

Spatial Distribution of Crime and Deviance in Urban Nigeria: A Theoretical Exposition

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Abstract

Several earlier researches have demonstrated that crime has a regional or sectional distribution in Nigeria. This position is in consonance with global geographical studies and environmental criminology which affirms that crime is often concentrated in clusters, generally referred to as hotspots. This paper explores criminological theories and propositions to summarise and extend understanding of environmental sources of criminal behaviour in Nigeria. In doing this, the study attempted to complement the social psychological approaches that have dominantly been used in explaining crime in Nigeria. This is premised on the realisation that insecurity stands as one of the main impediments towards Nigeria achieving 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Drawing from the theoretical positions of the Chicago School on social ecology of crime, rational choice, and routine activity theories, the study emphasised the complex matrix between urbanisation, population density, poverty and transient neighbourhoods, as determinants of crime distribution in urban Nigeria. In the urban areas, housing problems have trailed the rapid rate of urbanisation in the country as the cities cannot cope with the increasing migration from rural areas leading to the growth of slums. The unfavourable conditions that urban dwellers are exposed to and the high level of inequality within cities are part of criminogenic conditions that enable crime and deviance to thrive in specific areas of urban centres in Nigeria. Redressing the political, social and economic problems posed by speedy urbanisation is one of the most pressing governance challenges confronting successive Nigerian governments. The study suggests the need for Nigerian cities to adopt the principles of sustainable urbanisation as a means of managing and guiding the process and consequences of urban development. If pragmatic efforts are made to effectively manage urbanisation, Nigerian cities will be both sustainable and able to provide human security and deep sense of belonging to all citizens.

Keywords: Crime, Deviance, Environmental criminology, Urbanisation, Urban Nigeria.

Introduction

Geographical studies and environmental criminology reveal that crime is often concentrated in clusters, which in the literatures are referred to as hotspots (Charron, 2016). Hotspot mapping techniques for crimes has continued to attract attention from researchers and public safety agencies (Aborisade, 2014; Fajemirokun, Adewale, Idowu, Oyewusi, & Maiyegun, 2016; Oyinloye, Olamiju, & Otokiti, 2017). This has led to the wide usage of hotspot analysis for the identification and visualisation of crime (Balogun, Okeke, & Chukwukere, 2014). If crime hotspots are accurately identified, then the public will benefit through the creation of accurate threat visualisations, efficient allocation of police resources, and prediction of crime (Aborisade, 2014; Africa Research Institute, 2014). Most urban cities of the world are experiencing remarkable rapid growth that has resulted from

industrialisation and advancement in technology (Charron, 2016). In almost all African countries, there has been the propensity towards the concentration of growing population in moderately large cities (Hove, Ngwerume, & Muchemwa, 2013). Recently, there has been appreciable accelerated expansion being witnessed by many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa (Agyei-Mensah, Owusu, & Wrigley-Asante, 2015; Fajemirokun *et al.*, 2016). According to United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWA, 2015), the rapid urbanisation has come to have adverse effects on security and safety in African cities. It went further to state that „chaotic expansion of urban spaces actually disables the capacity of national governments and local authorities to provide urban security and to supply basic social infrastructure – health, education, water, and sewage disposal facilities (p.16). The bid to surmount these challenges accounts for the adoption of the

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), by African countries, and complementing the 2030 SDGs with Agenda 2063, which is a 50-year Transformative Agenda for the continent (African Union Commission, 2015). Specifically, the Aspiration 4 of the Agenda for Sustainable Development for Africa borders on Africa attaining a peaceful, stable and secure continent.

Nigeria, just as it is obtainable in other developing nations, experienced rapid urban growth that completely outpaced the capacity of government to plan for it (Mabogunje, 2007). In the country, the occurrence of growth had happened so quickly that government officials were unable to possess relevant statistics required for sustainable development (Oyinloye *et al.*, 2017). However, one of the major impediments to Nigeria attaining sustainable development agenda, within the set timelines of 2030 and 2063, is the problem of insecurity in the country (Aborisade & Adedayo, 2018). Within the last few years, the federal government has earmarked not less than N5 trillion for the defence of the territorial integrity and internal security of the nation (Achumba, Ighomereho, & Akpan-Robaro, 2013). A number of state governments have also allocated huge sums of money for the maintenance of law and order (Adebakin, 2016). Despite the monumental sum of money that has been committed to bring about security, individual citizens and communities still pay levies and salaries to young men and women who are engaged as security personnel to guard their properties.

