Community Policing: Ensuring National/Global Peace and Security

Paul A. Adekunte[1], Matthew N. O. Sadiku[2], Janet O. Sadiku[3]

[1]International Institute of Professional Security, Lagos, Nigeria
[2]Roy G. Perry College of Engineering, Prairie View A&M University, Prairie View, TX, USA
[3]Juliana King University, Houston, TX, USA

ABSTRACT

It is better late than never, goes the saying. As a country, now is the time to brace up to the challenges posed by insecurity to lives and property as well as other forms of crime in our society. There is need to critically look inwards to analyze the causes of insecurity/crime, propound plausible and practical solutions to them, as peace and security are prerequisites to achieving developmental objectives. The three tiers of government, security agencies, and the populace must partner together to fight all forms of crime to a standstill, as security is everybody's business. It is in an environment of peace and security that a country can develop, and businesses can strive. Community policing, also referred to as "grassroot policing," focuses on crime and social disorder through the delivery of police services that include aspects of traditional law enforcement, as well as prevention, problem-solving, community engagement, and partnership. The paper looks into community policing in ensuring national peace and security.

KEYWORDS: Three tiers of government, security agencies, community policing, white-collar crimes

WHAT IS COMMUNITY POLICING?

Community policing or community-oriented policing (COP) is a strategy of policing that focuses on developing relationships with the community members. This is a philosophy of full-service policing that is personal, where an officer patrols the same area for an extended time, develops partnership with the citizens, and collaboratively identify and solves problems [1]. It was proposed by the "Broken windows theory," that community policing can reduce crimes as well [2, 3]. In other words, community policing is said to be related to problem-oriented policing and intelligence-led policing, in contrast with reactive policing strategies which were predominant in the late 20th century [4].

HISTORY OF COMMUNITY POLICING

The values of community policing had been linked to Sir Robert Peel's 1829 Peelian Principles, most notably John Alderson, the former Chief Constable of Devon and Cornwell Police [5, 6]. The ideas of Peel included that the police needed to seek the cooperation of the public and prioritize crime prevention. The term "community policing" came into use in the late 20th century [7].

In 1967, American President Lyndon B. Johnson appointed a "Blue Ribbon committee" to study the apparent distrust of the police by many community members, especially along racial lines. The resulting report, the "President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice" was of the suggestion of developing a new type of police officer who would act as a community liaison and work to build to build relationships between law enforcement and minority populations [8]. It was in the late 1990s that Bob Trajanowicz, a professor of criminal justice influenced many future law enforcement leaders on how to implement elements of community policing [9, 10]. Community-oriented policing promoted by the Clinton Administration via the Violent Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, commonly referred to as the 1994 Crime Bill [11] or the Clinton Crime Bill [12], received $9.7 billion funding for prisons [13].

WHAT IS A CRIME?

Simply put, a crime is an unlawful act punishable by a state or other authority. However, the most popular view is that crime is a category created by law. In order words, something is a crime if declared as such by the relevant and applicable law [14]. A proposed definition is that a crime or offence (or criminal offence) is an act harmful not only to some individual but also to a community, society, or the state ("a public wrong"). Such acts are forbidden and punishable by law. Usually, to be classified as a crime, the "act of doing something criminal" must – with certain exceptions – be accompanied by the "intention to do something criminal" [15].

The notion that acts such as murder, rape, and theft are to be prohibited exist worldwide [16]. What precisely is a criminal offence is defined by the criminal law of each relevant jurisdiction. The state (government) has the power to severally restrict one's liberty for committing a crime. In modern societies, after following due procedures of investigations and trials, and if the suspect is found guilty, he/she may be sentenced to a form of reparation such as a community sentence, or, depending on their offence, to undergo imprisonment, life imprisonment or, in some jurisdictions, death, as shown in Figure 1.

CAUSES OF CRIME

What are the causes of crime and what triggers criminal behavior? Criminal behavior cannot be explained by a single factor, due to the fact that human behavior is a complex interaction between genetic, social, cultural, psychological, and environmental factors.

Crime does not occur owing to a single cause but is an extremely complex happening that is influenced by the culture of the place in which it takes place. For the same reason, many activities that are deemed illegal in one country can be legal in another. For example, alcohol consumption in Muslim countries is illegal but legal elsewhere. Some of the causes of crime are discussed below [17]:

➢ *Poverty:* Countries with high rates of economic deprivation tend to have higher crime rates than other countries. People with no secure means of living in the right ways, tend to resort to criminal activities for survival as this does not require any special prerequisite talents. This is what is evidently manifested between the rich and the poor in the society, whereby more and more of the poor take to crime as a means for living. When people are unable to earn and sustain themselves, they become so frustrated and therefore resort to illegal means to sustain themselves and their families.

