

## ASSESSMENT OF IMPROVEMENT FACTORS VIOLENT CRIMES IN THE UNITED STATES

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### Abstract

This article examines the phenomenon violent crime which is increasingly becoming a prominent issue in the United States, where researchers are trying to see the relationship between factors such as the freedom to own firearms in the United States and social and economic disparities as factors that encourage individuals to commit violent crime, by seeking justification for individual behavior as rational action when viewed from that perspective Rational Choice Theory. It was found that despite the high level of firearms ownership in the United States it greatly influences activity violent crime and violent crime which leads to death, researchers still cannot prove that external factors such as social and economic inequality have a major influence on the motivation of the United States population to commit suicide violent crime. Researchers then provide recommendations regarding efforts to mitigate the negative impacts of the factors that have been explained, which are expected to contribute to good research that has been carried out, as well as future research.

**Keywords:** firearm ownership, social and economic disparities, Violent crime

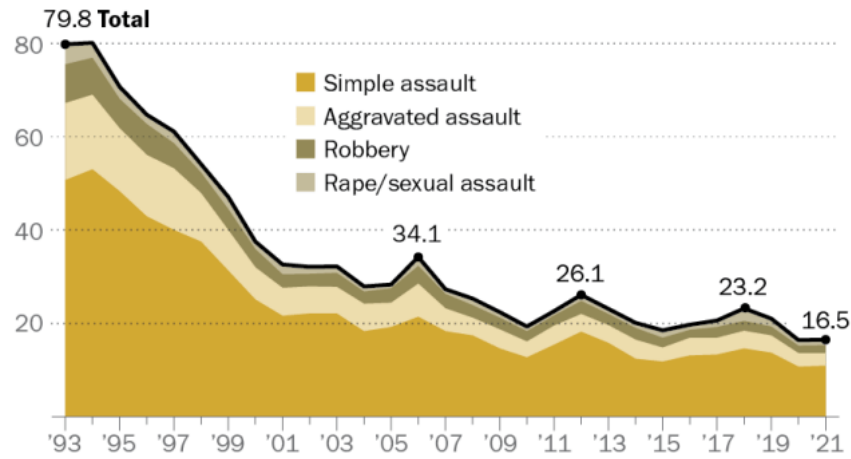
### A. INTRODUCTION

Violent crime literally means a crime accompanied by violence. Crime involves breaking rules while violence is the act of intentionally hurting another party using physical means (Felson & Richard, 2009). Uncontrolled violence has the potential to damage the social, political and economic infrastructure of a community and weaken relations between its residents (Bowles, 2009). The negative impacts of violence are very diverse, not only harming the victim, but also family members, friends, neighbors and other people who are close to the victim, both literally and psychologically. Violent crime can instill fear and feelings of helplessness in every resident (Lurigio, 2017). The United States is currently struggling with an intensification of activity violent crime, which triggers an urgent need to comprehensively understand the underlying factors contributing to these increasing trends that threaten domestic security.

In 2019, the total number violent crime reported in the United States was 1.2 million cases (Uniform Crime Reporting, 2019). About two thirds of violent crime in the United States can be categorized into aggravated assaults, which is an act of violence aimed at causing serious injury or injury. Some types of crime are commonplace and fall into categories violent crime of which is robbery, aggravated assaults, rape and sexual assault, as well as murder (Uniform Crime Reporting, 2019). In 2019, the level violent crime in the United States per 100,000 population is 366.7 (Uniform Crime Reporting, 2019). In the same year, level violent crime in the District of Columbia per 100,000 residents is 1,049, which is very high when compared with the average figure violent crime per 100,000 residents across the United States. However, in the long term, the data shows that the level violent crime per 100,000 population experienced a noticeable decrease from 758.20 to 366.7 in 1991 and 2019 (Uniform Crime Reporting, 2019).

## Federal surveys show no increase in U.S. violent crime rate since start of the pandemic

*Violent victimizations per 1,000 Americans ages 12 and older*



Note: Data for 2006 is not comparable to other years.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics.

