corruption.

Other crimes in LEDCs that can be observed are genocides. Two cases where the severity of the sanction that governments play in genocides can be seen in the genocide act of Sudan and the Rwandan [genocide](#). In western Sudan, also known as the Darfur region, the Arab Sudanese government committed multiple genocides like acts between the years 2003 and 2005 in the African communities. When it came to Rwanda, it was Hutu extremists who belong to the government who initiated the genocide on Tutsis where more than 800,000 people were killed.

Uneven modernization

Society is known to have the biggest impact on what we do today. The chase for modernity is never-ending. One form of [modernization](#) that can be seen most often now is advancements in scientific and technical innovation which have called for growth in the study of criminology. The downfall of the study of criminology is that most of it is conducted in the western and more modernized world. The modernization of the world is uneven causing the growth of the study of criminology to also be uneven all around the world.

The more direct effect of uneven modernization on crime rates in LEDCs is that all the LEDCs are left so far behind. In MEDCs, countries continue to improve law enforcement, education, and more which are all required to solve the already existing issue and also further prevent it. The lack of modernization and the large economic gap

between MEDCs and LEDCs calls for these resources not being available to those who need it most, developing nations. A prime example of where the economic gap can be observed is the [GDP](#) of Venezuela, a LEDC, compared with the GDP of Australia, a MEDC. As of 2014, the GDP of the countries were 482.4 billion and 1.467 trillion. Both countries have a similar population however Venezuela has a higher crime index (84.46) that goes along with its comparatively lower GDP. On the other hand, Australia has a lower crime index (41.86) that goes along with its higher GDP. The economic gap observed here shows the indirect correlation between crime rates and GDP of a country.

Poverty

Poverty is a problem that is very much prevalent in developing nations. South Africa has the highest poverty rate with an astounding 26.6%. While the poverty rates have been decreasing, in both absolute number and ratio, a likely increase might be seen due to the COVID 19 pandemic which has called for the loss of jobs, unpaid hours of work and lack of [remittances](#) being sent back home.

Poverty causes people to often fall back on crime as a source of income as none other are available. Crimes committed due to poverty have no age as teenagers are as likely to commit crimes due to this reason as anyone in their mid-30s.

A study carried out to find the correlation between crime rates and poverty was conducted by using two areas lying on American grounds. The two cities, Arlington in Virginia and Garland in Texas, had a similar population. The median household incomes of the cities were \$105,763 and \$51,997 respectively. Garland has a lower median household income and has a higher crime rate in comparison to Arlington which along with their higher household median crime, have a lower crime rate proving that there is a correlation between poverty and crime rates of a certain region.

The correlation between the two is undeniable even in MEDCs. For example, UAE is a country with a very low crime rate however with the COVID 19 pandemic putting people out of jobs, many have been forced into 'poverty' and crime rates in

regards to robbing and stealing have increased.

One crime can lead to another as well and poverty can be seen as part of the process. In a region where genocide has been committed, the area is more vulnerable to becoming labeled as poverty-stricken. When poverty rates increase there are two factors that can cause an overall increase in the crime rates; people who are 'poverty-struck' who have to resort to stealing to sustain themselves. In addition, the victims are not able to afford efficient securities or security systems that deter crime causing the increase. Additionally, in genocide, many times children are saved while their guardians are not. In this case, the number of orphans under the supervision of older siblings increases, or they are left to fend for themselves. Most of these children do not have any experience in the workforce, which makes them unwanted to employers and they also lack the financial resources that are required for education which results in them falling into a life of petty crime.

Impacts of high crime rates

There are many impacts of high crime rates. Common impacts include the [deterioration](#) of the physical or [mental health](#) of a person who has been victimized. The higher the crime rates, the higher the number of victims who have possibly sustained not only injuries but also can undergo stress, PTSD, etc. "The distress caused by one unit increase in local crime is 2-4 times larger than tha caused by a one unit increase in local unemployment, and about one-seventh of the short-term impact of the 7 July 2005 London Bombings." This extract is taken from the economic journal under the headline 'the effect of local crime on mental health'.

A large majority of victims of different types of crime report having been emotionally affected by the crime

Over half of the victims express anger about the victimisation.

Emotional impact	Type of victimisation		
	Any burglary	Vehicle-related theft	Any violent crime
Respondent emotionally affected	81.4	78.7	82
Anger	60	79.7	60.3
Shock	35.2	20	41
Fear	28.4	5	26
Difficulty sleeping	26.8	6.3	26.3
Crying / tears	15	4.3	22.7
Depression	11.5	5	17.3
Anxiety or panic attack	12	2	15
Lack of confidence / feeling vulnerable	24	7	13
Annoyance	23	48	8
Other	2.6	5	4.3

One out of three victims report having felt shocked

About one third of victims of burglary and violent crime experience fear.

