Insecurity and Crime: The Bane of Sustainable Social and Economic Development in Contemporary Societies

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Abstract

Insecurity and crime; the twin woes of the twenty first century have become as constant as the daily rising and setting of the sun. In an era where civilization and various advancements in man's quest to subdue nature have assumed exhilarating dimensions, insecurity and crime have brought to naught every leap of progress recorded in human history and threatens those awaiting conception. From local, national, regional to international levels, crime and insecurity have risen to monstrous heights with gross violation of human rights, destruction of livelihoods and crumbling of every ounce of social and economic sustenance ever instituted in a society. These duos affect societies in more overwhelming ways than can be portrayed by security analysts or reporters on warfronts as such, strategies to curtail the twin woes must assume a war-like character as is declared on other social ills bedeviling societies. Every form of crime must be tackled in its infancy and nations must strengthen and equip their security networks to be able to sniff insecurity in its formative stages and respond proactively.

Keywords: *Insecurity, Crime, Sustainable development, Contemporary societies*

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Background to the Study

The breaking of dawn in almost all parts of the world today is heralded by news of crime of all sorts from murders, kidnappings, bombings, theft, abuses on infants/minors, violence targeted at particular genders, metropolitan residences, government agencies, and the list is endless. These crimes inadvertently plant insecurities in the societies where the rate of occurrence is considered high not to mention the colossal losses accompanying such occurrences. Insecurity and crime have become the byproducts of man's desire to conquer nature and his environment. Despite the expeditions to space, labour- saving devices, nanotechs and all forms of advancement that enhance virtual experience and crime detection; crime and insecurity remain a juggernaut, they are the twin woes that lay as the common denominator in all societies regardless of classification as advance or developing. Just like karlmarx's explanation of the source of change in all societies driven by the economy (sub-structure) whereby the superstructure (political, legal, educational…as well as beliefs and values) owe their nature to the state of the economy and change as the former changes (Haralambos and Holborn, 2000). Crime and insecurity can also be said to have become the base of societies whereby, the lesser the degree and nature of crime and insecurity in a society, the more the level of progress attainable in such a society conversely, the higher the rate of insecurity and crime in a society, the more unstable the superstructure (economy, education, health, government…) becomes. There is undeniably a resurgence of atavistic instincts of blood thirstiness akin to that of pre-modern society and this insecurity and crime has created a world where possession of arms has become a *sine qua non* (absolute necessity) for subsistence whether one is part of an insurgent group or a local peasant because life today has become short, nasty and brutish. More to the problem of insecurity and crime is the internationalization of what begins as an internal conflict through external support politically, financially or technically. These external actors either perpetuate or shape settlements between warring parties which deepens the casualties to nations. Most local militia are also known to have alliances with stronger forces abroad (Smith, 2017). These complexities to the fight against insecurity and crime in the world today have rendered the situation dicey and unappealing to the future. This discourse revisits the security/insecurity and crime pandemic, situating the problems within a theoretical frame that enables individuals, the state and relevant stakeholders appreciate the value of taming situations as they arise; for in neglect even the harmless become lethal.

Conceptual Clarification

Insecurity, crime and sustainable development are the major concepts in this discourse.
An understanding of insecurity would be incomplete without a grasp on what security means considering that the former is the anti-thesis of the latter. Security is captured as an ambiguous concept attracting different views with traditional positions pitched around the military and state factors while non-traditional approaches attempt to broaden the definition of security to include environmental, political, social, economic, personal, health, communal issues with human security as the basis of all other forms. Therefore, security is seen as a state of being free from threat as well as the state's capacity to maintain independent identity and functional integrity against forces of change. Another definition of security says that:

"Security has to do with freedom from danger or threats to a nation's ability to protect and develop itself, promote its cherished values and legitimate interest, and enhance the wellbeing of its people. Thus, internal security could be seen as the freedom from or the absence of those tendencies, which could undermine internal cohesion, and the corporate existence of a country and its ability to maintain its vital institutions for the promotion of its core values and socio-political and economic objectives, as well as meet the legitimate aspirations of the people (Muyiwa, 2015).