Another impediment is the dwindling national resources that have further been depleted by massive and unhindered corrupt practices. As a result, developments in the country have been slow, insufficient and not connected with the commensurate economic growth and effective redistributive measures needed to alleviate poverty and midwife economic opportunities, required to improve living standards and quality of life of the people (Abass, 2012; Anochiwa & Enyoghasim, 2016). An important consequence of this is that the growth and expansion of cities in Nigeria has been largely uncontrolled, as a result, compounding problems in the country. These problems include poor and inadequate housing, slum areas, waste disposal, inadequate water supply, high rates of unemployment, poverty, traffic and human congestion, underdevelopment, crime and other social problems (Badiora & Afon, 2013; Aborisade, 2014; Balogun *et al.*, 2014; Anochiwa & Enyoghasim, 2016; Fajemirokun *et al.*, 2016).

The failure of Nigeria to adequately account and maintain proper records of its population size and distribution has provided a case of how congestion in the

cities can facilitate the incidences of criminality and deviance, within specific geographic environment (Adigun, 2013; Oyinloye *et al.*, 2017). This is mainly due to the politicisation of the several attempts by government to initiate processes that would ensure that all citizens are registered and data on all persons are compiled (Badiora & Afon, 2013). Consequently, there is very little knowledge of spatial distribution of the country, leading to the perennial failures of the government in checking the rural-urban migration, as the urban areas now accommodate a greater percentage of the population of the country (Fajemirokun *et al.*, 2016). Not only are there no reliable statistics that document the precise residency of people within the urban areas, the pattern of inter-city movements are hardly factored into projections.

This paper attempts to fashion an integrated sets of propositions to summarise and extend our understanding of environmental sources of criminal behaviour. In so doing, the aim is to expose the daunting challenges to Nigeria alignment and attainment of SDGs. The study will also complement the social and psychological approaches that have dominantly been used in explaining crime in Nigeria with environmental criminology. That is, the focus of this paper is on traits of places and groups, rather than on traits of individuals.

Environmental Criminology

The origin of environmental criminology has been traced to the 19th - century studies of „dangerous places (e.g. Mayhew, 1862). Thereafter, urban sociologists at the „Chicago School mapped the location of offenders (Park, Burgess & McKenzie, 1925). Although, the study of the location of offences (Schmid, 1960) received little attention, until victimisation studies in the 1960s and 1970s shifted the focus (Brantingham & Brantingham, 1993). The works of Lynch (1960), Jacobs (1961), Angel (1968) and Jeffery (1971) populated the idea that urban design could influence criminality. Further studies focused on the „geography of crime (e.g. Harries, 1974; Pyle, 1974), and the fear of crime (e.g. Garofalo, 1981; Smith, 1984), and the academic discipline of „environmental criminology gradually evolved.

Environmental criminology is the study of crime as it relates to particular locations, and to the way individuals shape their activities by place-based factors. There have been some observations made on how planning decisions help in the shaping of both the characters and levels of crime occurrence (Brantingham & Brantingham, 1993). The fear of crime and the potential impact of crime on our neighbourhoods and cities, as a result „deserve the full attention of planners (De Frances & Titus, 1993:190). Brantingham &

Brantingham (1993) put forward the argument that there are four dimensions to any crime: the law, the offender, the target and the location; and environmental criminology is concerned predominantly with location. These ideas are underpinned by two related crime opportunity theories, and provide an alternative perspective from which to evaluate New Urbanist thinking.

First, Cornish & Clarke (1986), in their rational choice theory, asserted that most opportunistic offenders are rational in their decision-making and recognise, evaluate and respond to environmental cues. These have to do with the perceived reward, risk and effort that are connected with the offence and environmental factors within the built environment which are integral part of this decision-making process. Therefore, the central issue that the rational choice theorists attempted to address is about the decisions a motivated person takes to commit crime, what type of crime to commit, the area the crime will be committed, the selection of the „target or victims for the criminal act, how to avoid detection and how offenders make decisions to go back to crime. This theory marks a departure from the traditional beliefs in criminology that view offenders as „empty vessels , being propelled by „background factors to commit crime, and posits that offenders are conscious decision-makers who weigh options and act with a purpose. Hence, if a male was born and bred in Mushin (a crime prone area), from a poor family, with little educational attainment, from broken family, and having no social support, these factors, on their own, cannot propel an individual to become a criminal. This is evident as not all people that share these background factors take to crime.

