

A Review of Youth Violence Theories: Developing Interventions to Promote Sustainable Peace in Ilorin, Nigeria

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Abstract

Ilorin is located in North Central Nigeria with an estimated population above two million people. For some time now, Ilorin has been regarded as the most "peaceful" State Capital in the North Central geo-political zone; due to rare outburst of violence and criminality. However, in the recent past, the peaceful atmosphere of the State Capital has been under serious threat owing to frequent outburst of youth violence, particularly in socially disadvantaged neighbourhoods (SDNs). Consequently, youth violence has attracted the attention of policy makers and stakeholders in the State Capital, thereby occupying an important space in local discourses. In this paper, we undertake a review of theories of violence to understand the etiology of youth violence in Ilorin in particular and Nigeria as a whole, and assess the implications of these theories for developing strategies and policy frameworks for promoting long-lasting, sustainable peace.

Keywords: Youth violence; Relative deprivation; Social disorganisation; Broken window; Ilorin,

Résumé

Ilorin est situé dans le centre-nord du Nigeria avec une population estimée de plus de deux millions de personnes. Depuis quelque temps, Ilorin a été considérée comme la capitale d'Etat la plus "Paisible" dans la zone géopolitique du centre-nord; en raison de rares explosions de violence et de criminalité. Cependant, dans un passé récent, l'Atmosphère paisible de la capitale de l'Etat a été sérieusement menacée en raison de fréquents éclats de violence chez les jeunes, en particulier dans les quartiers socialement défavorisés (SDN). Par conséquent, la violence chez les jeunes attire l'attention des décideurs et des acteurs de la capitale, occupant ainsi un espace dans les discours locaux. Dans ce document, nous entreprenons une revue des théories de la violence pour comprendre l'étiologie de la Violence chez les jeunes à Ilorin en particulier et au Nigeria dans son ensemble et les implications de ces Théories évaluées pour l'élaboration de Stratégies et de cadres politiques pour promouvoir une paix durable.

Mots-clés: Violence chez les jeunes; Privation relative; Désorganisation sociale; Fenêtre Cassée; Ilorin,

Introduction

Youth violence is rampant in Nigeria. Nigeria is becoming or has become a theatre of youth violence. Its occurrence and persistence have ostensibly undermined and threatened social security in the country. Apart from militancy in the Niger Delta region and acts of terrorism in North Eastern Nigeria, other common violent activities include clashes among cult members, political clashes, religious clashes, land disputes, communal clashes, herdsmen/farmer clashes, as well as tribal and ethnic violence. Meanwhile, research has found that persistent violence and restiveness across the six geopolitical zones in Nigeria is inimical to growth, and stifles economic development (Akpan et al. 2012; Ewetan and Urhie 2014). Apart from wanton destruction of poverty, several lives have been lost to violence. Between 1999 and 2003, USAID (2005) reported that scores of youth violence in Nigeria resulted in the death of over 9000 young people and displaced over 200000. Specifically, in Northern Nigeria, more than 90 people were injured and more than 20 reported dead in 2007 alone (US Commission on International Religious Freedom, 2008). In 2008, more than 600 people lost their lives and properties worth millions of naira was destroyed in Jos (Adinoyi 2009; Balogun 2009). In 2009, over 600 deaths were recorded in a series of youth related violence in Bauchi, Jos, Nasarawa, Lagos and Ibadan (Adinoyi 2009; Balogun 2009; Eya 2009). In 2011, Human Rights Watch (2012) estimated that over 15 000 youths were killed in violence since Nigeria transitioned to civilian rule in 1999. The activities of *Boko Haram*, especially in the northeast, have resulted in the deaths of thousands of Nigerians.

Meanwhile, while the killings and mayhem were going on in several parts of Nigeria,

Ilorin, the State Capital of Kwara State, had been relatively peaceful. In fact, Ilorin and by extension the Kwara State, has been christened 'The State of Harmony', following the peaceful nature of the people and the entire society. The State Capital has been so peaceful that even individuals from the crisis-laden northern states often see it as a safe-haven to pick up the pieces of their ruined lives. These people are facetiously addressed as 'ogun le nde' literarily referred to as 'people dispersed from the war zone to settle in Ilorin'. However, as much as this has been a long held perception, there is insufficient evidence to support this assumption, especially in the recent past. Since 2003, the ancient city of Ilorin has been plagued by violence perpetrated by young people. The widely reported cases of violence are in sharp contrast to the wide-held belief that Ilorin is a peaceful city. There are several reported cases of violence to support this claim (see Alanamu 2005; Fagbemi 2015; Muhammed 2005; Tunde 2015).

