

# Currents and Perspectives in Sociology



*edited by*

Uche C. isiugo-Abanihe, Austin N. Isamah &  
'Jimi O. Adesina

**Malthouse Press Limited**  
8, Amore Street, Off Toyin Street, Ikeja,  
P.O. Box 500, Ikeja, Lagos State, Nigeria.  
E-mail address: malthouse\_press@yahoo.com

Lagos, Benin, Ibadan, Jos, Oxford, Port-Harcourt, Zaria

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, transmitted, transcribed, stored in a retrieval system, or translated into any language or computer language, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, magnetic, chemical, photocopying, recording, manual or otherwise, without the prior permission of **Malthouse Press Limited**, PO Box 500, Ikeja, Lagos, Nigeria.

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise be lent, resold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the Publisher's prior consent, in writing, in any form of binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

© Department of Sociology, University of Ibadan 2002

First published 2002

ISBN 978 023 075 0

## Table of contents

<i>Introduction</i>	ix
<i>Part I: Sociological theory and research</i>	
1. The sociological trio: an introduction to Marx, Weber and Durkheim – <i>Justin Labinjoh</i>	1
2. Quantitative research techniques – <i>Uche C. Isiugo-Abanihe</i>	52
3. The use of Focus Group Discussions in Nigerian social research: – <i>Uche C. Isiugo-Abanihe &amp; Oka M. Obono</i>	73
4. Theory and research: the dynamic duo – <i>Uche C. Isiugo-Abanihe &amp; S. K. Alonge</i>	91
<i>Part II: Social development</i>	
5. The concept of development in historical perspective: the Third World experience – <i>A. O. Olutayo &amp; A.O. Bankole</i>	105
6. New directions in the Sociology of Development – <i>Austin N. Isamah</i>	123
7. The concept of Mode of Production in the analysis of development – <i>A. O. Olutayo</i>	138
8. Contemporary challenges for rural sociologists in Nigeria – <i>Janice E. Olawoye</i>	149
9. Perspectives on national integration in multicultural societies: a Nigerian overview – <i>Onigu Otite</i>	163
10. The rise of cities – <i>Adebola A. Adedimeji</i>	175
<i>Part III: Medical, health and population issues</i>	
11. Medical anthropology in perspective: prospects for Nigerian society – <i>E. Adewale Oke</i>	199
12. Problems and prospects of health care delivery in Nigeria: issues in political economy and social inequality – <i>A. S. Jegede</i>	212

13. The political economy of maternal and child health in Africa: – Bernard E. Owumi	227
14. Rethinking the Nigerian population policy: toward a multiculturalist perspective – Oka M. Obono	240
<i>Part IV: Formal organizations</i>	
15. Human relations and sociology of work: conceptual issues in a perspective – Jimi O. Adesina	259
16. Bureaucracy and postmodern organization: a critique – Ifeanyi Onyeonoru	274
17. Anomie and workplace deviance: a sociological analysis of bureaucratic corruption in Nigeria – Ifeanyi Onyeonoru	298
18. The prison as a social system – R.A. Okunola, A.A. Aderinto & A.A. Atere	319
<i>Part V: Social problems</i>	
19. The concept of social problem – A.A. Aderinto	335
20. Crime in society: currents and perspectives – R. A. Okunola	349
21. Punishment in society – Emeka E. N. Obioha	367

UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN LIBRARY

## Crime in society: currents and perspectives

– R. A. Okunola

### Introduction

Discourse about crime, its control and prevention has existed in one form or another since the ancient times although a distinctive science of criminology – a specific genre of discourse and inquiry about crime – did not emerge until the last two decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Garland, 1997). As a social phenomenon, crime is increasing in both developed as well as developing countries (Rodney, 1992). There is, however, a general political belief that improvement in material living conditions will take care of increase in crime as well as crime itself. But while the improvement is often handicapped by the pursuance of political policies which absorb most of the existing financial resources, this improvement may however reduce some forms of crime, it may create others which may sometimes be more serious than those that previously existed. Thus the problem of crime has remained with man and society as a major form of social deviance. In the words of Lopez-Rey (1970), 'like sin and virtue, crime offers very little room for anything new'. What may be new are the historical forms or modalities that the commission of crime adopts'.

### What is crime?

The word crime is embedded in several terms like 'deviation', 'deviant behaviour', 'anti-social conduct', and 'social pathology'. It is often identified as a fundamental socio-judicial concept with the numerous legal definitions given, most often, by criminal law. It is sometimes reduced to a few social commandments, the main beneficiaries of which are the individual, the family and the society and the fundamental forms of their respective organisation. Two major categories of offenders are normally distinguished in crime - Juveniles/Young offenders, on the one hand and Adult offenders on the other. This distinction stems from the humanitarian and paternalistic principles with strong political overtones in favour of the child. In juvenile court treatment approach, the child is a wrong doer not an accused and the pronouncement is an order not a judgement. In short, the court is concerned with the child's welfare although at the same time it must maintain a judicial approach. Within the context of this protective principle towards the child, each country in turn fixes its

own age-bracket. General age limit ranges between 17 - 21 years. In the case of Nigeria it can be taken to be 18 years.<sup>1</sup> Country specific age limit should draw attention to the politics inherent in this fixture. The concept of 'child' with respect to juvenile delinquency, it can be argued, is a fictional concept, which does not correspond to reality.

