Contemporary Challenges
The Global Crime, Justice and Security Journal

Vol. 2 October 2021 pp. 227-243
10.2218/ccj.v2.5400

Crime After Conflict:

Understanding the Causal Nexus of Crime and Conflict Through the Lens of Security, Development and Governance.

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Abstract

Overwhelming statistical evidence shows a correlation between conflict and crime rates, both at a structural and individual level. This is assumed by many to mean that conflict is responsible for rises in crime. This article describes an alternative approach: that conflict is conducive to organised criminality, but does not necessarily cause it. By demonstrating examples from post-conflict societies, it is shown that the causal nexus of conflict and crime is actually security, development and governance. This effect is particularly pronounced where violent crime is concerned, but the inconsistent and often contextual nature of such crime renders any attempt to draw conclusions difficult. By framing peacebuilding efforts around conflict, and prioritising the neoliberal democratic model of the Global North as a cure to security and development shortcomings, crime is actually further enabled as the symptoms of criminality are not addressed. By returning the focus to security, development and governance, critical discussion may be able to cut through the noise and provide practical solutions to the crime epidemics characteristic of post-conflict environments.

Keywords: post-conflict states, crime rates, organised crime, crime and conflict, security, development, and governance

1. Introduction

Statistical evidence suggests a positive correlation between armed conflict and crime rates at a structural and individual level. This correlation is somewhat poorly understood, since official statistics are often hard to come by in conflict zones, and the spectrum of criminal activity is broad, which discourages generalisations.[1] This article aims to serve as a modest contribution to our understanding of this correlation. While the contention that conflict breeds crime has traditionally been a widely accepted one,[2] it is perhaps somewhat simplistic. This belief seems to be based on the phenomenon that crime rates universally rise in areas of conflict. But correlation does not prove causation. Starting with the claim that "[c]onflict… creates unique opportunities for criminality to flourish and amplifies the threat that criminal groups pose to security, development and governance,"[3] it is argued here that crime and conflict are both tied to negative changes in security, development and governance, both in a way which causes these issues, and in a way which is caused by them. In other words, both conflict and crime catalyse, and in turn are catalysed by negative changes to security, development and governance at state and regional levels. To assess the impact of war on crime, we benefit most from observing states that have had enough time to undergo these negative changes. For this reason, this paper draws its observations from post-conflict societies where the legacy impact on criminality can be observed.[4] Specifically, examples are drawn from Colombia, countries in West Africa, and the Middle East, although other states are briefly mentioned when relevant.

The nexus between crime and conflict is best demonstrated with reference to observable economic and violent crimes that are often prevalent in post-conflict states. Section 2 of this paper is dedicated to uncovering the factors behind these forms of crime in order to formulate a clear understanding of their true nature: They are consequences of eroded levels of security,

[1] For a more robust discussion on the existence of this correlation and the role of reporting, see e.g. Ekaterina Stepanova, "Armed Conflict, Crime and Criminal Violence" in *SIPRI Yearbook 2010: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security* (Stockholm: Oxford University Press, 2010).

[2] Vesna Nikolić-Ristanović, "War and Crime in the Former Yugoslavia," in *The New European Criminology: Crime and Social Order in Europe*, ed. Vincenzo Ruggiero, Nigel South, and Ian Taylor (London: Routledge, 1998), 463-464.

[3] Jaremey McMullin, "Organised Criminal Groups and Conflict: The Nature and Consequences of Interdependence," *Civil Wars* 11, no. 1 (2009): 75, https://doi.org/10.1080/13698240802407066.

[4] It should be noted that post-conflict societies are hard to define. The existence of a formal ceasefire, a common metric, may oversimplify the boundaries of conflict given that conflict and violence are not as analogous as this definition would suggest.

development and governance. In Section 3, the inverse position is considered: whether such crime can have a negative impact on security, development and governance in post-conflict areas. At this point, the hunt for causality becomes cyclical. Conflict is therefore best viewed as the catalyst of the mutually destructive impact between crime and development. Finally, this article will consider the legacy of crime in post-conflict contexts and will criticise neoliberal approaches to peacebuilding intended to reduce crime through strengthening security, development and governance by showing that in some cases, these processes can have the opposite intended effect. Here, the Haitian experience is also considered as an outlier in terms of its effective response to conflict. Colombia and countries in the Middle East, in contrast, have been characterised by ongoing violence and many futile peacekeeping efforts.