Ultimately, the electoral process in Ilorin in particular has witnessed an unprecedented build-up of armed youths, recruited and trained by politicians to win elections with violence. Recruited thugs are usually school dropouts and unemployed youth, who bend to the whims and caprices of power-hungry politicians in exchange for some naira, political appointments and lucrative government contracts or tenders. Incidentally, politically motivated youth violence has been widely reported (Tijjani 2013; Saka 2010; Alanamu 2005). This was heightened between 2001 and 2003 during the administration of the late Governor Muhammed Alabi Lawal. It was during this time that the manipulation of the youth for settling political scores became entrenched, setting the stage for subsequent violent acts in the State Capital (Saka 2010). This became apparent during the political face-off between the then Governor and his late political 'god-father', Olusola Saraki. In this face-off, the two political figures were accused of recruiting, arming and deploying youth gangs for electoral malpractice and fraud. At this time, cultism became widely pronounced, as it crept into the political terrain to settle political scores. Previously, cultism was restricted to tertiary educational institutions. Prominent among the notorious ring leaders who were recruited to carry out politically motivated violent acts were *Suraju Akaje*, *Babalola*, and *Bayo Hajia*, all in their early and late 30s with many followers in their early 20s. The ring leaders however met their Waterloo in 2008, 2010 and 2015 respectively when they were brutally murdered by unknown gunmen. The youthful ages of these individuals confirm previous findings that most violent activities are perpetrated by the youth. A previous study specifically found that 56.3% of the victims and perpetrators of violence in Ilorin were between the ages of 21 and 40 years (Agere et al. 2012).

Meanwhile, beyond the age of the perpetrators, there is an existing nexus between neighbourhood characteristics and youth violence. Youth violence usually takes-off from socially disadvantaged neighbourhoods (SDNs), widely regarded as economically and socially deprived environments where levels of poverty, unemployment and underemployment are very high (Moser and McIlwaine 2006). These neighbourhoods

are usually characterised by 'ungoverned spaces' occupied by those who perfectly fit the definition of *Armed Non State Actors*¹ (ANSAs) who operate in non-conflict situations (DCAF Horizon 2015). These include crime groups, youth gangs, militias and vigilantes. These ANSAs were eminently present in most parts of Ilorin. The *Sango and Oke-Andi* areas were under the control of *Afobaje* and *One love*; *Opomalu-Emirs road* and *Oke-Sunawere* under the control of *Apase* boys; *Oloje* is controlled by *Tatase* boys; *Anifowose* is controlled by *Authority*; *Idiape* is controlled by *Ariyo* boys; *Isale-Oja* is controlled by *Oluomo* and *Adua* boys; *Agaka* and *Adabata* are controlled by *Bayero* and *Owo* boys; *Gambari* and *Ita-Ajia* (Fifa 11 domain) and *Okelele* (Go-slow). In many of these neighbourhoods, socio-economic activities, including the collection of daily 'tax' from motorists, *Okada* riders and allocation of shopping activities have been literarily surrendered to cult gangs.

It is against this background that the current paper attempts to examine the predisposing and enabling factors responsible for the proliferation of youth violence and more importantly ANSAs in Ilorin. Although, the ancient city of Ilorin has attracted the attention of scholars, many of whom have produced a plethora of literature on the history of Ilorin (e.g. Jimoh 1994; Danmole 2012) researchers have failed to capitalise on the emergence of youth violence in contemporary Ilorin. Existing scholarship does not provide sufficient sociological analysis. This paper attempts to bridge this gap. Based on the 'Causative-Preventive Model of Youth Violence in Socially Disadvantaged Neighbourhoods' (Abdullahi and Issah, 2016), this paper x-rays relevant contemporary theories of violence to unearth the causes of youth violence in Ilorin with a view to proffer sustainable clinical interventions. The study is, therefore, timely as it contributes to national discourses around neighbourhood characteristics and youth violence in Nigeria. The paper is, perhaps, one of the few on Ilorin that underscores the connection between neighbourhood characteristics and youth violence using relevant socio-psychological theories.

¹ The term ANSAs encompasses varieties of entities. Base on the Geneva Call, an ANSA is defined as any organised group with a basic structure of command operating outside state control that uses force to achieve its political or allegedly political objectives.

METHODOLOGY

Description of Ilorin

Modern Ilorin is the Capital of Kwara State. Spatially, modern Ilorin lies 306 kilometres northeast of Lagos and 500 kilometres southwest of Abuja. It plays a dual role of being the state headquarters and as well serving as a link between the northern and southern parts of Nigeria. It is located on latitude 8°30' North and longitude 4°35' East (Ahmed 2010; Raheem 2010). It has a built up area of about 14 kilometres. For political convenience, the capital city is divided into three Local Government Areas; Ilorin West, East and South (see figure 1). The State is bordered by Oyo, Ondo, Osun, Kogi and Niger. Modern Ilorin is a confluence of cultures, populated by Hausa/Fulani, Yoruba and now the Igbos and is predominantly a Muslim community. Yoruba language is however the lingua franca. Modern Ilorin, according to geographers, is categorised based on three major residential patterns, which are clearly identifiable on the urban landscape (Aderamo 1990). These are traditional or core areas, the transitional/mixed residential zones and the modern planned housing estates. The core areas, best described as socially disadvantaged neighbourhoods, are dominated by the locals. They include areas such as *Oja-Oba*, *Okelele*, *Kuntu*, *Pakata*, *Adangba*, *Alore*, *Ita-Ogunbo*, *Adabata*, *Sannin-Okin*, *Okekere*, *Omoda* and *Ita-Merin*. The transitional/mixed residential zone, comprised areas such as *Taiwo Road*, *Gaa-Akanbi*, *Offa Garage*, and *Government Reserved Areas (GRAs)*. The modern areas consist of planned housing estates such as *Irewolede*, and *Adewole*.