Secondly, there is the argument that states the preconditions necessary for the occurrence of crime as contained in „routine activities theory. Cohen and Felson (1979) opine that there must be a motivated offender, a suitable target and the absence of capable guardians for a crime to take place. Just as it is with majority of citizens, offenders have routine daily activities (work/school, visiting friends, shopping and entertainment) during which they may discover or search for potential targets (e.g. Maguire, 1982). While the argument of the environmental criminologists is that criminal events involve not only a person that is willing to offend but also the opportunity that favours the motives. Felson advanced this position by stating that the ability to offend even when the opportunity is available is also very germane. Cohen and Felson (1979) asserted that the routine patterns of work, play, and leisure affect the

convergence in time and place of the potential offenders, suitable targets, and absence of guardians. What this means is that the routine activities that we engage in on daily basis make us to become vulnerable to motivated offenders to take advantage of. The number of caretakers, acting as guardians, who are at home during the day, has decreased because of an increase in the participation of women in work activities. Therefore, homes are often left unguarded while both parents are at work and children are either in day care or at school. In addition, the growth of suburban living and the declining rate of traditional neighbourhoods have decreased the number of familiar guardians, such as family, neighbours, or friends. This is especially the case in transient neighbourhoods, where residents hardly know one another. It will be quite easy for a burglar to break into someone's compound and make away with belongings with little or no apprehension, as people hardly know their neighbours.

Streets that are more permeable signify more accessibility for citizens (including potential offenders) and, consequently, this increases the opportunities for crime (Eckblom, 1995). By restricting access to areas, there are fewer opportunities for potential criminals to be present within an area searching for targets and it allows locals to readily distinguish residents from nonresidents. In respect of street networks, Rengert (1988:21) puts forward an argument that "the relative magnitude of an opportunity is proportional to its relative degree of accessibility which will partially determine its probability of being exploited." Therefore, streets that are accessible and walkable are capable of providing more opportunities for crime, especially, if they are located in low density suburbs, where „eyes on the street are reduced.

Urbanisation and the Rise of Criminogenic Conditions in Nigeria

In sociological writing about crime, there is a common theme that has to do with the corrupting effect of city life. This is currently the case in Nigeria, where inner cities have the reputations for, and causes of, criminal activities. In Europe, during the 19th century, writers such as Durkheim and Tonnies, have stressed the breakdown of community under the pressures of urbanisation and industrialisation. It was argued that people felt less bonded to others, and were more likely to become selfish (Charron, 2016). This selfishness is connected not just to urban living, but also to the rise of individualism. In this approach, the explanation for deviance was first sought, not within the individual, but outside the person, in society as a whole. Thus, the society is described as where causes of deviance can be found. Such an idea was put forward by George Simmel

(1976), whose essay, „The Metropolis and Mental Life explored some of the psychological and social consequences of city living.

In Nigeria, though there have been fairly large settlements prior to colonial administration in the country, the occurrence of urbanisation commenced in the colonial era. According to Mabogunje (1968), pre-independence Nigeria had a very low urban population as well as urban population growth. As at 1921, only ten Nigerian settlements had urban status, and by 1931 only two cities, Lagos and Ibadan, had populations in excess of a hundred thousand people each. Post-independence Nigeria witnessed more rapid rate of urbanisation. Nigeria, since independence, has become an increasingly urbanised and urban-oriented society. By the early 1960s, the cities of Lagos and Ibadan had populations in excess of half a million people each (Mabogunje, 1981).

Urban migration is caused by public stimulation of urban activities and neglect of the rural areas. The rapid growth rate of urban population in Nigeria was spurred by the oil boom prosperity of the 1970s and resultant massive development projects in the country, which catalysed a great influx of people into urban areas. According to Mabogunje (1992), the factors that were responsible for the high urbanisation in Nigeria included the oil boom of the 1970s and early 1980s, government policies which resulted in the creation of new states and local government areas, creation of a new federal capital territory in Abuja, establishment of new universities and large scale government sponsored construction projects that included refineries, sea ports and steel companies.