2. Forms of Crime

The ongoing impact of war on crime is most transparent in the forms of crimes that are most prevalent in societies affected by conflict. These crimes come under two broad headings: organised economic crimes and violent crimes. While these categories are neither exhaustive nor mutually exclusive, this paper suggests that they are sufficient to demonstrate some of the key driving factors behind the prevalence of crime in post-conflict states.

2.1. Organised Economic Crime

Many commentators have noted that it is counterproductive to view organised crime in terms of the individuals and groups involved, preferring instead to treat organised crime as an economic activity.[5] Under the logic of illegal enterprise theory,[6] the supply of goods through shadow economies is a product of global demand, and the chaos of conflict provides favourable conditions for such activity. Viewed through this lens, organised economic crime is not borne out of conflict per se, but is instead a reaction to the increased demand for certain products which arises in conflict areas.

[5] See e.g. Andre Standing, "Rival Views of Organised Crime" (Institute for Security Studies, Monograph 77, 2003), 59, accessed February 11, 2021, https://issafrica.org/research/monographs/monograph-77-rival-views-of-organised-crime-andre-standing; Peter Gastrow, "Organised Crime in South Africa: An Assessment of its Nature and Origins" (Institute for Security Studies, Monograph No. 28, 1998), 9, accessed February 11, 2021, https://issafrica.org/research/monographs/monograph-28-organised-crime-in-south-africa-an-assessment-of-its-nature-and-origins-by-peter-gastrow.

[6] For the best-known work on illegal enterprise theory, see Peter Reuter, *Disorganized Crime: Economics of the Visible Hand* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1983).

In conflict zones, trafficking can include illicit products (such as arms and drugs) and non-illicit products (such as natural resources, money and medical supplies). Where trafficking involves illicit goods, emphasis is normally placed on the societal harm of the goods themselves, such as the use of trafficked arms in acts of violence,[7] or the impact of the drug trade on transit and destination states.[8] In this sense, trafficking illicit products has a more direct impact on security, development and governance. Bolton et al. note that the global trade of small arms and light weapons directly contributes to armed conflict and criminal violence, ultimately harming state development by exacerbating instability.[9] This has been observed in several conflict states such as Bosnia-Herzegovina, where it has been argued that illicit arms smuggling was instrumental in the outbreak and perpetuation of regional conflict.[10]

Trafficking is not limited to illicit substances. Unlawful trade can occur with natural resources and legal goods as much as drugs or guns. Of course, development, security and governance are not as easily threatened by timber and medical supplies in post-conflict zones. Yet, counterintuitively, the trafficking of non-illicit goods has still been closely linked to instability in many West African states, such as Côte d'Ivoire's cocoa trade and the prevailing regional conflict.[11] While profits raised through trafficking natural resources can be used to fund and perpetuate warfare,[12] the main ongoing impact in post-conflict scenarios relates to the wartime establishment of shadow economies, and the long-term prosperity of organised criminal groups. Conflict intensifies the pressure on manufacturing and supply chains, creating

[7] McMullin, "Organised Criminal Groups and Conflict," 94.

[8] United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, "Drug Trafficking as a Security Threat in West Africa'" (Vienna: UN Office on Drugs and Crime, 2008), 48, accessed February 11, 2021, https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/Studies/Drug-Trafficking-WestAfrica-English.pdf.

[9] Matthew Bolton, Eiko Elize Sakamoto, and Hugh Griffiths, "Globalization and the Kalashnikov: Public-Private Networks in the Trafficking and Control of Small Arms," *Global Policy* 3, no. 3 (2012): 304-306, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1758-5899.2011.00118.x.

[10] Sheelagh Brady, "Organised Crime in Bosnia and Herzegovina: A Silent War Fought by an Ambush of Toothless Tigers or a War Not Yet Fought?" (Sarajevo: Centre for Security Studies, 2012), 16, accessed February 11, 2021, https://www.occrp.org/documents/OC_in_BH_ENG.pdf.

[11] Global Witness, "Hot Chocolate: How Cocoa Fuelled the Conflict in Côte d'Ivoire" (Washington, D.C.: Global Witness, 2007), 9, accessed February 11, 2021, https://cdn.globalwitness.org/archive/files/pdfs/cotedivoire.pdf.

