



# The conundrum lensing theories, models and drivers in deciphering petty delinquencies

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## Abstract

The purpose of this review article is to explore the relationship between poverty, development, governance, and urban petty crimes. It offers an overview of crime, its typologies, theories, models and factors that constitute criminal behaviour in urban areas. The research methodology of this article is a comprehensive review of literature approach that examines global and regional crime discourses, with specific attention to Fiji. This qualitative approach involves reviewing selected published literature to build a comprehensive understanding of how urban crime is shaped by socio-economic conditions and governance challenges. It examines various crime theories and models to assess how underdevelopment, resource deprivation, and weak governance contribute to the prevalence of crimes in urban environments. The findings as per the thematic insights of the reviews, reveal that urban crimes, particularly petty offenses, are deeply rooted in factors such as economic underdevelopment, resource scarcity and ineffective governance systems. The interplay of these factors creates a conducive environment for crime to thrive. The practical implications from the reviews suggest that addressing urban crime in PICs as elsewhere requires a multifaceted approach towards the underlying causes in mitigating urban crime. By understanding the complex relationship between socio-economic factors and criminal behavior, effective crime prevention measures become central to urban populations in PICs.

**Keywords:** Crime, Development, Governance, Inequality, Poverty, Urbanisation.

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## Contents

1. Introduction .....	2
2. Models and Theories of Crime .....	3
3. Crime in Developing Countries.....	5
4. Petty Crime Factors .....	6
5. Conclusion .....	7
References.....	7

### **Contribution of this paper to the literature**

This article offers underexplored contributions by specifically focusing on the intersection of poverty, governance, and development within urban petty crimes, as a distinctive regional perspective of Pacific Island Countries (PICs). Therefore, reviewing global disclosures with localised insights has the potential to further advance understanding of urban crime in PICs.

## **1. Introduction**

Petty crimes brew in the shadow of urban inequalities with catalysing factors beyond resource deprivation, and challenges of law-and-order dynamics. Urban crime is seemingly performing a global presence more than ever before. Crime is a burning subject that has become more prevalent in recent decades (Soh, 2012). While the concept of petty crime is not new, its backward linkages among numerous factors are pointedly related to urban poverty, development and governance issues. In that, the realm of urbanism and crime remain incomplete without adjoining the supreme role of the mentioned dynamics.

Urban crime is certainly included in the long list of emerging urban challenges marking a strong global presence. Brennan-Galvin (2002) and Findlay (2005) point out that issues as with that of crime, are showing greater visibility in urban spaces today. Crime incidences may be linked to the levels of development (Arthur, 1991) given higher level of social disparity is a common thread between resource deprivation and crime (Toh, 2015).

Findlay (2005) states that crimes advanced with surging urbanisation<sup>1</sup> and urban poverty at the crux of it. In the same vein, the role of governance and levels of development implicating crime trends cannot be overextended. The impression of weak administration, corruption, underdevelopment and overall resourcelessness among others often creates a conducive climate for crimes to flourish. Considering the aforementioned, this review article addresses these questions: what is the petty crime scenario in developing countries; how petty crime thrives on factors of poverty, development and governance; and what is the role of said factors in relation to the Pacific and Fiji? Before divulging into the stated questions per se, let us first delve into the conception of defining urban crime and its typologies.

### **1.1. Urban Crime**

Identifying and settling down to a working definition of crime is herculean task. As has been identified in literature, the definition of crime has many versions that differ across countries and regions. Crime as an illegal act found in most criminal codes, has been a definitional grounding for long. Most criminal codes generalised the definition, compelling criminologists, legal scholars and others (like researchers) to describe it from a simplified viewpoint (ibid.). Zaidi (1999) describes crime as a rupture of a lawful proscription, an act that is punishable by law or a social harm that is forbidden by decree. From Tenibiaje (2010) perspective, crime can be described as deviant behaviour that violates the set norms and patterns of society. By and large, if the behaviour oversteps cultural, social, political, psychological or economic wellbeing, it can be classified as crime (ibid.). Petty crime<sup>2</sup> alternatively, is an “offence for which the probable punishment is no greater than six months in jail (that maybe) accompanied with a fine” (Warner, 2004). Crime as a fracture of a legal prohibition is well demarcated into legalistic, individualistic and social typologies (Clinard, Quinney, & Wildeman, 2015; Warner, 2004). The following is a brief coverage on crime typologies.