Above is an image of a table showing the emotional impact on people of three different types of crime that are concluded using a survey in Britain.

Another impact of high crime rates is that a high number of people are being victimized. The victim or the victim's family falling into the loop of crime and more. Often, when a family is, for example, robbed, they are robbed of all valuable goods and in LEDCs more often than not, these people live paycheck to paycheck. In this case, they are caused to find odd jobs to pay for basic needs or worse yet, they sort to crime themselves. Another example could be that when a family member is killed in a homicide, the family could lose their only source of income leaving a lot of pressure on the members of the family to afford their basic requirements.

Major Parties Involved

Venezuela

Venezuela is an LEDC which has the highest crime rate that can be observed in the world. The high crime rates in the country can be rooted back to multiple factors such as the high corruption levels within the authorities of the country, poor gun control, and

a poor judiciary system. In 2018, the country was classified as the deadliest and most violent. The capital city, Caracas, attributes their high crime rates to organized crime and street gangs. According to the Overseas Security Advisory Council's (OSAC) report on the safety of Venezuela in 2019, due to the humanitarian crisis, the impoverished resort to crimes that range from robberies to kidnappings and homicides. The report published in 2020 by the OSAC stated that “Last year closed with an estimated 16,506 murders and a rate of 60.3 violent deaths per 100,000 inhabitants, well above any other country in Latin America. “

France

France is not a LEDC but does have crime like any other country. France is ranked 38th for crime levels, not far behind its fellow P5 nation, USA. Their murder rate is 1.31. Street crime in tourist areas is very common while violent crime is not prevalent. Crimes such pickpocketing are common in the youth as they are less likely to face any sort of prosecution according to the OSAC crime and safety report released about France released in 2020.

The country is not only part of the European Union and a P5 nation but also a large aid provider in developing nations. In 2009, France was the second-largest donor and they have continued to support countries by being aid donors. One of the main objectives for France is putting an end to [inequality](#) and poverty according to loc.org. The fight against poverty is also one way of decreasing crime rates in LEDCs. France also prioritizes its recipients that align with many factors which include the fight against corruption is one major crime that leads to more crimes in a country and needs to be put to an end.

United States of America

While the P5 nation is in fact not a LEDC, they do have varying crime rates throughout the country. Crime rates overall have decreased substantially over the years however that is on average. According to the Pew Research Center, “In 2018,

there were more than 800 violent crimes per 100,000 residents in Alaska and New Mexico. By contrast, Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont had rates below 200 violent crimes per 100,000 residents.” There is a lot of geographic variation in the crime rate as they do not vary from just coast to coast or from state to state but rather from city to city. In addition, a multitude of crimes are not reported and in 2018 only 43% of the violent crimes were reported to the police.

Crime rates have also reduced due to the COVID 19 pandemic in the United States. Cities such as Atlanta process 100-150 crime reports by April whereas in 2020 only 47 were recorded by April due to the decrease in the opportunity of crime. This decrease in opportunity came with fewer people going out.

The United States of America is also home to the Overseas Security Advisory Council which gives very informative reports on countries of crime such as Venezuela and South Africa. They are known for the crime and safety reports that are released with the objective of keeping US nationals safe.

South Africa

South Africa, very much like Venezuela has a very high crime rate, in fact, being given the title of the country with the third-highest crime rate. It is known for having many factors that play into it such as high poverty and normalization of violence which are factors that differ from Venezuela. As stated by the world population review, South Africa is the country with the highest poverty alongside being the country with the highest crime rate further proving their correlation. “More than 1 in 4 men surveyed by the South African Medical Research Council admitted to committing rape.” The most common crime committed is committed by organized gangs that carry out armed robberies with sharp objects such as knives as stated by the Overseas Security Advisory Council 2019 on South Africa.

United Nations Office in Drugs and Crime (UNODC)

The UNODC is a United Nations office with headquarters in Vienna that with its establishment in 1997 combines the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Division

and United Nations International Drug Control Program. They also have offices based in Brussels and New York. The office is the global leader in the fight against crime in all divisions including illicit drugs, international crime, and more. Focusing on the crime section of the office, they work to combat growing organized international crime, improve the rule of law and criminal justice systems.

An example of the work the UNODC has done to reduce crime rates in LEDCs is their first assessment of human trafficking and the report published in 2017. The assessment that took into account 155 countries included an overview of trafficking patterns and the plan of action and what has been done to reduce this problem.

