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COUNTRY'S DEVELOPMENT AND SAFETY: VIOLENT CRIMES IN CRIME STRUCTURE

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Abstract. Violent crimes by the degree of public danger and the severity of the caused damage far exceed other criminal manifestations. Rapers disseminate the stereotype of aggressively-violent behaviour in the domestic and leisure microenvironment. These criminal offences are mostly condemned from the point of view of the general human morality. The aim of the present article is to examine the impact of socio-economic development level of a country on the level of violent crimes which are committed in that country. Successful prevention of a violent crime, which infringes on such important values as a human's life and health, demands scrutinizing of its causes. Any crime, the violent one in particular, is not as a rule the result of one cause but is a combination of external and internal factors. The qualitative analysis conducted within the research has proved the conclusion that there is a definite connection between the socio-economic development level of a country and the trend of the proportion of particular crime types that dominate in it. In less developed countries the proportion of violent crimes is much higher than in the developed ones, where thefts and other crimes against property prevail.

Keywords: violent crimes, crimes against property, developed countries, developing countries

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1. Introduction

Violent crimes are criminal acts where personal violence is the modus operandi, a means to further a criminal goal, and a motivational element. The basis for combining criminal acts in the given group are such criteria as a modus operandi of the perpetrator (physical personal violence, an attempt or a threat of its use), a deliberate form of guilt and the person subjected to the assault. In all violent crimes the mechanism of criminal behaviour is connected with aggressively-dismissive attitude towards a person, his or her life, health and integrity. Similar issues were previously examined by such scientists as V. A. Avdeev, V. Zahars, V. Tumulavičius and V. Sergevnin (Avdeev 2016; Zahars, Stivrenieks 2016; Tumulavičius, Ivančiks, Karpishchenko 2016; Sergevnin, Avdeev, Avdeeva 2015; Teivāns-Treinovskis, Amosova 2016).

In the structure of violent crime, violence is not only the means to further a goal but also a motivational element. This group includes crimes against life, health, freedom, honour and dignity. The largest share in the crimes against the person comprises serious crimes against life and health: murders, deliberate damage to the health, mugging and forced robberies (Latypov 2005). Their state and dynamics characterize the violent crime as a whole.

When defining causes and conditions that determine violent crime, it is necessary to point out that it is not the question of a particular separate combination of factors. Most of the reasons and conditions of violent crimes are a crime determinant of a system part in general. Among various reasons and conditions that determine unlawful conduct of criminals who commit violent crimes it is necessary to point out the socio-economic factors which exert substantial impact on violent crimes (Bayzakova, Social Factors).

Particular importance to determine various forms of violence must be given to unsatisfactory social needs (e.g. Starineca, O.; Voronchuk, I. 2015). The reasons and conditions for crimes are social by their nature as they are always included in the social contradictions system of a society. In the society of a transition period violation of this relative balance and a dramatic deterioration of social status of certain groups lead to increased violence. The chain reaction takes place: deepening of the economic and political crisis causes social tension, devaluation of traditional spiritual values, depreciation of a human life as well as rise in cruelty and violence.

In fact, the anomie theory of Robert Merton (Merton 1938) does not contradict it either. Social factors of public sphere are to be understood as peculiarities of a family, education, religiosity, distribution of wealth, urban or rural life, living conditions, social deprivation, public opinion, public institutions, organization of work, political structure and etc.

Poverty results in the appearance of lumpen, who cause dehumanization of society where poor living conditions, malnutrition, and drunkenness predominate. It is they who usually commit serious crimes which remain unreported and unregistered anywhere. Even ancient Roman philosophers spoke about crimes caused as the result of unsatisfied basic human needs.

The causes for some crime types must be sought, above all, in economic relations, in their contradictions, the imbalance of the economic mechanism, in flaws and inadequacies of the economic planning, and in the system of distributive relationships (Yezikyan 2011).

2. Economic classification of the world countries

Dividing the world economy into economic activity spheres and defining particular basic economic relationships among them help not only to analyse the development trends of individual countries, but also to compare them.

