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11

CRIME

Abdullateef I. Bako

11.1 Introduction

Crime is a complex and multi-dimensional phenomenon. According to Breetzke and Horn (2008), crime typically includes behavioural, psychological, criminological, spatial (geographic), managerial, correctional and perceptual dimensions. Eme (2012) defines crime as an infraction of the basic principles of law and order and the norms of civilized behaviour. It is also seen as a destructive socio-economic phenomenon. Crime is a violation of societal rules of behaviour as interpreted and expressed by a criminal legal code created by people holding social and political power (Siegel, 1995). Davies (2005) argues that crime is not an empirical, uncontested fact; rather, it is an anti-normative process that requires an examination between incivilities (anti-social behaviour), criminality (criminal tendencies) and actual crime.

The UN-Habitat (2007) defines crime as an anti-social behaviour that

violates a law and for which punishment can be meted out. It is also the breach of established rules or laws for which some governing authority can ultimately prescribe a conviction. Crime and violence are increasingly recognised as "major obstacles to the realisation of development objectives (World Bank, 1998).

According to the *Oxford Dictionary of Sociology* (2009), a crime is held to be an offence as it goes beyond the personal and into the public sphere, breaking prohibitory rules or laws to which legitimate punishments or sanctions are attached, and which requires the intervention of a public authority. Crime has also been seen as a behavioural act transgressing a socio-legal prohibition. As a result, two basic approaches to understanding criminal behaviour have been established. These are the legalistic (seen as an act forbidden by law) and the socially reactive (act condemned by society or the state and as such punishable) (De Keseredy and Schwartz, 1996; Henry, 1998; Brown et al., 1998).

Weatherburn (2001), however, contends that the term 'crime' is itself, potentially misleading, as it encompasses everything from non-payment of parking fines to armed robbery or murder. He argues that, in much of the literature, what are regarded as crime are serious offences for which people are brought to court when arrested. Weatherburn (2001) gives examples of crime to include offences such as theft, sexual offences, driving offences, drug offences as well as others considered to involve violence of some sorts. Poverty, unemployment and inequality have been found to render some areas or neighbourhoods crime-prone.

Crime has also been regarded as one of the most serious problems confronting contemporary societies (Marzbali et al., 2012), as high rates of crime and violence often result in fear among the citizenry, inflict trauma on victims, while the criminal justice system often outcasts perpetrators (Jahic and Mitrani, 2010). In many instances, the effects of crime are said to spread even beyond the immediate victims, as families and friends sometimes suffer in the hands of the slow and seemingly inefficient criminal justice system. In many parts of the developing countries, a vast majority of crime is never reflected in official police data, because as they are often unreported (Jahic and Mitrani, 2010).

The rapid pace of urbanization and increasing urban population density, fluid cultural identity and metropolitan nature of urban environment are associated with increased crime and violence. Poor urban planning design and management play a role in the shaping of urban environments that put citizens and property at risk. The fabric and layout of cities impact on the movements of offenders and victims and on opportunities for crime (UN-Habitat, 2007). The spatial expression of these realities and the consequence of spontaneous urbanization with uncontrolled patterns in most of the urban cities are manifested in diverse urban problems, such as urban decay, where drug use, anti-social behaviour and criminal damage to public and private property, leading to fear and insecurity of lives, are the order of the day (Gibbons, 2004). The fear of crime is mostly related to densely populated and built environment (Glaster and Sacerdote, 1999; Bannister and Fyfe, 2001). Crime and the fear of crime affect many aspects of everyday life in city. This leads to insecurity and anxiety in most cases.

The link between crime and city size in developing countries can be explained by three factors. First, returns on crime are likely to be higher in larger cities owing to the greater concentration of wealthier victims, more opportunities to commit various types of crime and more developed systems for the disposal of stolen items. Second, the chances of arresting a criminal might be lower in larger cities because large cities spend less on law enforcement per capita, or have lower levels of community co-operation with the police or require more police officers per inhabitant to affect an arrest. Finally, larger cities have a greater proportion of crime-prone individuals/potential criminals.

Poor urban planning, design and management have been cited as playing a role in the shaping of the urban environment, which puts citizens and property at risk. Hence, the physical fabric and layout of cities have a bearing on the routing movement of offenders and victims and on opportunities for crime.