However, the increase in population in the urban areas has led to uneven development, as more resources have been channelled into urban centres and an excruciating little percentage goes to the rural areas (Adigun, 2013). In the urban areas, housing problems have trailed the rapid rate of urbanisation in the country, as the cities cannot cope with the increasing migration from rural areas, leading to the growth of slums. Although, studies have shown that the problem of housing is universal, it is more critical in developing countries like Nigeria because of its magnitude and lack of resources to tackle it. About 60-70% of Nigerian urban dwellers live in slums (Badiora & Afon, 2013). In addition, the rapid rate of urbanisation accompanies an extremely high rate of unemployment in the cities, which equally raises the level of poverty (Aborisade, 2014). Poverty is an acute problem in Nigeria. Nigeria has one of the highest poverty rates in sub-Saharan Africa, with 70% of her population below poverty line (Balogun *et al.*, 2014), which is the sixth highest in the world (Africa Research

Institute, 2014). The country also has, probably, the third largest number of poor people in the world, after China and India (Abass, 2012). This eventually led to the creation of social vices such as armed robbery, drug peddling and so on. The number of criminals in the society increased, as people started looking for any means to survive

The unfavourable conditions that urban dwellers are exposed to and the high level of inequality within cities are part of criminogenic conditions that enable crime and deviance to thrive in various urban areas in Nigeria (Aborisade, 2017). The failure of the government to adequately cater for the growing rate of population in these urban areas further aggravated security situation in these areas. Nigeria's socioeconomic and environmental indicators show very poor performance across the board, with the resultant inequality gravely amounting to the high level of insecurity in the country.

Human Ecological Approach to Crime Distribution in Urban Nigeria

Shaw and McKay (1942) who examined the organisation of American cities such as Chicago, observed that most cities are arranged into distinct neighbourhoods or zones, each with its own distinctive subcultural values and lifestyles. It is the intention of this paper to reconsider the human ecological approach to spatial distribution of crime in relation to urban areas in Nigeria. To start with, Stark (1987) identified five aspects of urban neighbourhoods which characterise crime prone areas. Though, this particular set was not listed in the postulation of the Chicago School, however, the concepts permeated through their entire literature, starting with the classics of Park, Burgess, and McKenzie (1925) titled „The City . The concepts are equally prominent in the empirical studies of the Chicago School (Faris & Dunham, 1939; Shaw & McKay, 1942). As a matter of fact, most of these factors featured prominently in the works of 19th - century moral statisticians, such as the Englishmen Mayhew and Buchanan, who were credited with ecological sociology decades before any member of the Chicago school was born. These essential factors are: density, poverty, mixed use, transience, and dilapidation. In this paper, each of the five factors will be used in relation to spatial distribution of crime in Nigeria.

Population Density and Crime

As Stark (1987) pointed out, the greater the density of a neighbourhood, the more the association between the most and least predisposed to deviance. Similarly, proponents of social disorganisation theory linked crime rates to neighbourhood ecological characteristics. In other words, a person's residential location is a

substantial factor shaping the likelihood that the person will become involved in illegal activities. This does not rest solely on the issue of higher proportion of deviance-prone persons in dense population. Rather, it is stated that there is a higher average level of inter-personal interactions in such neighbourhoods and that individual traits will have less influence on patterns of contact. In the low-density wealthy neighbourhoods of the Nigerian social environment, it requires a lot of efforts for children of such neighbourhoods to reach out to one another. For example, within the Lagos metropolis, a kid that resides in low-density areas like Victoria Island will likely need a ride from a parent to visit a friend, as against a similar kid that is resident in a high-density area like Ajegunle, Ijesha-tedo, Oshodi and Ebute-Meta. By implication, the kids and parents in low-density Lagos can easily limit contact with bullies, juvenile delinquents and those in disrepute. The parents can even choose the „kind of friends that their children keep within the neighbourhood, which more often than not, are children of their (parents) friends. Hence, the phrase „family friends is very common among inhabitants of such neighbourhood in reference to members of a family becoming friendly with the entire members of another family. This is not so for those that reside in high-density areas, where the "bad" kids often live in the same building as the "good" ones, hang out close by, dominate the nearby playground, and are nearly unavoidable. The parents in this case can hardly choose or monitor the kinds of friends that their children keep, especially, if such „friends double as neighbours. Therefore, in the dense neighbourhoods, there is a high probability of peer influence that will put pressure on kids to deviate as postulated by differential association theorists (Sutherland and Cressey, 1966; Gardner and Steinberg, 2005; Ennett, *et al.*, 2008; Cook, Buehler and Henson, 2009).