Figure 1: The Map of Kwara State, Nigeria, Indicating Ilorin (Nigeria map insert)



Source: Google Map

Kwara State is nicknamed the 'State of Harmony' and prides itself as a place of peace and tranquillity in a country where many states are crises-laden. However, the emergence of violence in Ilorin in the recent time, has brought the perceived peace under very serious threat, as the ancient city is becoming a battle-ground for youth violence. Apparently, each of the gangs is domiciled in particular locations and these locations are better described in academic domains as 'ungoverned spaces' or 'hot-spots' and are usually restricted areas mostly located in SDNs. Meanwhile, the eruption of inter-group conflicts is very common among the gangs. Whenever violence erupts, residents become prisoners in their homes. Innocent people are at risk because rival gangs and police pursue their targets with little regard for innocent bystanders. People become afraid of one another and are unwilling to help. Consequently, parents are afraid to let their children participate in community activities, which may lead to further isolation. Unfortunately, children in SDNs of Ilorin have become consistently exposed to violence and isolated from other more positive experiences and positive role models.

Ilorin strategic location in the North central Nigeria has attracted the attention of many scholars in the past. The ancient city of Ilorin was established in the early 18th century with a very strong history of Islamic scholarships. Hence, scholars have sufficiently delved into the historical and political exigencies of the pre-colonial, colonial and postcolonial Ilorin. In *Ilorin: The Journey So Far*, Jimoh (1994) outlines the connection between historical and contemporary events in Ilorin. Danmole (2012) discussed the interface between religion, politics and economy of Ilorin in the 19th century and its impact on the reputation of modern Ilorin. However, in the recent time, few scholars have attempted to dissect the root causes of emerging violent activities in Ilorin, despite recorded growing numbers of violence in the ancient city. In 2014, one person was reported injured when unknown thugs attacked the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps at Gambari area. In 2015, Kwara State Police Command arrested eight persons for alleged involvement in violence (Tunde 2015). On the 25th of April, 2015, at least two unidentified people were reported dead and properties and houses worth millions of Naira destroyed as a result of the mayhem that broke out across several neighbourhoods of *Oja-Oba*, *Adifa*, *Idi-ape*, *Agbarere* and *Ita Ore* areas (Fagbemi 2015). This paper attempts to fill this gap relying on theoretical justifications to understand the upsurge of violence in modern Ilorin.

Data Collection

This paper relied on secondary data as a source of collection. The paper reviews theories of violence relevant to the understanding of the upsurge of violence in Ilorin in particular and Nigeria as a whole and assesses the implications of these theories for developing strategies and policy framework for promoting long-lasting, sustainable peace. To achieve

this, a search was performed on MEDLINE, EBSCO, ScienceDirect, JSTOR and ERIC databases using the keywords of 'youth violence'; 'theories of violence'; 'political violence in Nigeria'; 'violence in Ilorin', 'neighbourhood characteristics and violence' from the start date of each database to July 2016. Additional searches were carried out at the University of Ilorin, Nigeria library. A Google and Google Scholar search was equally painstakingly carried out. All databases consulted were searched again using the names of theories as keywords, with 'meta-analysis' or 'systematic review'. Published articles and book chapters in English, describing particular theories and violence, and articles that presented a meta-analysis of the theory were included. Newspaper reports were equally utilised. Articles and reports were excluded if they did not satisfy the criteria set out in the study. Where possible, interventions related to youth violence were identified. Several additional randomised controlled studies and other articles were also included as examples of the use of theories in intervention development. In all, three theories, relative deprivation, social disorganisation and broken window theories, were identified and reviewed to understand the upsurge of violence in the study. This method of data collection has been successfully utilised by previous scholars (Munro et al., 2007).

RELATIVE DEPRIVATION THEORY (RDT)

Relative deprivation theory (RDT) is fundamentally embedded in the psychological theory of frustration-aggression hypothesis. Retrospectively, early psychological theories of crime believed that the cause of crime lies in the individuals' psychology. They argued that individuals with personality disorder are more likely to commit crimes than those within the borderline of neurotypical personalities. This line of thinking may have influenced the development of the RDT. However, RDT moved beyond the individual psychology to understand collective psychology that aggravates crime and violence. The idea of relative deprivation specifically measures individuals' subjective evaluation of their financial and political position or other measurement of social examination. Relative deprivation is more critical when predicting individuals' conduct, compared with "objective" measures of hardship, such as, poverty and inequality. Scholars contended that individuals will encounter relative deprivation when they need X, or see that comparatively others have X, and feel qualified to have X (Davis 1959), and individuals must think it is attainable to get X (Runciman 1966), while people do not have an awareness of other's expectations for their inability to have X (Crosby 1976). RDT refers to the disenchantment people feel when they compare their positions to others and realise that others in the group possess something that they do not (Chen 2015). When this feeling persists, it may lead to frustration, stress and aggression, which may result to violence.