From a basic perspective, security is seen as:

These definitions and a host of others point to absence of threat whether in the present (or anticipated) at the individual and state levels which is key to having security in all other facets of man's existence. Insecurity, can also be described as "not knowing, a lack of control and inability to take defensive action against forces that portend harm or danger to an individual or group or what makes them vulnerable" or "the state of fear or anxiety stemming from concrete or alleged lack of protection (NSACC, 2016).

Deduced from the forgoing, insecurity in the context of this discourse can be said to be the state of living with threats and dangers from which an individual or community is incapable of forestalling and such threats/dangers appear unsurmountable to state forces or such forces are unwilling to adequately address the causes thereby creating a sense of perpetual anxiety and hopelessness in the populace/state.

Crime is generally regarded as any act that is unlawful and attracts punishment by the state or law of the society. Post-modern conceptions go further to conceive crime as social harm which embraces all threats to people's ability to pursue diverse lifestyles and identities as well as destruction of existing livelihoods (Markim, N.D). Comprehensively put "crime encompasses any harmful acts including violations of fundamental prerequisites for wellbeing (such as food clothing, medical service, challenging work and recreational experiences) as well security from predatory individuals or repressive and imperialist elites (Juliana and Herman 1975, as cited in Mian, 2014).

Development has been the buzz word in social science discourses over the past decade, it is usually applied to improvements in the livelihoods of people indexed in areas of poverty reduction, employment generation/ availability, access to health care, education and other variables that make human living decent. It can also be viewed as enhancement of human wellbeing in the aspects of health, education, security as well as enhancing capabilities, opportunities or choices in a way that enables people to lead longer, healthier and fuller lives (Stewart, 2004). Sustainable development draws attention to the capability of meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (Achumba, Ighomerebo and Akpor-Robaro, 2013).

Theoretical Framework

Several theories of crime abound with some focusing on individual factors that predispose people to crime while the likes of social disorganization theory locate the cause of crime in neighbourhood characteristics. The discourse in this paper is pitched on the broken windows theory developed by sociologists James Wilson and George Kelling in the 1980's. The theory posits that "when low level crimes like vandalism…are ignored, larger and more serious crimes start to happen soon". In other words each problem that is left unattended to or without intervention in a given environment or society affects people's attitude towards that environment and creates room for more problems. Conversely, a well-tended environment where issues are promptly addressed cultivates favourable attitudes in the members towards good management and maintenance of sanity. The authors illuminated the theory with this illustration.

"Consider a building (society) with a few broken windows (social ills), if the windows are not repaired (tackling the ills decisively), the tendency is for vandals to break a few more windows. Eventually, they may even break into the building and if it's unoccupied, perhaps become squatters or light fires inside. Or consider a pavement. Some litter accumulates, soon more litter accumulates. Eventually people even start leaving bags of refuse from take-out restaurants there or even break into cars" (whatis.com, 2020)

Broken windows set a new norm of behaviour for the community, which is slightly close to the criminal or anti-social behaviour, and people adjust their normal behaviour accordingly. As the level of normalcy goes down, it sets a vicious cycle in motion that gradually causes a neighborhood to become more and more run-down dangerous. This theory depicts the characteristics or image of a society whose social structure is littered with broken windows (crimes, corruption by public/ private bodies, lopsided criminal justice system and many other anti-social, anti-people, anti-progressive policies/actions which give impetus to all sorts of criminal activities to be incubated in the populace. Such vices give room for individuals to indulge in all manner of criminal behaviour which renders their environment unsafe. There is no society without a broken window, the only variations that exist are in the magnitude of crack or visible holes in the windows of socio-economic and political structures in the society and of course the response strategies available.

For sub-Saharan African countries especially Nigeria, cracks are visible on a daily basis with reports of abuses, injustices and social ills lined up on a continuum from the family level to the national front, all together sending waves of insecurity in every living soul in the environment and inevitably pushing people to crimes that seem like survival strategies until they become national emergencies.