### **1.2. Typology of Crime**

Criminologists have worked on creating specific identification, classification and description of crime types and criminal behaviour upon the realisation that crime initially referred to a variety of behaviours (Clinard et al., 2015). The absence of an appropriate typological framework was blocking the way in acquiring common consensus on varied delinquent behaviours. Brennan (1987) says, ‘different purposes require different methods’. As such, criminologists worked out ways to slot crimes into different typologies (Clinard et al., 2015). Various scholars and crime institutions recognised this lack of distinctiveness, which gave rise to common groupings under the legalistic, individualistic and social crime typologies (ibid.).

A subdivision within crime typologies are its categorisations, the basis on which the typologies are meant to function. Most categorisations provide a typology for lawbreakers based on illegal behaviour and certain attitudes they exercise (Gibbons, 1992). According to Usman, Yakubu, and Bello (2012) four widely accepted crime typologies include: crimes against person; crimes against property; crimes against lawful authority and crimes against local act. Another aspect of typologies is the crime dimensions. Some key crime dimensions are the “legal part of the offence, criminal career of offender, group support of criminal behaviour, correspondence of the criminal, legitimate behaviour, societal reaction and legal processing” (Clinard et al., 2015).

Notwithstanding, crime typologies have been much challenged. Gibbons (1992) fundamental typological contribution had been criticised for its vague and overlapping definitions. Wrong (1992) critiques that crimes included under Gibbons (1992) offence patterns ‘are unclear and meaningless’. Therefore, coming up with crime typologies (its categories and dimensions) is one thing, and agreeing with a single typological framework, is another complex scenario. Table 1 exhibits the various categorisations of criminal behaviour. Clinard et al. (2015) group them under eight categories that include; Violent Personal Criminal Behaviour, Occasional Property Criminal Behaviour, Public Order Criminal Behaviour, Conventional Criminal Behaviour, Occupational Criminal Behaviour, Corporate Criminal Behaviour, Organised Criminal Behaviour and Professional Criminal Behaviour. The typologies that follow act as a focal point in understanding criminal behaviour.

<sup>1</sup> The ‘proportion of a country that is urban’ (UNICEF (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund), 2012).

<sup>2</sup> Warner (2004) groups misdemeanors into maximum penalties of six months to below thirty days in jail against infractions; the noncriminal offences for which the maximum penalty is jail time of five days or less.

**Table 1.** Typologies of criminal behaviour.

Type of criminal behaviour	Description
Violent personal criminal behaviour	They are often people who commit an offence under certain circumstances and do not have a previous criminal record. Such offenders are not reliant on any group, although their behaviour may emerge out of cultural or subcultural conditioning.
Occasional property criminal behaviour	Such offenders often do not associate themselves as criminals upon which the justification of their criminal act lies. They largely observe the overall objectives of society, general response is not severe in these cases and leniency in lawful dealings is common.
Public order criminal behaviour	Includes offences such as prostitution, homosexuality, drug use, drunkenness and so on. Such offences may not have a direct victim but are against social conduct. Only a small percentage of such offences result in arrests. Most of these offences operate routinely and perhaps in some cases discreetly.
Conventional criminal behaviour	Crimes such as larceny, burglary, robbery and others can be grouped here. Offenders engage in such acts from an early stage of their lives and can operate with gangs. Chances of sequencing and detention are common. Reintegration programmes are not effective, as they do not cater for social conditions that give birth to such acts.
Occupational criminal behaviour	These offenders are accounted for when occupational activities or business activities become the means to violate the law. Most such cases are tolerable while legal penalties are not too harsh (Severity of offence matters). Involvement of high profile or influential individuals is likely.
Corporate criminal behaviour	Restrictions and checks on trade, false marketing, exploitation of trademarks, insider trading, production of risky foods and drugs, dangerous working environment and environmental pollution are some examples. Such laws promote socially conscious entrepreneurial transactions and protect consumers and workers. Legal actions are sanctioned as corporate crimes continue to grow.
Organised criminal behaviour	Such lawbreakers pursue crime as a living and can be isolated from the communities and larger society. These offenders can have association with members of the society and chosen residential areas.
Professional criminal behaviour	Private property defence laws are used in cases of pickpocketing, forgery, counterfeiting and so on. Such offenders pursue crime as a livelihood, associate with their gangs and have high rank in their "world." Professional offenders require a high degree of skill and offences can go undetected because of low discernibility.