Whatever its variation, however, crime can be seen as an attitudinal concept which is indispensable to society. Crimes generally entail propositions about aberrant conduct and how it should be understood. Its main function is to express an extreme form of social reproach vis-à-vis certain extreme forms of behaviour. Generally, the legal definition of crime is often the point of departure to determine the extent of crime in society. Thus, crime can simply be defined as 'an act or omission punishable by the state'. It can equally be held:

to be an offence which goes beyond the personal and into the public sphere, breaking prohibitory rules and laws, to which legitimate punishments or sanctions are attached, and which requires the intervention of a public authority (the state or a local body) - Marshal, 1996: 96

Law therefore becomes central to the designation of crime. In crime, there is a set of actions or omissions united only in their proscription by law. The scope of criminal law changes in rough accordance with public concerns. Furthermore, what constitutes crime changes with time. In line with the relativity of norms, crime is also relative to society. There are however some acts that are universally designated as criminal. Typical examples here are the rules against murder and that on theft/stealing. The legal definition of crime however sets limit to its proper understanding especially for sociological analysis. This is because from the legal orientation, crime can be known as such when it has come to the notice of, and processed through an administrative system or enforcement agency. Yet, sociologically, we know that the extent of crime in society goes beyond the known or detected and recorded crimes - which are contained in the records of administrative system or enforcement agency. A full sociological appreciation of crime situation in any society has to take two other aspects into consideration. These are the undetected or unknown, and the detected or known, but unrecorded crimes. Each of these aspects of crime often raises its own problems and can be studied by different sociological approaches and techniques. Such alternative techniques include victim survey and self-reporting studies, and they have generally shown that crimes are greater and more diverse than shown by the records of administrative system or enforcement agency.

The above three categories of crime - known/detected and recorded; undetected/unknown; and detected/known but unrecorded - can be further categorized into two - recorded and unrecorded criminality. Further, efforts at grappling with the

<sup>1</sup> Although Children and Young Persons Law in some states (e.g. Oyo State) fixed the age limit for under 14 years; the OAU Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (to which Nigeria is a signatory) defines a child as 'every human being below the age of 18 years. For a discussion on the 'emergence' of young offenders see Moris, A. *et al.* (1980). On the issue of criminal responsibility in Nigeria, see section 30 of the Criminal Code.

extent of crime in society has led to the concept of *Dark Number Theory* (see Gana, 1985). Under this can be grouped unknown crime, the undetected offender and offenders who, though detected were declared free because of lack of evidence or those offenders who for any other reason evaded penal sanctions.

As legal entities, behaviour (or acts and omission) covered by criminal codes can run into hundreds, and can be complex. Attempts have however been made to bring some order into these collections using different criteria. Lopez-Rey (1970) suggested that crime be sorted into two categories - conventional and unconventional. To him, conventional crimes are 'mostly made up of offences against persons, property, moral, mores and public order'. Unconventional crimes include those:

Committed under cover of official or semi-official position, against international law and usages; as the sequel of patriotic, political, ideological, revolutionary and even fanatic religious actions; by intelligence services; economic and financial frauds, criminal corruption at high levels... very few of them are new, the vast majority are defined as criminal offences by national penal codes and special laws but largely go unpunished. (Lopez-Rey, 1975: 18).<sup>2</sup>

Legally, offences can also be categorized by the degree of punishment it attracts. In this stead Madarikan and Aguda (1974) noted that there are three kinds of offences (see Table 1).

**Table 1: Crime categories by degree of punishment.**

Felonies	Offences punishable without proof of previous conviction, with death or by imprisonment for 3 years or more.
Misdemeanours	Offences punishable by imprisonment for not less than 6 months, but less than 3 years.
Simple offences	Offences which are neither a felony nor misdemeanour

Source: Madarikan and Aguda(1974)

A fourth category can be added - treason. This consists in the levying of war against the state and adhering to war enemies, giving them aid and comfort. In addition, it includes forging and counterfeiting of state's currency, and the counterfeiting of the privy seal. However, considered from the punishment it attracts, treason can safely be grouped under felony. Further, from the legal point of view, Obilade (1970:245) submits that offences can equally be classified as indictable and non-indictable. Here, an indictable offence is one in:

- which on conviction may be punished by a term of imprisonment exceeding two years; or
- which on conviction may be punished by imposition of a fine exceeding four hundred Naira; not being an offence declared by the law creating it to be punishable on summary conviction.

<sup>2</sup> As quoted in Okunola (1995:4)

Any offence outside (a) and (b) is a non-indictable offence. Crime records do not, however, come in the forms described above. A common format by the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) groups crime statistics under the following four categories in Table 2 below.

**Table 2: Common crime category**

<i>Crime category</i>	<i>Offences</i>
Crime against persons	Murder, manslaughter, attempted murder, suicide, grievous harm/wounding; assault, child stealing, slave dealing, rape and indecent assault, unnatural offences and other offences*
Crime against property	Stealing, robbery and extortion, burglary, house breaking, false pretences/cheating, store breaking; forgery, receiving stolen property; unlawful possession, arson and other offences*
Crime against local acts	Traffic acts, offences against township acts, liquor acts, dog acts and other offences*
Other offences.	Forgery of CBN notes, coining offences, gambling; offences against public order, forgery, bribery and corruption, escape and rescue and other offences.*

*Source: Nigeria Police Force Annual Report (1980) (\*Not exhaustive.)*

There has always been the problem of estimating the scale of crime in society. The convention has been the use of crime records as provided by the various criminal justice administrative systems or law enforcement agencies - the principal of which is the Police (see Tables 3, 4 and 5 as examples on Nigeria).

