

## **Appraisal of Security Challenges Within the Nigerian Residential Neighbourhoods: In Search for a Sustainable Theoretical Framework**

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**Abstract:** Home ownership is often viewed as a way to help enable households to build wealth but a threat to the enjoyment of this investment may limit its appeal. One of such threat is crime which may reduce the desirability of ownership in the affected neighbourhood. The main objective of this paper is to examine a sustainable framework for the control of the trend in housing crime within developing economy like Nigeria. This is carried out through an in-depth analysis of existing literature which reveals a merger of Crime Prevention through Social Development (CPSD) and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) theories to form Crime Prevention through Social and Environmental Development (CPSSED). This is expected to go a long way in controlling residential neighbourhood crime maximally. This research serves as a call to the urban neighbourhood planners, estate managers/realtors and government agencies to see crime prevention as an urgent assignment towards achieving housing sustainability.

**Key words:** Housing crime, (in)security, CPSD, CPTED, CPSSED, Nigeria

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Crime breeds destruction of live and property as well as terrifying fear of insecurity. Most nations of the globe are therefore, looking for additional techniques of fighting the soaring wave and growing sophistication of urban violence. A 1990 review by the United Nations unveiled that while most countries of the developed economy spend an average between 2 and 3% of their annual budgets on crime prevention those of the developing economies spend an average between 9 and 14%.

Generally speaking, home owners as well as occupants are usually susceptible to various forms of insecurity ranging from natural disaster (flood, earthquake, hurricane sandy, landslide and tsunamis among others) and man-made insecurity which constitutes mainly property and violent crimes. Essentially, urban crime and fear of it are situated within a culture of violence (Robertshaw *et al.*, 2001). Internationally, urban crime rates are soaring, particularly in cities of the developed and developing nations. Fear of crime is often associated with fear for one's personal safety, especially when alone and at dark. Fear of crime may keep residents off the streets and other public areas. It may also constitute a barrier to participation in the public life of cities (Wekerle and Whitzman, 1995). Robertshaw *et al.* (2001) identified among others physical

environmental factors resulting from poor urban design and management of urbanization process, inadequate urban services and failure to incorporate security related issues in urban management policies as contributing factors to rising urban crime.

Studies have shown that residential neighbourhood crimes have grievous consequences (Dugan, 1999). To the residents: it can lead to psychological effect of fear which over time had resulted in health impairment; some violent crime like armed robbery had led to loss of life while frequent burglary attacked has been found to add to resident's house maintenance budget as they will need to expend money to fortify the building, spend extra money to replace burgled home items and atimes pay higher insurance premium, all these can add up to reduce the level of productivity of the residents (Gibbons, 2004). The effect to the neighbourhood can also be enormous: it has been found to lead to neighbourhood decline, residential mobility (Rabe and Taylor, 2010), effect on property investment as it has been found to have negative effect on property values/prices, it causes neighbourhood stigmatization which may inferably affect environmental sustainability as well as real estate practice.

The burden of property crime also cuts across the government as it is capable of reducing income from property tax, adverse effect of incivility on governance, increase in government budget as government may have

to pay more on procurement of additional police, judiciary and building and maintenance of ever-overcrowded prisons. This by and large affect the general economy (Anderson, 1999; Cohen, 2004; Gibbons, 2004). All these have called for an urgent response to property crime globally and Nigeria in particular through a sustainable theories and approaches.

### **Literature review**

**Crime wave within the Nigerian urban centres:** Increase in the crime rate in Nigeria was being reported as early as the eighties. Lives were no longer safe, the country was characterized by insecurity challenges posed by offenders. Essentially, urbanisation and development of large cities were not new in Nigeria but rather the crime surge is what is relatively recent. Nigeria as a matter of fact has over a century developed large towns and cities but the reality of insecurity especially posed by criminals is relatively recent. The crime wave and the extent of violence in Nigeria are becoming more frequent, more offensive and horrendous. There are daily reports of more violent crimes (Agbola, 1997; Fabiyi, 2004).

The unexpected rise in urban insecurity has been associated to aggravated poverty that has become entrenched in most urban centers of many African nations. Population in poverty has been growing steadily in Nigeria for example, in 1985, 27.2% of Nigerians were rated as poor; in 1990, it was measured as 56% in 2000, it was estimated to be about 66% and in 2014, Nigeria was classified as the third poorest country in the world (United Nations University, 1990; World Bank, 2014). Both insecurity and poverty function in a symbiotic way to make life in most Nigerian urban cities very irritable and relatively irksome. Fabiyi (2004) also observed another major cause of the increased wave of crime in Nigeria as the 1966/1970 civil war as he opined that the civil war taught Nigerians how to kill themselves with impunity to have little regard for human life and to derive joy in shedding blood. The official security apparatus in Nigeria grossly fails to checkmate the security problems in Nigeria. This is due primarily to inadequate facilities to fight crime efficiently and due to the poverty level that has brought uncontrolled corruption within the security systems (Agbola, 1997; Onibokun, 2003; Fabiyi, 2004).