11.2 The Concept of Crime, Insecurity and Urban Violence

According to Agbola (1997), research on different aspects of urban violence and criminal activities, including crime trend analysis, has been the exclusive preserve of sociologists, criminologists, psychologists and penologists. It is recently that environmental scientists began to show considerable interest in the nature, causes, consequences as well as spatial dimension of violence.

Crime, insecurity and violence, particularly in the urban place, have been variously conceptualized and understood. However, no consensus has been reached for the adoption of a universal definition (Wa Teresia, 2011) among authors regarding the meanings of these terms, as they are mostly viewed from the perspective or background of the author defining them. Crime is seen as a social problem that affects people's lives and their property and, therefore, generates considerable fear within the communities and neighbourhoods. Crimes such as theft, break-in, rape, murder and armed robbery are considered as serious threats to the safety of people (Agbola, 1997).

Igbo (2015) attempted a clarification of crime and insecurity. He defines crime as actions or behaviours (or omissions to act) which violate the criminal laws of a country and against which there is official reaction by the law enforcement agencies of the state in the form of punishment or sanction. Crimes are offences against the state. Insecurity is an overwhelming state, situation or condition of feeling insecure, unsafe, fearful and constant feeling of the presence of danger and an atmosphere of uncertainty about the or safety of one's life, property, family or country. The contention here is that crime, particularly violent ones, breeds or drives insecurity.

In a related dimension, the term violence has been given a complex definition and interpretation. According to Moser (1997), it is usually seen as the use of force which often causes hurt to others. Violence has also been defined by WHO (2002) as the intentional use of force, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person or against a group or community which either results in or has a high likelihood of

injury, death, psychological harm, mal-development or deprivation. Much broader definitions of the concept view it as psychological hurt as well as material deprivation (Cohen and Swift, 1993). Other definitions too have emphasized that violence in most cases involves the exercise of power to legitimize the use of force for specific but different gains (Moser and McIlwaine, 2004).

Distinguishing between crime and violence is necessary (Spink, 2001). While 'crime' (an act punishable by law) is dependent on specific laws (although most crimes receive international agreement), 'violence' allows broader definition as "the undue exercise of physical force" (Ayres, 1998). Although there are different types of crimes, worldwide, most urban crimes are property-based (armed robbery, car snatching, etc.); violent personal crimes, such as assault, murder, rape and kidnapping; and constitute between 25-30% of offences (United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute) (UNICRI, 1995). Both types of crime encourage fear and insecurity, often according to specific urban spaces and social groups (Spink, 2001).

It will be difficult to understand the concept of insecurity without first conceptualizing security. Ibidapo-Obe (2008) views security as the situation that exists as a result of the establishment of measures for the protection of persons, information and property against hostile persons, influences and actions. Security also includes all measures that are designed to protect and safeguard the citizens, their resources and livelihoods against sabotage or violent occurrence (Ogunleye et al., 2011). Insecurity is therefore, an antithesis of security (Achumba and Ighomereho, 2013) and can be described as the state of fear or anxiety, stemming from a concrete or alleged lack of protection (Beland, 2005).

11.3 Typology of Crime

The nature of crime in human societies, particularly in the urban centres, is diverse. Several attempts at characterisation in the literature have yielded three particular types of crime. These are crimes against persons or personal crimes, property crimes and crimes against public order

(Jinadu et al., 2012; Igbo, 2015). Crimes against persons or personal crimes consist of different types of offences which usually involve causing bodily harm or injury, death or threat to bodily harm. These types of crimes are generally seen to include homicide, manslaughter, armed robbery, kidnapping, assault, rape, and suicide.

Property crimes are usually considered less serious and violent but they equally have tremendous negative impacts on the people as well as quality of life generally. They include theft, burglary or house breaking, arson, car snatching or theft, vandalism and trespass. Crimes against public order are seen as covering moral infractions (UN-Habitat, 2007). Offences under this category include fraud, forgery, disturbance of public peace, gambling, conspiracy and perjury.