[12] Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, "On Economic Causes of Civil War," O*xford Economic Papers* 50, no. 4 (1998), https://doi.org/10.1093/oep/50.4.563.

demand for everyday substances. An apt example is the smuggling of medical equipment to besieged areas in Syria.[13]

The inseparable connection between organised criminal actors and shadow economic activities has prompted many scholars to conclude that organised criminal networks are primarily motivated by greed.[14] Certainly, this can be the case – a claim supported by the fact that conflict is one of the major push factors driving migrant smuggling into and within the European Union.[15] Often, however, the background of conflict highlights certain contours of criminal activity which suggest a different primary motivator. The direct correlation between conflict and criminal greed does not prove the mutual interdependence of the two. Indeed, countries rich in valuable natural resources can enjoy peace as well as experience war. Some diamond-producing countries have experienced recent conflict (such as Angola, Liberia and Sierra Leone) but several others have not (Australia and Canada, for example). In fact, while mining and smuggling natural resources can fuel and fund warfare, it can equally be used to consolidate state power. The difference between these possibilities comes down to who controls the resources, and how wealth is subsequently distributed.[16] Read in this context, the fight for control over natural resources often observed in contemporary civil wars (particularly in parts of Africa), while inextricably linked to conflict through the funding of insurgency groups, does not imply opportunistic criminal greed, but rather confirms the notion that wars are won with capital.[17]

[13] Nasser Fardousi, Douedari Yasan, and Howard Natasha, "Healthcare Under Siege: A Qualitative Study of Health-worker Responses to Targeting and Besiegement in Syria," *BMJ Open* 9, no. 9 (2019): 1-12, https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2019-029651.

[14] Martin Bouchard and Carlo Morselli, "Opportunistic Structures of Organized Crime," in *The Oxford Handbook of Organized Crime*, ed. Letizia Paoli (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).

[15] EUROPOL, "European Union Serious and Organised Crime Threat Assessment: Crime in the Age of Technology" (The Hague: European Police Office, 2017), 49, accessed February 11, 2021, https://www.europol.europa.eu/activities-services/main-reports/european-union-serious-and-organised-crime-threat-assessment-2017.

[16] Richard Snyder and Ravi Bhavnani, "Diamonds, Blood, and Taxes: A Revenue-Centered Framework for Explaining Political Order," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 49, no. 4 (2005): 566-574, https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002705277796; McMullin, "Organised Criminal Groups and Conflict," 83.

[17]This helps to explain why Zimbabwe, which has previously resisted the implementation of international covenants, became willing to comply with the Kimberley Process for diamond certification, making it harder to illegally mine and smuggle diamonds. For more see Nathan Munier, "The One who Controls the Diamond Wears the Crown! The Politicization of the Kimberley Process in Zimbabwe," *Resources Policy* 47 (2016), https://doi.org/10.1016/j.resourpol.2016.02.001.

2.2. Violent Crime

While the use of violence in organised crime is usually rare,[18] there is evidence that in post-conflict situations, criminal violence (or the threat thereof) becomes more commonplace. Steenkamp theorises that this is because, in conflict, a culture of violence is normalised.[19] Camelo builds upon this groundwork to suggest that post-conflict environments are particularly politically sensitive, and that violence represents the residual aggression of conflict.[20] This theory is supported by the continued violence by dissident rebel groups as a form of residual conflict in Colombia,[21] and is one of the reasons that the "post-conflict period" can be so hard to define.

It is widely claimed by advocates of the "violent veterans" model that ex-combatants are responsible for the rise in violent crime rates in post-conflict environments.[22] Certainly, this argument has some statistical credibility as rates of homicide in post-war transitioning states tend to be highest in areas of combatant resettlement.[23] Common trends seem to indicate that the economic prospects of returning ex-combatants and the quality of reintegration assistance are key indicators of the likelihood of recidivism. It is claimed by Boyle[24] that ex-combatants are mobilised in two main ways: through dissatisfaction with the terms of peace, or through ineffective state enforcement of that peace. The former is particularly damaging since it amounts to a violent manifestation of the rejection of peace, and thereby a continuation of the conflict, albeit on a smaller scale. Either way, the existence of violent crime causes instability and harms security.

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[18] EUROPOL, "European Union Serious and Organised Crime Threat Assessment," 16.

[19] Chrissie Steenkamp, "The Legacy of War: Conceptualizing a 'Culture of Violence' to Explain Violence after Peace Accords," *The Round Table* 94, no. 379 (2005), https://doi.org/10.1080/00358530500082775.

