

# REGULATING PREVENTIVE MEASURES IN ADDRESSING SOCIOECONOMIC DETERMINANTS OF CRIME: SOCIOLEGAL AND ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS

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## Abstract

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The COVID-19 pandemic has had a negative impact on the health and economy of people around the world. In addition, lack of access to income and social restrictions have increased the crime rate related to COVID-19. In this context, this study seeks to investigate the effect of the pandemic, especially social restrictions on the increase in crime. Furthermore, this study aims to formulate policies that are interrelated between socioeconomic pressures during a pandemic and crime. This study is formulated based on the theory of socioeconomic determinants of crime from Buonanno (2003), while the theorization of the relationship between pressure as the effect of pandemics and its use as crime legitimacy is adopted from Agnew (2006) and Green (2020). However, the focus and formulation of the socioeconomic determinants of crime, especially during the COVID-19 period, have rarely been examined in previous studies. To fill this void, this research was conducted using a normative-empirical approach in a qualitative design. The results show that COVID-19 has influenced the pattern of crime in society. In this context, clearer governance is needed to modify the negative effects of the pandemic which is adjusted to each of the socioeconomic determinant. Furthermore, regulations and targeted frameworks need to be integrated into areas related to business, tourism, and industry to absorb labor and minimize unemployment.

**Keywords:** Governance, Socioeconomic Determinants, Crime, COVID-19 Pandemic, Regulatory Measures

**Authors' individual contribution:** Conceptualization — U.E.; Methodology — N.K.S.; Investigation — U.E.; Resources — U.E. and N.K.S.; Writing — U.E. and N.K.S.; Supervision — U.E.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Indonesia is one of the countries that has not yet implemented a full-scale national lockdown policy. One reason is

the impact of politics on the economy. Although the government did not impose a lockdown, it has responded to the situation by issuing policies it sees fit to stabilize the economy, including quarantines in hard-hit areas. The basis for the local quarantine

policy is Law No. 6 of 2018. According to the law, quarantines are implemented to protect communities from disease and other causes that endanger public health. In quarantine policies, both central and local governments are responsible for ensuring that communities are healthy and meeting community needs. Lockdowns and social distancing guidelines are urgent solutions being implemented in many countries due to COVID-19 (Mukharom & Aravik, 2020). These guidelines are considered adequate to minimize the spread of COVID-19 (Yunus & Rezki, 2020).

Social restrictions have limited social and economic activities. Many companies and industries are laying off employees due to the disruption of low market demand due to the pandemic. This, in turn, raises socioeconomic problems as a pandemic effect. In addition to the decline in individual incomes, the social aspect that is affected by these curbs is the crime of individuals affected by the negative effects of COVID-19. For example, national data reveals an increase in criminal cases by 10% at the start of the pandemic in 2020, with the types of cases being robbery, burglary, violent theft, automotive theft, drug abuse, and fraud. In particular, the Bali police recorded a 19.72% increase in crime from the pre-pandemic period, with the most common types of crime being theft, mugging and minimarket robbery.

Various theories suggest that there is a possible link between restrictions on social activities caused by economic crises, pandemics, natural disasters or wars and crime rates. From a psychological point of view, limiting individual and social activities can lead to stress, anger, strained relationships, and a lack of control over the behavior of others (Agnew, 2006). This increase in various types of crime is in accordance with the results of various previous studies (Jemberie et al., 2020; Spallini et al., 2022). It, in turn, raises the need for a more in-depth investigation into the relationship between stresses resulting from the pandemic and crime rates. Previous studies have examined this matter (Nivette et al., 2021; Meyer et al., 2022; Chen et al., 2021). However, the focus and formulation of the socioeconomic determinants of crime, as well as the formulation of policies and governance, especially during the COVID-19 period, have rarely been investigated in previous studies. To fill this void, this study examined the effect of the pandemic, particularly social restrictions on the increase in crime. Furthermore, the aim of this study is to formulate policies that are interrelated between socioeconomic pressures during a pandemic and crime. This study was formulated based on the socioeconomic theory of crime determinants from Buonanno (2003), while the theory of the relationship between stress as a pandemic effect and its use as crime legitimacy was adopted from Agnew (2006) and Green (2020).