Source: Clinard et al. (2015).

Having briefly discoursed typologies, next is a short review on selected theories and models of crime.

## 2. Models and Theories of Crime

### 2.1. Theories

Various theories and models have been developed around crime as a phenomenon. The rational choice theory for example, explains criminal behaviour based on judgments and choices of an offender (Cornish & Clarke, 1987). The "rational choice" as the term suggests, assumes that criminals pursue to advantage themselves through their decisions, choices, abilities and information access (ibid.). Offenders carry out their cost-benefit analysis such as the type and amount of benefit, supposed risk, expertise needed and so forth. They term this cost-benefit probe as "choice-structuring properties". Johnson, Guerette, and Bowers (2014) under crime displacement theory, express that crime "displacement" is determined by the devotion of an offender, the degree of determination in identifying and abusing a substitute crime and the degree to which delinquents are aware of other prospective circumstances. According to Bennett and Wright (1984) study on crime displacement, the findings revealed that less than half of the study samples opted for an alternative crime (no displacement) upon failing at the initial crime attempt. The duo therefore proposed that displacement also relied on criminal opportunity structure, behaviours and patterns which, nonetheless, is circumstantial.

The Chicago School's human ecological standpoint explains crime through rates of population growth in cities and its consequential implications (Abrahamson, 2018). Stark (1987) however, argues that Chicago School's understanding of crime underpinned by city density, poverty, transient population among other factors, is just one way of looking at the issue of crime tendencies. Another criticism of this approach is that despite urban ecology (area of one's residency), most people do not transform into criminals within urban ecological parameters (ibid.). Stark (1987) and Gove (1985) add to the debate by arguing that many aspects influence criminal behaviour which are not rooted in ecology just as living in a slum is not a necessary condition for deviant behaviour, given all squatter residents do not choose crime as an outlet. Critics like Stark (1987) urge human ecological theory to shift attention from the environmental influence to crime and deviance occurrences from broader lenses.

However, the urban scaling theory does solidify urban population and its crime relationship (Chang, Choi, Lee, & Jin, 2018). Everyday routine activities such as going to work or shopping in urban set-ups increases a person's probability of victimisation, especially for targets lacking guardianship<sup>3</sup> (Boivin, 2018; Corcoran et al., 2020). Studies carried out in USA on nearly 250 cities and over 100,000 inhabitants confirm a superlinear relation between crime count and population size, and that an increase in urban population by 100 per cent, increases crime incidence by 120 per cent (Chang et al., 2018). Large population in most respects, may offer more candidates for victimisation. Boivin (2018) notes that huge populace whether suburban, visiting or a combination, create room for more offences. In opposing urban scaling theory, Leon (2019) says that larger population is lesser-expected crime targets as increased number of individuals provide increased supervision, rather reducing chances of victimisation (ibid.).

The social disorganisation theory bases its assumptions on hostile social and physical environments towards a life of crime (Breetzke, 2010). Studies carried out in Tshwane City (South Africa) found correlations between crime

<sup>3</sup> Refers to persons capable of defending an attractive target from crime victimisation for instance, security guards and objects that aid as deterrents such as video surveillance, locked doors and security systems (Corcoran, Scheitle, & Hudnall, 2020).

and social disorganisation (ibid.). Le (2002) believes that distinct acculturation factors and the marginalised environmental ethos need consideration apart from culture. Similar results were identified in Le (2002) study in Vietnam as it explained crime beyond ethnic identity and culture (ibid.). Yet, Breetzke (2010) opposes these findings by labelling it to be relevant for now only. As widely agreed in scholarly work, research information is time and nature specific, therefore, the findings may be deemed valid for a certain timeline. As stated by Clinard et al. (2015) 'all phenomena are unique in time and space'. Other crime approaches include the Disarmament, Demolition and Reintegration (DDR) that was used in Nepal to better comprehend urban criminality (Rozema, 2008). Upreti, Sagar, Sharma, Nath, and Ghimire (2010) on the contrary, critiqued that DDR failed to modernise the security sector, which the authors admit got amended by the time its successor, the Security Sector Restructuring (SSR) approach emerged in the face of law-and-order concerns.