O;ufolabo, Akintande and Ekum identified eighteen major categories of crimes associated with Nigerian urban centers; they posited that police department emphasized stealing/theft/burglary as the most committed crime in most cities. They went further to mention illiteracy, broken home, bad company, porous environment and failure of police and other judicial authorities in administering justice as main causes of residential urban crime.

### **CAUSES OF RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBOURHOOD CRIME**

Bearing in mind the interdependent nature of crime that is, crime generally operates like a network in that controlling a particular crime while leaving the others is as bad as not controlling any (Sherman and Sherman, 1997), hence, literature has revealed three main sources (causes) of residential neighbourhood crime. One, crime occurring as a result of poor environmental design (Armitage, 2013; Crowe, 2000), secondly crime emergence as a result of offender getting ample opportunity without adequate restriction (Clarke and Raymer, 1994; Roman and Farrell, 2002; Ozkan, 2011) and crime arising from absence of social development which most times appear in the form of poverty, unemployment, homelessness, corruption, poor family and community cohesion among others (Hastings, 2007, 2008; The John Howard Society of Albert, 1995; Waller and Weiler, 1985).

Statistics shows that certain age groups are more likely to criminal behavior. In 1992, young people between 12-17 year were implicated in 13% of the violent occurrences and 27% of all property offences. Meanwhile, adults between 18-34 year were implicated in 55% of all violent occurrences (Canadian Center for Justice Statistics, 1994). Likewise, empirical proof credits 25% of the increase in crime during the 1960s to increase in the balance of adolescent in America (Sheley and Smith, 1988)

Essentially, it is virtually impossible to discuss age as a risk factor without mentioning the part of being female or male plays as a risk factor connected to a crime. It has long been proved that males are much more likely to be involved in crime than female (Chilton and Datesman, 1987). United States statistics indicates that women commit far fewer crimes than men. In every five arrested men, only one woman is arrested (Bennett, 1987).

Poverty is seldom cited as a factor linked to crime, although the correlation between poverty and crime is yet to consistently verified by research (Hartnagel and Lee, 1990). The three essential definitions of poverty in contemporary use according to Ryerse (1990) are absolute poverty (those without the most primary needs for survival such as food, shelter and clothing); relative poverty (families and individuals whose income and other source levels are scant in comparison to the majority of people within the economy) and exclusionary poverty (persons excluded from our society's basic living requirements and opportunities). Exclusionary poverty more perfectly describes the condition of life of people living in poverty because it exceeds simple economic considerations like looking at individual's access to health care and quality of diet, transportation possibilities

Table 1: Analysis of the underpinning theories

Name of theory	Thrust of theory	Relevance of theory	Recent studies/propounder(s)
Crime prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)	The theory asserts that ‘the proper design and effective use of the built environment can lead to a reduction in the fear and incidence of crime, and an improvement in quality of life	The theory has been tested to have the capacity of checkmating crime opportunity through building design	CPTED by Jeffery (1971) Defensible Space by Newman (1973) The Broken Windows by Wilson and Kelling (1982) CPTED by Crowe (2000)
Crime Prevention Through Social Development (CPSD)	Crime Prevention Through Social Development (CPSD) is an approach or concept that acknowledges the underlying complex social, economic and cultural processes that contribute to crime and victimization CPSD endeavours to bridge the gap between criminal justice policies and programmes and social support for individuals, families and communities. It does this by tackling the factors that contribute to crime and victimization and are amendable to change	This theory is expected to tackle the root causes of crime that is the social risk factors like poverty homelessness, illiteracy and others	Development of Social Model by Glueck (1962) CPSD by Waller and Weiler (1985) Sustainability of CPSD by Hasting (2008)
Crime opportunity theories	These are theories that suggest that offenders make rational choices and thus choose targets that offer a high reward with little effort and risk. The occurrence of a crime depends on two things: the presence of at least one motivated offender who is ready or willing to engage in a crime and the conditions of the environment in which that offender is situated, to wit, opportunity for crime.	These theories are meant to serve as lubricant to the other too that is CPTED and CPSD. Also to address the psychological and social aspects of crime	Situational crime Prevention by Clarke and Mayhew (1980) Lifestyle Theory by Fattah (1993) Rational Choice Theory by Clarke and Felson (1979) Routine Activity Theory by Cohen and Felson (1998) Crime Pattern Theory by Brantingham and Brantingham (1981)