This article is divided into several parts. The first section is an introduction that explains the background of the problem and its theoretical significance in academic studies. The second section examines the literature that describes socioeconomic determinants in relation to crime rates and pandemics. The next section details the methodology used and the approach employed in this study.

The fourth section is the results of the analysis and interpretation of the study findings. The fifth section discusses the findings. The final section of this study summarizes the conclusions and practical and theoretical implications as a follow-up to the findings.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1. Socioeconomic drivers of crime during the pandemic

An emergency can cause people whose basic needs are not met to be desperate to commit crimes in order to survive during the COVID-19 pandemic. In a criminological review, a person's inability to maintain his individual factors to stay on the right corridor line, becomes a manifestation of a person's internal factors to commit the crime of theft (Mamluchah & Mubarak, 2020). The motorists of crime during the COVID-19 pandemic can be viewed from the perspective of criminology and victimology. Criminology is the study of crime, one of which is to bandy the etiology of crime. According to criminology, one has four factors behind a miscreant who commits a crime.

*The first is the financial factor.* Criminological proposition says that what is meant by profitable factors is the most important motorist for crime, adding that severance during the pandemic also encourages crime and limits the forestallment of large-scale crimes. The circumstance of layoffs due to this pandemic causes those who are victims of layoffs to find it delicate to meet their diurnal requirements, the profitable crush occasionally makes people hopeless to commit crimes, similar as stealing, cheating, stealing and so on (Romlah, 2020). This indicates that economic factors are the main and most influential reason for perpetrators to commit crimes during a pandemic.

*The second is the social environment of the actors.* Some crimes during the COVID-19 pandemic were done in groups, with actors carrying out their own job descriptions. For this reason, the social terrain of formed groups facilitates individual geste in making opinions to commit crimes during the COVID-19 pandemic. Even lone offenses are closely related to socio-environmental influences (Ediwarman, 2012). Third, perpetrators may be discouraged from committing crimes in places where victims can commit crimes given the opportunity but are unable to do so.

*The fourth is imitating crimes in other areas.* One of the criminological theories mentions the differential association theory. Djanggih and Qamar (2018) set up that felonious geste is a learned geste grounded on a literacy process. This means that it is caused by the process of imitating or learning from other malefactors. Crime propositions have linked ways and specific motives, impulses, apologies, and stations for committing crimes. Djanggih and Qamar (2018) stated that impersonal communication, such as through the cinema, newspapers, relatively does not have an important role in the occurrence of criminal behaviour. This view is equally commensurable to community wealth, imitated by felonious conditioning similar to thieveries, convenience store thieveries, and mask

hoarding in other areas. This includes the part of mass media in reporting felonious cases during the COVID-19 pandemic as violent. While there may be influence from the part of mass media that can have a positive impact on society, adding information about crimes, especially for inexperienced actors, can be negative for perpetrators. From a sociological perspective, there is a remedial law that means restoring situations and social interactions to their original state. Therefore, the main thing is eliminating unpleasant situations from various parties (Triana & Fauzi, 2020; Anowara & Hossain, 2021).

## 2.2. Socioeconomic effects of the pandemic on crime

In the third quarter of 2021, the number of patients with high death rates due to COVID-19 was increasing. Government efforts to prevent transmission by closing schools, working from home, especially formal sector workers, and delays and cancellations of various government and private events have made the global economy decline (Ramelli & Wagner, 2020; Farianto, 2022). The impact of COVID-19 creates vulnerability to the economy (Leiva-Leon et al., 2020). Purnamasari (2017) found that even though high-income people were classified as unemployed, they actually committed a crime at a significant rate. Serious crimes are committed by people belonging to the production order who are unemployed. Retirement is a state in which people are unemployed and looking for work. However, when people are unemployed for a long time, they are more likely to commit crimes (Bender, 2016).