**Table 3: Breakdown of crimes by categories: 1990-1993 (Nigeria)**

<i>Offences</i>	<i>1990</i>	<i>1991</i>	<i>1992</i>	<i>1993</i>	<i>1994</i>	<i>1995</i>
Against Persons	98,371	94,418	93,027	90,151	89,125	64,403
Against Property	186,682	166,322	78,527	76,443	114,956	44,675
Against Local Acts	5,922	6,598	4,733	5,880	4,724	n.a.
Other offences	16,226	15,823	32,433	31,548	14,713	1307
TOTAL	307,201	283,156	208,730	204,022	223,518	110,385

*Sources: (a) FOS (1996) (b) The Nigeria Police Annual Reports (several editions)*

**Table 4: Juvenile delinquency: 1992-1995 (Nigeria)**

<i>Number</i>	<i>1992</i>	<i>1993</i>	<i>1994</i>	<i>1995</i>
Cases Reported	2,454	575	265	306
Juvenile arrested	3,124	717	295	336
Cases Convicted	381	87	44	39
Awaiting Trial	731	92	52	50
Cases acquired	73	14	10	7



Number	1992	1993	1994	1995
Under investigation	1,017	215	106	151
Juvenile Convicted	442	117	13	10
Juvenile awaiting trial	914	151	96	25
Juvenile acquitted	96	63	19	13
TOTAL	9,151	2,035	900	937

Source: Iyamabo, R.I. (1996:12).

**Table 5: Violent crimes\* in Lagos State and Nigeria (1986-1996)**

Year	Nigeria	Lagos State	ARMED ROBBERY	
			Nigeria	Lagos
1986	70,955	7,598	1,308	340
1987	78,894	14,456	1,260	163
1988	81,687	17,134	1,338	140
1989	72,111	15,132	1,577	84
1990	73,182	15,381	1,700	95
1991	69,849	12,428	1,064	68
1992	73,573	16,634	1,568	107
1993	72,377	15,896	1,975	112
1994	67,057	20,185	2,044	272
1995	66,749	20,355	2,109	375
1996	74,170	27,028	2,419	363
TOTAL	800,609	182,227	18,362	2,119

Adapted from Alemika, E.E.O. (1997: 85 and 88).

\*Included here are Murder, Manslaughter, grievous harm and wounding, assault; rape and indecent assault. Armed Robbery is presented separately in Columns 3 and 4.

It is also traditional for the police to give periodic crime statistics during press conferences and or special occasions (see table 6 for an example of this).

**Table 6: Crime statistics (Nigeria) 1997-1998\***

Offences	1997	1998
Burglary	7,706	5,548
Forgery	1,245	718
False Pretence/Cheating	11,950	12,037
House Breaking	8,562	7,847
Store Breaking	4,729	4,036
Receiving Stolen Property	1,826	1,595
Theft	58,095	54,506
Unlawful Possession of property	6,246	5,747
TOTAL	100,359	92,034

Source: Daily Champion, September 15<sup>th</sup>, 1999: pp. 1-2

\*Amount of property lost to crime within the same period was reported as N19.048billion (1997) and N341Million (1998); while within the same period property recovered by NPF were put at N333 million (1997) and N72 million (1998). It should be noted that this release is incomplete as it does not cover several other crime like armed robbery, child stealing to mention but a few.

There are some defects that have been found with police records. Such defects with criminal statistics mostly supplied by the police include (Alemika, n.d.).

- Inaccuracies of computation and recording.
- Inadequate and inconsistent classification of crimes in terms of offenders and spatial features.
- Poor analysis.
- Poor management of information, in terms of storage and retrieval of criminal records for judicial and peno-correctional decision-making and criminological research.
- Failure to collect information on pertinent variable such as socio-economic characteristics, prior criminal records, records of residence over time, etc, etc. from offenders and suspects.
- Publication of report of multiple and inconsistent figures for some crime in the same year in various media.

In addition to these technical shortcomings can be added that of the public's alienation from the police. The alienation has led, in part, to the non-reporting of criminal conducts especially by the large rural population. This is in addition to the limited coverage of the rural population by the Police which can be attributed to the relative absence of modern agencies of crime control in the remote parts of the country" (Ajayi, 1971). What this points to is the possibility of the dark alley figures bracket being huge in the case of Nigeria (see Gana, 1985). However, the Nigeria Police Force crime statistics still remain central to crime analysis in Nigeria.

### **Why crime in society?**

There is no doubt that the society has a large stake in the understanding of why crime will occur in society. Sociologists have also been interested in crime and deviance in society and with other professionals like biologists, psychologists and anthropologists have applied theories and methods. In fact social rules and the violation of them are an intrinsic aspect of social organisation, a part of the human condition (Garland, 1997). Discourse about crime and criminals are thus as old as human civilization itself. Sociologically, efforts have been generally concerned with providing solution to crime problem in society since it is generally seen as 'bad thing' that needs to be stopped or at least reduced.

It is this causal-corrective tradition that has pervaded the concern of sociologists on crime problem in society. There are however some critical minority in the field who oppose this tradition arguing that the quest for causes of crime implies a deterministic view of human action, as opposed to the view that the individual possesses "free-will" (Roshier, 1986). For a better understanding of the argument involved in this differing positions - free-will versus determinism or absolutism versus relativism one needs to look into the domain assumptions involved in the two

major paradigms in sociology.<sup>3</sup> The differing positions notwithstanding, schools of thought on crime and deviance in sociology can be classified into three major perspectives based on changing philosophical and ideological situations (Roshier, 1986). These revolutions are: classical criminology, positivist criminology, and neo-classical criminology. These schools, as they are called, will be discussed below.

### *Classical criminology*

The emergence of this school dates back to 1764 and its contribution has been more towards reforming the operation of the legal and penal system. Its theory of human action posit that human beings are motivated by rational self interest, and governed by the utilitarian principle of seeking pleasure and avoiding pain. They submit that people are likely to reject the limitations to their freedom that could be outlawed as 'crimes' although they also simultaneously, appreciate the need and benefit accruing from giving-off some of their freedom for increased order and social security in social life. With the absolutist conception, the school suggests penalties to deter criminal actions.