Poverty, Population Density and Growth of Crime

People that live below the poverty line usually inhabit most densely populated areas, which is characterised by crowded homes. In Lagos, as a result of high accommodation costs, it is a common sight for most densely populated areas like Makoko, Ijora, Orile, Ajegunle and several others to accommodate more than the healthy number of people required to stay under the same roof. In situations like that, the crowding of the homes will lead to a greater tendency for occupants to spend more times outside their homes and at places that may raise the level of temptation and opportunity to commit crime.

Roosa and Deng (2005) opined that when people stay away from home, they will tend to congregate in places conducive to deviance (drinking bar, stores, cafes, street

corners, taverns and so on). In addition, where homes are crowded, the level of children supervision by the parents will be grossly inadequate. This is equally as a result of the less time spent at home by children of crowded homes, who would rather stay out of home while their parents rarely objects to their movements (Crosswhite and Kerpelman. 2009; Teasdale and Silver, 2009). Crosswhite and Kerpelman (2009) stated that when the level of children supervision is reduced, academic performances suffer, so does stakes in conformity with a resultant decline in willingness to conform and increase in deviant behaviour. This assertion is one of the most cited and strongly verified causal claims in the literature on delinquency (Bonny *et al.*, 2000; Vazsonyi and Pickering, 2003; Aborisade, 2016).

Poverty, Dense Mixed-Use Neighbourhood and Deviance

There is tendency for poor, dense neighbourhoods to be mis-use areas. The mis-used has to do with parts of the urban areas where homes, apartments, retail shops, and even light industries are mixed together. This is very evident in Lagos and other urban cities in Nigeria where commercial activities are very prevalent within the residential areas. Considering the fact that most of the properties within the areas are rented, there is little that can be done to stop the commercial use of the properties. This is especially the case in apartments that are not inhabited by the landlord, which leaves the tenants with relative freedom to use the apartments they rented for secondary purposes.

In Nigeria, most property owners in the urban areas will welcome the mixed-use of their apartments because of the prospects of increased land values. It is commonplace for urban houses to be built with shops surrounding a residential building in lieu of a fence in most major cities in Nigeria (Marenin and Reisig, 1995). In many instances, a residential flat will also serve as a „business centre for sales of goods and services. This can be further observed in the nature of a number of business complimentary cards offered by business people that live in such neighbourhood, as the cards normally carry both business and residential addresses of the business owners, which suggest that the residences of such business owners equally serve as business places. Furthermore, the poorest and most dense areas in Nigeria, especially in Lagos, are often adjacent to the commercial sections of the cities, forming what the Chicago school referred to as the "zone of transition" (Shaw and McKay, 1942). This mixed-use scenario increases familiarity with easy access to places that offer opportunity for deviance.

Research have pointed out that kids that engage in delinquent acts like shoplifting often find it more comfortable to do it within their neighbourhood, at least in their first attempts (Charron, 2016). This tendency is further strengthened, if they live in a mixed-use neighbourhood, which will enable them to have easy access to such business places. On the other hand, kids that live in suburbs that may want to take to shoplifting will have to travel far to reach a store. The long distance between their neighbourhood and the store is a factor that may generate fear in the minds of the kids in their bid to shoplift.

Meanwhile, Stark (1987) remarked that mixed-use neighbourhood offers increased opportunity for congregating outside the home in places that are conducive to deviance. This is due to the fact that there are several places where inhabitants of dense, poor, mixed-use neighbourhood can congregate, such as street corners, „beer parlour and all sorts whenever they leave their place of abode, unlike inhabitants of the suburbs. Vazsonyi and Pickering (2003) asserted that when people, especially young males, congregate and have nothing to do, the incidence of their deviance is hugely increased. Gardner and Steinberg (2005) equally opined that most delinquency, as well as a lot of crime, is a social rather than a solitary act. Some of the deviant acts in this case might start in the form of a „game especially shoplifting, which may be practised among delinquent peer groups as a way of expressing their daring ability and invincibility in the art of stealing.

High Transience Rate in Dense Neighbourhood as a Factor of Deviance

It is a common knowledge that there is high transience rate within the dense, poor, mixed-use neighbourhoods as against the suburbs. McKenzie (1926:145) corroborated this position as he wrote that „Slums are the most mobile sections of a city. Their inhabitants come and go in continuous succession. On the other hand, empirical research have also pointed out that transience weakens extra-familial attachments (Stark, 1987). This, of course, is self-evident as the greater the amount of local population turnover, the more difficult it will be for families or individuals to form and retain attachments. This is especially the case in places like Isale-Eko and Ajegunle in Lagos, where there are very high turnover of population (Koleosho and Adeyinka, 2006). This is mainly as a result of the dilapidated rates of houses in these areas which makes it of paramount interest for residents to transit from the areas immediately they are able to afford accommodation in less stigmatized areas.