Fading of traditional, close-knit collective lifestyle fast-tracked poverty and increased criminalistic tendencies. Arthur (1991) outlines, modernisation approach grounds itself on the rise of industrial evolution at the hands of agrarian livelihoods. A compromised subsistence lifestyle and birthing of a currency led modern society created the notion of 'haves and have not' (ibid.). To test modernisation theory, International Criminal Police Organisation (Interpol)<sup>4</sup> used crime data from eleven countries in Africa and found that emergence of industrial development did lead to a surge in criminal activities (ibid.). Otwin and Arthur (1995) however, disagree with such findings and strongly question the experimental, methodological and conceptual take on modernisation, underdevelopment and routine activities and its correlation between developing and developed countries. They add that a lot more needs to be unravelled before arriving at any such conclusion.

Rogers (1989) focuses on the colonialism hypothesis to provide counter arguments. Unlike other schools of thought that blame poverty and crime to be products of post-colonialism, the author opines against this generalisation. As outlined, the said hypothesis fails to explain rising urban crimes in United States, Canada, South America, Indonesia and Thailand given none of these countries were ever colonised (ibid.). Holding similar grounds, Lange, Mahoney, and Vom Hau (2006) suggest that the 'poorest pre-colonial regions emerged wealthiest in the postcolonial era' in justifying that poverty and resulting crime, cannot be blamed on the colonialism factor alone.

Brantingham and Brantingham (1991) and Cornish and Clarke (2014) shed light on the crime pattern theory whereby criminal's awareness level combined with certain forces determine their choices and "patterns". According to studies carried out, certain vectors define crime types and crime flow patterns (Blumstein, 2002). Using the non-parametric variation approach, football matches were studied as a possible crime surging factor (Kurland, Johnson, & Tilley, 2014). The study established that hourly dispersal of crimes increased in hours before and during football matches post delinquents' awareness of match timing (and duration). Prior knowledge of busy game watchers reinforced lawbreakers' crime choices and set patterns (ibid.). However, such findings are challenged given the lack of research on similar topics (football matches as a crime factor), making it a subject of further research. It implies that no matter how urban crime is viewed, it remains a deep-seated issue making it very challenging to understand using selected theoretical lenses, given socio-economic and political realities of economies differ by and large. Crime theories while useful, cannot be used as broad generalisations for all contexts and settings.

## 2.2. Models

Copious crime models are often developed with the hope of understanding and compressing crimes. Burke et al. (2019) pick on Packer's crime control model (CCM) and the Due Process Model (DPM) in stating that it regulates crime, adjusts policies, tightens criminal justice structure, increases police power and covers topics like crime sentencing practices. This model pushes for instant punishment compared to time consuming trial systems (ibid.). Conversely, the effectiveness of this model has been much questioned. While this model necessitates justice system to see legal and individual rights at the same wavelength, Burke et al. (2019) argue that striking the right balance between the two would be harder on ground realities. Meanwhile, Blumstein (2002) suggests that the justice system interactive model (JUSSIM) handles the criminal justice system in stages consisting of preparatory crime, arrest and release. It focuses on resources such as police, prosecutors, judges, prison cells, unit costs and suggests careful resource application (ibid.). Yet, in line with many others, this model is deemed to have certain flaws. A common drawback that soon surfaced was its downstream flow without adequate involvement of stakeholders (ibid.).

Studies aiming to understand causes of one race or group of prisoners superseding others are several. Several findings on this subject have appeared in many significant reports. Heinz (2020) suggests that a prisoner's race as a crime factor is a complicated game. Citing examples of Hispanics<sup>5</sup>, the author says that black and white inmates are counted as non-Hispanics in some reports and at a combined level in others, which make race-based crime data questionable. On a different note, the Becker model suggests that opportunity cost of time directly affects criminal propensities (Glaeser, 1999). The model suggests that an upsurge in criminality occurs only when the opportunity cost of time drops (ibid.). Drawing on a national longitudinal survey, Glaeser (1999) mentions that measures of opportunity cost of time had the potential to predict crime. Drawing onto the Ehrlich model in connecting crimes to perceived benefits while linking with empirical studies, Soares (2003) suggests that cross-regional differences in crime rates were largely due to income level or some measure of poverty. That said, the Ehrlich model, among other things, had been criticised for its inadequate attention to crime from a developmental perspective (ibid.). Therefore, various models and theories while vital, have been much questioned on its notions and relevance given crime is a broad subject to decipher.