On the international scene, cracks erupt as nations struggle for power or dominance and formulate policies that do not favour certain nations or power blocks. This creates cracks /lesions on the global skin enveloping nations of the world. Aggrieved nations tend to respond to these lesions by building or gathering stones (developing highly sophisticated

weapons of warfare…) that would be used to deepen or widen the already existing cracks thereby, putting the entire world in jeopardy. International politics and policies cash-in on internal broken windows to complicate the local situation and breed more dangerous behaviours that are beyond the national body's control strategies.

Insecurity and crime can be regarded as products of broken windows which hold the potential to widen cracks or even crack more windows in any society where they are allowed to thrive. The duo are products of typical broken windows characteristic of extant human societies and are rife with potentials for shattering society's protective windows which make social life operational with some sense of decency.

The analogy of the broken windows is expanded to signify any anomaly within the social structure of societies which serve as the basis upon which individuals justify engagement in criminal activities as a means to achieving the socially desirable goals of the society. Seen in this light then, it is in place to say that all societies contain broken windows, the difference being in the magnitude of crack found on which windows (social institutions). Certain advances in technology such as spytechs, nanotech, drones, nuclear weaponry etc. represent a category of broken windows that breed increasing insecurity in international relations inevitably preparing the consciousness of individuals towards wars. Figure 1 provides an illustration of the broken windows conception of insecurity and crime.
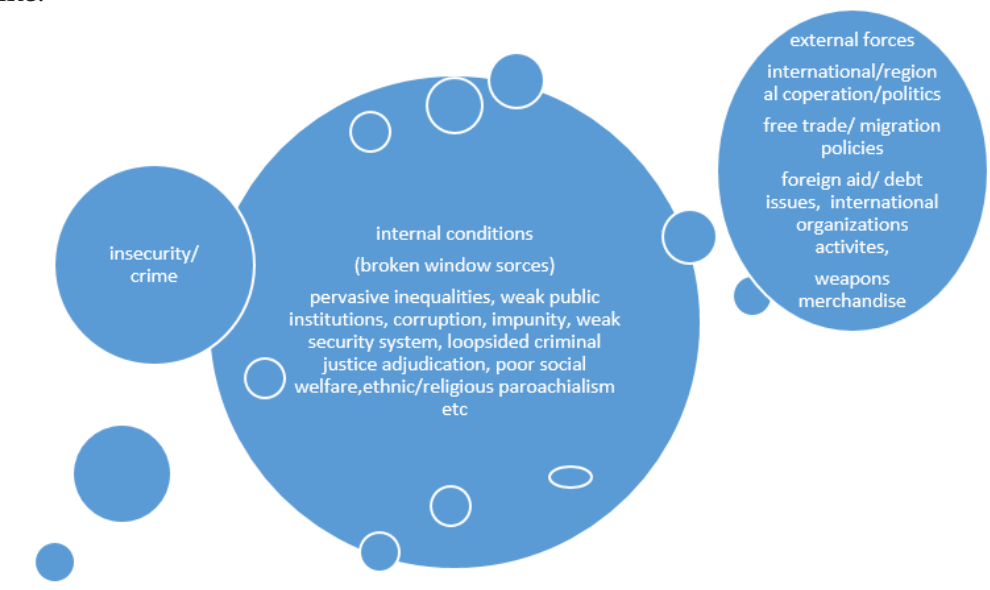

Figure 1: Diagrammatic illustration of broken windows perspective on insecurity and crime.

In figure 1 above, the biggest circle represents the walls of a society with the listed ills as broken windows. The big circle attached to it represents insecurity and crime which are largely a result /consequence of the ills which form a big crack on the wall which if left unattended can increase in size and crush the wall itself (the biggest circle). The circle to

the right represents external forces which also have a bearing on the broken windows that thrive in societies. The smaller dots within and outside the circle are the various social and economic effects ravaging the walls of the society which prevent it from flourishing (developing).