Furthermore, studies have indicated that transience also weakens voluntary organisation. As a result, decreasing

both formal and informal sources of social control (Koleosho and Adeyinka 2006; Cook, Buehler and Henson, 2009; Teasdale and Silver, 2009). Cook, Buehler and Henson (2009) submitted that membership of voluntary organisations such as Church/Mosque, Vigilante groups, landlord/tenant associations relies on attachments which suffers where transience rate is very high. Consequently, neighbourhoods that are deficient in such voluntary organisations will also be less able to exert effective social control within the neighbourhood as its level of community surveillance will be reduced. This will be due to the fact that the areas will continue to welcome newcomers which will make it difficult for the residents to know when someone does not live in a building he or she is entering. According to a resident of Ajegunle, „sometimes, an occupant of a room/apartment may not be able to tell the exact number of other occupants of the same apartment (Ordway and Ogundele, 2006:231). This is due to indiscriminate conversion of rented apartments into makeshift „hotel accommodation by some tenants that will be hoping to further sub-let their rented space for monetary incentives. In a more stable neighbourhood, however, it will be very easy to notice strangers as permanent residents are relatively able to recognise one another.

High Rates of Neighbourhood Deviance as a Factor of Social Stigma

High rates of neighbourhood deviance are a social stigma for residents as, apart from dilapidation, neighbourhoods that abound in crime and deviance stigmatise the moral standing of all residents (Anochiwa & Enyoghasim, 2016). For example, the inhabitants of Mushin area, which is highly known for crime and deviant incidences, are mostly perceived as deviants. It is not uncommon for people to immediately presume someone's character to be that of a deviant simply because the person is a resident of a stigmatised neighbourhood. It will equally be difficult for a lady that resides in an area like Ayilara area of Surulere in Lagos to own up to such residency, as the area is known to accommodate lots of commercial sex workers that stroll the sidewalks waving to passing cars and commuters. In fact, the activities of the ladies of easy virtues have made the area to be so stigmatised that the name-tag, „Omo Ayilara (Ayilara Ladies), is used to refer to any lady-resident of the neighbourhood. Similarly, residents of areas like Isale-Eko, Mushin, Oshodi, Ebute-Meta and other areas where assault, homicide, rape are common, where it is easy to find drug dealers, where people sell TVs, VCRs, cameras, mobile phones, and other such items out in the open, are very likely to experience social stigma from other residents of Lagos State.

Kaufmann, Wyman, Forbes-Jones, and Barry (2007)

asserted that living in areas that are stigmatised causes a reduction in an individual's stake in conformity. This means that those that live in slums that have been stigmatised as a „crime or deviance zone“ will perceive themselves as having less to risk by being detected in acts of deviance. This is in conformity with the postulations of the labelling theorists that emphasised the role of society reactions as being integral to the creation of crime and deviance (Lilly, Cullen and Ball, 2007). For instance, why would someone that lives in Mushin be afraid to fight in public? In some cases, when the residents of such areas are involved in scuffles with someone that resides elsewhere, they are quick to make reference to their neighbourhood as a way of instilling fear in the mind of the person they are fighting with. This is often based on the assumption that the mere mention of „*emi omo Mushin!*“ – „I am from Mushin!“ – will make the person they are fighting with to realise that (s)he is engaged in a fight with a dangerous person, hence, (s)he develops some sense of fear.

Consequently, it is safe to say that the stigmatised neighbourhood will tend to be highly populated by the most demoralised kinds of people (Anochiwa & Enyoghasim, 2016). This is not a reference to the poor or even those into crime or delinquency but people that are unable to function in reasonably adequate ways. The area is often congregated by the socially deprived or excluded, mentally ill, chronic alcoholics, the retarded and others that have limited capacity to cope (Hove, Ngwerume, & Muchemwa, 2013). As a result, the higher the relative number of demoralised residents, the greater the number of available "victims". Just as mixed-use neighbourhoods provide targets of opportunity by placing commercial firms within easy reach of neighbourhood residents, the demoralised serve as human targets of opportunity. The demoralised are considered as human targets as their state of mind can easily be exploited by deviants like picking the pockets of the drunk, mentally ill or retarded. It can, therefore, be suggested here that the higher the relative number of demoralised residents, the lower will be residents' perception of chances for success, and hence, they will have lower perceived stakes in conformity (Tienda, 1991; Taylor and Sally, 2010). Those that are demoralised will hardly serve as role models for the youths to believe in the Nigerian dream. Rather, they are often perceived as losers that are going nowhere in the Nigerian system. This type of people are also vulnerable to take to crime as a way of meeting their needs as well as „revenging“ against the society that has deprived and denied them the chance of living up to their dreams. Finally, stigmatised neighbourhoods are unlikely to get