The next part begins with coverage of crime and its trends through the lens of developing countries and PICs. This is followed by a brief discussion on three foregoing crime factors.

<sup>4</sup> An information clearinghouse, manned by criminal-intelligence professionals who monitor international criminals (Leon, 2019). Interpol does not have within its power to meddle with outside intervention or activities. It does not have enough answerability for its actions and usually goes unchallenged in many of its operations (ibid.).

<sup>5</sup> Out of the many definitions, generally, it refers to people from Spanish-speaking countries in Latin America (excluding Brazil) while Latinos are people from Latin America regardless of language (Lopez, Krogstad, & Passel, 2019).

### 3. Crime in Developing Countries

An increasing body of literature supports the view that developing nations stand out in crime and poverty statistics and narratives. As per [Elis and Liu \(2018\)](#) study, out of the eight developing countries that were selected for crime evaluation, Madagascar stood out with staggering figures of nearly 79 out of 100 on crime levels, Tanzania at about 63, whereas Nigeria and Malaysia each with nearly 65 on levels of crime. [Table 2](#) shows the levels and types of crime in selected developing countries that have scored between high and moderate (exception of handful of categories rated low) on crime levels. The crime ratings are indicators of higher social disparity and weaker law enforcement that many developing countries have in common.

**Table 2.** Level of crime in selected developing countries.

Country	Crime		Type of crime				
	Level	Score*	Worries home broken and things stolen	Worries being mugged or robbed	Worries car stolen	Problem property crimes such as vandalism and theft	Problem violent crimes such as assault and armed robbery
Madagascar	High	78.57	High	Moderate	Moderate	High	High
Nigeria	High	65.15	Moderate	High	Moderate	High	High
Malaysia	High	64.73	High	High	High	High	High
Tanzania	High	62.50	High	High	Moderate	High	Moderate
Pakistan	Moderate	52.20	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
Thailand	Moderate	49.95	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
India	Moderate	46.22	Moderate	Moderate	Low	Moderate	Low
Nepal	Low	33.00	Moderate	Low	Low	Moderate	Low

Source: Adapted from [Elis and Liu \(2018\)](#). \*Value varies between 0 to 100.

Also, distinct victimisation surveys conducted in many developing countries acknowledge urban growth and its poverty association ([Findlay, 2005](#)). Prevalent cases include that of Latin America and the Caribbean which [Bergman and Whitehead \(2009\)](#) highlight, are the regions with an enormous crime wave.

#### 3.1. Petty Crimes in PICs

The Pacific is clearly not immuned to the shenanigan of urban lawbreaking. From 2000 to 2005, the island country of Kiribati witnessed major population gains in North Tarawa and Kiritimati Island posing urban setbacks of overcrowding, pollution, joblessness, rising urban crimes and the like ([Lea & Jones, 2007](#)). In Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), urban growth decelerated ([Jones, 2012](#)) and according to FSM's 2000 Census, cases like thefts, vandalisms and alcohol infused disorderly behaviours became rife ([Noble, Pereira, & Saune, 2011](#)).

Port Moresby holds only six per cent of Papua New Guinea's (PNG) population, but caters for 30 per cent of all crimes, and many of its peri-urban areas<sup>6</sup> have witnessed mugging at bus stops and public venues ([Jones, 2012; Noble et al., 2011](#)). Studies between 2004 and 2007 revealed that about one quarter of the survey participants in PNG had been part of burglaries and more than 60 per cent as victims of household crimes ([Noble et al., 2011](#)). In Marshall Islands, a 71 per cent increase in the number of incidences against young people had been reported from 2009 to 2010 ([Connell & Lea, 2002; Noble et al., 2011](#)).

Considering Honiara (Solomon Islands), police records and studies indicate similar findings which are not limited to the incidences of assault and property damage ([Noble et al., 2011](#)). In 2009, Apia (Samoa) witnessed 13 and 11 per cent increase in burglary and theft respectively, and between 2006 to 2010, several crimes transpired out of breach of trust, theft, forgery, false pretence and falsifying accounts, while in Nuku'alofa (Tonga), police and other reports highlight offences of larceny, forgery, trespassing, shop and house break-ins including spiking armed robberies (*ibid.*).