for socializing and partaking in community life (Ryerse, 1990). Not with standing the fact that study has failed to confirm a poor individual’s greater likelihood of criminal engagement and that white collar crime proves inconsistent, poverty continues to be linked to crime (Short, 1991, Hipp and Yates, 2011). Further while researchers take progressing care to warn against simplistic relationship that relate poverty with crime, there is considerable agreement that living in poverty greatly rises risk of criminality (Mehlum *et al.*, 2006; Sen, 2008). In similar studies, it was submitted that violent crime, low level of educational achievement, long season of unemployment and poverty are connected across themselves (Huang *et al.*, 2004; Ucha, 2010).

Efforts made to relate some of these risk factors to the Nigerian situation reveal the following: Recently, world bank report on Nigeria’s poverty level noted that at 33.1%, Nigeria is ranked third in the world (World Bank, 2014). In the same vein, researcher’s studies have corroborated this assertion (Aigbokhan, 2000; Ogwumike, 2002). Agbola (1997) posited that poverty is one of the leading causes of neighbourhood crime in Nigeria. Educationally, Nigeria has been rated very low in terms of its national policy on education (Ojerinde, 1985; Obanya, 2002), poor budgetary allocation to education (Dike, 2005) and the threat to Western education in some sections of

the country by the terrorist group. Omotor (2010) listed illiteracy as one of the socio-economic determinants of crime in Nigeria. Likewise, Dike (2005) and Smith (2010) posited that there is a correlation between crime rate and corruption in Nigeria. Ucha (2010) in his study submitted that corruption is a factor in evaluating poverty and that they are all connected to a crime.

Considering the environmental and building design as a risk factor, first, in Nigeria, there is weakly enforceable law guiding the mode of residential neighbourhood design as we have it in the developed nations. The little exemption is in Government Reservation Areas (GRAs) and this only last for a short period of time after full development. Secondly, government role in the area of layout planning (in the form of site and service scheme) and drawing up of master plan as well as monitoring are not effectively implemented, hence, government control over development is not loudly felt in most of the Nigerian urban settlements. Furthermore, the degree of poverty among the medium and low income group which cover over 75% of the working class seems not to allow for proper residential neighbourhood planning as government seems not to be up and doing in the area of making housing affordable through housing finance and provision of neighbourhood infrastructure among others for the generality (Adepoju, 2014) (Table 1).

## THE UNDERPINNING THEORIES

Urban crimes that include residential neighbourhood crime have since been described as a global phenomenon (McKnight and Kretzmann, 1993; Hastings, 2008). Efforts toward curbing or eradicating the trend of the social ills have been intensified by governments of different nations of the world through city and neighbourhood policing, funded researches and formulation of theories. Researches show that over the years, government of different economies of the world do earmark a remarkable percentage of the annual budget on curbing crime (policing) and the judicial system (The John Howard Society of Alberta, 1995). Gorazd believe that the test of police effectiveness is the nonexistence of crime and disorder, not the apparent evidence of police action in dealing with them. For police, according to them, prevention in the past has consisted essentially of exhorting people to “lock it and lose it” and dispensing advice on door locks and window bars for their homes. Crime prevention in the developed nations typically was (and often still is) an attachment to the police bureau which ordinarily included a few officers who were equipped to go to citizen’s homes and provide safety; surveys or involve in public lectures on prevention topics. It must be emphasized here that in the developing and emerging economies, adoption of crime prevention strategies are still in its infancy (Sherman, 1997; Clarke and Rayer, 1994).

From related literature, efforts available at curbing crime mostly in the urban centers are categorized under preventive (crime prevention strategies) and curative (apprehension). In other words, in the recent times, researchers have been soliciting for the adoption of the preventive approach (Winkel, 1991; Sakip *et al.*, 2012; Cornish and Clarke, 2014). This approach has been applauded as not only cost-efficient but government-citizen friendly.

Essentially, this study aims at adopting crime prevention theories as contemporary researches in environmental crime have recommended (Clarke and Raymer, 1994; Vallee, 2010; Sherman, 1997). Crimes in the urban residential neighbourhoods are characterized and influenced by different factors. First of all, in the developing economy like Nigeria, the degree of rural-urban drift is high due to the concentration of infrastructure, employment opportunities, health services and educational institutions among others in the urban centers. This in turn results in overpopulation culminating to overstretching of limited facilities, unemployment and homelessness. Furthermore, in the developing economies, it is not uncommon to witness unplanned residential

neighbourhoods or inability of the local planning authority to control residential developments due mostly to the poor state of the economy. This is usually evident in the absence of approved layout and building plan, an absence of access road network, poor drainages and deviance to planning regulations. As a matter of fact, when a neighbourhood is not well planned, it makes it easy for offenders to commit a crime. This usually results in burglary, theft and a time, rape.