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Figure 1. Levels Violent Crime per 1,000 People in the United States Year to Year

Annual government survey recorded by Bureau of Justice Statistics shows that there has been no increase in recent years in the rate violent crime in the United States. In 2021, there were 16.5 acts violent crime for every 1,000 Americans aged 12 and over. This figure has not changed significantly from the previous year, is lower than before the pandemic, and far below the figure recorded in the 1990s, according to National Crime Victimization Survey (Gramlich, 2022). These findings provide a broader context for understanding the condition violent crime currently in the United States.

### U.S. murder rate rose sharply in 2020, but remains below previous highs

*Murders per 100,000 people in the U.S.*



Note: 2020 data is provisional.  
Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

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Figure 2. Murder Rates per 100,000 People in the United States by Year

However, despite the level violent crime overall in the United States does not appear to have increased in recent years, form violent crimThe most serious e, namely murder, experienced a significant increase during the pandemic. Neither the FBI norCenters for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recorded an increase of approximately 30% in homicides in the United States between 2019 and 2020, which is one of the largest annual increases ever recorded. Data provided by the FBI and CDC shows that the number of homicides continues to increase in 2021 (Gramlich, 2022).

Crime rates vary across different regions of the United States, from states to cities to places within cities. Studying these variations is very important to understand the causes and consequences of violence against victims and to produce strategies to at least reduce the negative impacts and prevent crimes from occurring. It is important to understand how crime rates vary across different communities. It becomes vital to understand how factors such as poverty, gun ownership rates, social mobility, and population density influence activity violent crime in the United States.

## B. LITERATURE REVIEW

This research design will use a theory known asThe Rational Choice Theory which was initiated by Gary S. Becker. This theory offers a framework for understanding and is often used to formally model social and economic behavior. The basic premise of rational choice theory is that social behavior as a whole is the result of the behavior of individual actors, each of whom makes their individual decisions. This theory also focuses on the determining factors of individual choice (methodological individualism). Rational choice theory has the

basic assumption that each individual has his own priorities in determining his choice among a series of existing options which allows each individual to express or make decisions regarding his actions (Becker, 1974). Using this theory, analyze the factors that influence activity violent crime in the United States, such as non-binding gun ownership policies and socio-economic disparities, can be approached through a rational decision-making perspective.

In relation to crime, rational choice theory argues that individuals who commit crimes are rational perpetrators because their choice to commit crimes is considered to provide the highest benefits or advantages for them. This means that criminals consciously make decisions to fulfill what they feel is important, either for their survival or simply to seek their own satisfaction.

### **C. RESEARCH METHODS**

This article was written with reference to qualitative research methods, where this method carries out research on data with a philosophical basis to make sense of a phenomenon which is used to research the phenomenon in a scientific setting, which emphasizes meaning through the use of instruments and processes, which involve collection strategies. data to qualitative analysis (Sugiyono, 2017). The data sources for this research are taken from various secondary sources in the form of writings (books, essays, journals, official government websites, etc.) which will later be used as support and reference sources for the research.

### **D. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

In the United States, firearm violence is the third leading cause of death, which research shows causes more than 36,000 deaths and 74,000 injuries each year (Siegel, et al., 2013). In the decade leading to 2022, more than 300,000 deaths occurred due to firearm use in the United States, exceeding rates reported in other advanced industrial countries (Iroku-Malize and Grissom). For example, the United Kingdom with a population of around 56 million people reports around 50-60 deaths per year involving firearm violence, while the United States with a much larger population reports more than 160 times as many deaths from firearms (Weller, 2018).

It is estimated that personal gun ownership in the United States reached 30%, and an additional 11% of Americans lived with someone who owned a gun in 2017 (Gramlich and Schaeffer, 2019). Some of the reasons found for carrying a firearm include protection of others (anticipation of being a victim in the future or experience of being victimized in the past) to reasons such as hunting or shooting sports (Schleimer, et al., 2019). The majority of firearm-related injuries and deaths occur as a result of intentional acts (62% due to suicide and 35% due to homicide), whereas only 2% of firearm-related injuries and deaths occur as a result of unintentional acts or accidents (e.g. , unsafe storage) (Fowler, et al., 2015).