As per [US Department of State Travel Advisory \(2019\)](#) Crime and Safety Report, common cases of property crimes are rife in Fiji ([US Department of State Travel Advisory, 2019](#)). The breaking of security features is common, and criminals can operate largely on ad hoc basis. Various petty offences in the country are of concern ([Government of Fiji, 2016, 2019](#)). The Fijian Government has been facing repercussions of rising crimes principally in urban centres ([Phillips & Meg, 2016](#)). Rapid urbanisation in Suva has resulted in several concerns without dismissing the fact that a fifth (for year and time in question) of Greater Suva Urban Area (GSUA)<sup>7</sup> residents live in poverty, improper services and squatters ([Phillips & Meg, 2016](#)). Supporting evidence from [FBoS \(Fiji Bureau of Statistics\) \(2018\)](#) confirms Fiji's urban population to have surged from around 37 per cent to nearly 56 per cent between 1976 and 2017, and that most crimes occur in Fiji's crowded towns and cities ([US Department of State Travel Advisory, 2019](#)).

Predictably, with rising population at hand, it becomes increasingly challenging to provide all facilities to all people and to control crime. Countries with reliable resources may manage rising population and crimes concurrently but for others, it creates an unmanageable negative environment ([Elis & Liu, 2018](#)). Fiji like elsewhere, faces its share of resource implications in the face of crime. As emphasized by [McCusker \(2006\)](#) and [Phillips and Meg \(2016\)](#) law enforcement capacity and regulatory elements are a work in progress. The combination of urbanisation, poverty, inequality, squatter settlements, unemployment and others is at the heart of Fiji's law and order outbreak ([Phillips & Meg, 2016; Reddy, Naidu, & Mohanty, 2003](#)). Property crimes are common in Fiji while pickpocketing and other petty offences occur during the day and at night ([US Department of State Travel Advisory, 2019](#)). Crime networks may target areas of least resistance, and a weak crime response capacity may imply, an easy space for crimes to survive in developing economies ([Adinkrah, 1995; McCusker, 2006](#)). The general observation is that as Fiji

<sup>6</sup> 'An area between consolidated urban and rural regions' ([UNICEF \(United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund\), 2012](#)).

<sup>7</sup> Comprises the capital city of Fiji, Suva City, and three municipal towns namely Lami, Nasinu and Nausori Town ([UN-Habitat \(United Nations Human Settlements Programme\), 2012](#)). The urban area covers 4000 hectares, forming part of the larger Suva-Nausori Corridor and is the economic centre generating roughly 30 per cent of the national Gross Domestic Product.

progresses and becomes prosperous, the volume of crime and crime tendencies may advance, putting immense pressure on Fiji Police Force (FPF) (Government of Fiji, 2013, 2016, 2019).

## 4. Petty Crime Factors

### 4.1. Poverty

The underprivileged are propelled towards crime simply because there is a serious lack of needs and a dire wish for wants. Petty crimes become a common way of obtaining economic profit when mainstream avenues fail to function in favour of the deprived masses. There is little doubt that factors of global poverty and inequality are more visible in the present century. Urban petty crimes are fast locating solace around poverty ridden metropolises, family breakdowns, societal disturbances, increasing divide between advantaged and underprivileged classes, unemployment, poor education, health services, inadequate infrastructure among others. An important feature in any city is the quality of life, and everyone wants a piece of this 'urban pie', be it by legitimate means or otherwise. However, Zaidi (1999) mentions that not all poor people engage in law-breaking and on similar lines, a study by UN-Habitat (United Nations Human Settlements Programme) (2007) identified crime levels to be drastically low in selected poverty-stricken areas.

Despite related surveys proving the same, Stark (1987) takes a divergent stand in arguing that class matters, given that serious offences are excessively committed by the underclass. A 2007 survey on poverty and extreme deprivation, ranked Nigeria as a red zone for the entire continent (Adebayo, 2013). The urban centres of India and Pakistan for instance, are juggling with social disorganisation, rising crimes, security concerns, cost of living amidst poverty (Hanzala & Iqbal, 2010; Wadhwa & Dutt, 2012). Likewise, Latin America is termed the most "unequal region" in the world, while delinquencies in Caribbean countries and Vietnam are sprouting due to factors of inequality, poverty, joblessness and rural-urban drift (Ayres, 1998; Berkman, 2007; Le, 2002).