➢ *Peer pressure:* Peer pressure is said to play a significant role in the lives of all teenagers and young adults, as this is a phase of life where they tend to look up to their friends believing that what they do is right. As a result of lack of proper upbringing, wisdom, and experience, many in their youthful age subconsciously get drawn to vices such as smoking, alcohol consumption, and could graduate into taking drugs, if addicted can subsequently ruin their lives.

➢ *Drugs:* Substance/drug abuse and crime are twin brothers. Some people under the influence of drugs tend to indulge in criminal activities which they would not have indulged in otherwise, and which becomes more problematic when they are addicted to the drugs. According to the data collected by the National Institute on Drug Abuse, which is a wing under the National Institute of Health in the United States of America, over 70,000 people succumbed to drug overdoses in America in 2019 alone.

➢ *Politics:* We tend to often overlook the interrelation between politics and crime, due to the fact that many people have engaged in criminal activities while dealing with political issues. There are umpteen politicians with criminal records. Some politicians in developing countries have been associated with violent crimes and murders. Many youth members of political parties are often given weapons and instructed to handle matters violently during conflicts, which exposes youths to criminal activities and putting the lives of various citizens at risk.

➢ *Religion:* Unfortunately today, various divides and issues of society can be attributed to religion. Religion is a basic human right, of which many people have been deprived the right to practice their own religion, leading to resentment. Many cases of crimes in many countries abound where innocent lives have been lost in this war over ideological concepts that have existed since time immemorial, which is saddening in this present 21st century. This is a heinous crime committed by religious fanatics in trying to further their cause by propagating their religion or at times trying to establish their religious superiority over other faiths by resorting to destruction, arson, and vandalism, as shown in Figure 2.

➢ *Background:* The family conditions and the background of a criminal can also be the reason behind their crimes, as shown in Figure 3. When people who should be responsible to provide for

their family but due to lack of education, opportunities, work, etc. they resort to crime.

➤ *Society:* The society today attaches importance to money. The more money one has is attributed to his societal status, worth, and even values. As a result of this, people earning less feel unworthy and are compelled to indulge in a life of crime so as to make more money and feel more worthy.

➤ *Unemployment:* Lack of employment opportunities is a serious issue in developing and developed nations alike as large number of youth are unemployed. The unemployment rates in many countries is on the increase, leading to frustration and resentment among the youth after acquiring education, causing them to rebel, riot, and commit crimes. Unemployment can lead to crime due to the feeling of deprivation, rejection and personal failure. It is claimed too that it could lead to mental stress, apathy and illness, which are factors that could pave way to criminal behavior.

➤ *Unequal rights:* When people are deprived of their basic rights, this impedes their means to obtain a livelihood in an honest and conventional way, they will resort to notorious activities. Since they have limited options and are already at a disadvantaged position in society, they choose to make money by hook or crook i.e. through criminal activities.

➤ *Unfair justice system:* Another contributor to crime is flawed justice system. This occurs when people are not given their due and are unfairly treated by the system itself as they harbor feelings of resentment towards it and start to rebel. This will make them involve in criminal activities in trying to avenge themselves and get what they believe they deserve and losing trust in the courts. The different types of crimes are: personal crimes, property crimes, hate crimes, victimless crimes, white-collar crimes, and organized crimes.

➤ *The "born criminal":* Cesare Lombroso is known as the founder of modern criminal anthropology and "father of criminology." He rejected the established classical school, which held that crime was a characteristic trait of human nature. He instead used concepts from physiognomy, degeneration theory, psychiatry, and Social Darwinism, of which his theory of anthropological criminology essentially stated that criminality was inherited, and that someone who is referred to as a "born criminal" could be identified by physical (congenital) defects, which confirms a criminal as "savage or atavistic" [5].

He suggested that their brains were mar-developed or not fully developed. Lombroso also identified five types of criminals as: 1. "criminaloids", 2. occasional criminals, 3. criminals by passion, 4. moral imbeciles and, 5. criminal epileptics. Even though his work is greatly criticized, biological theories have continued to develop. Criminological theories focus on explaining the causes of crimes, some of which are: rational choice theory, biological and biosocial theories, social learning theory, and labeling theory [18].

The five theories of causation of crime are: 1. Biological, 2. Economic, 3. Psychological, 4. Political and, 5. Sociological theories (it should be noted that sociological theory is subdivided into three theories i.e. strain theory, social learning theory, and control theory) [19].

HOW TO CURB CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES

As opined by Skolnick and Bayley, since neither the police nor the criminal justice system can bear the responsibility of ensuring a safe and secure community alone, the public has a very active role to play in ensuring public safety [20].