Some economists have argued that income inequality is at the root of violent crime, especially property crime. This means that as inequality rises, economic wealth concentrates in the hands of fewer people, making them more likely targets for criminals and greater profits from violent property crimes (Baharom & Habibullah, 2009). Another perspective, popular among criminologists and sociologists, is that economic inequality is also seen as a major cause of violent crime. The relative deprivation of the poor tends to create frustration and hardship that lead to violent crime (Ramelli & Wagner, 2020; Leiva-Leon et al., 2020).

Criminal activity is dominated by the poor who cannot earn a living (Mehlum et al., 2006). There is long-term and short-term empirical evidence for the existence of poverty that has a strong impact on crime (Tang, 2009). In fact, people under the pressure of a life of complete deprivation, or in this case the poor, are encouraged to engage in theft. Consistent with theoretical models constructed by finding a relationship between worsening poverty, or the sense that increasing poverty leads to increasing inequalities in robbery. Mehanna (2004) studies the positive impact of poverty level on crime growth. People living below the poverty line are more likely to commit illegal acts because they cannot attract the attention of the public to take legal action. Socioeconomic conditions in a pandemic condition bring them into an anomie situation, which is a situation where there is tension and instability in the social structure that makes individuals experience pressure and eventually commit deviant actions, one of which is crime. This tension and instability were certainly triggered by the COVID-19

pandemic, which then affected the economic condition of the community (Novianti, 2020; Derbali et al., 2020).

Fallahi et al. (2012) showed that the effect of the severance rate on the crime rate has a significant impact. Hassan et al. (2016) stated that severance is appreciatively associated with crime because the jobless do not spend productive time on plutocrat-generating conditioning. Buonanno and Vargas (2019) conducted research on the crime rate and unemployment rate and the results of their research stated that the unemployment rate has a positive effect on criminal acts, and can become a habit of acting against the law. Unemployment leads to social and political insecurity, and low profitable exertion and high severance can foster felonious conditioning similar to theft and pirating (Sukirno, 2000).

## 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

From a research design perspective, this study is qualitative in nature. The approach used in this study is an empirical normative approach, with the aim of collecting data related to changes in crime rates during the pandemic and policy formulation. The data collection technique used in this study is field research which is complemented by observations and interviews with law enforcement agencies and related government agencies. This includes the private sector which is affected by social restrictions. Insights from this sector are used to formulate appropriate governance and regulations for the business world to play a role in employment as an important part of overcoming social problems.

The analysis used in this study is a qualitative technique, namely by collecting data, compiling and describing, and analyzing it systematically according to the theoretical framework of Creswell and Poth (2016). In addition, in order to formulate governance and regulations related to changes in crime rates and the strategies implemented, this study uses a conceptual approach based on the rule of law.

This research is based on the theory of socioeconomic determinants of crime from Buonanno (2003), while the theory of the relationship between pressure as an effect and its use as a legitimacy of adoption from Agnew (2006) and Green (2020). However, the focus and formulation of the socioeconomic determinants of crime, especially during the COVID-19 period, has rarely been investigated in previous studies. Therefore, this research was conducted using a normative-empirical approach in a qualitative design.

## 4. RESULTS

Regarding the increase in crime during this pandemic, there are two main hypotheses that explain this increase in crime. COVID-19 preparedness and containment programs are severely affected. Beneficial stability for a large portion of the population, especially the lower classes class goes up. As a result of this policy, a significant number of criminals commit off-road crimes. Second, the government had arrested people as part of the COVID-19 prevention and containment policy. The prisoners not only did the assimilators have no jobs and no steady income when they went out, but

at the same time, they quickly faced it. The reality is that it is difficult to find work and income due to the influence of the new coronavirus mitigation policy. Third, the problem of government welfare distribution. Make it available to the community. Specifically, the cause of this conflict is an unequal and targeted distribution of social assistance.