Table 11.1: Typology of Crime and Violence

Type	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Murder	1585	1561	1730	1688	1766	1871	2120	2283	2136
Attempted Murder	321	307	250	248	244	243	253	280	233
Manslaughter	25	21	18	27	14	27	15	14	16
Grievous Harm/Wounding	16300	17650	14720	14440	16730	14168	15351	17761	17666
Assault	6543	52747	42815	40847	37044	35000	37691	32492	17666
Rape/Indecent Dressing	2346	2198	2585	2265	2451	2234	2285	2201	2253
Kidnapping	415	373	377	282	356	357	354	369	410
Armed Robbery	2109	2419	2181	2291	2422	2925	2925	3271	3497
Arson	1240	1002	1190	1135	1291	908	908	1539	1499
Total	70, 884	78, 278	65, 811	63, 223	62, 318	57, 733	61, 902	60, 210	65, 376

Source: National Bureau of Statistics, 2010

In addition to increased proliferation of arms, other issues and conditions that are promoting criminality and insecurity in the country include economic hardship fostered by poor economic management of the nation's abundant resources, corruption, poor standard of living,

deteriorating standard of education, increasing youth unemployment, poor wages and inadequate training in specific skills relevant to the modern agricultural and industrial sector needs of the country (Chinwokwu, 2014). These conditions and circumstances are fuelling the sense of hopelessness and depression among the masses of the country, especially the youth.

11.5 Crime Management and the Urban and Regional Planning Practice

11.5.1 Crime Prevention

Cohen (2006) is of the view that, as cities grow, their management becomes more complex. This is because the speed and scale of urban transformation, particularly in the developing countries present more formidable challenges to city development managers. Violence and insecurity, although not particularly limited to developing countries, have reached critical levels in these areas and have become critical threats to the security of urban dwellers as well as to productivity and development (Moser, 2004).

According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) (2010), crime prevention has become a significant component of many strategies directed at ensuring and promoting public safety and security. As a result, the UNODC notes that crime prevention is grounded in the principle that crime as well as its victimization is driven by several causal and underlying factors. The UN agency observes that four types of crime prevention methods have been identified, namely crime-prevention through social development, community or locally-based crime prevention, situational crime prevention and crime prevention reintegration programmes.

In addressing the pattern of urban violence and insecurity, several policy measures have been evolved (Moser, 2004). These include specific approaches at criminal justice system to control and treat economic violence as well as the public health or epidemiological approach aimed at prevention. Much newer measures include conflict transformation and human rights, citizen security and crime prevention through

environmental design (CPTED) as well as various forms of urban renewal. This is in addition to evolving local level community-based approaches to rebuilding trust and social capital.

Also, as part of the incorporation of crime prevention and other safety measures into the planning process, the UN-Habitat (2011) argues that among several other forms of urban planning interventions, slum upgrading will offer an opportunity to provide urban safety for the poor. Slum upgrading has also been suggested as having the capacity to give momentum to the idea that improving a neighbourhood would include overhauling all dimensions of life, including freedom of citizens from the occurrence or risk of injury, or loss of life.

The fact that urban residents themselves could be the key to a better understanding of urban violence and in identifying appropriate remediation has been acknowledged in the literature (Moser, 2006). For instance, Hove et al. (2013) claims that in response to the growing threat of urban insecurity and the seeming weakness of the police to provide adequate protection, relatively affluent individuals and businesses have resorted to engaging private security firms for their protection. In many cities across the developing countries, citizens and communities are organizing themselves into neighbourhood self-protection groups and, in extreme cases, vigilantes.

11.5.2 Impacts of Crime and Insecurity

Crime and insecurity are a huge threat to public safety. They are sources of great personal suffering, and vast material damage to individuals and groups, and equally places enormous burden on the urban social network (Agbola, 1997). Crime undermines the social fabric by eroding residents' sense of safety and security (Onoge, 1988). Although there is a general agreement that crime impedes development (Moser and Holland, 1997; Ayres, 1998), there is no consensus as to whether development reduces or encourages crime (McIlwaine, 1999). Urban violence and crime threaten and sometimes destabilises social stability and are becoming major obstacles to development (Fajnzylber et al., 2002).

According to Badiora and Fadoyin (2014), crime is a major source of

social concern not only in the developing countries, but also in the entire world today. Nations of the world are faced with unacceptable levels of delinquency, insecurity and criminality. Crime is also considered as a threat to the economic, political and social security of a nation and a major factor associated with underdevelopment. Discourage both local and foreign investments, reduces the quality of life, destroys human and social capital, as well as damages relationship between citizens and the states. It has the capacity to undermine democracy, the rule of law and the ability of the country to promote development (Adebayo, 2013). Muggah (2012) and Igbo (2015), aver that the impacts of crime and violence on human development are significant and varied. They include both direct and indirect costs and consequences. The direct costs are deaths and injuries, destruction of public infrastructure, and increased spending on law enforcement and so on, while the indirect ones are psychological trauma, population displacement, and disruption of social services, reduced economic growth, and brain drain, and so on. Igbo (2015) categorizes the costs of crimes in Nigeria in terms of social, economic, psychological, biological-physical, social-legal and political costs.

