

Running Head: SOCIO-ECONOMIC DETERMINANTS OF CRIME

**THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DETERMINANTS OF CRIME IN THE US**

**[Name of the Topic]**

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### *1.1. Introduction to Research*

This chapter pertains towards introducing the research and further provide initial insights about the research topic to the readers. Furthermore, this chapter also provides a brief background about the following research and explains the concept which has to be incorporated in the research in later chapters. Alongside, the following chapter also provides with aims and objectives of the research which has been set in order to carry out the remaining chapters of the research in an effective manner. Furthermore, this chapter also provides rationale and significance of the research along with a brief outline of all chapters which is to be covered in this research.

In the past eras, many economists have attempted to explore the determinants which have introduced crime rates in different countries. In this essence, many economists and theorists have applied the economic theories and econometric models in order to gain understanding about the factors which determine crime rates in different countries (Aaltonen, Kivivuori and Martikainen, 2011). The first explicit model was developed by Ehrilch in 1973 to provide an in-depth understanding about the population participating in criminal activities, where every agent has decided over the allocation of their time in leisure, working in either criminal or legal activities. In this context, the policy makers and agents of different countries consider criminal activities as a part of a labour, along with a particularity as this activity reflects the arresting probability.

In addition, the model proposed by Ehrilch predicts that the crime rates have to be positively affected by inequality of income and negatively affected by the arrest probability and growth rate (Bianchi, Buonanno and Pinotti, 2012). On the contrary side, the income effect is

still indeterminate by some of the economists. Moreover, a significant amount of work has been carried out by the policy makers and the economists in this field, this is still considered as the basic vision for determining the subject by the economists.

This paper is aimed towards the identification and investigation of different socio-economic factors of crime in the United States with a special focus on income inequality and poverty. It is evident that the crime rates have significantly been increasing in every country over the limited time frame which has evolved the ecological theories concerning crime. The establishment of these theories has served the purpose of explaining the behaviour of crime or violent nature of crimes. Therefore, for the current study, it is necessary to identify possible predictors regarding crime which can help the policy makers in developing new policies which can minimise the crime rates in the US.

## ***1.2. Contextual Background***

In the light of Lorenc *et al.*, (2013, p. 30), crime in the US has been reported since the ages of colonisation. Moreover, the crime rates in the United States constantly varied over the time but in the year 1963, a sharp increase was found which reach its peak between the 1970s and 1990s. After this dilemma, the crime rates in the United States have been declining significantly due to the formulation of new policies against such crimes. There are different natures of crimes in the United States but it mainly consists of four criminal offences named as forcible rape, aggravated assault, robbery and murder. On the other hand, a property crime is also common in the United States which incorporates burglary, car theft, arson and larceny.

In the long-term, the violent crimes have been declined in the United States soon after the colonial times. Moreover, during the era of the 20th century, the crime rates in the United States

began to rise in different parts of Western Europe. However, the level of crime was not exceptional as the crime rate in different cities of America was relatively higher than other European cities (Seelke *et al.*, 2011). As in the report of FBI (2015), the number of murders estimated in the United States was 15, 696. During the year, the rapes were reported at 90,185 and the robberies were reported at 327,374 nationwide which accounted for a total of \$390 million in the losses. This can be observed from the graphs depicted below:

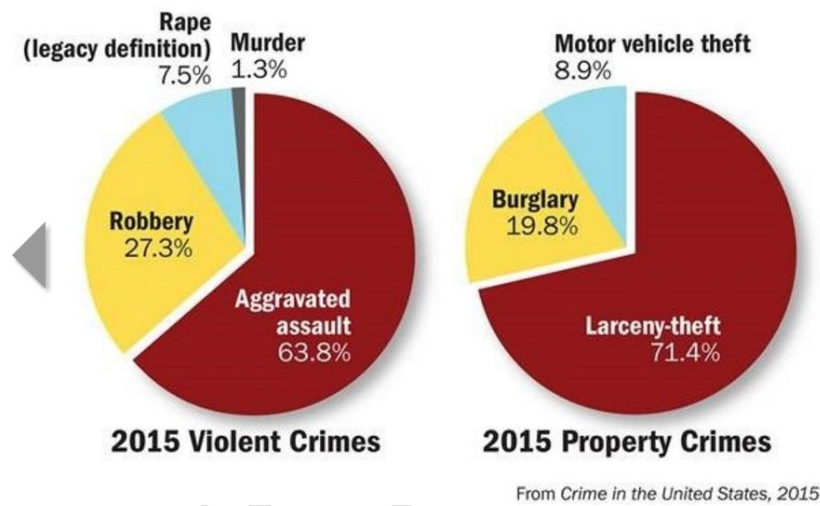


Figure 1: America's Statistics for Crimes

Source: FBI

In this essence, the economist around the world put their joint efforts in order to analyse which socio-economic variables are responsible for increasing crime rates in the United States. In the light of Buonanno (2011, P. 347), the use demographic variable as the determinants of the crime rates in a country is yet to be explored in the literature of crime. Therefore, in this research, the researcher has provided the evidences related to the socio-economic variables which ignite crime rates in the United States and further present demographic variables such as the increasing population of children born from single mother or teenage mothers which helps in identifying the aggregated data for crime in the United States.