Gurr (1970), one of the pioneers of RDT, contends that relative deprivation is the distinction between one's value expectations and value capabilities. Value expectation alludes to merchandise and opportunities that the individual needs and feels qualified for, evaluated, taking into account correlations with others. Gurr (1970) indicates that youth violence is normal if the general practices and legislative issues that authorise vicious responses to violence are enormous. In any given society, deprived youth are usually pushed to the edges of society (Lea and Young 1984). While, in response to their social, monetary and political deprivations, greater numbers of youth have momentarily entered the world of violence and created a criminal sub-cultures that consequently wreaks destruction on the security of lives and property. Gurr (1970) maintained that the perception of deprivation, marginalisation, and persecution of the individuals in a given community may lead to frustration and anger. He argues that people rebel because they were frustrated and angered by the enormity of the socio-economic and structural inequalities, which are inextricably entrenched in the fabrics of societies. Ikuomola et al., (2009) noted that as a reaction to social marginalisation in Lagos, *area boys* (thugs) react to their weaknesses by constructing sub-cultures based around violent conduct and other deviant behaviours, including theft and violence.

However, the following scholars (Tilly 1978; Tarrow 1998; Burton et al. 1994) have criticised the methodological pertinence of relative deprivation as an indicator of youth violence and reason that relative deprivation is not an imperative indicator of violence. While it is contended that clarifications of violence ought to start by analysing the social and political structures of the areas (Skocpol 1994), Tilly (1978) focused attention on political mobilisation as the impetus and driver of violence in human social orders. Tarrow (1998) is of the opinion that there is the requirement for mass social movements for structured and organised youth violence in human society. Bandura (1973:33) criticised RDT as follows.

The widespread acceptance of the relative deprivation notion is perhaps attributable more to its simplicity than to its predictive power. In fact, the formula that deprivation-frustration breed aggression does not hold up well under empirical scrutiny in laboratory studies in which conditions regarded as deprivative-frustrative are systematically varied. Deprivation-Frustration, as commonly defined, is only one- and not necessarily the most important-factor affecting the expression of aggression and violent conflicts.

Criticism against relative deprivation notwithstanding, the assumptions of RDT are still relevant to the understanding of youth violence in Ilorin in particular and Nigeria in general. From the theory, it can be argued that the major actors of violence in Ilorin and other disadvantaged neighbourhoods in Nigeria usually lack legitimate means of

income, formal education and awareness of other's expectations in the general public. This kind of youth when contrasting their condition with other people who are moderately doing admirably well tend to feel ignored and dejected and may subsequently set out to engage in violence to make themselves relevant in the society. Likewise, when a specific neighbourhood feels denied of assets or civilities that different groups have, they have a tendency to become involved in aggregate activities to request their own offer of the assets as it was the situation with the Niger Delta aggressors. Despite the fact that, this theory incompletely provides clarification on political violence resulting from political deprivation in Ilorin, it presents a thorough clarification to aggregate violence as a precursor to violence.

SOCIAL DISORGANISATION THEORY (SDT)

Social disorganisation theory (SDT) of violence has a long history in the field of sociology. The concern for social violence has occupied an important space in sociological lexicon since the time of classical sociologists. The theory is concerned with why violence is more common and prevalent in some neighbourhoods than others. Among the questions raised are:

1) Which neighbourhood attributes advance social disorganisation in a society?; 2) Is there something about the qualities of these neighbourhoods that encourage violence? and; 3) Why is violence higher in some neighbourhoods than others?

The idea of SDT was first proposed by Thomas and Znaniecki in 1918 towards the end of the First World War. However, the theory was popularised in sociological circles at the Chicago School by Robert Park in 1924. The theory suggests that social disorganisation within a society, especially in urban centres, is a consequence of industrialisation, migration flows, neighbourhood deterioration and the absence of social control (Rubington and Weinberg 2010). Robert Park and his colleagues combined SDT with other theoretical propositions to investigate and examine the socio-ecological connection of neighbourhood and violence. The idea was to deal with the environmental and social diversities of the criminogenic neighbourhood that catalyses youth engagement in violent acts (Bursik 1988).