Moreover, the UNODC in the 63rd session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) that took place in March of 2020 stressed how important it was to ensure that no developing country is left behind when responding to the worldwide drug problem. They also started the South-South cooperation which aims to fight the set of vulnerabilities that all developing countries, that have the more industrially developed countries lie to their north, face which include corruption and more.

Timeline

DATE	EVENT	OUTCOME
9th December 1948	The adoption of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.	In 1948, the UN unanimously adopted this convention making genocide an official crime under international law.
1970	The formation of the IPI	The International Peace Institution was formed as the original international peace academy that at the time focused on training military officers and diplomats for peacekeeping troops for the UN.

1st July 2002	International Criminal Court gains jurisdiction	The ICC is able to practice jurisdiction over its first three pillars of crime. They soon after created the assembly of state parties and associated themselves with the UN.
24th July 2002	Publication of the UN Economic and Social Council Resolution 2002/13: Action to Promote Effective Crime Prevention	The UN ECOSOC released resolution focuses on crime prevention and guidelines that allow for a decrease in overall crime as well as costs to do with the criminal justice system.

22nd July 2005	Publication of the UN Economic and Social Council Resolution 2005/22: Action to Promote Effective Crime Prevention	The UN ECOSOC published this resolution with the aims of acting on effective crime prevention. Here, they ask the UNODC to have a balanced approach to crime prevention and criminal justice response.
14-16th September 2005	The Adoption of the R2P	The Responsibility to Protect was adopted as an obligation and a principle at the 2005 world summit of the United Nations to protect the world's population from mass atrocities such as genocide.
24th July 2008	Publication of the UN Economic and Social Council Resolution 2008/24: Strengthening	The UN ECOSOC published this resolution with the aims of acting on effective crime prevention in urban areas. This specific resolution called for member states to integrate crime prevention policies into all economic and social considerations that were

	prevention of urban crime: an integrated approach.	possible to understand where crime can root from.
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Evaluation of Previous Attempts

Responsibility to Protect (R2P)

A simple principle that was endorsed by the United Nations at the summit in 2005. The principle or rather the obligation entitles each and every state to protect any population at risk and their own population from genocide and mass atrocities. The R2P evokes three pillars of responsibility in every member state which include clauses numbered 138, 139, and 140. In summary, the first pillar states that each member state must protect its population from war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity. Globally, member states should help and other states to practice their responsibility and essentially help the United Nations to successfully establish an early warning system. In the second pillar, states are encouraged to be prepared to take collective action using the tools of the Security Council. It also states that the member states must help build capacity to handle a situation if one of 4 atrocities do occur and assist those states that are prone to the conflict before it breaks out.

Like multiple other attempts at solving the issue of crime in general, there are downfalls to the R2P which includes its costs to deploy people and at the same time the inevitable casualties that will occur in these military bodies. States that do choose to deploy military bodies also have to be given the benefit of the doubt because the R2P does not halt states from doing so if they do so for their own benefit, thus allowing some states to exploit the resources they are given. In short, the R2P may be too vulnerable and a replacement for it must be made.

Education

Education is a very powerful tool that has been previously used to help decrease crime rates in multiple ways. Academic education has been used to increase people with jobs

so that they don't have to resort to a life of crime. Education through seminars about why crime is something that can be avoided and how in the future it will do nothing but harm is also a previously tried solution. While this has proven to be an effective solution, it is not widespread enough. And the problem only very slowly gets better. In the short-term, the solution has no effect on the crime rates but in the long-term, it should. Therefore, the effects of it are yet to be seen in LEDCs. Moreover, this education is focused largely on countries that can afford it which means MEDCs with crime rates have focused them in targeted areas. LEDC governments are unable to afford to provide any education which includes academic education and education through seminars. The lack of financing calls for it to not be feasible in LEDCs and to solve this more financing and resources are required in the form of aid from allies and the United Nations.

One study by the Economic opportunity Institute focused on mainly 3-4-year-olds. They were enrolled in an education program for 15 years. It showed that students who were not enrolled in the preschool program were 70% more likely to be arrested for committing a crime after their education. This study showed that there is a link between early child development through early age education and crime rates.

International Criminal Court (ICC)

The ICC is generally recognized as one of the best tools for analysis and advice to governments and worldwide groups such as the UN. The ICC was allowed to practice their jurisdiction over the first three pillars which include crimes against humanity as of 1st of July in 2002. The ICC works in close cooperation with the United Nations, allowing it to reach a wider community and helps them grant jurisdiction over situations easily.