Even though there is no crime free state, however, the crime level must be kept low to ensure peace and development. It is the government's major responsibility to deter criminal activities by way of enacting laws with stringent punishments against offenders. Some measures to take are as outlined below [21-24]:

1. *Speedy justice system:* Just as the saying goes, justice delayed is justice denied. In Nigeria, as in some other nations, there is the urgent need for the total overhauling of the justice system. In Nigeria, so many suspects are still languishing in prison custody whose cases are yet to be heard or mentioned in court for many years. Most of these prison custodies are congested and while the courts have a backlog of cases due to shortages in the number of judges and undue delays in the hearing and disposal of cases. Additionally, judges/other judicial staff should be well paid and as well as the correctional institutions.

2. *Job creation opportunities:* An idle hand is the devil's workshop; unemployment and criminal tendencies are correlated. Studies show that unemployment leads to the rise in property crime and not violent crimes. From the foregoing, these criminals engage in criminal activities as a means to survive, therefore, job creation opportunities would help prevent such crimes.

3. *Bridging economic gap:* The gap between the rich and the poor is ever increasing, such that the rich live luxuriously and while the poor cannot access basic necessities and amenities of life required for their survival such as clean water, food, and shelter, hence resorting to criminal activities. The government should step in and reduce the economical inequalities through initiatives to reduce the negatives classism brings with it and to ensure that all citizens have a means of livelihood/survival and not to resort to criminality.

4. *Formulating provisions for cybercrimes:* As at today worldwide, cybercrime has assumed a dangerous dimension. Technology's evolution has brought about numerous benefits, but has also given rise to new threats and vulnerabilities. The increased reliance on computers, smartphones, and the internet for communication, commerce, and entertainment, cybercriminals have found new avenues to exploit unsuspecting individuals and organizations. These cybercriminals can hack into people's personal accounts, to launching large-scale attacks on government institutions or multinational corporations dumping them of large amount of money, as shown in Figure 4. Ten most common types of cyber threats or attacks are: malware, phishing, denial-of-service (DOS) attacks, spoofing, identity-based attacks, code injection attacks, supply chain attacks, insider threats, DNS tunneling and IoT-based attacks. Cybersecurity is not solely the responsibility of individuals, governments and organizations have crucial roles to play to ensure security of their systems and networks. Governments must enact laws and regulations to protect citizen's privacy and prosecute cybercriminals, with collaboration with international partners/agencies to combat cyber threats globally [25].

5. *Awareness of people:* The people should be educated on their rights and remedies. The citizenry should be educated on how to be good citizens, to stand or steer clear from online crimes, and avoid being victims of crimes. The people's faith in the justice system should also be restored by improving the system, cum educating the masses on how to report any case of crime they may encounter for them to get redress or justice.

6. *Promoting harmony among the different religions:* Most nations are secular countries in which all religions are equal in all respects. This is however not so, as there are countless instances of prejudice against certain religions and ethnic groups. The government has tremendously failed in most countries to address this issue by not taking necessary actions. To this end, the government should be neutral while enacting laws and ensure that the rights of all citizens are protected irrespective of the religion, ethnic group, or location they live/belong to. A society in which all the citizens live in peace and harmony will certainly have reduced crime rates and experience economic and infrastructural development.

7. *Penalizing white-collar criminals:* White-collar crime is a form of corruption, which is a non-violent crime committed by individuals, businesses or even the government officials. Corruption refers to the misuse of power by government officials so as to facilitate their illegitimate private gain, this has detrimental effects on the whole country. Therefore, the police and the justice systems must ensure proper investigations of all cases, as shown in Figure 5. Corruption stunts the growth of the economy of a country by discouraging investment and modifying the composition of government spending to the disadvantage of the public. Government's lack of political will and its weak institutions to combat corruption and white-collar crimes has led to increasing cases of money laundering, bank thefts, and the like. Hence, government should rise up to this challenge to penalize all white-collar criminals with no sacred cow.

CONCLUSION

In Nigeria, and in fact other countries of the world, crime rates are on the increase such as property crimes, violent crimes, and cyber crimes. The causal factors in crimes were highlighted ranging from biological factors to political and sociological factors. The government must play its major role in curbing crimes by enacting enabling laws and regulations cum empowering the agencies in charge, as well as better restructuring of the justice systems in this regard for proper and timely dispensation of justice. To help in the prevention of crimes (just as prevention is better than cure), these three important things should be done: 1. Mass education, 2. Instilling morals in people from their childhood, 3. Job creation for people to reduce poverty cum crime. Therefore, for an effective community policing, the following are put forward among others:

➢ Effective crime prevention and control through intelligence-led policing.

➢ Combating violence and economic crimes through various government institutions and the criminal justice systems without interference.