### *Positivist school*

This school emerged as an application of the methods of science to the understanding of human beings following from the work of Darwin. In criminology, it is usually associated with Cesare Lombroso although the original founders are mostly biologists, medical psychiatrists and psychologists (Roshier, 1986). The pathological group of theories is a brand of the positivist school. Also included in this school are the series of sociological explanations. Below are discussions on these.

#### *(i) Pathology theories*

As a leader of the school, Lombroso's work *Luomo Delinquente* (1876) was historically important in the pattern of research it established. Lombroso concluded, after using convicted criminals in prisons, that criminals were a distinct 'atavistic' group of people or generic throw-backs who could be identified by physical stigmata such as facial and cranial deformities, excessively hairy bodies, overlong arms, receding jaws, etc. The legacy of Lombroso led to the physical differences and body type theories (of Glueck and Glueck, 1956) and has continued with the search for the 'criminal personality'. Although Lombroso's idea can be said to be outdated, its orientation can still be seen in the various 'clean-up' campaigns or drives of contemporary anti-crime agencies in most Nigerian cities wherein unkempt and 'abnormally' looking persons are more vulnerable to arrest.

<sup>3</sup> See Alubo (1981), 'The current state and future prospects of sociological theory', in *ABU Sociologist*, Official Journal of Ahmadu Bello University Students Sociological Association, Zaria; No. 8, pp. 31-45.

*(ii) Sociological theories*

The emergence of sociology as a distinct discipline also brought with it sociological explanations of causes of crime and deviance in society. These explanations shifted attention away from the criminal/delinquent into the social and economic circumstances. There are several brands of this explanation.

(a) *Chicago school*: The school is often seen as the foundation of the social disorganisation tradition and is one of the earliest and most famous schools in criminological studies. Included here are the pioneering works of Park and Burgess (1970), and Shaw and McKay (1970). The major contribution of the school is the study of "criminal areas" of the city. The school submitted that delinquents and criminals are heavily concentrated in the inner decaying residential areas of the city. This, they located in the 'ecological' process of 'natural selection' whereby the most socially and economically disadvantaged ended up in the least desirable residential areas which is characterised by social disorganisation. In the areas of 'social disorganisation', conventional agencies of socialisation and control are ineffective given the 'rapid changes' that are the norm. It is thus a deprived and seductive area of the city. It is a crimo-genic area of the city.

(b) *Differential association theory*: This emerged from the 'social disorganisation' postulation of the Chicago school. First proposed by Edwin Sutherland (1970) and later developed by Donald Cressey (1970). Its basic argument is anchored on the fact that we all grow up in environments where we receive, from our associates', definitions both favourable and unfavourable to the acquisition of the motives for and techniques to commit crime. Becoming a criminal or delinquent is therefore a factor of the degree or differentials of interaction with both favourable and unfavourable motives for and techniques to commit crime. Sutherland (1970) made nine postulations, which can be summarised thus:

- That all behaviour is the result of socialization through interaction.
- That how we act depends on how those around us desire us to act.
- That how much we deviate from or conform to the norms depends on differences or differentials in which we associate with.

While this deviant attachment theory had correctly identified the source of deviant behaviour – those attachments that are supportive of deviance - a major problem is research suggesting that delinquent kids end up together because others reject them not because these friends encouraged each other's delinquency (Rodney 1992). A second position is that differential association – social learning theory – does not address the question of *why delinquent friends exist*. In other words what caused the deviance of friends? Related questions have include why do some people but not others have deviant friends? And why are some people susceptible to the influence of deviant friends? These unanswered questions made the approach suffer from sins of omission (Rodney 1992) – a gap that other theories attempt to fill.

(c) *Anomie theories*: A version of the anomie theories is that of Merton often referred to as structural strain theory. This group of theories borrows a lot from Durkheim's concept of anomie - a situation of normlessness where roles governing social life has become unclear. From the assumption that humans have a natural tendency to observe norms, especially because of the part of personality often called conscience. Thus breaking norms is because of terrible strains on norms. Anomie often results from rapid social change. The rapid change results in an imbalance between people's goals and available opportunities to achieve them.

Merton (1970) focusing attention on the 'log cabin to the white horse' dream (cultural goal) of an average American and structural barriers to this route (which includes, class and race) postulated five main reactions to the strain produced by the disjuncture between the goals and means. These reactions or adaptations which result from the conflict so generated are:

- Conformism* - accepting or still believe in the goal as well as the laid down rules.
- Innovation* - accepting the goals but create new means to achieving the goals.
- Ritualism* - rejecting cultural goals but accepting the institutional means.
- Retreation* - rejecting both the cultural goals and the institutional means and often leaving a life of isolation.
- Rebellion* - those who reject the old cultural goals and which to introduce new ones; and as well as reject the old institutionalised means and wish them replaced.

From Merton's position all except the conformists are deviants in society and his work is a widely quoted social explanation although it is often criticised for predicting far too much crime especially amongst the lower class in society. For example, Rodney (1992) argued that deviant behaviour committed by persons under structural strain couldn't alleviate their frustrations. Or how do we explain the crimes committed by people in the privileged social positions. Criticisms such as this led to the white-collar crime concept.