A special role in determining violence plays social injustice. It accompanies both the motivation of violent crimes and the motivation of their self-justification. Social injustice has been directed for years towards people, social, national and professional sections of population. As a result, it has been consistently forming general discontent with affairs, life, and with the authorities. In conflict situations this discontent easily turns into specific motifs of its violent resolution.

Economic condition of a society, low living standards of a large part of the population, social insecurity, unemployment, judicial disempowerment, and general psychological instability lead to the abuse of alcohol and drugs and loss of morally-psychological guidance. Thus, all this negatively influences the atmosphere in a family, at school, and in the workplace as well as drastically decreases the interpersonal skills and causes violence and cruelty.

The fullest picture of country groups in the world economy can be obtained from the data of the international organisations, of which most world countries are members: the United Nations (UN), International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. To characterise the economy of the world countries such indices as gross domestic product (GDP) per capita, industrial structure of the economy and knowledge-based industries as well as standards of living and the life quality of population are used.

In terms of development, countries are divided into the developed ones and into developing ones. Developed countries comprise a group of countries which dominate the world economy and which are characterized by

high living standards. They possess, as a rule, a large supply of produced capital and population, which is generally involved in highly specialized types of activities. About 15 proc. of the world population belong to this group of countries. However, they produce 3/4 of the gross world product and comprise most of the economic, scientific and technological capacity of the world. Developed countries are also called industrial countries or industrially developed ones.

The UN currently attributes to these economically developed countries about 60 countries of Europe, Asia, Africa, North America, Australia and Oceania. Among the industrial ones the most important role is played by the countries called the Group of 7 (G-7) as they ensure about 47 proc. of the world GDP and 51 proc. of the world trade (Bobrova 2004).

The economic development level of developing countries can be characterized as underdevelopment if compared with the most developed part of the world. Low development level of productive capacity, backwardness of industrial technical equipment, agricultural sector and social infrastructure comprise the main features of the economy of these countries in general. The most typical feature of underdevelopment is agricultural course of the economy and the proportion of the population engaged in it.

The analysis of the crime level and its specific structural elements can be exemplified by some developed countries as well as the countries of a lower socially economic development as it can help to determine crime structure links to the socio-economic development level of a country. For further analysis it is necessary to select some countries with high, medium and lower development level.

Where to be born index of Economist Intelligence Unit attributes such countries as Sweden (4th place) and Canada (9th place) to ten most favoured countries (The Economist. Where to be born Index). Where to be born index in the Baltic States is much lower, and according to the given research Estonia occupies 44th place. Turkey is on 51st place; it is followed by South Africa and Serbia: 53rd and 54th place respectively. India, with even lower where to be born index, occupies 66th place.

The United Nations attribute Canada and Sweden to the countries with very high human development, and they take 9th and 14th places respectively in the rating of Human Development Index (UNDP. Human Development Index). Estonia, similarly to the previous rating, lags behind (30th place), but it also belongs to the countries with very high human development. Serbia with very high human development occupies 66th place; after it there is Turkey on 72nd place. South Africa and India, in turn, are considerably behind taking 116th and 130th positions respectively. The latter two countries belong to the countries of medium human development. The Human Development Index is comprised of quite a large number of factors: life expectancy at birth, expected years of schooling, mean years of schooling, and gross national income (GNI) per capita.

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has also marked Canada and Sweden as having the highest Quality of Life index (OECD. Better Life Index). These two countries belong to the three leading countries of the highest living standards in the world.

Similarly, the World Bank data (The World Bank. GDP) based on GPD calculations per capita have shown that Canada and Sweden hold strong position among 20 leading countries (World Bank national accounts data). Estonia occupies 39th position, Turkey – 62nd, South Africa – 86th, Serbia – 88th whereas India remains far behind occupying 132nd place.