➢ Effective machinery for conflict prevention and resolution.

➢ Effective community policing via security agencies-public representations.

➢ Ensuring prompt and timely investigations and disposal of cases.

➢ Training of security personnel on democratic policing, community policing, human rights, and international instruments on conduct of law enforcement officers so that officers are well acquainted with demands of efficient and accountable policing.

➢ Mass media, NGOs and National Human Rights Commission to assist promote public enlightenment on security agencies-partnership community policing.

➢ Provision of good career development, salary and welfare packages to motivate security personnel to help promote better service delivery and discipline.

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Figure 1 Contract killing.

Source: https://www.newindianexpress.com/cities/delhi/2022/jun/13/contract-killing-new-style-for-gangs-of-delhi-2464990.htm
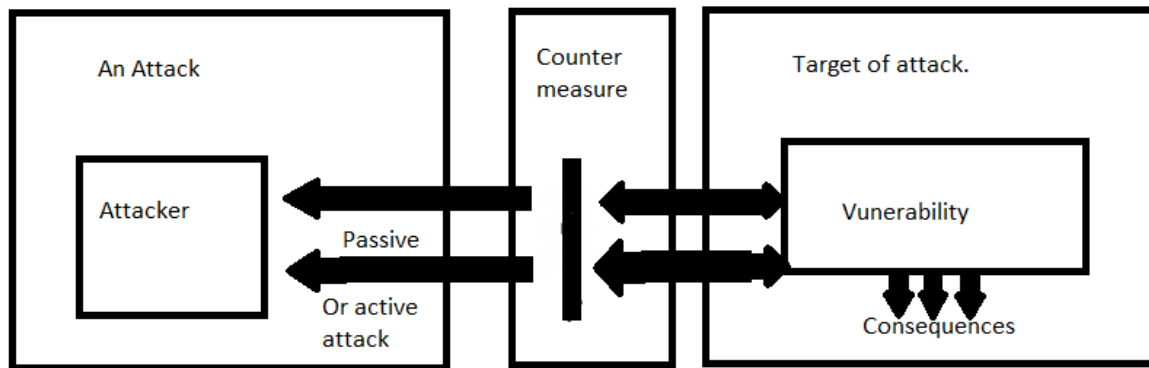

Figure 2 September 11 attacks.

Source:https://www.google.com/search?q=images+on+arson,+vandalism+by+wikipedia&sca_esv=5918262 72&tbm=isch&sxsrf=AM9HkKn6Ld4wpqO2qwZ4ZBnauUVuECabSQ:1702896455194&source=lnms&sa =X&ved=2ahUKEwjg8bPS55iDAxWcZ0EAHQ8QDsEQ_AUoAXoECAUQAw&biw=1366&bih=580&dp r=1#imgrc=q2ELM-lhDAxEPM

Figure 3 Crime: Changing Lives, Changing Minds.

Source:https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&url=https%3A%2F%2Fcltlblog.wordpress.com%2Ftag%2Fcrime %2F&psig=AOvVaw0RyK4xQb_RU7OnYFvzuKag&ust=1702876438286000&source=images&cd=vfe&o pi=89978449&ved=0CBQQjhxqFwoTCJi8pqnblYMDFQAAAAAdAAAAABAV
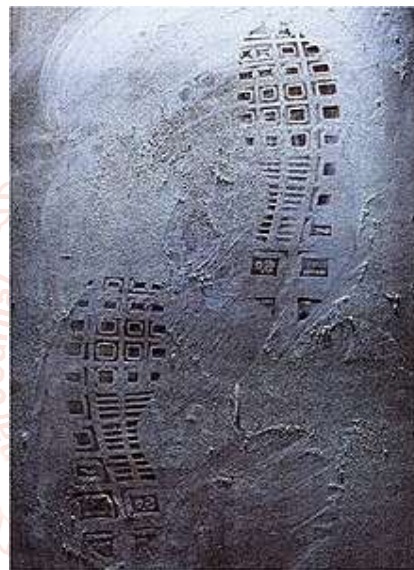
Figure 4 Cyberattack.
Source:
https://www.google.com/search?q=images+of+cyber+threats+wikipedia&tbm=isch&ved=2ahUKEwiJ9pyo
1JiDAxXqnCcCHYuSDvoQ2-cCegQIABAA&oq=images+of+cyber+threats-
+wikipedia&gs_lcp=CgNpbWcQDFAAWABgAGgAcAB4AIABAIgBAJIBAJgBAKoBC2d3cy13aXotaW
1n&sclient=img&ei=Ag-AZYntG-q5nsEPi6W60A8&bih=580&biw=1366#imgrc=rmyidXI1vkPBbM

Figure 5 Forensic photography.
Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Forensic_photography