fair law enforcement protection. This is as a result of the effect of the social stigma on the areas, as people in stigmatised areas complain less often, and are unlikely to cooperate with the police in their investigation, as well as the relative fear of the police to venture into such areas (Tienda, 1991). There have been reports of how the police avoided areas like Isale-Eko and Oluwole within Lagos Island in the past owing to the notoriety and hostility of the residents of the areas against the Nigeria Police (Adigun, 2013). It has been further advanced that criminals, being pursued by the police, but who are able to run into these areas will immediately feel „safe“ as the police will retreat as soon as the suspects make it into the areas (Fajemirokunet *al.*, 2016). There are such areas in Lagos that have gained so much popularity as crime hotspots that even the law enforcement agencies consider them no-go-areas. However, the deviant-intent or criminally-minded individuals scramble to acquire residency in such areas.

Policy Gaps and Challenges

Redressing the political, social and economic problems posed by speedy urbanisation is one of the most pressing governance challenges confronting successive Nigerian governments. There have been quite a number of aborted measures that have been attempted by a number of political regimes in the country. The population census, which is one of the measures that are used to monitor city growth, has proved ineffective in this regard. Virtually, every census conducted in the country since 1952 has been highly contested (Mabogunje, 1992). This is perhaps as a result of both economic and political reasons. Economically, federal statutory allocation to states is influenced by their population. These states with reportedly low populations are disadvantaged in resource allocation from the federal level. Politically, in the democratic setting, politics is a game of numbers and political parties controlling large population can be at an advantage. Population is also one of the indices upon which parliamentary representations is based.

There have also been some policies deployed by different governments in Nigeria to check the high rate of rural-urban migration that largely accounts for rapid urbanisation of cities like Lagos, Port-Harcourt, Ibadan and Abuja. These measures include infrastructural development and provision of social amenities in the rural areas. In spite of the efforts of the government to bridge the gap between the rural areas and urban centres, the disparities between them remains enormous, with most of the rural areas lacking basic infrastructure to sustain reasonable living. This has led to uncontrollable movement of people from the rural to urban areas.

In various cities across the country, the distribution of

resources and government presence have been very lopsided in favour of suburbs as against the slums and transient neighbourhoods. This has largely projected the level of environmental inequality within cities with the slums left with high consciousness of social exclusion. In particular, the inadequate police presence in slums and transient neighbourhoods is partly responsible for the growth of crime rates in these areas, and also makes the areas to serve as breeding grounds for delinquents and by extension, career criminals. Successive governments have either failed or completely ignored providing the slums with adequate security, leaving such areas to fashion their own security mechanisms. The consequence of such apathy to securing these areas is largely responsible for these areas being mapped as hotspots for crime. The security tension in the country is so high and enduring that there has been growing concern over Nigeria's ability and readiness to deliver the goals of sustainable development, having failed in her attempts to meet the earlier millennium development goals (Oladeji & Folorunso, 2017).

Environmental Sustainability Implications of the Study

In Nigeria, the achievement of environmental sustainability will be herculean unless effective measures are put in place to address the ubiquitous problems of crime and the fear of crime within the country. This position is supported by the argument of Du Plessis (1999: 33) that "no city can call itself sustainable if the citizens of that city fear for their personal safety and the safety of their livelihood." Therefore, the growing level of insecurity in Nigeria's urban centres has serious implications to the country's bid to rank among African countries that are able to achieve 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Sustainability has been predominantly perceived as an economic or environmental issue (Du Plessis, 1999; Cozens, 2002), which fails to consider the issue of crime and fear of crime to any meaningful extent while others have discussed the subject minimally (Goodchild, 1994).