Working with the wider community allows for arrests of the [perpetrators](#) to be made all over the world, and the ones who are charged are placed in the detention center in the Netherlands. The Rome statute also called for the formation of two more 'bodies' including the Assembly of state parties and the trust fund for victims. The latter is to provide for victims and give them physical, psychological, and required material to support a victim and their family back into a more or less 'normal' life. The

ICC in the current genocides, such as the one taking place against the Rohingya in Myanmar, is taking the initiative to move forward to ensure that the victims are given justice. As of June of 2019, an ICC prosecutor is investigating the crimes committed against the Rohingya even though Myanmar is not a state party of the ICC. While these are larger-scale crimes, they are as important and in fact affect a very large number of people in one go. This means they technically have the jurisdiction to prosecute leaders which can rule out a very worrying key issue, corruption.

International Peace Institute (IPI)

The IPI is a non-profit organization with headquarters in New York that works very closely with the members of the UN to achieve peace and sustainable development. One of their key ways to ensure peace is decreasing crime. They have diverse staff to reach their goals however why they are yet to have decreased mass atrocities has been spelled out by them themselves. The IPI has talked about how the UN can implement new rules and work with the IPI to ensure they improve where they are falling behind. Their early warning system is not very systematic and comprehensive and is one that calls for the allowance of mass atrocities.

Possible Solutions

Regulating Access To Weapons

Access to weapons needs to be more regulated since firearms are easily accessible to civilians residing in countries such as the USA and Venezuela. Powerful weapons will only make it easier for civilians to commit violent crimes that put public safety at risk in LEDCs. A country such as Switzerland has 2 million privately owned guns in a country with a population of 8.3 million however the last mass shooting was in 2001, due to the strict requirements for one to acquire a firearm. The fact that Switzerland is a developed nation just means that developing nations must follow suit in this matter.

Around the world, more strict rules need to be implemented and databases must be created to ensure that gun sellers understand who they are selling the gun to. Countries that are prone to crimes such as smaller-scale homicides to larger-scale

genocides and countries where possible violent crime has been detected should have bans on firearms trades be imposed on by the UN where essentially the UN embargoes on the population of the region including the government. This has helped and can be seen in Myanmar and worked out as Israel stopped their advanced flow of arms to the region. In this case, it is essential to understand that defenseless people must be provided with some forms of defense such as guns however it must end up in the right hands and not the hands of the perpetrators instead.

Support of community organizations

As community organizations have pointed out time and time again, addressing the issues that arise from poverty is essential to ensure the eradication of crime. Community organizations allow for not only a change in the policies of the justice system but also supporting people who have no economic support to attend school to ensure they don't fall into a hole of poverty and crime. A study completed in NYU showed that "...in a city of 100,000, each new nonprofit community organization lead to a 1.2 percent drop in the homicide rate, a one percent reduction in the violent crime rate, and a 0.7 percent reduction in the property crime rate." Supporting low-income communities is essential to reducing crime rates as crime rates are increasingly high there and any financial support they receive would have a positive impact on the crime rates of the region. Moreover, these community organizations can help provide for more equal opportunity between also races, genders, and more factors that call for [discrimination](#). A study by the World Bank based in Latin America went onto show that localities with less inequality have a relatively lower crime rate when comparing more than 2000 municipalities within Mexico.

Restructuring policies for prevention

The reduction of crime is not something that can be achieved by a single new policy being introduced by many policies, direct and indirect, being restructured, and introduced into LEDCs where it is required. Some simple and common policies include early childhood development, poverty reduction programs, and an increase in education. Studies have shown that early childhood development allows for the child to be less likely to drop out of school and therefore less likely to be convicted for a

crime. Studies also show that health policies ranging from nutrition to mental health will also allow for prevention in crime as there are many factors that play into crime all around the world. Policymakers must reform the law to ensure that LEDCs are one step closer to the prevention of crime and P5 nations and the UN will offer support as they do through aid and whatever is required to make the policies viable.

Improving judicial systems and law enforcement

Tens and thousands of policies could be introduced into a country however if the judicial system and police of the region cannot be trusted, crime rates are bound to maintain themselves and not decrease whatsoever. In LEDCs, corruption within judicial systems, law enforcement officers, and governments does not go unseen. Better and longer police training will allow for crime rates to go down as in many LEDCs such as Venezuela, the police themselves are involved in crime. Improving these systems with the help of the UNODC will allow for more trusted systems and the policies being introduced to be implemented and enforced properly to ensure a difference is made.

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