### ***1.3. Research Problem***

The problematic area in which the research has focused towards the increasing crime rates in the United States due to several socio-economic factors in the country. There is a great variability of crimes in different cities of the United States for which the rate of homicides has increased to 200 to 300 for around 2000 inhabitants in different cities of the United States. Therefore, it is evident that due to the economic environment faced by the policy makers and agents such as growth, income and inequality has subjected to the increase in crime rates in the United States (Wu and Wu, 2012, p. 3765).

Moreover, the increasing population in the United States has also caused an increase in crime rates in the country. For which there is a significant increase in the percentage of the children which have been raised without mother or father. There is higher probability that such children can indulge in criminal activities. This signifies that the absence of father determines the probability of the involvement for men in the criminal activities. On the other hand, the violent crime is also increasing in the United States which arises to the percentage of children born from teenage mothers.

### ***1.4. Research Aim***

The main aim of the research is to determine socio-economic factors which are responsible for increasing crime rates in the United States. This has explored the relationship between the increasing crime rates in the United States with the variables responsible for triggering crimes in the country.

### ***1.5. Research Objectives***

Following objectives have been derived from the aim of the research which is stated as follows:

- To identify the socio-economic determinants responsible for increasing crime rates in the United States.
- To examine the impact of each socio-economic determinant on the crime rates in the United States.
- To provide recommendations to the policy makers to reduce crime rates in the United States with the support of identified determinants.

### ***1.6. Research Questions***

Following are the research questions which would be emphasised on during the research:

- Which socio-economic determinants are responsible for increasing crime in the United States?
- What is the relationship between each identified socio-economic determinant to the increasing rate in the United States?
- How the criminal activities can be mitigated in the United States by focusing on the socio-economic factors in the country?

### ***1.7. Rationale of Research***

It is evident that the increasing crime rate in the countries has a negative impact on the society. Moreover, it can affect the society present in the country in terms of the money which is to spend when apprehending and punishing the criminals involved in the criminal activities or to

repair the damage done by such activities (Walker, Spohn and DeLone, 2012). Moreover, it can also affect the personal safety, happiness and peace of mind of the individuals. It is an ultimate responsibility of the Government and officials to protect the rights of the citizens by providing them protection by crafting social policies which can help in minimising the negative impact of crime in the society. Therefore it is necessary to identify the determinants which are directly responsible for increasing crime rates in the country.

In addition to the above statement, there is a constant gap in the literature presented by the previous authors about the identification of relevant determinants of socio-economic which supports increasing crime rate in the country. Though there is a criminal theory available in the literature which could reflect on the socio-economic determinants but still there is a gap in the literature of criminology in the context of United States. This research has reflected on various socio-economic determinants which are responsible for the increasing crime rates in the United States and further provide recommendations on how the criminal activities can be reduced in order to foster growth and development in the country.

### ***1.8. Significance of Research***

This research is significant for the future researcher who wishes to research in the same area of the study. Moreover, this research is also significant for the policy makers of the United States as it is aimed towards the identification of the relationship between the socio-economic variables in the context of increasing crime.

The data collected for this research will help the economist and policy makers in investigating the link between determinants and crime in the United States. Therefore, this research is significant for the policy makers which can assist the Government officials in the

United States to take preventive measure for a reduction in crime rates in the United States and further lower the impact of demographics and differences in the legislation across different states of the United States.

### ***1.9. Outline of Research***

This research is comprised of five chapters in total.

The first chapter in this study is known as an introductory chapter which introduces the topic to the readers and further helps in gaining insights about the study and concepts relates to the research. This chapter is a most important chapter of the research because it consists of aims and objectives which assist the research in proceeding with the study.

The second chapter is mainly comprised of a literature review of the study in which the researcher has highlighted certain studies and theories postulated by authors and practitioners.

The third chapter of the study discusses the methodology of the research as for how it has analysed the data and which techniques are adopted in order to carry out the research.

The fourth chapter of the research is concerned with the data analysis which incorporates data collected for the research.

The fifth chapter is mainly concerned with the recommendations and conclusion of the study.

## CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### *3.1. Introduction*

Methodology is the key chapter of any research dissertation since it includes all the fundamental components which are necessary to arrive at the results research topic. The chapter contains research design, research approach, research investigation, methods through which data is collected, ethical considerations and lastly the limitations of research. These components align the direction of research with the core purpose for which the study is conducted.

### *3.2. Research Design*

According to Arora and Stoner (2009), there are three different types of designs from which the researcher chooses the one which is most compatible with topic of study. Qualitative, quantitative and mixed method research designs are the three designs which facilitate the researcher to execute and conclude the research study. Quantitative research design enables the researcher to gather objective measurements that are numeric in nature and through which results are generated regarding the phenomenon. In quantitative research, the researcher uses different statistical tools to analyse the collected data. In contrast, a qualitative research design allows the researcher to develop an understanding related to the phenomenon under study through which motives and opinions are improved (Zimmerman, et. al., 2010). This design enables a deep insight through which theories are developed. Lastly, a mixed method research design use both, qualitative and quantitative research design for executing the study. This design enables data collection on huge levels and takes time for analyses and interpretation.

For this research, quantitative research design is adopted by the researcher since the study aims to identify the socio-economic determinants of crime in the US. The impact of these determinants can be identified through quantitative data that is published on different sources in form of facts and figures.

### **3.3. Research Approach**

The outcomes of research study are made possible by selecting a research approach through which the researcher determines that whether the research study adopts a specific approach or a general approach. There are two different types of research approaches namely inductive and deductive approach which facilitates the researcher to focus on the topic of research. According to Ponterotto (2005), by adopting an inductive approach, the researcher moves the study towards a more general topic in contrast to specific topic. The inductive approach is also known as bottom up approach. Consequently, adopting a deductive research approach allows the researcher to simplify the topic of research by breaking down the components of research into more focused form (Block, et. al., 2010). A deductive approach is also known as top down approach because it narrows the area of focus.

The following research has adopted the deductive approach since the focus of study is primarily in US and towards the socio economic determinants of crimes committed in the boundaries of US. Moreover, through deductive approach only essential determinants are identified which have the most significant impact.

### ***3.4. Research Investigation***

The research studies are executed by researchers using following three investigations including descriptive, exploratory and explanatory research investigation. Through exploratory investigation, the researcher further explores the phenomenon which has been studied too little in the past. A huge amount of data and information is required for this type of research and it is commonly adopted for qualitative researches (Battaglia, 2010). In contrast, the adoption of explanatory investigation facilitates the researcher to identify the cause and relationship among the variables that are chosen for research study. This type of investigation analyses the impact and is usually utilised with quantitative research (Zimmerman, et. al., 2010). Lastly, descriptive research develops a link between the population and phenomenon to study the variables; however it does not answer the questions of research study.

An explanatory research investigation has been adopted by the researcher since the study aims to identify the socio economic determinants related to crime in US. This investigation permits the researcher to analyse the impact of socio economic determinants on the crime rate in entire US.

### ***3.5. Data Collection Method***

The method of data collection refers to the procedures and techniques, through which the researcher collects, obtain or gather the data for executing and concluding the research study. As stated by Battaglia (2010), there are two different methods through which the data is collected, namely the primary method and secondary method. In primary data collection method, the researcher collects fresh data for analyses in order to fulfil the purpose of study. The primary data is gathered keeping in mind the aim of the study and this type of data is not available from

any other sources. In contrast to primary method, the other data collection method is secondary method in which the researcher gathers the data from different sources where the data and information is already published. The nature of secondary data is not new and this data have been used to execute different studies conducted in the past. However, as stated by Henning (2016), secondary data is always used in research studies since it facilitates the researcher to develop the literature of research.

Secondary data collection method is adopted for this study since the study is based on factual and statistical values that are provided by the concerned authorities in US. The numbers are generated according the crime rate in US and its effects on the social environment and as well as economic environment. The outcomes generated through this are accurate and genuine because the figures are generated responsible authorities and that the researcher has no influence over this data. The sources from where the data has been collected are as follows;

- <https://data.bls.gov/timeseries/LNS14000000>
- <https://www.statista.com/statistics/200463/us-poverty-rate-since-1990/>
- <https://www.statista.com/statistics/191219/reported-violent-crime-rate-in-the-usa-since-1990/>
- <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG?locations=US>

### ***3.6. Sample Size***

Although the sample size refers to the number of respondents who are selected for providing the responses through which objectives are achieved (Henning, 2016). However, since this research is secondary in nature, the sample size for this research is the time period in which

the data is collected. Therefore, the sample size is 10 years from 2007 to 2016 and data related to determinants discussed is collected.

### ***3.7. Data Analysis Plan***

The data collected for this research is analysed by using statistical software of Eviews and the test of regression analysis is applied to identify the impact among the variables.#

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