3. Violent crime and development level of a country

Violent crimes cover quite a large area of all committed crimes, and they must necessarily be examined applying quantitative analysis. It is these crimes that cause general sense of insecurity in society. As a result, every single society member can lose the sense of personal security. This can result in public tension as well as lead to the sceptical attitude to the policy adopted in that country.

According to official statistics, in *Canada* 1 949160 crimes (Statistics Canada 2002–2012) were registered in 2012, of which 1 190972 were crimes against property (thefts, frauds, destruction of property, and arsons) and 85010 were violent crimes (murders, attempted murders, intentional serious bodily injuries, or robberies). Therefore, there is one violent crime per 14 crimes against property.

In *Sweden* 1 402588 crimes were registered (Brottsförebyggande rådet) over the same period. Out of the total number of the crimes, 693377 were crimes against property and 102491 crimes were of violent nature (categories similar to Canada). Consequently, the proportion of violent crimes to crimes against property in Sweden is 1: 6,76.

In *Estonia* in 2012 40816 crimes were registered (Kuritegevus Eestis 2012), of which 22800 were crimes against property and 6752 were crimes of violent nature. It can be concluded that there is one violent crime per 3,37 crimes against property.

According to Eurostat data (Crime and criminal justice statistics), in *Turkey* 1 904500 crimes were registered in 2012, of which 287870 were violent crimes and 328446 were crimes against property. It is estimated that there is one violent crime per 1,14 crimes against property, which is much less than in more developed countries.

In *Serbia* over the same period 96,100 crimes were registered (Eurostat. Noziedzības statistika), of which there were 33,700 violent crimes and 35506 crimes against property. Consequently, there is one violent crime per 1,05 crimes against property.

In *South Africa* 608724 violent crimes and 530624 crimes against property (South African Police Service. Crime situation in South Africa) were registered over 2012. Thus, there is one violent crime per 0,87 crimes against property. In the country there is the situation when the number of violent crimes takes precedence over the ones against property.

India stated 2 387188 registered crimes in the record for 2012 (according to the Indian Penal Code, and not taking into account individual special and local laws) (Crimes in India. Statistics 2012). The situation with the ratio of violent crimes and the ones against property in India is similar to the ratio in South Africa. For instance, in 2012 there were 465055 crimes against property and 560699 crimes of violent nature out of total number of crimes. Therefore, there is one violent crime per 0,71 crimes against property.

Violent crimes in these countries, in relation to foreign citizens as well, are not conducive to both international tourism and investments. In a way, this leads to isolation and degradation as well as does serious harm to civil society functionality. Of particular interest is the fact that the crucial indicator in such calculation is the ratio of violent crimes to the ones against property as 1:1. With the higher ratio of violent crimes in respect to the crimes against property, security of the person and their socio-economic situation in a country undergoes qualitative changes. The country in general becomes unsafe in every respect.

Table 1. Country's development and number of property offences per a violent one

	UN Human Development Index Position number:	World Bank. GDP Position number:	Economist Where to be born index Position number:	Number of Property Offences per a Violent one
Canada	9	6	9	14
Sweden	14	11	4	6,76
Estonia	30	39	44	3,37
Turkey	72	62	51	1,14
Serbia	66	88	54	1,05
South Africa	116	86	53	0,87
India	130	132	66	0,71

Source: created by authors

In recent years violent crime has also been directly related to military conflicts, which inevitably leads to increase in the number of such crimes as murder, causing serious physical and mental harm, destruction of property, terrorism, crimes against prisoners of war, hostage-taking, and etc. Violent crime is also closely linked to the active arms trafficking, illegal drugs trafficking, and drug abuse, which results in the rise of crimes number committed using a weapon in order to obtain narcotic substances or in the growth of committing violent actions under the influence of drugs. But if one undertakes a direct analysis of a socio-economic state of the countries where now armed conflicts are taking place, it becomes obvious that these countries cannot in any way be considered prosperous. To put it differently, the appearance of this determinant does not change the overall placement of violent crimes reasons.