Although there are no available or reliable financial costs of crime in Nigeria, it is perceived by major stakeholders to be high (Achumba *et al.*, 2013; Adebakin, 2016; Oladeji & Folorunso, 2017). This, together with personal, emotional and psychological costs of crime, which are equally presumed to be high (Ordway & Ogundele, 2016; Oyinloye *et al.*, 2017), makes urban dwellers to be living in precarious situations. In addition, these costs include huge sum of money allocated as security votes by states and federal government. The environmental sustainability of major cities like Lagos, Port-Harcourt, Abuja has been tested

considerably, with monumental losses incurred to crime-related events by individuals, corporate entities and the state. Urban design could be potentially implicated in some of these areas as residents sometimes alter city plans and aesthetic values out of the fear of crime.

A city is an ecosystem and within the city, crime and the fear of crime are interwoven within this ecosystem (Wirth, 1938). The study of both „ecology of crime“ and environmental criminology, as presented in this paper, are worthy of consideration as a central component of urban sustainability. Industrialisation and urbanisation processes in Nigeria gave way to a range of new threats to public health and well-being. The unplanned, rapid and „*laissez faire*“ expansion of cities across the country led to the problems of overcrowding, poverty, conflict, pollution, crime, disease and „anomie“ with urban areas becoming containers of problems as well as places of vitality excitement and „*joie de vivre*“. This condition is further aggravated by persistent rural-urban migration which is largely caused by continuous neglect of the rural areas.

Indeed, a prerequisite for a sustainable urban environment is that it should not pose a threat to current or future users. Therefore, attempts made towards „Ecologically Sustainable Design“ (ESD) development in Nigeria should identify and harmonise synergies between crime prevention and sustainability. In attaining environmental sustainability in Nigeria, there should be: shared responsibility for sustainability, equity in the security of urban and rural communities, reducing environmental impacts through investment in evidence and effectiveness, understanding quality of life issues, enhancing understanding of the ecology of the environment and appreciating the need for government strategies, partnerships, best practice and environmental and social responsibility.

Conclusion

Global discourse on how peace and security in the context of the SDGs can be framed has concentrated on the identification of crime hotspots to aid strategies to prevent crime. However, the practice in the security and justice sectors across Nigeria indicates that the challenges posed to Sustainable Development Goals from the perspective of peace and security will require a more nuanced approach that takes into account governance, rule of law, policing and human rights compliance in security and justice sector institutions. Based on the discussions in this paper, adverse effects of rapid urbanisation on security and safety in Nigeria become a drain on local and national resources at the expense of development and people's wellbeing. This will further jeopardise the country's chances of meeting

the Sustainable Development Goals.

The prevalence of urban poverty and deprivation sharply contrasted with relative wealth, and has created a potentially volatile situation, which after being left unattended to has culminated into insecurity, political upheaval and crime in various parts of the country. The spatial distribution of crime in urban Nigeria is indeed a reflection of the high level of socioeconomic inequality that pervades the country and the inability of the government to effectively address the disparity. People migrate to urban centres with the hope of securing better future for themselves and their families. It is, therefore, the obligation of the government to create policies that permit them to accomplish this goal. Indeed, urbanisation offers both economic and political opportunities for national development. With a suitable political milieu, the economic potential of urbanisation is capable of providing a foundation for national growth and prosperity that will create vibrant and affluent cities in Nigeria. It is evident that urban governance is an important factor that can effectively reduce the rate of crime and deviant behaviour in specific areas within major cities across the country.

In view of the literatures, the dimension of crime cannot be ignored in the development and refinement of government planning policy guidance. Notably, the response rates of successive governments to extant literatures that have identified crime hotspots in urban areas have been rather lukewarm. Allocation of police personnel and security instruments have not been seen to be strategically executed, in order to give preference to high crime-prone areas within urban centres in the country. Without mincing words, there are indications that Nigerian cities need to adopt the principles of sustainable urbanisation as a means of managing and guiding the process and consequences of urban development. The Nigerian government should pay more attention to improving the provision of urban infrastructure for poor households, especially, in those areas where the stock of urban infrastructure is deficient. Furthermore, city authorities need to be strengthened by providing them with the necessary powers, resources and capacity to undertake a wide range of statutory functions. Finally, Nigerian government can assimilate tactics from developed countries in its quest to transform the urbanisation that is being experienced in the country from an unbridled phenomenon to the centrepiece in development initiatives today. Accordingly, if pragmatic efforts are made to effectively manage urbanisation, Nigerian cities will be both sustainable and able to provide human security and deep sense of belonging to all citizens.

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