

CRIME AND DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA

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"For many, crime and development are so closely interrelated that there is nothing more logical (or natural) than to look at them in a causative, or at least highly associated manner" (Ugljesa Zvekic, 1990:9).

INTRODUCTION

A general statement often made is that there is no development where there is no peace. It is said that "African policy makers are keenly aware of the fact that substantial improvements in the economic and social situation of their populations are contingent upon the maintenance of peace. Without peace, little or nothing can be achieved" (ECA, 2004:3). Generally, reference is made, in the case of the African region, to armed conflicts, which are per se violations of the rule of law. It should be noted that armed conflicts are made up of or are accompanied of different other violations of the rule of law such as: looting, rape, homicide and other atrocities, trafficking in firearms, etc. It is therefore worthy noting that these are different types of crime and that crime is identified as one of the major obstacles to development. This is what the presentation endeavours to demonstrate.

Crime and development is a relationship that deserves due attention. A critique addressed to development administrators and the academic community is that, both of them, although for different reasons, have for long time respectively overlooked the importance of crime in their analysis of development and the importance of development conditions in the analysis of crime and criminal justice (Ugo Leone, in U. Zvekic. 1990:7).

The situation has a bit changed. But still, although there are so much writings about the issues of crime and development generally, very little, if nothing at all, has been written about "crime prevention and sustainable development (G. Newham, 2004:1). We believe that there is still a lot to be done in order to attract more the attention of development administrators, the academic and donor communities when designing and implementing programmes for sustainable development in Africa.

The presentation is an attempt to the above effort in demonstrating how crime affects efforts towards sustainable development and vice versa. Technical considerations will be then needed (See section 1). The Theme of the workshop is "Rule of Law and Development". But due to some conceptual difficulties: definitions of the concept of "Rule of Law" referred to (M. Stepheson, 2004:1-4), and to be practical, the presentation will focus more on "Crime of concern for the African region - as violation of Rule Of Law (ROL) and "Sustainable Development", with emphasis on "Underdevelopment". The aim of Sustainable Development being seen, as "improving the quality of human life while living within the carrying capacity of supporting ecosystem (Reed, 1996:17 quoted by G. Newham, 2004:2).

It looks at crime and development as highly associated variables and identifies other key-variables (intervening variables), which show how crime operationalised as independent variable, affects sustainable development the dependent variable (See the conceptual framework, hereafter p.6). It provides tools that might guide development analysts, donor community in their development programmes in Africa. One advantage of referring to all these concepts is that they

lead to identifying key-social actors who should be involved in the design and implementation of development programmes in order to ensure the success of the programmes.

1. FROM CAUSATIVE TO HIGHLY ASSOCIATED RELATIONSHIP

1.1 Causative relationship

In cause-and-effect terms, the independent variable is the cause, and the dependent variable is the effect. So, in constructing a theory, we would form an expectation about the relationship between the two variables based on what we know about each (M. G. Maxfield et al., 1998: 18). The study then describes the associations that might logically be expected to exist between particular attributes of different variables. Such a focus might exclude from the field of reasoning other variables, which would have enriched the nascent theory. A researcher has an explanatory purpose if he/she wishes to know the “whys” as opposed to simply describing the relationships (M. G. Maxfield et al., op. cit., p. 71).

This is why the presentation does not limit itself to a causative reasoning or relationship: The independent variable (Crime) causing (explaining) the dependent variable (Underdevelopment). It goes beyond looking at intervening variables and interactions, which show how the independent and dependent variables are related (Hirschi et al., 1967).

It goes to show that the above variables: crime and development are highly associated in a very complex manner (See the conceptual framework here after, p. 3) throughout a number of other variables. It shifts from the descriptive level to other higher levels of conceptualisation: explanation and interpretation.

1.2 Levels of Conceptualisation

It is worth noting that the levels are conceptual tools that might guide and help in developing programmes aimed at and also in identifying key actors for sustainable development in Africa.

1.2.1 Description

It indicates, in a binomial relationship, how the independent variable positively or negatively correlates with the dependent variable. The weakness of this process is that generally the “whys” are not answered.