### Mass shootings in the US are on the rise

Incidents in which four or more people were killed or injured

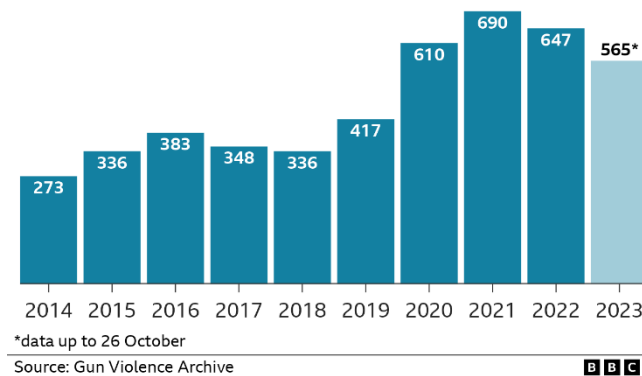


Figure 3. Number of Mass Shooting Incidents in the United States from Year to Year

As far as 2023 goes, the BBC reports that according to data compiled by Gun Violence Archive, there have been more than 200 mass shootings across the United States. A mass shooting can be categorized as such if the incident involves at least four injured or dead victims. The figures recorded include shootings that occurred in homes and public places. In recent times, there have been two mass shootings in Texas - five people were killed at a home in Cleveland, north of Houston, and eight people were killed at a shopping center in Allen, near Dallas. In each of the past three years, there have been more than 600 mass shootings, nearly two per day on average. The deadliest recent mass shooting attack was in Las Vegas in 2017, with no less than 50 people killed and 500 others injured. However, most mass shootings leave fewer than 10 people dead (BBC, 2023).

Firearm violence is a complex problem. One of the main obstacles to understanding the extent and how often firearm-related violence occurs is the lack of detailed scientific research on the issue. Research on gun violence takes up less than 0.09% of the annual budget Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Rajan, et al., 2018). Further research on gun violence is indeed severely limited by the Dickey Amendment, first passed in 1996 and implemented annually in the budget, which prohibits the use of federal funds to promote or advocate gun control (Rostron, 2018).

The lack of comprehensive and universal background checks for firearms sales is one of the primary factors that helps maintain the phenomenon of gun violence as an ongoing problem. Of the 17 million people who submitted background checks to purchase or transfer ownership of a firearm in 2010, less than 0.5% were denied approval to purchase (FBI, 2014). Currently, background checks are only required when transfers are made by licensed retail businesses, and nearly 40% of firearm transfers in recent years were made privately (Miller, et al., 2017). Thus, nearly a quarter of individuals who acquired a firearm in the last two years did so without undergoing a background check (Miller, et al., 2017). One study evaluated the relationship between the type of background information required by states before purchasing a firearm and the number of deaths due to homicide and suicide by gun (Anestis, et al., 2017). It was found that the number of deaths due to firearm homicides appeared to be lower in countries that comprehensively screen consumers' status rather than only conducting criminal background checks (Sen & Panjamapiron, 2012).

Research supports evidence that comprehensive and universal background checks can limit firearm-related crime, and enforcement of these laws and policies can prevent firearm violence. It is important to focus on gun control. A comprehensive background check must be

conducted for persons who intend to own a firearm. People with diagnosed mental health conditions should not be allowed to own firearms. Possession of assault firearms should be banned completely. It is important to treat violent crime as a serious public health and safety issue. Effective media campaigns and technology should be used to educate the public about the negative impacts of violent crime alongside local programs to improve awareness communities that will help reduce violent crime.

### **Social and Economic Inequality**

There are economic reasons why people living in poverty commit crime. Poverty is categorized as a condition where a group of people do not have the minimum income or material wealth to meet basic living needs. The status of the United States in the eyes of the international community as a country that can meet its needs still means that the United States cannot escape poverty, with this phenomenon still mushrooming in various corners of the United States. However, the United States has always been active in trying to overcome this problem with various efforts such as era legislation New Deal during Great Depression, the War on Poverty program carried out in the 1960s, to efforts to reduce poverty rates during the Great Recession in 2008 (Quednau, 2021).