(d) *Delinquent subcultures*: There are several subculture theories; but the best known ones includes Cohen (1970) and Cloward and Ohlin (1970). While borrowing from the anomie tradition, subculture theories focus attention directly on the experience of lower class, adolescents growing up in a stratified society. The recognition of sub-cultures enables us to understand that deviance is often a matter of definition. Those who have power to pass laws and sets policies in society have power to influence the norms, which are central to the focus of deviance. Thus in complex societies, where many sub-cultures exist, deviant behaviour can be explained as conflicts over norms. The typical argument here is that kids start with the ambition to achieve conventional status but lower-class boys/girls found them disadvantaged by the middle-class dominated institutions such as the school. Failing to achieve, frustration that results could lead to the creation of own alternative status system - delinquent sub-culture. Delinquent sub-culture thus becomes an alternative means of

achieving conventional goals and a deliberate negation of middle class values. Here middle class values generally held to be the care of societal goals.

In essence the anomie situation provides the initiating impetus for the formation of groups (with different sub-cultures) that then 'transmit' delinquent values via differential association (Cloward and Ohlin 1970). The question one could ask here is – does delinquent sub-culture need necessarily be different or be in conflict with conventional culture? Or in the words of Roshier (1986), isn't delinquent sub-culture fun in it's own right? Rodney (1992) even argued that some forms of deviance seem to have no sub-cultural basis (e.g. homicides). Again how does one explain deviance within any sub-cultural group?

### *Neo-classical criminology*

The Neo-classical school returned attention to crime rather than the 'criminal' by its suggestion that there should be a less deterministic conception of the delinquent. It argued that the delinquent should be seen as drift between convention and delinquency. The idea is that it is the definition and application of the legal rules that define 'crime' were a crucial feature of the environment of the delinquent. The 'interactionist' theory proposed by Becker (1964) and that of (1967) can be grouped into this tradition.

#### *(i) Symbolic interactionism and labelling theory*

The 60s and 70s witnessed a rise in hippie counter culture and general counter culture which 'corrective' traditional criminology could not grapple with and a relativist approach became needed. This led to the emergence of the interactionist perspective, which was based on Mead's ideas in Symbolic Interactionism.

Symbolic Interactionism sees human beings as constructing their social action in a process of interaction with others through symbols. Human beings are seen as active participants in the social world (Cuff *et al.*, 1992). In the cause of interaction, human beings use stereotypical 'labels' to make 'sense' of other people based on cues or language they have of such persons. Within the context of interaction one of such 'labels' is that of *criminal* or *deviant*. Following this, the main thesis of labelling theory is that 'official' application of these particular labels (via agencies such as schools, police, etc.) had profound consequences for the persons so labelled, and for the way we perceive and understand criminals and deviants. Crime becomes crime because they are actions that are defined unfavourably. Thus the crime statistics represent the group that has been successfully 'labelled' as criminals.

Lemert (1967) elaborated the amplifying effect of labelling. He argued that once successfully labelled (officially), a criminal comes to be seen by others as different. As a result of this image, the 'criminal's access to conventional settings and identities are cut off. In turn, the deviant acquires a different conception of his self and moves to the new identity; thus, propelling what can be referred to as secondary deviation.

The theory has been lauded for focussing attention on power factor in the definition of deviance in society; and for being able to enter into the world of the deviant and appreciating the motives, meanings and understanding that constitute it.

### *Control theory*

The concern of this theory is 'what causes people to conform' or put differently why don't people deviate? Within this orientation the theory proposed that human motives are diverse and naturally self-seeking. Following from these two assumptions are made:

- that life is a vast cafeteria of temptation;
- that deviance acts tends to be attractive, providing rewards to those who engage in them.

That people conform therefore is a factor of the degree of control their groups have over them. Conformity thus occurs only when people have more to gain by it than they have to gain by deviance. It is argued that access to desired rewards is unequal among members of any society. The causes of conformity are thus the *social bonds* between the individual and the group. These bonds are not class determined. The submission here is that when these bonds are strong, the individual conforms, but when these bonds are weak, the individual deviates. These bonds can fluctuate over time and are embodiments of *attachments, investments, involvement and beliefs*.

Attachments refer to stable patterns of interaction between individuals in groups like the family. The greater one is attached to the family for example, the less he/she would want to deviate from what the family approves of. Secondly, investments refer to the costs an individual has expended in constructing a satisfactory life and the rewards he expect. Consequently, the greater the investment made by an individual, the greater the risk for deviation, and thus, the greater the tendency to conform. Third, by involvement is meant the time a person spends on activities that conform to the norms, the less the time and energy that person has to devote to deviant activities. Involvement is a consequence of an investment and attachment. Finally, we form beliefs through socialization. Through this we internalise norms. If through socialization we imbibe 'positive' and or 'conformity' norms, these become part of us to want to conform.

### *Post neo-classicism*

The neo-classical revolution continued to be relevant and have influenced some recent contributions in the field of criminology. An example here is phenomenological sociology. Phenomenological sociology, for example, took indeterminism and anti-positivism to logical extremes (Roshier 1986). It is argued that delinquents have never heard of anomie, neither do they refer to themselves as

delinquents or criminal. They therefore argue that the attention be focused on more basic levels of meaning construction by social actors.

### ***Marxist criminology***

Although the interactionists discovered power, they got stocked at the street level. The move away from the street level was opened-up by the 'new' Marxist. As would be expected, the approach took into account Marxist theory, although Marx did not write specifically on the subject of crime and deviance. The thesis here is that crime or the need to criminalize was the product of the dehumanising features of the capitalist mode of production. A typical submission from the new Marxists reads thus:

Three expedients offer themselves to one who has fallen into the blackest poverty: mendacity, theft and suicide. It is partly chance (opportunity, etc) and partly the individual predisposition which fixes what anyone under the conditions named will become, what a mendicant or a thief (Bonger 1969, pg. 36).<sup>4</sup>

The attention of the new Marxist school has tended to focus on the criminal law and penal system. While focussing on the historical changes on these institutions as they have adapted to the emerging needs of the capitalist class, they have generally submitted that formal definitions of crime are biased towards lower class misdeeds.