Incidentally, the classical SDT influenced contemporary sociologists, in their analysis, Shaw and McKay (1942) argued that socio-economic structures, residential mobility and ethnic heterogeneity are important factors for measuring the level of social disorganisation in any neighbourhood. During the early years of the theory, Shaw and McKay (1942) contended that social order requires that community members oversee and control teenage groups, neighbourhood kinship systems formed and active participation in formal and voluntary associations. However, the more complex a society becomes the more social control becomes difficult to instil. Poverty, residential mobility,

ethnic heterogeneity and weak social networks decrease a neighbourhood's capacity to control public conduct of a people, and hence increase the likelihood of violence (Kubrin and Weitzer 2003). It is argued that where people persistently move in and out of a particular neighbourhood, it becomes difficult for residents to know who to trust which consequently hampers social cohesion and erodes informal social control to prevent violence (Kubrin and Weitzer 2003; Sampson and Groves 1989; Bursik and Grasmick 1993). Shaw and McKay (1942) noticed that, beside the absence of behavioural regulation, socially dispersed neighbourhoods tend to create "criminal conventions" that could be passed to progressive eras of adolescents.

Indeed, Shaw and McKay's (1942) studies provided the impetus for the SDT to become popularised and widely accepted. The popularity continued until 1970's, thereafter the relevance of SDT started to wane, especially in analysing youth violence. However, barely a decade later the theory experienced a revitalisation, which started with the works of several sociologists and those outside the field of sociology. Among these were Kornhauser (1978); Stark (1987), Bursik (1998), Sampson and Groves (1989), Land *et al.* (1990), Bursik and Grasmick (1993) and Wilson (1996). These scholars' empirical studies boosted and helped to extend the scope of SDT as a theoretical construct. The scope of the theory was adjusted to include variables and constructs beyond the macro-level components specified by Park and Burgess (1924) and Shaw and McKay (1942). According to Bursik and Grasmick (1993:39), 'key causal processes have been reformulated into a more sophisticated systemic model that incorporates both intra-neighbourhood and extra-neighbourhood factors and more clearly specifies the relationships among these factors'. More specifically, Sampson and Groves (1989) added urbanisation, family disruption and concentration of youths in a neighbourhood to the theoretical formulation of SDT. In these analyses, urbanisation was used as the main criterion of social disorganisation. It is argued that urbanisation can have major effects on a neighbourhood's quality of life. The deindustrialisation of inner-city neighbourhoods would directly wash-out the number of blue-collar jobs, and increases economic deprivation, leading to the growth of illegal drug distributions and consumptions in socially disadvantaged neighbourhoods, and consequently aggravate youth violence (Doran and Lee 2005). Other social determinants of social disorganisation in a society are education, occupation, median family income and family disruption. It is argued that, a neighbourhood characterised by a high number of uneducated people, high levels of unemployed young people, high level of poor people and a high rate of divorce is a fertile-ground for crime and violence. It is suggested that social disorganisation encourages youth violence through its effects on family structures and stability (Sampson and Groves 1989).

While researchers have employed SDT empirically and theoretically to explain neighbourhood disparity in youth violence, critics have pointed out that the theory is at best substantively and methodologically deficient. According to Bursik (1988), a key

problem is with the measurement of what constitutes social disorganisation. He argued that the theory does not separate the presumed outcome of social disorganisation (such as high rates of crime and delinquency) from disorganisation itself (Kubrin and Weitzer 2003). Critics contend that criminality and other forms of social disturbance were both often cited, as examples of disorganisation, while in the real sense were something caused by social disorganisation itself. It is difficult to delineate whether social disorganisation is the dependent or independent variable. Despite the criticism, SDT has occupied an important place in sociological and criminological thought because of its popularity and utility in the understanding of crime and violence (see Paulsen and Robinson 2004; Lowenkamp, *et al.*, 2003). Therefore, the assumptions of SDT could be applied to the understanding of youth violence in Ilorin and beyond. The emergence of violence in Ilorin, like most urban centres in Nigeria, partly aligns with the fundamental canons of SDT, given the influence of social change, rapid urbanisation and population growth on the security of lives and property in the ancient city.

BROKEN WINDOW THEORY (BWT)

Wilson and Kelling (1982) proposed the broken windows theory of crime. They adopted the analogy of 'Window-Building' to outline how minor fierce act may lead to major violent act if not legitimately attended to by the security agencies. According to Wilson and Kelling (1982: 378), if the first broken window in a building is not repaired, the general population who like breaking windows would assume that nobody cares about the building and more windows would be broken. Before long, the building would have no windows. The underlining assumption of the theory to the understanding of crime and violence is that, where any fierce act of demonstration has gone unchallenged, un-checkmated, or not legitimately managed by the appropriate security agencies, it would create more violent acts (Kelling and Coles, 1996; Skogan 1990). The theory suggests that signs of physical disorder (such as illegal dumpsites, dilapidated buildings, lack of security patrol, and unplanned structure) in a neighbourhood can predispose such neighbourhood to violence. The fundamental assumption of the theory is that physical disorder in a neighbourhood can infringe the ways in which residents can wield social control. Thus, lack of social control makes the neighbourhood prone to social disorder activities such as bars (public drinking), gambling, and brothels (prostitution). Unfortunately, these activities further attract illegal commercial criminal enterprises such as drug dealing and elevate the level of violence in the neighbourhood (Sherman and Eck 2002; Skogan 1990).