Drivers of Insecurity and Crime
Every social phenomenon that exists is traceable to underlying individual, familial, communal or societal factors. Insecurity and crime can be explained from various perspectives. Some factors that incubate insecurity and crime are internal to particular societies while others lay in the interdependent nature of international relations while others scholars view the factors in terms of remote and immediate sources. It is imperative to state that though external factors greatly impact security situations in states, there are internal factors that provide fertile grounds for the former to infiltrate and thrive. Some prominent drivers of conflict include:

I.   Lack of institutional capacity- institutional infrastructures, state governance and democratic accountability have deteriorated badly evidenced by failure on the part of government to provide basic necessities and improve public services in Nigeria and most African societies. Failure is also demonstrated in the inability of the state to tackle criminal behaviours like homicides, kidnappings and other violations of fundamental human rights. This situation has birthed a pool of frustrated people who are prone to violent and aggressive behaviour at the slightest provocation. When a populace loses confidence in the state and her officials' capacity to protect and provide their needs while the same individuals spend the nation's resources lavishly, the consequence is descent to Hobbesian state of nature (NSACC, 2016; Bustillo and Velloso, N.D).

ii.   Material inequalities/ unfairness- being conscious of differences in life chances and perception of marginalization by a group of people reflected in government development plans and policies, as well as appointment into political offices has become a prime source of disaffection and dissatisfaction. This leaves a large number of the Nigerian population in a state of helplessness and as such tendencies towards aggression, violence, and criminal activities are heightened. The youth who are largely affected by this ill have expressed their dissatisfaction with the status quo by forming groups like the Niger Delta revolutionary crusaders, Niger delta Avengers and other underground groups whose activities have affected oil exploration and production and also caused the government losses in revenue, power supply shortages and salary debts (NSACC, 2016). In Latin America and Caribbean societies, highly unequal income distribution, youth marginalization, widespread urbanization, pervasive presence of organized crime, and weakness of law enforcement institutions have been recorded as some of the major drivers of crime in the region (Bustillo and velloso, ND).

iii.   Ethno-religious conflicts- the multi-ethnic structure of Nigeria has made it almost impossible to achieve harmony especially because each group is in competition with others for access to the national resources and leadership positions. All over

the nation, political consciousness and identity are tied to ethnic and religious affiliation thus, mutual suspicion and fear and tendency towards violent confrontation is endemic (Achumba et al,2013; NSACC, 2016)

iv. Weak security system- the security system in Nigeria is lacking in areas of attitudinal and behavioural disposition, expertise in handling sensitive information and weapon, availability of adequate and state of the art security equipment and a general absence of commitment to the one Nigeria project. Also disheartening is the tendency of these national watch dogs to sabotage governments peace building efforts through aiding and abetting acquisition of weapons by criminal groups, aiding escape of persons convicted of highly criminal behaviour in their custody, aligning to ethnic, religious or communal sentiments in their places of duty and the list of maladies choking this group of military and paramilitary personnel as vanguards of Nigeria's unity goes on and on.

v. Erosion/ collapse of socio-cultural and communal value system- collectivism, loyalty to authority and community, honesty, truthfulness, hard work, tolerance, love for others, mutual coexistence are distinctive features of Nigerian and most African traditional societies which made social life secured and orderly. However, with civilization and modernization came anew set of values which convey highly individualistic tendencies, cut-throat competition in virtually all aspects of life, excessive quest for material success which pushes people to indulge in criminal activities- theft, murder, kidnapping, human trafficking, organ harvesting etc(Achumba et al, 2013).

vi. Porous borders- this is one of the biggest issue with countries in African region particularly West Africa where Nigeria is a part. Porous borders permit individuals and cargo to move freely into and around the country untracked. Influx of persons from neighboring countries and far-off places who may harbor dubious/ criminal intentions and with the weak security system in place, weapons are smuggled into the state and used to commit crimes. . It is reported that of the 8 million illegal weapons housed in West Africa, Nigeria hosts over 70 percent (NSACC, 2016). These weapons mainly small and light arms(rapid-fire assault rifles, pistols, submachine guns, mortars, rocket-propelled grenades, avionics, drones etc.) are easily smuggled alongside legitimate cargo because, they are simple and can be handled by uneducated combatants and children, require little maintenance and are durable, are produced in mass so surplus in supply and affordable to a large audience due to low prices aided by recycling of these arms. This provides dissidents with firepower that equals or supersedes that of national police and even military forces thereby rendering the fight against terrorism, insurgency, militancy and all forms of criminal activities unyielding to all strategies. The global proliferation of these weapons has conditioned groups to resort to armed violence to resolve disputes/grievances rather than civil/ nonviolent resolutions (International Committee of the Red Cross [ICRC], 1999). West Africa is regarded as the unsecured region in the world and Nigeria, the most unsecured in the region.