### ***Feminist theories***

There has been a critique of criminology's failure to address the issues of gender and women and the low attention on women in crime. Some of the reasons that have been advanced for this gap are the use of criminal statistics with fewer figures for women. In order to address this imbalance some have argued for the development of feminist criminology and theories. Three of such approaches in feminist criminology mentioned here are - patriarchy; marginalization; and control and conformity approaches.

*Patriarchy approach* - the central hypothesis here is that the role of men is used to explain women's experience of the criminal justice system, and the gendered nature of much criminal victimisation, especially from violence and abuse within home.

*Marginalization* - The approach submits that women are generally poorer than men and have suffered more in modern recessions. Thus, it is argued that deviant women constitute an especially marginalized group in society.

*Control and conformity approach* - This approach applies control theories to women. It is argued that women were subject to a series of pressures and rewards to conform to which men are not. These differential applications of pressures are biased against women. For example, informal sanctions discourage women and girls from

<sup>4</sup> As cited in the discussion by Taylor *et al* (1996), chp.7.



straying far from proper behaviour. This is held responsible, for the relative low involvement of women in crime.

### ***Integrated theories***

There have been some attempts to tie together the theoretical fragments of conventional criminology. An example here is that which weaves together the disconnected socialization settings of control theory into a unified conceptualisation of socialization processes (Colvin and Pauly, 1983). This effort retains control theory's purely quantitative conception of bonding processes. It then followed the individual through life-cycle encounter with other various agencies (family, schools, peer groups, etc.). At each step, the effort is to inquire whether the initiating strong or weak bond to the conventional order are being accentuated, or reinforced. The objective is to see how early socialization experiences 'interact' with later ones.

### **Controlling crime in society**

It has been argued that internalisation through socialisation is the most efficient way of controlling deviant behaviour (including crime). This is because socialisation, it is assumed, produces unconscious, spontaneous self control in which people find it natural to conform to most social norms most of the time. In essence, through socialisation, people learn to be disciplined. The content of discipline as discussed by Isamah (1990:84) is:

nothing but the consistently rationalised, methodologically trained and extra execution of the received order in which all personal criticism is unconditionally suspended and the actor in unswervingly and exclusively set for carrying out command.

Thus discipline includes the 'habitual' characteristic of uncritical and unresisting mass obedience when extended to the day-to-day behaviour of the individual in group context or society. Again most of us confirm most of the time to avoid offending those around us.

However, socialisation is not always fully successful for reasons or factors that can be inferred from the various theories and approaches discussed above. Hence, 'a few people' commit serious crimes, and everyone deviates occasionally. While the society often tolerates minor deviations, crimes, which violate the mores of the society, are sincerely punished (Peil and Oyene, 1998). The process of keeping individual in check, moderating their behaviours, and maintaining the social order is referred to as social control (Marshall 1996).

Social control is thus a pervasive feature of society and the issue is often to determine its precise nature and identifying the mechanisms at work in particular social contexts. One of the common distinctions is between repressive/coercive forms

of control and the softer ideological forms. Another distinction is that which recognises informal and formal agencies of social control.

Informal agents of social control include: the family, peer groups, teachers, preachers, kinsmen, neighbours, community elders, clubs, and associations (Peil & Oyeneye, 1998). It is informal social control that we exercise when we frown, gossip, criticise, avoid or ridicule members of our group, friends, playmates or someone around us in a social relationship. Although these forms of control have been said to be associated with traditional towns and villages, or indigenous areas of towns; various studies have confirmed that informal agencies and techniques are still very relevant and useful in towns and cities (Peil & Oyeneye, 1998). In this trend, it is usual to find ethnic associations/groups settling disputes with the aim of maintaining conformity and social control in many urban centres. However, where deviant acts became serious, especially in the area of crime, formal social controls are usually imposed. Thus, deviant acts like burglary, armed robbery, child stealing are generally and expectedly handled through the formal means of social control.

Formal social control is attempted in three principal ways – prevention, deterrence and reformation/re-socialization. Generally, formal social control is in the purview of the police, psychiatrists, prison, mental hospitals, the courts, and even collection agencies. Deterrence in formal social control is achieved by the treat of punishment. Here it is assumed that a rational human being will wish to avoid pain and a-privation that result from deviation. Such potential for punishment is provided in the surveillance and operations of institutionalised agencies. Such institutions are specifically created by the state for the sole aim of maintaining law and order in society, and by extension help put crime and criminals in check. In addition the punishment meted out to convicted criminals by such institutions help to deter and thus control others.

In Nigeria, as in most countries in Africa, modern police were often seen as instruments of alien oppression. In spite of political independence, the police are still seen as ruthless, brutal and prone to using violence on the population. This notwithstanding, from its humble beginnings as the consular guard of 1961 in Lagos to its present staff strength covering the entire 356,689 square metres of the federation, the Nigeria Police Force has remained a formidable force in the checking of crime and the maintenance of peace and order in the society. With over 1526 Police stations and 1,115 police posts, and over 175,000 men,<sup>5</sup> there is no doubt that the Nigeria Police Force has contributed a great deal to the control of crime and the maintenance of security in the country. The shortcomings of the Nigeria Police in the area of crime control has led Nigerians especially city dwellers to take measures to protect themselves. Such measures or public responses to growing insecurity are many (Okunola, 1996). The manifestations of this can be seen in the increasing 'caging/imprisonment' in most Nigerian cities (See Agboola 1997).