Empirical studies conducted to test the hypothetical, methodological and empirical importance of the Broken Window Theory provide supportive results (e.g. Zimbardo 2004; Skogan 1990) although with some methodological concerns (Sherman

and Eck 2002). Nevertheless, researchers have questioned the theoretical relevance of the BWT, among the questions raised by critics were: what is the theoretical basis for BWT? Why are windows in the neighbourhood broken in the first place?. According to critics, while the theory posited that the primary causes of youth violence are broken windows, failure of the theory to provide convincing answers to its hypothetical issues have diminished the hypothesis to a negligible theoretical exercise, with constrained theoretical, empirical and methodological importance in clarifying the etiology of youth violence in disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

Bratton and Kelling (2006), Gault and Silver (2008), Xu, Fiedler and Flaming (2005) took exception to this interpretation and argued that the broken windows thesis never suggested a direct path between disorder and youth violence, but rather asserted that the path was indirect and asymmetric. They, accordingly, introduced a logical grouping of its hypothetical formulations. Likewise, socio-physical or physical disorder in a disadvantaged neighbourhood would build the trepidation of violent acts in the neighbourhood, which would decrease social control and leave neighbourhoods defenceless against criminal invasion.

THEORETICAL OVERVIEW

It is a common notion that social theories are formulated to explain and understand how society works. Theories contain hypothetical statements that have been tested and trusted over a period of time. As a result, the search for theories of violence has been a long-standing endeavour that has preoccupied the minds of sociologists, since the early 20th century. At first, causes of crime and violence in particular were traced to the individual actor; i.e. his biology. These scholars relied on biological determinism to explain and understand the causes of crime. Indeed, historical record indicates that many of the earliest criminologists – including Cesar Lombroso (1835–1909), believed that certain physical characteristics indicated a “criminal nature” (Englander 2007; Siegel and McCormick 2006; Ellis 2005). Lombroso’s manuscript *L’Uomo Delinquente* (The Criminal Man) is perhaps the most famous of these early efforts to draw a direct link between biology and crime (Lombroso 1876). According to Lombroso, criminals possessed certain physical characteristics (including long arms and fingers, sharp teeth, abnormal amounts of body hair, extended or protruding jaws) that distinguished them from ordinary law abiding others. In sum, he argued that criminals were atavists’ biological throwbacks to an earlier period of human evolution. He further maintained that these atavists engaged in criminal activity, including violence, because it was instinctive for them to do so. Because these characteristics are the product of biological forces, Lombroso felt that criminals lack free will and are thus not morally responsible for their actions.

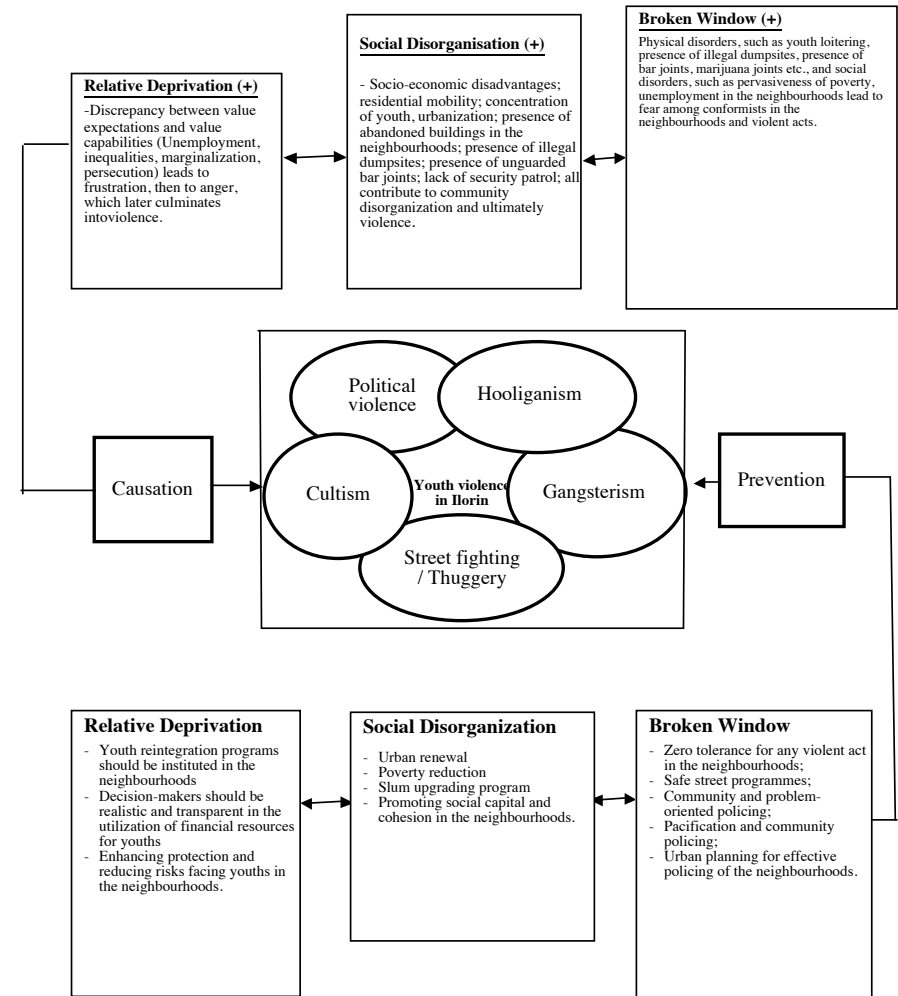
Contemporary criminologists have discounted Lombroso's work. Critics of biological determinism of crime and violence have argued that many of these early arguments were based on small, non-random samples and rarely involved adequate control groups (Seigel and McCormick 2006). They argued that many of the physical traits mentioned by Lombroso and others could have been caused by deprived social conditions, including poor nutrition and health care. Therefore, their central argument is that Lombroso and his followers failed to consider the many social factors that could lead to criminality. Consequently, bio-criminology fell out of favour during the early 20th century and began to pave way for more psychosocial factors, and more emphasis on sociological variables. The supporters of sociological factors argue that it is more productive and empirically accurate to focus on the social factors (social exclusion, economic strain, poverty, family disruption, neighbourhood structure) that produce class differences in violent behaviour than to spend efforts trying to uncover the genetic basis for criminality. What is common to virtually all violent activities and clashes is the fact that they usually take-off from SDNs where socio-economic and environmental strains are entrenched (Moser and Mcilwaine 2006). In these neighbourhoods, most young people have become the willing tools of violence.