Jones (2012) claims that urban population is susceptible to poverty in PICs, wherein, Vanuatu and Solomon Islands showing its prevalence. UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) (2014) highlights that the severity of poverty was around 6 per cent in Tonga and Tuvalu, and nearly 3 per cent in Vanuatu (at the time of author's writing). Various scholarships point towards Pacific's unemployment dilemmas as a driving factor for urban poverty. Between 2012 to 2015, the unemployment rate (adult) was between 33, 38 and 11 per cent in Kiribati, Marshall Islands and FSM correspondingly (Clarke & Azzopardi, 2019). Kiribati and Marshall Islands denote higher unemployment rates, making the scenario more vulnerable to crime (ibid.).

Jones (2012) states that urban crime in PNG is a survival mechanism. Most Pacific Island Countries and Territories have urban populations below the Basic Needs Poverty Line (BNPL) with vulnerabilities beyond criminal activities, governance, security, safety and social inequality (Connell & Lea, 2002; Jones, 2012).

In Fiji's context, as per Reddy et al. (2003) and Mohanty (2006) study, close to 73 per cent (at the time of authors' writing) of individuals moved from rural to urban Fiji (Mohanty, 2006; Reddy et al., 2003). Supporting evidence shows that Fiji's urban population surged from around 37 per cent to nearly 56 per cent between 1976 and 2017 with a fifth of Greater Suva Urban Area (GSUA)<sup>s</sup> (for years authors' mention), residents living in poverty, improper services and various other disparities (Phillips & Meg, 2016). According to Narsey (2011) the incidence of urban poverty declined in Fiji from 28 per cent in 2002-2003 to 18 per cent in 2008-2009, while corresponding rural poverty increased from 40 to 43 per cent (note relevance of percentages for the year's mentioned). However, many authors maintain that between 25 to 33 per cent of Fijians were estimated to be living in poverty, and some 54,000 people (note relevance of figures for authors' time of writing) were identified as suffering from food poverty owing to unemployment, inequality, land dispossession, existing policies amid other factors (Bryant-Tokalau, 2012; Chatter, 2016; Lal, 2002; Mohanty, 2006).

### 4.2. Development

Crime's link to development is not only deep sinking, its equally complicated. Level of development in a country is often associated with episodes of lawbreaking. Development often puts only a handful on the highest pedestal of economic success, while a majority get pushed out of the league. As cutout as it can be, "the most important exclusion, however, was and continues to be what development was supposed to be about: people" (Escobar, 1995). By pushing away the developmental 'ladder' (Wade, 2018) urban inequalities became more damaging.

Lack of "pro-poor" development policies, generate urban challenges. It is urban deficiencies like these that are central to the so-called 'wealth re-distribution' agendas through unlawful means (Brennan-Galvin, 2002; Muggah, 2012; Smith, 2019). Chances are that urban inequalities will remain a long howl unless global economies aim for well spread-out developmental strategies. In that, development in PICs while not limited to, calls for liberalising international trade, investment regimes, privatisation of state-owned enterprises, favourable investment conditions and reduction in commodity prices (Duncan & Nakagawa, 2006).

PICs development constraints may spring out of its natural barriers, size, remoteness and governing policies. Chand (2001) talks about economies of scale in Nauru and how it endures lack of fundamental services such as education and health. PNG's coarse landscape, distributed islands, multilingualism and other factors pose many setbacks for growth. This includes meeting trade costs to markets in the Americas and Europe (ibid.). PICs also endure weak ecological immune system paired with challenges around its natural resources (ibid.).

Fiji as a middle-income country, faces issues of racial tension and political divide which takes the developmental game to the next level. It is for this reason that Lal (2002) stated that if Fiji were to evade concerns of poverty and inequality, it would need to ration state services on a nondiscriminatory basis to all ethnic communities. Duncan and Nakagawa (2006) back Fiji's development on institutional empowerment and free trade policies, while Prasad (2003) roots in into addressing Fiji's institutional problems (for example property rights). Nevertheless, UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) (2019) outlines that Fiji's Human Development Index (HDI) has come a long way. As per Table 3, Fiji's Human Development Index (HDI) value has increased from 0.640 in 1990 to 0.724 in

<sup>s</sup> Comprises the capital city of Fiji, Suva City, and three municipal towns namely Lami, Nasinu and Nausori Town (UN-Habitat (United Nations Human Settlements Programme), 2012). The urban area covers 4000 hectares, forming part of the larger Suva-Nausori Corridor and is the economic centre generating roughly 30 per cent of the national gross domestic product (ibid.).