Also, developing nations like Nigeria are usually bedeviled by political recklessness and instability resulting in mass misappropriation of public funds, poverty, unemployment, school dropout and illiteracy, uneven distribution of wealth, homelessness and lawlessness among others. All these have a positive impact on the social and environmental crime risk factors.

Furthermore, crime at any level and viewed from any angle must have social and psychological underpin. Crime in many cases is seen as an act developed and executed from the mind. This means even when other factors are made suitable, some, especially the youths (through juvenile delinquencies) and some miscreants may still insist in fomenting trouble.

Sequel to the above analysis, it is proposed that the theoretical framework for residential neighbourhood crime in Nigeria shall cut across three main levels as demonstrated in Table 1: Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED). This is expected to address crime caused by poor neighbourhood planning, crime opportunity theories. This is expected to address the sociological and psychological aspects of Crime. Crime Prevention Through Social Development (CPSD). This is expected to address the fundamental causes of crime which seems to treat neighbourhood crime unemployment, corruption, poor family ties, lack of community integration, poverty and negative peer influence among others.

A search into the relevant literature has shown that basically the aforementioned three theories. CPTED, CPSD and the Opportunity theories are widely implemented crime prevention approaches. However, the crime opportunity theory basically serves as the threshold to the other two approaches as the principles in opportunity theory tend to guide the operations of CPTED and CPSD. Furthermore, studies show that the weakness of one tends to stand as the strength of the other. Hence, within the scope of this study, a merger of CPTED and CPSD is proposed to form Crime Prevention through Social and Environmental Development (CPSSED). The approach is considered adequate as the review of the literature unveils that there is a paucity of research in this

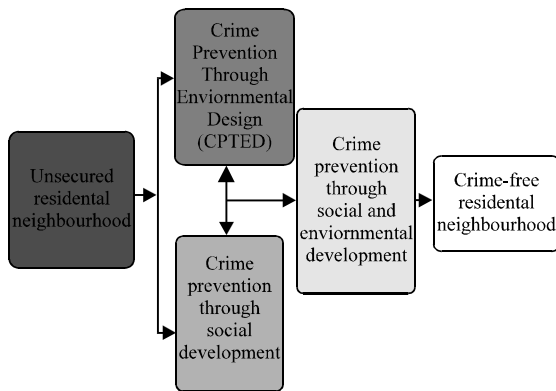


Fig. 1: Merger of CPTED and CPSD to form CPSED

direction. Hence, it is meant to bridge a gap in knowledge. Figure 1 attempts to show the graphical picture of the merger.

### CONCLUSION

So far so good, in the course of this research work, it has been reiterated that crime generally is a global problem of which researchers and governments are making frantic efforts to control, if not eradicating its trend. However, residential neighbourhood crime which is the center of this research has been identified as a must-fight war considering its looming adverse effect on human health and productivity as well as on the general economy. Also, it was also stressed that effort made in the developed nations towards this is tremendously commendable through government policies/sponsors and research compared to the developing economies. Nigeria as an example of a developing economy has been seen to be devastatingly hit by the urban residential crime of which if urgent measures are not fetched may bring the situation to a very dangerous dimension.

It is upon this instance that this paper had proposed a framework described as Crime Prevention through Social and Environmental Development (CPSED). CPSED as earlier described is derived from the combination of CPSD and CPTED which is considered suitable for Nigeria (developing nation) as it involves the contributions of both the public (CPSD) and that of the private (CPTED).

Also, considering its suitability, studies have shown that most of the design and social risk factors are prevalent in Nigeria which CPSED is capable of ameliorating. Hence, it is the belief of this study, if this framework can be tenaciously pursued, is hoped to cater for both the short and long term crime prevention issues

within the Nigerian residential neighbourhoods. The two concepts have been proven as crime prevention tools by researchers and industrialized nations.

The result of this study lends support to this theory by documenting the need to keep a safe and secured residential neighbourhood globally in general and Nigeria in particular. Thus, this research supports the view that policy makers and city officials concerned with urban growth should make crime prevention an important priority. Additional research on the relationship between the efforts of developed and developing nations within the arena of crime prevention represents an exciting avenue for future research.

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