Historically, RDT, SDT and BWT stand out among the prominent theories of crime and violence. Specifically, RDT explains frustration and aggression can exacerbate collective violence even though it tends to see the eruption of violence as a rational means to redress economic or political grievances (Gurr 1970; Sambanis 2002: 223). The theory posits that the experience of frustration, grievances and aggression often creates conducive atmosphere for the eruption of violence as experienced in most part of Nigeria, especially in Ilorin. The SDT argues that a neighbourhood characterised by social disorganisation provides fertile-ground for violence. Such a society is characterised by lack of behavioural control mechanisms and a culture of violence. It identifies residential mobility, family disruption, low socio-economic status, poverty, and unemployment as causal factors of crime and violence. The theory posits that neighbourhoods with more of these vices and social ills are more prone to violence than those with less. BWT proposes that where any violent act goes un-checked, or not properly dealt with immediately either by the community or law enforcement agents, it could generate more violent acts (Kelling and Coles 1996; Skogan 1990). The moment a society or community fails to address crime immediately, the situation can degenerate to a more chaotic condition.

Given the complexity and diversity of violence, a single variable or factor is grossly inadequate in explaining its etiology. Although each of the RDT, SDT and BWT has their merits, each may not be sufficient to understand the complexity of violence in Ilorin or anywhere in the world. A combination of the assumptions and variables as proposed becomes indispensable in the understanding of crime and violence in any given society. Incidentally, researchers, including Merton (1956) have advocated for the adoption of multi-theoretical approach in sociological and criminological

studies. A theoretical pluralism combines many theoretical formulations to explain a particular social problem. The importance of multiple-theoretical approach is situated in its exhaustiveness and extensiveness to provide the basis for the understanding of multi-factors aetiology of youth violence. It is considered a framework sufficient to provide thorough explanations of the multiple factors precipitating social problem like youth violence. It is against this circumstantial that this paper adopted a 'Causal-Preventive Model of Youth Violence' (Abdullahi and Issah, 2016) as the theoretical pluralistic approach to explaining youth violence in Ilorin.

Figure 2: Integrative Model of Youth Violence in Disadvantaged Neighbourhoods of Ilorin



Source: Authors'

The “Causal-Preventive Model of Youth Violence” in Figure 2 summarises the predisposing and enabling factors of youth violence (with plus signs) as contained in the RDT, SDT and BWT and simultaneously suggesting policy options to promote long-lasting, sustainable peace (with minus signs) not only in Ilorin but Nigeria as a whole. From the figure it is evident that, RDT explains that the perceived gaps between value expectations and capabilities may lead to feelings of anger and disenchantment among the people in neighborhoods that are socially disadvantaged, and, consequently, can result in collective violence. RDT argues that individuals will encounter relative deprivation when they need X, see that comparative others have X, and feel qualified to have X. This is even more likely where some groups of people compare their standard of living with others with whom they used to share similar characteristics that have used violence to gain access to political power. Incidentally, this may have further fuelled the resurgence of militancy in the Niger Delta regions because those who did not benefit from the Amnesty Programme of the government wanted to have share of ‘national cake’. So, as the government is trying to quench the flame of violence in the Niger Delta, more violence may have been taking place. Similarly, previously condemned thugs in Ilorin are seeing living large. Some of them are even holding political offices. When other criminals see this happening they may wish to continue their activity hoping that government would listen to them some day.