2018, placing the country in the “high human development”, with expectancy at birth increasing from 65 years in 1990 to 67 years in 2018, and expected years of schooling increasing from 12 in 1990 to 14 in 2018 (note relevance of figures to years’ mentioned).

**Table 3.** Trends in selected development indicators in Fiji, 1990-2018.

Year	Life expectancy at birth (Year)	Expected years of schooling (Year)	GNI <sup>9</sup> per capita (2011 PPP\$)	HDI value
1990	65.4	12.1	5,683	0.640
1995	65.2	12.8	6,162	0.666
2000	65.7	13.2	6,807	0.675
2005	66.3	14.1	7,536	0.687
2010	66.7	14.6	7,125	0.694
2015	67.1	14.5	8,391	0.718
2016	67.2	14.4	8,588	0.718
2017	67.3	14.4	8,799	0.721
2018	67.3	14.4	9,110	0.724

Source: UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) (2019).

### 4.3. Governance

Besides popular descriptions, governance systems may be put against two guiding principles: state and people. Not many will defy that failing states pose a herculean challenge. Poor governance has a key role in and against misdemeanors, especially when such bodies fail in rudimentary roles and functions. This in fact, concretises that weak governance may generate social inequalities. Studies in Africa reveal that urban crimes rose due to poor governance systems, limited infrastructure, services and poor policing (Owusu, 2016). While countries with robust governance manage urban population and crimes at some level, for others, the situation gets very tough. In ascertaining this, Boggs (1965) and Elis and Liu (2018) reiterate that speedy development places, increase burden on authorities in meeting public safety demands.

Without contest, robust city surveillance and management dynamics can make an ocean of difference in the lives of disadvantaged urban inhabitants. Sadly, numerous city governments may endure ill-equipped administrative systems providing scarce answerability or accountability (Devas, 2014). When robust governance tanks in any nation state or region, it has the potential to postpone development by leaps and bound. Studies reveal that contained by urbanisation and economic growth, urban crime rose due to poor governance systems, limited infrastructure and services, including weak policing (Elis & Liu, 2018; Owusu, 2016; UN-Habitat (United Nations Human Settlements Programme), 2007).

A surge in urban crimes in PICs, simply tells a story about existing areas of opportunity. Cain (2001) says some social and economic structures in the South Pacific are at the helm of crimes. Governing authorities struggle to provide active controls on crime and threats to public order in parts of the Pacific (Ranmuthugala, 2001). While the Government of Fiji (2016) acknowledges issues of deviance, Phillips and Meg (2016) mention that the Fijian Government fronts repercussions of crimes, principally in urban centres. Baba, Nabobo-Baba, and Field (2005) state, lawbreakers quickly thrived in the shadow of political instability in Fiji where petty crimes aggravated with wilting of law and order (especially in urban areas). As emphasized by McCusker (2006) and Phillips and Meg (2016) law enforcement capacity and regulatory elements such as effective governance are of huge concern. In Fiji as with most developing economies, economic and social developmental factors are critical issues central to crime tendencies.

## 5. Conclusion

Crime refers to behaviours that violate set standards and norms. Various crime theories, models and drivers have emerged to comprehend criminal behaviours and tendencies. The very desire of a metropolitan future has pushed many to the other side of law in the lead up to the demands of urban survival. As much as decisive authorities and agencies are fundamental in absorbing crime, various economies continue to be tormented with issues of crime and its implications. The conception of urban crime, amid its vast definitions and typologies, is an attempt to understand this dynamic urban issue. The interplay of urban poverty, development and governance as critical crime factors, seem to be at the heart of law-and-order outbreaks. Like many developing economies, PICs witness crime and its consequences against the backdrop of resource deprivation. The general observation is that crime as an urban dilemma, is a subject that will continue to pose various implications. In containing some magnitude of urban discrepancies and petty crimes, policy undercurrents in conjunction with international and national dialogues are vital. It would not be easy, but developmental and other vulnerabilities are areas of concern in the realm of urban crime, where amid other necessities, the hero ingredient is inclusiveness of underserved communities.

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<sup>9</sup> Total income earned by a nation's residents whether domestically or internationally, including income earned from abroad such as remittances and investments, and is therefore, a comprehensive indicator of a country's economic health and mark of market value of goods and services produced in each period (World Bank, 2021).

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