Violent crime caused by stringent imbalance between the aspirations of the population and the actual state of society undermines to a greater extent the foundations of a country, stability of society as well as reduces the socio-economic level of country welfare. Under such conditions the other extreme is possible. In fear of increase in violence in a country the society being of a relatively low development level may see advantages in a more simple solution to a violent crime problem – restriction of human rights and freedoms, which in the short run gives some results. However, such solution to a problem as a rule is not long-lasting. Furthermore, the authoritarian elements hinder individual creativity and business activity, which are prerequisites for social and science and technology progress.

Still, the results obtained in the course of this study must not be considered absolutely indisputable as the official statistics of crime rate and of crime structure may not reflect the objective organized crime situation in a particular country. The existence of a high level of latent criminal activity can drastically change the situation. Even greater distortions may occur if such a negative phenomenon as concealing less serious crimes takes place, not even mentioning the deliberate distortion of statistical data by the state institutions themselves. The aim of such falsifications may be forming of misleading picture of a human safety level both within the country and beyond it. As a rule, such situation exists in the countries with the authoritarian or totalitarian regime in the context of weak civil society if some elements of international exclusion are present.

In this case, a more objective view of violent crime can be formed by analysing the number of murders per fixed number of people: 100 000, for instance. Murders as a rule are hard to conceal and they cannot be as latent as other types of crimes because they usually receive a wide public response.

However, it is necessary to note that in several countries this rate can also be understated for various political reasons. Furthermore, some countries include attempted murder in intentional homicide rate, which affects the overall statistical results. In Table 2 the previously analysed countries have been placed according to the intentional homicide rate per capita (Homicide Rate. 2013). The given rating is based on the criteria of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC, The Global Study on Homicide. 2013). The intentional homicide rate is calculated as the number of intentional homicides per year per 100 000 people. This rate is one of the core elements to evaluate the overall physical safety rate of the population in a particular country or region. This index is often understood as violence level index in the society in general despite the fact that such correlation does not necessarily exist. In fact, there are other significant factors such as health care quality which affect homicide rate statistics. Moreover, the definition of intentional homicide varies greatly in different countries. For instance, different countries apply or do not apply this term to infanticide, euthanasia or assisted suicide. Nevertheless, this index quite accurately represents physical safety level in various countries and reflects to a large extent the state of the social climate and attitude towards a human life in general.

The general trend remains unchanged: in more developed countries such as Sweden and Canada the homicide rate per 100 000 people is lower – 0,7 and 1,6, respectively. In less developed countries such as India and South Africa there are from 3,5 to 31 murders per 100 000 people, which is a very high rate. However, analysing the positions of the countries in the given rating, it is necessary to point out surprisingly low rates of Serbia and high rates of Estonia. Serbia occupies 39th place with the rate of 1,2 murder per 100 000 people having surpassed even such a developed country as Canada whereas Estonia in this rating remains far behind (114th place) with the rate of 5 murders per 100 000 people.

Table 2. Intentional homicide rate

	UNODC Homicide Rate Position Number:	Homicide Rate (per 100 000 people)
Sweden	14	0,7
Serbia	39	1,2
Canada	46	1,6
Turkey	71	2,6
India	91	3,5
Estonia	114	5
South Africa	209	31

Source: UNODC, The Global Study on Homicide 2013.

Conclusions

Summing up the conducted analysis, it is possible to conclude that socio-economic development of a country directly influences the crime structure. As it is shown in Table 1, the more a country development measured by various indices of world organisations is, the lower the number of violent crimes in comparison with crimes against property is. In more developed countries crimes against property prevail, but in developing ones (less developed ones) crimes against the person, a person's life and health which are committed using violence predominate. This connection is so obvious that there could be no doubt about it. It can be fairly simply explained by logic.

Violent crimes are always connected with a quite serious risk. In a prosperous society such risk is not justified as it involves possible loss of a large number of various benefits. In a society not so prosperous, however, these losses are not that tangible. Frequently, violence is believed to mark some expressions of frustration and bitterness because of a person's dissatisfaction over the social structure and their place in it.

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