vii. Terrorism- this described as premeditated use or threat of use of violence by an individual or group to cause fear, destruction or death, especially against unarmed targets, property or infrastructure in a state so as to compel those in authority to respond to the demands of the individual or group behind such violent acts(Sampson and Onuoha, 2011 in Achumba et al, 2013). The rise in terrorist groupings and activities on a regional and global scale has wreaked havoc on many countries like America, France, Brazil, Libya, Israel and in fact only a few nations worldwide are yet to experience significant attacks from insurgents/ terrorist activities. Apart from human and material losses, terrorism crushes the hope of future survival. Terrorism is not new to the Nigerian state but its politicization is threatening the survival of civilians and posing serious hindrance to efforts from within and external sources to contain the problem. Foreign observers have linked terrorism in Nigeria to political manipulations, high level corruption, poor governance/leadership failure, ethnic/religious distrust and inequalities (Ewetan and Urhie, 2014). This perception has led to decline on the international community's sympathy and will to rescue Nigeria from her damnation. Hence, "to your tents oh Israel" is the position of Nigeria. Each family, community and region must defend itself or be wiped off the surface of mother earth.

viii. Weapons merchandise- development of weapons have been an essential part of state survival as it provides the military with the means to protect the state and her populace form external aggression as well as achieve other ends. With the development of international trade, production and transfer of weapons became part of economic activity of nations, attracting huge revenues to producer countries like US, Russia, Germany and France who are recorded to be the top gainers in the global market for weapons while clientelelies largely in India, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Africa. The high demand for weapons is driven by regional rivalries, rise in conflicts involving non-state actors and intra-state conflicts (Nigeria, Cameroon). While purchase of these weapons are to be under the state's purview, the rise in non-state actors/ terrorist/insurgent groups purchase of weapons especially small and light arms has raised a lot of concern for global security (Guay, 2015). Also, the market driven global economy governed by the law of demand and supply facilitates availability of weapons with little or no regard to the purposes of recipients. Even discipline or checks imposed by producer nations on client states is nonexistent or hardly looked into because of the desire to satisfy demands of emerging markets like African states(ICRC, 1999). Thus, large scale arms transfer to Rwanda facilitated the 1995 genocide, massive arms export to Iraq emboldened heir incursion into Kuwait and places like Libya, Syria, central African republic, south Sudan and the like who have experienced devastating conflicts and insecurities owe their plight to availability of weapons. Inextricably bound to the legal trade is the illegal trade in weapons which serves the appetite of dangerous groups who utilize such weapons for selfish/sectional interest that affect largely unarmed civilians. The booming illegal trade has made efforts at controlling arms proliferation especially small

and light weapons largely unproductive. While the devastating effects of small and light arms proliferation is already being felt and can be managed at least to a certain degree, another monster named nuclear weapon is still being incubated by more nations around the world in a bid to build insurance against perceived aggressors. To act prudently, nations race towards increasing their stock of arms to be utilized for deterrence as well as political and military goals. This seemingly prudent move is pushing the world into a point of no return where peace has become a pause between wars (Gallagher,2002). Manufacturing of weapons is a broken window whose crack has continued to widen beyond man's anticipation and stands as a juggernaut today.