[20] Heyder Alfonso Camelo, "Aportes para la comprensión de la violencia en periodos de post-conflictio/ Contributions for the Comprehension of Violence in Post-Conflict Times," *Ciudad Paz-Ando* 8, no. 1 (2015), https://doi.org/10.14483/udistrital.jour.cpaz.2015.1.a01.

[21] Manuela Nilsson and Lucía González Marín, "Violent Peace: Local Perceptions of Threat and Insecurity in Post-Conflict Colombia," *International Peacekeeping* 27, no. 2 (2020), https://doi.org/10.1080/13533312.2019.1677159.

[22] Dane Archer and Rosemary Gartner, "Violent Acts and Violent Times: A Comparative Approach to Postwar Homicide Rates," *American Sociological Review* 41, no. 6 (1976), https://doi.org/10.2307/2094796.

[23] Archer and Gartner, "Violent Acts and Violent Times." The reasons behind this correlation are highly debated due to the uniqueness of each situation. A full discussion on those reasons is beyond the scope of this paper. For an overview, see Oliver Kaplan and Enzo Nussio, "Explaining Recidivism of Ex-combatants in Colombia," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 62, no. 1 (2018): 67-68, https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002716644326.

[24] Michael J. Boyle, *Violence after War: Explaining Instability in Post-Conflict States* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014), 75-90.

Robust statistical analysis is difficult in countries with histories of extensive contemporary conflict given that the adverse impact of conflict on governance often renders accurate statistics hard to find.[25] However, the common trends highlighted seem to indicate at least some level of consistency with the key drivers of economic crime – low levels of security coupled with economic necessity. For similar reasons, the underlying causes of post-conflict civilian violence also vary between states, and behavioural data analyses are often narrow and non-conclusive. Nussio and Howe argue[26] that regional increases in post-conflict violence in Colombia are the result of authority vacuums when conflict actors are abruptly removed from certain territories, although this theory is not settled.[27] The normalisation of violence in conflict is usually seen as one underlying cause of its continuation after the post-conflict transition.[28] Indeed, Deglow associates the length and brutality of the conflict in Northern Ireland with the insidious and lasting continuation of youth violence.[29] The effect of civilian violence on post-war development and security can be crippling. In other examples, civilian attacks can stem from ethnic tensions, reflecting the battle lines of conflict and blurring the line between criminal and political violence, as was the case in Kosovo.[30] Political violence, which reflects the spirit of recent conflict, directly aggravates peacebuilding efforts, keeping trust in public institutions (a necessary pre-requisite for national reconciliation) to a minimum.[31]

3. Effects of Crime on Security, Development and Governance

Conflict and organised crime share a common goal of eroding state power,[32] which is ultimately achieved by fostering distrust in public institutions. Post-conflict states are usually

[25] United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, "Global Study on Homicide 2013: Trends, Contexts, Data" (Vienna: UN Office on Drugs and Crime, 2013), 78, accessed February 11, 2021, https://www.unodc.org/documents/gsh/pdfs/2014_GLOBAL_HOMICIDE_BOOK_web.pdf.

[26] Enzo Nussio and Kimberly Howe, "When Protection Collapses: Post-Demobilization Trajectories of Violence," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 28, no. 5 (2016), https://doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2014.955916.

[27] Luis Gabriel Salas Salazar, Jonas Wolff, and Fabián Eduardo Camelo, "Towards Violent Peace? Territorial Dynamics of Violence in Tumaco (Colombia) Before and After the Demobilisation of the FARC-EP," *Conflict, Security & Development* 19, no. 5 (2019), https://doi.org/10.1080/14678802.2019.1661594.

[28] Steenkamp, "The Legacy of War"; Amanda Browne et al., "Risk and Refuge: Adolescent Boys' Experiences of Violence in 'Post-Conflict' Colombia," *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* (2019): 17, https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260519867150.

[29] Annekatrin Deglow, "Localised Legacies of Civil War: Postwar Violent Crime in Northern Ireland," *Journal of Peace Research* 53, no. 6 (2016), https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343316659692.

[30] Boyle, *Violence after War*, 177.

[31] Eric Gordy, "Serbia after Djindjic: War Crimes, Organized Crime, and Trust in Public Institutions," *Problems of Post-Communism* 51, no. 3 (2004), https://doi.org/10.1080/10758216.2004.11052169.