The United States government has two benchmarks for categorizing poverty: the Poverty Threshold established by the United States Census Bureau, recorded for statistical purposes, and the poverty guidelines issued by the Department of Health and Human Services, used for administrative purposes. The poverty threshold defines poverty as a lack of income. According to the United States Census Bureau, the official poverty rate in 2019 was 10.5 percent and approximately 34.0 million people were in poverty, which is one of the lowest points ever recorded due to slow economic growth (Quednau, 2021).

Increased activity violent crime is strongly related to macroeconomic indicators (consumer pessimism, poverty, unemployment, and inflation) from 1973 to 2000, but is less visible from 2001 to 2011 (Lauritsen, et al., 2014). In particular, macroeconomic factors are correlated with violent crime among minority men before 2000, but not after 2000 (Lauritsen, et al., 2014). Likewise, macroeconomic indicators are related to violent crime against women from 1973 to 2000, but not thereafter (from 2001 to 2011) (Lurigio & Staton, 2019). In looking at the relationship between economic theory and violent crime, the economic recession of 2007 to 2009 is expected to produce a substantial increase in trends violent crime, but no subgroup experienced an increase violent crime means in 2011 when compared with data in 2007 (Lauritsen, et al., 2014).

General trends in violence rates nationwide can mask trends in demographic categories and obscure how violent crime can be influenced by macroeconomic conditions such as economic inequality (Lauritsen, et al., 2014). Broadly speaking, Black and Latino people have lower economic status in the United States and are therefore more vulnerable than White people to economic setbacks and violent crime (Lauritsen & Heimer, 2010). Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that consumer pessimism and violence against minorities will be related. However, minority groups vulnerable to persecution did not experience increased levels of violence in 2011 compared with the period from 2007 to 2009, when the United States faced its worst economic downturn in 80 years. Lack of significant relationship between macroeconomic indicators and violent crime on victimization after 2000, especially for minorities, may be explained in part by changes in criminal justice policy that affected the performance of policing, incarceration, and gun law enforcement in urban areas. The growth of drug markets in rural areas and a reduction in the concentration of drug markets in urban areas can also help reduce the negative impact of the recession on urban communities (Lauritsen, et al., 2014).

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Other influencing factors may include changes in social welfare policies, such as the implementation of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (formerly known as food stamps), which increased the number of people eligible for assistance, and the federal Emergency Pension Program created in 2008 temporarily extended the assistance provided to the unemployed. These programs can weaken the relationship between macroeconomic factors and violence against victims (Lauritsen, et al., 2014).

## E. CONCLUSION

Violent crime is a long-standing problem in the United States. Although the action figures are categorized into violent crime has not increased in recent years, and has improved greatly when compared with the number of cases violent crime before 2000, figures violent crime in the United States is relatively high when compared with other developed countries in the world. Moreover, if we talk about the tragedy of murder and violence related to firearms, the United States can be said to be an unsafe country, with high rates of both crimes which are included in the violent crime the.

By examining the two factors that researchers feel are influential and interesting factors to study, it was found that the high rate of private firearm ownership in the United States and the weak regulations and requirements required to own a firearm have a significant influence on the high rate.violent crime involving firearms. Therefore, it is necessary to establish better regulations that can overcome the negative impacts of firearm ownership in the United States, by carrying out more thorough background checks and other business efforts.

It could be said that the high rate of firearm ownership in the United States plays a role in making it easier for violent crime to be committed and increasing the death rate in every violent crime incident that occurs. However, firearms are nothing more than instruments. To further look at the driving factors that make individuals commit violent crimes, researchers use social and economic inequality as variables studied in influencing individuals to commit violent crimes as a rational choice in order to gain profit. However, no convincing explanation was found regarding the poverty and violent crime rates, where if you look at the number of violent crime cases during the Great Recession, which was one of the biggest economic setbacks for the United States in history, the violent crime rate did not increase. Therefore, further research can be carried out to explain the factors driving violent crime, especially from a psychological perspective, where external factors such as social and economic disparities do not show signs of a significant influence on the increase or decrease in the number of violent crime cases in the United States.

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