<sup>5</sup> The actual staff strength of the Nigeria Police is difficult to estimate. The figure here was credited to Minister for Police Affairs as reported in *The Comment Newspaper* Vol. I, No. 091, October 11, 1999, pp. 1 & 2.

Second in Nigeria there is a wide variety of Courts run by local chiefs and their elders as well as civil courts run by lay magistrates and high court under professional judges. In Nigeria, each state has a distinct legal system serviced by its own system of courts. However, states can only legislate on matters in the concurrent list, which are not covered by Federal legislation, or any subject not enumerated in any of the legislative lists contained in the constitution. As a federal legal system, federal laws have direct effect in all states unless otherwise restricted (Federal Capital Territory is part of the Federal Legal System). Judgement in Nigeria court systems range from discharge and acquaintance, bail, remand in custody, fines, flogging,<sup>6</sup> forfeiture, and imprisonment and in extreme cases death.<sup>7</sup>

## Reformation

Where there is a need to remove 'undesirable elements' from circulation, the prison – a total institution- is one of the major institutions created for this purpose. Some traditional prisons – for example *ile Ogboni* among the Yoruba of the South West Nigeria – predated the modern prison system as is the case with the police institution. There are about 132 'modern' prisons spreads all over Nigeria. They are, however, maintained and controlled by the federal government. They are in different categories. Ideally each prison has a prescribed inmate capacity but most of the Nigerian prisons hold much more than the capacity they are built for. Prisons in developing countries have also been said to be unkempt and dingy while toilet facilities are inadequate.<sup>8</sup>

Within the protective principle towards the child or the young offenders, remand homes have been established to take custody of young offenders. These homes have less stringent measures and are much more corrective in approach.

## Crime prevention

Attention in criminology has equally been focused on the area of crime prevention in society. Crime prevention basically involves the disruption of mechanisms, which cause crime events. In other words, the central question to crime prevention is 'how to disrupt the causes' of crime.

Three broad perspectives have been distinguished in literature (Pearse, 1997). These are:

**Structural prevention:** this is basically prevention of crime through economic and social change. This viewpoint is common to criminologists with sociological

<sup>6</sup> The criminal procedure Law (1970) Section 385 abolished whipping as a form of punishment in Nigeria.

<sup>7</sup> Children are however not to be sentenced to death for any criminal offence committed. Within this protective principle, juvenile courts have been established (see section 17 of the Nigerian Criminal code on Punishment which may be inflicted within the country).

<sup>8</sup> See CLO (1995).

background and among practitioners with criminal justice. For example if one subscribe to the argument that structural adjustment or poverty is the accentuating crime in society; then the submission will be that we tackle them in order to reduce crime.

**Psyche:** This perspective is common to those who argue that crime is a product of human psyche. Thus, the greatest prevention possibilities, argued this perspective, lie in changing the establishment of potential offenders by control or reform. Sentencers and politicians favour this orientation. The emphasis here is placed on penal institutions that have reformatory principles.

**Circumstance:** This focuses attention on the social and physical settings in which crime occurs. The argument here is that control may be achieved by quite modest adjustments in the circumstance. Effort here among others involves installation of mechanical gadgets. This is common with the police.

Pearse (1997) has suggested that the second and third techniques can be combined and further divided into three:

*Primary prevention*, which reduces crime opportunities without reference to criminals or potential criminals. At this stage the police are the primary focus and three main issues are involved - increasing the effort, increasing the risks, and reducing the reward for the potential offender.

*Secondary prevention*, which seeks to change people especially those at high risk of embarking upon criminal career, before they do so. Here mass media, or various bodies and organisations like Non-Governmental Organisation (NGOs) and propaganda programmes.

*Tertiary prevention* which focuses upon the truncation of the criminal career in length, serious or frequency of offending. It deals mainly with the treatment of known offenders and centres on prison and probation services.

The techniques are alternative and often integrated, in practice, in society and are often affected by the ideology of the society.

## Conclusion

This chapter has been concerned with the social phenomenon of crime in society. It has been argued that sociologically, crime is inevitable and pervasive in society. The issue is often to determine its nature and classification in particular social context.

The pervasive nature of crime and the discomfort it poses to society has been reflected in the great search for its causes. In addition, there have been some efforts at controlling and preventing crime in society. It would however appear that crime cannot be eradicated in society. It can only be reduced not totally eliminated. Its eradication might not even be advisable given that they function as openers to alternatives - a major source of social change in society. This notwithstanding, an excessive dosage of crime is no doubt inimical to society's peace and comfort and by implication that of its members.