Defending the country according to Law No. 3 of 2002 is the obligation of every citizen. Defending the country turns out to be not only an obligation but also the right of every citizen toward his or her country (Usman, 2020). Defending the Indonesian state is the right and obligation of every Indonesian citizen, this is clearly stated in the Constitution (Soepandji, 2018; Abdulqader & Assalmani, 2021). Every citizen is also entitled and obliged to participate in national defense and participation in every state defense effort must be in accordance with their respective abilities and professions. The form of defending our country as Indonesian citizens that we can do during the COVID-19 pandemic which has disrupted and threatened the lives of the Indonesian people is by complying with the policies issued by the Government, both central and regional, namely by implementing the health protocol. This is hand wash. Wear a mask, keep your distance from others or practice social distancing. Eat healthily, stay home, and only leave the house if there is an urgent need. Law No. 23 of 2002 concerning National Defense reads that every citizen has the right and is obliged to participate in efforts to defend the country. So, by complying with the appeal from the government, it is included as an effort to defend the citizens (Shabrina, 2020). The government advises its people to stay at home, except for workers who are really needed during this COVID-19 pandemic (Mahsun, 2020).

Crime prevention is inherently an integral part of social defense efforts and social welfare efforts. Therefore, the ultimate or primary goal of crime prevention is to protect communities in order to achieve the common good. When it comes to providing protection and reassurance to crime-related communities during the COVID-19 pandemic, one of them is the role of government through the police, which has the mandate and function to implement crime prevention. Efforts to combat

crime can be made through the use of criminal law, prevention through impunity, influencing public opinion about crime, and punishment by the mass media. According to Article 13 of Law No. 2 of 2002 on the Indonesian Police, the main duties of the police are: to maintain public safety and order foundation; providing shelter, and services to the community (Fadri, 2010). Other duties are stipulated in Article 14 of the Police Law in relation to the preventive duties and functions of the police, the term "prevention" is used either by including community development or indirectly by employing coaching aimed at making communities law-abiding citizens. It is sometimes called "preventive action".

Preventive tasks or functions can be divided into two main groups. The first is physical prevention through the implementation of three main activities: regulation, guarding, and patrol. As for the second point, it is actually called "preemptive or indirect precaution" (Kandpal, 2020). The comprehensive crime prevention efforts carried out by the Indonesian National Police as a law enforcement agency consist of preemptive, preemptive, and repressive efforts. Firstly, preemptive action is conducted by utilizing the function of community guidance and counseling, by making programs to serve and maximize community participation by involving community leaders and village officials. Community policing is conducted by optimizing the role of the community and by collaborating with the mass media to convey to the public to always be aware of the crime. Secondly, preventive measures are conducted by identifying strong points in vulnerable areas from both municipal/city police and its subsidiaries to carry out routine operations, and to utilize the informant approach and dissemination and soft and hard approaches to prevent crime. Thirdly, repressive actions were done by arresting the perpetrators and processing them in accordance with applicable legal procedures, directing guidance during personal investigations of perpetrators, and eradicating crime intermediaries. In this regard, a firm attitude toward the perpetrators is still required to balance the interest of law enforcement with its standard and procedure. The analysis can be shown in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Formulation of decriminalization framework

<i>Strategies</i>	<i>Actions</i>	<i>Main actor</i>	<i>Stakeholder</i>
Pre-emptive	Community guidance and counseling	Police	Other law enforcement agencies, community leaders
	Community policing	Police	Community, mass media
Preventive	Identifying vulnerable areas	Municipal/city police and its branches	Community
	Identifying criminals	Municipal/city police and its branches	Community
Repressive	Arresting the perpetrators	Police	Law enforcement agencies
	Legal measures	Police	Law enforcement agencies
	Guidance	Police	Community leaders
	Law enforcement and SOP	Police	Government

## 5. DISCUSSION

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the strategy of law enforcement officers and the police has its own way of dealing with criminal acts. As a preventive measure, police can actively patrol areas where the virus is likely to spread and monitor things such as taking body temperature and spraying disinfectants in public spaces (Laufs & Waseem, 2020; Nielson et al., 2022). In this context, they can

also carry out routine patrols and work with the community to assist law enforcement (Sangadji, 2021). This is done to provide guarantees to the community and reduce crime. In addition, preventive strategies can also effectively address factors related to socioeconomic pressures in the community, along with providing security guarantees (Pramono, 2021). Police can actively identify the determinants of crime through identification at the local level, and encourage communities to

confirm potential crime in their area (Syamsuddin et al., 2021). In addition, in the context of work from home, the police can actively monitor the level of community compliance. In this context, the police with community leaders can provide guidance and counseling by making use of their time at home (Sa'diyah & Enggarsasi, 2021; Luong, 2021).