[32] McMullin, "Organised Criminal Groups and Conflict," 85.

characterised by a dearth of public resources, which diminishes the capacity of the police to enforce the law. Furthermore, the rise of violent crime in post-conflict states spreads thin their ability to investigate criminal activity. When trust in public institutions is low, the risk of conflict or insurrection returning is high. In post-conflict Afghanistan, for example, executive and judicial authorities were perceived as corrupt, which made it relatively easy for the Taliban to assert control over many parts of the country.[33] Belligerents can also intentionally seek to cause such damage themselves. The frequent use of fake bombs known as "hoax devices" by violent dissident republicans[34] in Northern Ireland reveals an attempt to harm public trust in political authority as well as the legitimacy of the peace process.[35] Unlike real bombs, which have also frequently been used in Northern Ireland, hoax devices are simple instruments of fear and disruption, designed to attack post-conflict stability rather than human life.

According to McMullin, conflict enables crime "because of the inability of the state, due to attacks on its institutions and legitimacy, to counteract [criminality]."[36] Distrust in public institutions impedes effective governance and indicates instability, which is often used as a metric when determining state development.[37] This creates a spiralling problem for post-conflict states, where the negative effect of conflict can be exacerbated by a rise in organised criminality. The problem of drug trafficking through West Africa highlights this spiralling effect. Cocaine is transported from South America to Europe through West Africa, owing to the poor capacity of post-conflict states in this region to respond to organised criminal activity.[38] To compound this effect, those working for traffickers are often remunerated in cocaine, increasing the availability of drugs while simultaneously decreasing the availability

[33] John Braithwaite and Ali Wardak, "Crime and War in Afghanistan: Part 1: The Hobbesian Solution," *British Journal of Criminology* 53, no. 2 (2013), https://doi.org/10.1093/bjc/azs065.

[34] This term is used here owing to its widespread use by academic commentators. Politically these groups are usually referred to as "ultras" or "residual terrorists" since the term "dissident" risks valorising acts of indiscriminate murder. See John Horgan and John F. Morrison, "Here to Stay? The Rising Threat of Violent Dissident Republicanism in Northern Ireland," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 23, no. 4 (2011): 645, https://doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2011.594924.

[35] Sanjin Uležić, "'Doing a Number': Adaptation of Political Violence in the Aftermath of the Northern Irish Conflict," *Dynamics of Asymmetric Conflict* 11, no. 3 (2018), https://doi.org/10.1080/17467586.2018.1517942.

[36] McMullin, "Organised Criminal Groups and Conflict," 84.

[37] John A. Arthur and Otwin Marenin, "Explaining Crime in Developing Countries: The Need for a Case Study Approach," *Crime, Law and Social Change* 23 (1995): 193, https://doi.org/10.1007/BF01301636.

[38] UNODC, "Drug Trafficking as a Security Threat in West Africa," 35-49.

of capital, creating a trail of poverty and dependency.[39] This example suggests that organised drug trafficking is simultaneously a reaction to, and a cause of, poor development trends, which have been catalysed by recent conflict. It does not help that, as Castells theorises,[40] the Information Age has spurred a growing devaluation of the Global South as data capital gravitates to Northern metropolitan centres, which perpetuates the exclusion of underdeveloped countries from lucrative data markets. In turn, the rise in organised crime is a major reason for the drastic decrease in investment in the Global South.[41] This example demonstrates why fear of underdevelopment and poverty leading to conflict and organised crime has become the "focus of new security concerns."[42]

This phenomenon is not only tied to drug trafficking. Poor development and security are also frequently characterised by high levels of state corruption[43] and low levels of asset security and capital.[44] All of this might suggest that crime and conflict are intricately connected to one another through their mutual effects on development, security and governance. While some forms of crime are impacted more than others, the negative effect of conflict on these three factors might give rise to increases in all different sorts of criminal activity. The implication here should be that, when conflict ends, the cycle should be broken. The following section demonstrates why this may not always be the case.

4. Crime After Conflict: Post-War Criminal Legacies

Since crime thrives in conflict, it stands to reason that the end of conflict should herald the end of rising crime rates. Unfortunately, the experiences of many post-conflict states such as Colombia have proven this to not be the case. It might be more accurate to say that the adaptation of society and state authority during the transition from conflict to peacebuilding is

[39] UNODC, 48.

[40] Manuel Castells, *End of Millennium, Vol. III of The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1998), 161-165.

[41] United Nations Economic Commission on Africa, "Transforming Africa's Economies: Economic Report on Africa 2000" (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: Economic Commission for Africa, 2001), accessed February 11, 2021, https://archive.uneca.org/sites/default/files/PublicationFiles/era2000.pdf.