1.2.2 Explanation

A third variable, prior to the independent variable, is identified in the process of conceptualisation. It is called “Antecedent Variable”. It explains the relationship between the independent and the dependent variable. We refer to the disappearance of a relation as explanation when the third variable is causally prior to the independent variable (Lazarsfeld, quoted by T. Hirschi et al., 1967:43). It is to note that “Explanation” is still a result of a causal analysis.

1.2.3 Interpretation

This is the highest level of conceptualisation. New variables are generated or identified. They are seen as intervening in the causal sequences between the independent and the dependent variables (See the conceptual framework), and show how the later are related. They also reveal the complexity of relationship between crime and development (G. Newham, idem). We believe that such a conceptual framework might guide policymakers, donor community, development analysts, and others in taking decisions, because it helps identify key-actors and gives them the

opportunity to contribute as well as play the expected role for a successful implementation of the initiative.

2. OTHER VARIABLES TO BE CONSIDERED

The following variables: economic growth, political modernisation, protection of human rights might be considered, because they are all believed to hinge, at least in part, on “the Rule of Law” (M. Stephenson, 2004:1-4). It is worth noting at this juncture that crime is a violation of Human Rights (Schwendinger and Schwendinger, 1975:133-134). All these concepts are to be kept in mind by criminologists, development analysts, policymakers, and donor community while initiating projects for sustainable development. The conceptual framework, here after, re-organises a number of related concepts. It is to be noted that concepts are generated during the conceptualization process of field collected materials. The specificity of the study might lead to other concepts that the presentation has failed to generate or identify.

3. A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

(Diagram not reproduced here)

4. CRIMES OF CONCERN FOR THE REGION

UNAFRI had developed a questionnaire on “Priority Areas of Research in African countries”. The data collection instrument was sent to all African countries. At this date, only 12 countries have returned the filled in questionnaire. One of the findings reveals by decreasing order of concern, the following list of crime by African countries.

1. **Transnational Organised Crime (9/12)**
2. **Violent Crime (6/12)**
3. **Corruption (6/12)**
4. **Trafficking in Firearms and Ammunitions (6/12)**
5. **Terrorism (4/12)**
6. **Trafficking in Women and Children (3/12)**
7. **Money Laundering (3/12).**
8. **Cyber-crime (1/12)**

Let us, by means of the above conceptual framework, show how through the identified intervening variables (fear of crime, failure of States to offer Public services, economic related crime and Human Rights), crime affects development or leads to underdevelopment and vice versa.

The material time allocated to the presentation does not allow us to demonstrate how each of the above crimes affects development in Africa. We believe that selecting one of them, corruption for example, will suffice.

In Africa, many people perceive corruption as a practical problem involving outright theft, embezzlement of funds or other misappropriation of state property, nepotism, the granting of favours to personal acquaintances, and the abuse of public authority and position to exact payment and privileges (Harsch, 1993:33 quoted by J. Mukuna Mbaku, 2004:2). It not only drains scarce state resources, but also hampers efforts at broader economic and social development (E. Harsch, 2004:2).

It is said that corruption costs Africa more than \$148bn dollars a year; increasing the cost of goods by as much as 20%; deterring investment and holding back development; and most of the cost falls on the poor (E. Blunt, 2004:2).

Corruption is a violation of Rule of Law both at national and international levels. And the notion that corruption adversely impedes development is no longer an issue of debate. It has a negative impact on institutions, growth and productivity, policy processes, property rights, and consequently, development.

UNAFRI wishes to seize this opportunity to offer to donor community, policymakers, development administrators and others concerned with the African region, its expertise in this field. It also encourages African States to sign, ratify and translate into national legislations the United Nations Instruments and others on crime prevention, that strengthen the Rule of Law and whose effective implementation leads to a sustainable development.

In the limits of its financial resources, UNAFRI offers to its member States, at their request or on the initiative of the Institute, the needed technical assistance, which is always oriented towards sustainable development.

SUMMARY

(1) The relationship between violation of Rule Of Law (ROL): Crime and Development or Underdevelopment seems to be overlooked by policymakers, donors, development administrators and the academic community.

(2) The conceptual difficulties: the definitions (various conceptions) referred to, raised by Stephenson might be an explanation of what seems to be an overlooking of the importance of crime in development analyses.

(3) As shown on the diagram (conceptual framework), these concepts are highly related. Overlooking of the concept of crime (as violation of ROL), weakens development analyses and vice versa. It also compromises the expected results.

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