Prevention activities were also implemented after analyses and assessments showed increased crime rates due to active patrols and policing of crime-prone areas. Law enforcement with efforts to uncover the crimes committed is ongoing, including maintaining the stability and availability of the basic needs of communities to minimize the potential for crime (Rubin, 2018). In this context, The National Police has telegram number ST/1238/IV/OPS.2/2020, which content is designed to prioritize prevention and prevention efforts in one place to try to lower the crime rate. This regulation also confirms that the police are allowed to take firm action against any perpetrators of crimes such as robbery, social violence, and theft. Included in the specification of this regulation is an encouragement for the police to map out potential crimes, including increasing regional patrol activities to create security and public order (Hamzah & Barthos, 2022; Pramono, 2021). In addition, preventive efforts are carried out by appeal activities in order to break the chain of the spread of COVID-19 and humanitarian and security activities (Laufs & Waseem, 2020). From this analysis, several activities related to reducing crime rates can be identified, such as strengthening patrols and monitoring, as well as repressive actions in crime cases (Jiang & Xie, 2020; Syamsuddin et al., 2021; Pramono, 2021; Hamzah & Barthos, 2022).

The results of the study also show that the police have a higher level of obstacles during the pandemic. In terms of internal constraints, organizationally, the police lack adequate facilities and infrastructure which can make it difficult for the police to carry out investigations. In terms of external constraints, the constraint is the lack of evidence, witnesses, and the apathetic community in helping the police. The first aspect refers to witnesses who are also needed to obtain information related to the crime of theft that is lacking or even non-existent. Evidence and witness statements are very important for the smooth investigation of the theft crime. Meanwhile, the second refers to people who are apathetic to helping the police. In this context, strategies related to law enforcement require a clear governance framework in the form of regulations as a guide for law enforcement and the public to minimize the potential for crime during the pandemic. The results of this study confirm the importance of the community's role in crime prevention.

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The results are also in line with previous studies (Buonanno, 2003; Green, 2020; Agnew, 2006). In terms of environment-related socioeconomic determinants, the phenomena that operate in congested areas are explained by ecological theories, one of which is population density. The mobility of the population here is only for horizontal mobility, which has recently shown a clear increase. According to McKay (1949), this is primarily due to the development of transportation, and, based on his findings, crime rates were highest in industrial and commercial centers and in the poorest areas. It is said that, based on this ecological theory, several criminal incidents occurred in urban areas during the COVID-19 pandemic (Millah, 2020). The area here is identical to a trading center, thus affecting population density so that it becomes a target place for criminals. It is also valuable in victimization studies that in the business district on the outskirts of the city, and in areas where the crime of theft is found, violence dominates (Brown, 1982; MacDonald et al., 2013; MacDonald et al., 2010).

## 6. CONCLUSION

Crime prevention is inherently an integral part of social defense efforts and social welfare efforts. Therefore, the ultimate or primary goal of crime prevention is to protect communities in order to achieve the common good. The results show that COVID-19 has influenced crime patterns in society. The socioeconomic determinants identified in this study underscore the role of the environment, socioeconomic conditions, and crime-associated factors. In this context, the early identification of this change in crime is the effect of the social curbs and layoffs that were rampant during the early days of the pandemic. Because it is connected to the business sector, regulations and frameworks that are targeted in this context need to be formulated specifically for the SMEs, industry and tourism sectors. In this case, the countermeasures taken to reduce the crime rate are government policies by encouraging and awakening SMEs and the tourism industry while still paying attention to health protocols.

As an implication, clearer governance is needed to modify the negative impacts of the pandemic according to each socioeconomic determinant. Furthermore, regulations and frameworks are targeted to be integrated into business, tourism, and industry fields to absorb labor and applications. The limitation of this study is that it only analyzes the effect of the pandemic on changes in crime rates descriptively. Further research is necessary to analyze the effects of the pandemic and the resulting stresses quantitatively by analyzing the socioeconomic determinants associated with crime.

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