[42] Mark Duffield, *Global Governance and the New Wars: The Merging of Development and Security* (London and New York: Zed Books Ltd., 2014), 7.

[43] Agnesa Beka, "Some Criminogenic Factors Affecting the Appearance of Corruption in Kosovo," *Prizren Social Science Journal* 4, no. 2 (2020), https://doi.org/10.32936/pssj.v4i2.166.

[44] David Chandler, "The Security-Development Nexus and the Rise of 'Anti-Foreign Policy'," *Journal of International Relations and Development* 10, no. 4 (2007): 367, https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.jird.1800135.

mirrored by an adaptation of criminal activity, which also seeks to operate in the newly envisaged peace.[45] This means that effective peace-making efforts must be constructive in the sense that they must address the root causes of lingering criminality if they wish to avoid the crime and development spiral. The African Union adopted this approach to criminal justice reform by evaluating changes with reference to their ability to address economic imbalance, and their projected impact on vulnerable communities.[46] Similarly, Nicaragua enacted wide-reaching institutional reforms following its civil war, and now experiences significantly lower rates of violent crime than its neighbouring countries, which enacted no such reforms. This theory is supported by Rivera, although it is acknowledged here that the standalone facts are not conclusive in proving causality.[47]

It is important to understand the direct correlation between crime and conflict in light of other factors such as unresolved political issues or underlying social tensions. In other words, not all of the crime that arises in a post-conflict situation is necessarily a result of that conflict. The two may be influenced by other more insidious factors. State (in)security and instability – key drivers of conflict – are often prolonged into post-conflict periods, ensuring the continuation of criminal behaviour.[48] Here it may be useful to consider the examples of Iraq and Mexico. The latter, unlike the former, is a state with no recent history of conflict. Despite this, there are striking similarities between organised criminal activity and systemic security concerns in both countries. Williams notes that "in both countries, violence has increased enormously, kidnapping is rife, police are routinely assassinated, corruption is endemic, and criminal organisations are very powerful."[49] Both states suffer from similar problems with security and development, which manifest as similar forms of organised crime (both economic

[45] McMullin, "Organised Criminal Groups and Conflict," 91.

[46] African Union, "Second African Union Ministerial Conference on Drug Control, Annex A: African Common Position on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice" (New York: United Nations, 2004), accessed February 11, 2021, https://www.unodc.org/art/docs/Annex%20A.pdf.

[47] Mauricio Rivera, "The Sources of Social Violence in Latin America: An Empirical Analysis of Homicide Rates, 1980-2010," *Journal of Peace Research* 53, no. 1 (2016): 92, https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343315598823.

[48] Sabine Kurtenbach and Angelika Rettberg, "Understanding the Relation Between War Economies and Post-war Crime," *Third World Thematics: A TWQ Journal* 3, no. 1 (2018), https://doi.org/10.1080/23802014.2018.1457454.

[49] Phil Williams, "Illicit Markets, Weak States and Violence: Iraq and Mexico," *Crime, Law and Social Change* 52, no. 3 (2009): 325, https://doi.org/10.1007/s10611-009-9194-0.

and violent). This heavily implies that the causal nexus between crime and conflict is hinged on security and development and is not purely correlative.

4.1. The Role of Peacebuilding

All too often peacebuilding frameworks are fashioned and implemented by Western, self-appointed champions of liberal democracy. Because of this, the conclusions envisaged by these frameworks have a tendency to skew liberal, democratic, and economically deregulated.[50] This is referred to here as the neoliberal approach to peacebuilding, which can be blind to the root causes of conflict and may itself be a contributing factor to criminal activity.[51] A well-known historical example is the representative democracy imposed on the German Empire by the Treaty of Versailles, which many believe ultimately triggered the rise of fascism 15 years later.[52] The implicit yet inescapable lesson is that the harm done to security, development and governance in post-conflict states could be exacerbated by indiscriminate peacekeeping efforts designed to bolster those very concepts.[53] In other words, crime and violence arise as a result of the inequality and societal imbalance created by the imposition of Western democratic and economic standards on countries to whom these standards are entirely foreign.[54] The failure to adequately address economic inequality pushes the poor and disenfranchised further into shadow economies, not out of greed but necessity. Put in these terms, it could be said that McMullin's "unique opportunities for criminality to flourish"[55] are not solely the result of conflict but may be the consequences of ineffective peacebuilding efforts in post-conflict scenarios.