## Reference

- Agboola, T., *Architecture of Fear: Urban Design and Construction Response to Urban Violence in Lagos, Nigeria*. Ibadan: IFRA, 1997.
- Ajayi, F.A., 'The Judicial Development of Customary Law in Nigeria,' Allot *et al.* (eds.), *Integration of customary and Modern Legal Systems in Africa*. Ife: Institute of African Studies (University of Ife, Nigeria), 1971.
- Alemika, E. O., 'The Politics and Problems of Crime in Nigeria', Jos (Dept. of Sociology): An unpublished paper/manuscript, (n.d.).
- Alemika, E.O., 'Criminal Violence and Insecurity in Lagos State, Nigeria', *Africa Peace Review*, vols. 1. & 2. *Journal of Centre for Peace Research and Conflict Resolution*, Abuja (Nigeria): National War College, 1997.
- Becker, H.S., *Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance*, New York: The Free Press, 1963.
- Becker, H.S., *The Other Side: Perspective on Deviance*; New York: The Free Press, 1964.
- Becker, H.S., 'Whose side are we on,' *Social Problems*; 1967, vol. 4, pp. 239-249.
- Civil liberty Organisation (CLO), *Behind the Wall: A Report on Prison Conditions in Nigeria and the Nigerian Prison System*. Lagos: CLO, 1995.
- Clinard and Abbot, *Crime in Developing Countries: A Comparative Perspective*, New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1993.
- Cloward, R. A. & Ohlin, L. E., "Differential Opportunity Structure," in Wolfgang and Johnston (eds.), *The Sociology of Crime and Delinquency*, New York: John Wiley and Sons Inc., 1970, pp.300-318.
- Cohen, A. K., "The delinquent sub-culture," in Wolfgang and Johnston (*ibid.*) 1970, pp. 286-291.
- Colvin, M. & Pauly, J., 'A Critique of Criminology: Toward an Integrated Structural-Marxist Theory of Delinquency Production,' *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 89, no. 3, Chicago: The University of Chicago, 1983, pp. 514-546.
- Cuff, E.C, Sharrock, W.W. and Francis D.W., *Perspectives in Sociology*, (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed); London & New York: Routledge, 1992.
- Durkheim, E., *Suicide*, New York: Free Press, 1951.
- Farrell, R. A. & Swigert V. I. (eds.), *Social Deviance*, New York: J.B. Lippincot Co., 1975.
- FGN, *Crime of the Quality of Life in Nigeria*, The Nigerian National Paper for the 6<sup>th</sup> UN Congress on Crime Prevention and Treatment of Offenders; Lagos: Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1980.
- Gana, A. T., 'On the Political Economy of Crime in Nigeria: Social Polarisation in Peripheral Capitalism,' in *Nigerian Journal of Political Science*; vol. 4. nos. I & II; Zaria: Dept. of Political Science (ABU), 1985, pp. 172- 84.
- Garland, David, 'Of crimes and criminals: the development of criminology in Britain,' in Maguire, M., Morgan, R. and Reiner, R., *The Oxford Handbook of Criminology* (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition); Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997, pp. 11-45.
- Glueck, S. A. and Glueck, E., *Physique Delinquency*, New York: The Free Press, 1956.
- Hirschi T., *Cause of Delinquency*; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969.
- Igbo, E U. M., 'Development & Crime in Nigeria,' *African Journal of Sociology*, vol. 1. no. 2; Ekpoma: The International Sociology Circle, 1992.
- Isamah A. N., 'Organized Labour Under the Military Regimes in Nigeria,' *Africa Development Journal*, vol. XV. no. 2; pp. 81-93, 1990.

- Iyamabo, R. I., 'Causes of and Remedy of Juvenile Crime,' being a lecture delivered at Late Pa Memorial Lecture in Abuja on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1996.
- Lemert, E. M., *Human Deviance, Social Problems and Social Control*, New York: Prentice Hall, 1967.
- Lopez-Rey, *Crime: An Analytical Appraisal*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970.
- Madarikan C. O. & Aguda T. A., *The Criminal Law and Procedure of the Six Southern States of Nigeria*, London: Sweet & Maxwell, 1974.
- Marshall, *Oxford Concise Dictionary of Sociology*. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1996.
- Marshall, W.L. and Clark, W.I., 'The Normal Definition of Crime and Criminals,' in Wolfgang and Johnston (eds.), *op cit.* pp. 15-21, 1970.
- Merton, R. K., 'Social Structure and Anomie,' in Wolfgang and Johnston (eds.), *op. cit.*, pp. 238-246, 1970.
- Morris, Allison, Giller Henri, Szwed E. and Geach H., *Justice for Children*, London: The Macmillan Press Limited, 1980.
- Okunola, R.A., 'Working in the Shadow of Death: The Case of Night Guards in Urban Centres in Nigeria,' in Adewumi, F. and Omololu, O. (eds.) *Death by Instalment: Occupational Health and Hazards in Nigeria*. Lagos: Friedrich Ebert Foundation, 1997, pp. 126-138.
- Okunola, R.A., 'Change and Rural Criminality: A case study of Saala-Orile Community (Ogun State)'. An unpublished M.Sc. Thesis, Ibadan: Dept. of Sociology, 1991.
- Pearse, 'Crime Prevention and Control,' in Morgan, M. M. and Reiner, R. (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Criminology*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997.
- Peil, M. & Oyeneeye, O. 1998. *Consensus, Conflict and Change: A Sociological Introduction to African Societies*. Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, Chapter 9.
- Rodney, Staric, *Sociology*, California: Wordsworth Publication Coy, 1992, chapters, 7 & 8.
- Roshier, Bob, "The Sociology of Crime of Deviance," in Burgess G. Robert (ed.); *Exploring Society*, London: Longman Group, 1986, pp. 136-157.
- Shaw C.R., and McKay, H. D., 'Cultural Transmission,' in Wolfgang and Johnston (eds.); *op. cit.*, 1970, pp.225-232.
- Shaw, C.R. and McKay H.D., 'An Ecological Analysis of Chicago,' in Wolfgang and Johnston, *ibid.*, 1970, pp. 233-237
- Stuart H.T. & Craig, B.C. (eds.), *Theories of Deviance*, New York: State University of New York, 1977.
- Sutherland, E. H., 'Differential Association,' in Wolfgang and Johnston (eds.); *op. cit.*, pp. 208-210, 1970.
- Tamuno, T.N. *et al.* (eds.), *Policing Nigeria: Past, Present, and Future*, Lagos: Malthouse Press Limited, 1993.
- Taylor, Ian, Walton Park and Young Jock, *The New Criminology: For a Social Theory of Deviance*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1996.
- Taylor, I., Walton P. & Young, J. (eds.) *Critical Criminology*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975.
- The Nigeria Police *Annual Reports*. Lagos: NPF; 1981, 1982, and 1983.