

Crime in 1990s. the
two writers suggest



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Crime has been a global concern for most countries all over the world. In their influential article titled *Freakonomics*, Levitt and Dubner give a vivid account of the prevalence of crime in the United States. They stated that crime had been growing persistently in all U. S.

cities over recent years and appeared to be a precursor to the demise of the world we knew. Murder, drug peddling, rape and robbery had become widespread in all cities and extensively covered by the media in the United States (3). Majority of experts in criminology predicted that crime rate would rise steadily to astonishing figures.

For instance, in mid 1990s, James Fox, an expert in criminology, predicted the impending rise in murders by youngsters. He suggested an optimistic and pessimistic state of affairs. On the former stance; Fox predicted that the rate of crime committed by teenagers would increase by 14. 9% in the next ten years. His pessimistic outlook suggested that the crime rate would rise to more than 30% by 2005.

The same pattern of prediction was upheld by several experts in criminology and political scientist. Bill Clinton, the former U. S. president pointed out this gloomy picture when he stated that juvenile delinquency would be among the top priorities to be addressed by future administrations (Levitt & Dubner 4). However, against all odds, the crime rate started to drop. The demise was astonishing in a number of aspects.

All states recorded significant drop in crime rates. The slump in crime rate was constant and decreased at an increasing rate in successive years. Yet, the drop was totally unexpected, more so by the same specialists who had

forecasted the opposite. The degree of the turnaround was shocking. The teen murder rate declined by over 49.

9% in less than six years, in contrary to what Fox had predicted- a 14. 9% rise in crime rate. By the turn of the new millennium, the aggregate murder rate in the U.

S. had decreased to its lowest figures in 35 years. A similar pattern was also observed in other forms of crime, such as car burglary and assault (Levitt & Dubner 4). The sudden drop in crime rate prompted several criminologists to propose theories to explain the phenomenon.

Some claimed that the booming economy in 1990s contributed to the abrupt turnaround in crime rates. Others claimed that the introduction of numerous gun control regulations reduced the number of guns in the market. The introduction of effective policing programs in New York City that reduced incidences of murder from 2444 in 1900s to a low of 595 in 2002 was also cited as a probable reason. These reasons sounded rational because they credited the drop in crime levels to human intervention strategies. For example, the introduction of laws on gun control was identified as one of the reason for the decline in crime rate (Levitt & Dubner 5). However, these theories were not necessarily accurate. In chapter four, Levitt and Dubner draw an analogy between the account of abortion in Romania and the escalating crime rates in the U.

S in 1990s. The two writers suggest that, in one way, the Romanian abortion narrative presents an opposite picture of the crime rates in the United States. However, the convergent point of the two phenomena occurred on <https://assignbuster.com/crime-in-1990s-the-two-writers-suggest/>

December 25th, 1989, when Ceausescu was shot in the head for outlawing abortion.

On the same day, crime in the U. S. had reached unprecedented levels. When crime rates started to drop all of a sudden and rapidly, everybody was stunned because it went against all rational expectations (Levitt & Dubner 119). The abrupt drop in crime left criminologists with one disturbing question: why did the crime drop so suddenly? The same experts rushed to propose several reasons to explain the abrupt drop.

Some of the reasons suggested included: creative policing tactics; an ageing population; over-reliance on penitentiary facilities; decline in crack and heroin sell; economic growth; robust arms control regulations; an increased police force; and other remedial measures such as gun buybacks and capital sentences (Levitt & Dubner 121). The reasons suggested above however do not explain adequately why the crime levels fell suddenly. For example, the rapid economic growth in 1990 was listed as one of the reason because it created more employment opportunities for the youth. However, this theory was not entirely correct. It is a fact that a thriving economy may render some crimes obsolete. However, this is true for those crimes that are correlated financial aspect, such as automobile theft, robbery and mugging, in contrast to non-financially related crimes such as rape, homicide and murder. A number of studies done indicate that a rise by one percent in employment levels reduced no-violent crime by the same margin. From 1990 to 2000, the rate of employment in the U.

S. rose by over 1.9%. Consequently, passive crime fell by over 39.8% during the same period. However, the major fault in this theory is related to violent crime that reduced at a bigger magnitude than any other type of crime (Levitt & Dubner 122).

Thus, the link between economic growth and declining crime rate was rebuffed. According some studies, abortion was identified as the main reason for the escalation of crime in most parts of the US. When Nicolae Ceausescu banned abortion in mid 1960s, all children born after the law was enacted were likely to engage in criminal activities than those born prior to the ban. Similar research done in Scandinavia and parts of Europe between 1930 and 1960 support this viewpoint. Research experts unraveled that when abortion was forbidden in these countries; women usually ended up resenting their children and refused to nurture them properly. Even when some socio-economic factors such as age, income, healthcare and education of the women were held constant, the researchers discovered that the affected children would still turn into juvenile delinquency (Levitt & Dubner 136).

Thus, according to the findings above, it seems the only solution to sprawling crime rate was the legalization of abortion. For example, when abortion was legalize in the US, actual birth rates dropped by over 5.9%. Also, the number of children under foster care decreased rapidly. Thus the legalization of abortion reduced the number of children unwanted by their mothers (Levitt & Dubner 139).

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Work Cited

Levitt, Steven & Dubner, Stephen. “ The Hidden Side of Everything”,
Freakonomics, (2005): 1-144