As documented by UN-Habitat (2008), the impacts of urban crime and violence are multifaceted and multidimensional. They include injury, death, trauma and continuously nursing and living in fear. At the national level, crime and violence impede foreign investments, contribute to capital flight and brain drain as well as hinder or discourage international tourism. It has also led to the stigmatization of some urban neighbourhoods or an entire city with such areas becoming "no-go" zones to both foreigners and citizens from other parts of the country. Such areas lose out in terms of investments and sometimes provision of infrastructure or essential public services.

According to Alemika and Chukwuma (2005), crime and insecurity often lead to loss of lives and property and have serious consequences for democracy, economic development, social capital and quality of life. Urban crime and violence have also prevented many residents from enjoying the benefits often offered by city living. This has made many of

them to seek all forms of safety. As a result, they have progressively transformed that safety into safe places or refugee areas which then become maximum security enclaves leading to self-segregation (Agbola, 1997; Alkimim, Clarke and Oliveira 2013). Different perceptions of the urban threat lead urban residents to construct certain spatial relations with space, thus creating geography of fear.

The global trend of crime has been increasing. According to UN-Habitat (2008), the total recorded crimes are said to have increased from 2, 300 to 3, 000 for every 100, 000 people between 1980 and 2000. Although the trend is global, there are exceptions, as total crime rates are reported to have dropped sharply in both North America and Western Europe within the two decades; while most of the increases were recorded in Latin America, Eastern Europe and Africa. The report also noted that regional variations in crime and violence are more pronounced when specific crime types are considered. For instance, in the case of homicides, which are particularly indicative of violent crime, while Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean reported double-digit increases, significantly lower rates were recorded for Southeast Asia, Europe, the Eastern Mediterranean and the West Pacific. The report further observed that, although crime and violence were typically severe in the cities, they were further compounded by their rapid growth.

To further demonstrate the urban nature of violent crime in several parts of the developing countries, the UN-Habitat (2008) report also observed that, in Latin America, where the urban population was about 80%, for instance, the more rapidly expanding metropolitan areas of Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paulo, Mexico city and Caracas accounted for more than half of the violent crimes in their respective countries. The report cited the particular instance of Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo, both in Brazil, where homicide rate had tripled and quadrupled, respectively between 1970 and 2000. A similar trend was also observed in some of Africa's largest cities of Lagos, Cape Town, Johannesburg, Durban and Nairobi, which accounted for sizeable proportions of each country's crime rates.

11.5.3 Planning Measures to Ameliorate Crime

- i. **Designing safer public housing:** Buildings with better views of the outside have residents with lower levels of fear and rates of victimization. Also fencing of buildings should strictly adhere to planning standards for safety as very tall fences can allow criminality without the awareness of the neighbours. For instance, there have been cases where people were robbed silently without next neighbour's awareness.
- ii. **Erecting barriers and changing street patterns:** Straight street pattern with thoroughfare can reduce crime rates, as there will be no hideout for criminal activities. Crimes such as auto theft and assault have been reported to decline more rapidly in the neighbourhood than in the city as a whole (Atlas, 1991).
- iii. **Controlling access to buildings, schools, parks, public housing, or other trouble spots through the use of regulated entry:** Measures such as the use of identification card, setting limited hours of usage, diverting traffic through specific checkpoints, and using metal detectors in schools or other public buildings can be adopted.
- iv. **Creating safer public places:** Removal of overgrown trees and bushes and increasing lighting in neighbourhood parks, marketplaces and streets as well as highways can deter criminal activities, vandalism, and the presence of homeless persons.

11.6 Conclusion

Crime is a major source of social concern not only in the developing countries, but also in the entire world today. Nations of the world are increasingly faced with unacceptable levels of delinquency, insecurity and criminality. Crime results in people dying, being injured, losing their property and rights, becoming traumatized, having their quality of life reduced and becoming involved with the criminal justice system. In some

places, more likely in developing countries than in developed, this can happen on a grand scale. It is, therefore, important to prevent crime regardless of its effect on development.

It is commonly believed that crime and/or the perception of crime can affect the rate at which an individual or country develops and, therefore, also affects the standard and quality of life. The negative effect of crime on development is another reason why much greater, targeted efforts must be made to prevent it, particularly employing planning measures.

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