This theory can be observed in practice. Following the US-led invasion of Iraq, neoliberal economic reforms imposed by the Coalition Provisional Authority included the

[50] See e.g. Cedric de Coning and Charles T. Call, "Introduction: Why Examine Rising Powers' Role in Peacebuilding?," in *Rising Powers and Peacebuilding: Breaking the Mould?*, ed. Charles T. Call and Cedric de Coning (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

[51] Kirsten Howarth, "Connecting the Dots: Liberal Peace and Post-conflict Violence and Crime," *Progress in Development Studies* 14, no. 3 (2014), https://doi.org/10.1177/1464993414521336.

[52] For more see Mikkel Vedby Rasmussen, "The History of a Lesson: Versailles, Munich and the Social Construction of the Past," *Review of International Studies* 29, no. 4 (2003), https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210503004996.

[53]Michael Pugh, "The Political Economy of Peacebuilding: A Critical Theory Perspective," *International Journal of Peace Studies* 10, no. 2 (2005).

[54] de Coning and Call, "Introduction".

[55] McMullin, "Organised Criminal Groups and Conflict," 75.

opening of unrestricted imports and taxation laws designed to attract global businesses to Iraq, which instead increased unemployment and instability in the country.[56] Coupled with a power vacuum immediately following the removal of the Hussein regime, such threats to development and security open the floodgates to organised criminality.[57]

For a time, post-conflict rebuilding efforts in Haiti demonstrated the effectiveness of prioritising security, development and governance. Until the earthquake in 2010, Haiti's demobilisation and reintegration programme, following its internal conflict, represented perhaps the best example of effective national peacebuilding. Following an initially ineffective peace settlement, the continued existence of organised criminal gangs severely hindered efforts to rebuild security and development. Only after re-strategizing and focusing on improving the legitimacy of the government did these wounds begin to heal.[58] This shows that it may not be enough to simply address belligerents in the peace-making process, but that bolstering security, development and governance could be the best way to ensure lasting peace. If the negotiation of peace fails to account for the root causes of crime, then agreements designed to restore security, development and governance may only end up harming them. Attacking the root causes of crime in the post-conflict peacebuilding process is instrumental to the restoration of security and development.

5. Conclusion

The positive correlation between crime and conflict is assumed by many to mean that conflict is responsible for the rise in crime. Indeed, there is evidence to support this claim – in migrant smuggling, for example, economic crimes are directly enabled under the backdrop of warfare. Illegal enterprise theory offers a different perspective. It portrays economic crime as resulting from a global demand that is streamlined but not enabled by conflict. The smuggling of cocaine through West Africa is one example which demonstrates this theory. On the other

[56] Bassam Yousif, "Coalition Economic Policies in Iraq: Motivations and Outcomes," *Third World Quarterly* 27, no. 3 (2006): 496-498, https://doi.org/10.1080/01436590600587770.

[57] Shalmali Guttal, "The Politics of Post-war/post-Conflict Reconstruction," *Development and Change* 48, no. 3 (2005): 79, https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.development.1100169.

[58] International Crisis Group, "Haiti: Security and Reintegration of the State" (Policy Briefing, Latin America/Caribbean Briefing no. 12, 30 October 2006), 11, accessed February 11, 2021, https://d2071andvip0wj.cloudfront.net/b12-haiti-security-and-the-reintegration-of-the-state.pdf.

hand, violent crime may represent the most severe consequences of post-conflict security and development issues, but the inconsistent and incomplete crime statistics in many post-conflict societies render any attempt to draw conclusions difficult. Organised crime shares a common goal with insurgency: the erosion of state power. Put this way, the negative impact on security, development and governance observed in post-conflict societies is, at once, a causal factor and a symptom of organised crime. This suggests an alternative causal nexus between the two ideas: security, development and governance. Indeed, it is practically impossible to discuss crime and conflict without reference to these concepts. By framing peacebuilding efforts around conflict and prioritising the neoliberal democratic model of the Global North as a cure-all elixir to every strain on security and development in the South, crime is further enabled as its symptoms are not addressed. This helps to explain why peace agreements are often so ephemeral, and post-conflict crime rates so high. By returning the focus to security, development and governance, critical discussion may be able to cut through the noise and provide practical solutions to the crime epidemics characteristic of post-conflict environments.

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