The Costs of Insecurity and Crime
Insecurity and crime affect society in far more devastating ways than statistics or media reportage can portray. From individuals to family to businesses, educational institutions, political arena and every nexus of social relations, the twin woes plunge societies into unfathomable emotions and difficulties and also costs government huge resources to intervene and restore sanity. Among the most biting costs of insecurity and crime is the huge finance that are lost and also spent on provision of security to contain a pressing problem which has tendencies of escalating to regional and international fronts. Estimates of insecurity and crime costs to countries put figures ranging from 3 percent to as high as 10 percent of a country's Gross Domestic Product earnings. These funds are spent on defense, security, justice, medical interventions, loss of lives and disability(Bustillo and Valesso, ND).Between 2008 and 2014, the security share of the budget in Nigeria has increase from 0.158 trillion naira (3%) to 0.965 trillion naira (19.45%) respectively (Eboh, 2014). In a review of security expenditure in West Africa, the EU spent about €2.5 billion in 2017 as development assistance to provide technical assistance, training and equipment for internal security forces to fight against terrorism, organized crime and irregular migration. Yearly allocations for security and the associated challenges assistance by EU and other international agencies runs in millions and billions while military expenditures sweep about 10-15% of state budgets which is non-inclusive of police and gendarmerie spending. With this huge investment in security, one may pause to ask this question: can peace become affordable? (Paul, 2019)

Effects of insecurity and crime on human capital is too enormous to capture but the visible costs remain in the huge loss of experienced labour for both the present and future development, displacement which accounts for large number of refugees, reduced rate of school enrollment and attendance, poor concentration at work which affects performance and productivity, mass emigration from troubled areas and the list goes on (Sohnen, 2012).In addition to deaths, malnutrition and famine, contamination of water supplies, and collapse of health services in conflicting and insecurity-prone zones worsens the travails of the populace which forces many to flee their homes- as high as 28 300 people daily are forced to flee their homes because of violent conflict and persecution. The world total of forcibly displaced people is over 65 million and has been ascending sharply in recent years, driven primarily by the effects of violent conflict in which armed groups have continued to multiply both internally and internationally (Smith, 2018).

The table below summarizes the costs of insecurity:

	Direct costs	Indirect costs
Individual	• immediate loss of productivity due to death or injury • Ransom payments • Costs to repair or replace damaged or destroyed property • Medical care • Legal services • Insurance	• Preventive private security • Bribes Lost investment in human capital Effects of psychological harm of victimization • Compounded losses of lower productivity
Firms	• Cost to repair or replace property • Ransom payments • Legal services • Insurance	• Preventive private security • Bribes • Lost investment in human capital of employees • Lost potential customer base (for public outings) • Lost potential investment (domestic and foreign) due to poor business climate
Government	• Medical spending • Spending on public security, law enforcement, and criminal justice • Repair and replacement of infrastructure	• Lost investment in human capital (via public health, education, and training programs) • Diminished productivity of citizens • Foregone tax revenues from individuals and businesses • Drag on MDGs/ development progress (eradication of hunger, poverty, reduction of infant/maternal mortality…) • Aggravation of climate change impacts • Opportunity costs of lost output/ income • Long-term damage to business and economic confidence etc.

Source: Ebo, 2014; Sohnen, 2012

The areas of effect captured in the table above points to those areas readily identifiable as costs of insecurity and crime which no nation escapes whether it is classified as developed or developing. Far more damage is also done particularly to groups that cannot be reached with interventions. Though the twin monsters seem fairly manageable with policy statements and a standby force, the impending doom will shock humanity if politics, corruption and other ills that trigger and/or obstruct efforts to minimize their occurrences are not flushed out while there's still little time. The more the broken windows allowed to thrive in a society and the world at large, the frequent the disruptions of social equilibrium which is a precondition for sustainable development.

The Way Forward
Leaders ought to discern how to make conflict altogether unnecessary by understanding the root causes and dealing with such while it is yet small. This entails sanitization of our value system as well as establishment of a transparent/fair acquittal/indictment formula

that shows no reservation for class, religion, race or ethnicity. This would make the internal environment of a society unsuitable for breeding most forms of insecurity and crime.

Community policing is an area that needs urgent attention and strengthening because crimes usually begin at the community level from which they infiltrate the state and become a regional and national problem. If the community is empowered by law and other legislations to tackle deviant behaviours in the environment, it will reduce the burden placed on the national leadership and security forces to tackle every wave of offences that are injurious to individuals and the nation at large. More so, community policing would ensure prompt response to emergencies especially as it affects the low and middle class in society.

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