Therefore, the real performing artists of political violence in Ilorin and other places in Nigeria have the tendency to compare themselves with the vast majority of the hooligans that have been utilised by the politicians to accomplish political goals, but who were later compensated for the ‘good job’ done with colossal sums of money, lucrative contracts and even political offices. This may spur an interest in violence to attract the political class or have access to resources. Relative deprivation among the dejected and neglected youth may result in sentiments of misery, disappointment, grievance, and outrage, and may be an effective motivator of violence, as are widely reported in the Ilorin metropolis recently. RDT suggests that youth reintegration programmes should be instituted in the neighbourhoods and that decision-makers should be realistic and transparent in the utilisation of financial resources for youth to reduce risks facing them in the neighbourhoods. Social disorganisation theory, explains youth violence in terms of socio-economic disadvantages such as of residential mobility or turnover, poverty and unemployment, and the presence of uncompleted or abandoned buildings, which may serve as the potential hideouts for the potential perpetrators of youth violence in the neighborhood. Research has found that neighbourhoods physical and social characteristics contribute greatly to the incidence of youth violence. Scholars have posited that economically poor neighbourhoods differ from affluent neighbourhoods in a number of ways and those living in poverty have a much greater chance of being violent than the general population (Shaw and McKay 1972; Odumosu 1999; Siegel 2005; Moser and Mcilwaine 2006). A household survey conducted by Ijaiya and Raji (2005),

revealed that incidence of poverty is inversely related to the demand for modern health care in Ilorin. Atoyebi and Ijaiya (2005) found that the deterioration in the housing conditions of the people in Ilorin, inadequate toilet and sanitation facilities, the poor nature of water sources are most related to the incidence of poverty among the people. Thus, disadvantaged neighbourhoods like these are criminogenic as they are characterised by high concentrations of poor people with high levels of transiency, family disruption, crowded housing, school dropouts, criminal subculture, substance abuse, unemployment and underemployment (Baugher, & Lamison-White, 1996; Odumosu 1999; Siegel 2005). It can thus be argued that the greatest incentive influencing violent behaviour among youth in Ilorin include poor living conditions that youth find themselves in. In consonance with this position, researchers (Hong and Farley 2008; Eamon 2001; Smith and Jarjoura 1988) posited that what usually inspired violence among youth has to do with poverty, economic frustration, insufficient infrastructure, political disagreement, and failure of government to punish the previous perpetrators of violence. Thus, the proposed model suggests urban renewal, poverty reduction strategies, slum upgrading programmes and promotion of social capital and cohesion in the neighbourhoods as a sustainable measure to ensuring peace and tranquillity in the neighbourhoods that are socially disadvantaged. BWT, which also has an association with the SDT, suggests that physical disorders such as the proliferation of vacant and uncompleted buildings, neighbourhood unplanned structures, illegal dumpsite, bar and cannabis joints and social disorders (pervasiveness of poverty, unemployment in the neighborhoods) often lead to fear among residents and violent acts among the non-conformists in the neighborhoods. Such unique characteristics in the neighbourhood might be ‘pull factors’ for violence, because they serve as hide-outs for violent youths. Neighbourhoods where signs of disorder such as dilapidated/uncompleted buildings, youth loitering, and low socio-economic status are more attractive to potential violent youths, such that violent act is aggravated and tolerated in the area. From the model, urban planning for effective policing is suggested. Also important are youth-related programs, such as capacity-building workshops and entrepreneurial leadership skills training for the youth.

CONCLUSION

This paper has attempted to uncover the predisposing and enabling factors in the incidence and prevalence of youth violence in Ilorin relying on RDT, SDT and BWT. The paper adopts these theories not only to understand the complexity in the etiology of youth violence in Ilorin but to also suggests the way out of the quagmire. The relative importance of ‘Causative-Preventive Model of Youth Violence’ is the fact that it supports the on-going argument that a mono-factor explanation of youth violence is grossly insufficient in analysing a complex phenomenon like youth violence. The

overall relevance and message of this review is that most violent activities do occur in neighbourhoods that are socially and economically disadvantaged, where conventional institutions of social control, such as families, schools, and religious organisations are weak and unable to regulate the behaviour of residents, especially the youth. Such neighbourhood provides a fertile-ground for violence in two ways: i) a lack of behavioural control mechanisms that could prevent youths from engaging in violent activities and ii) the cultural transmission of violent values to the younger generations. It is in view of this that most youth violent activities occur mostly in socially and structurally disadvantaged neighbourhoods of Ilorin characterised by high concentrations of people living in poverty, substandard housing, poor community design, limited public services. These are mainly the traditional, core areas of Ilorin which include *Okelele, Kuntu, Pakata, Adangba, Agbarere, Alore, Adabata, Sannin-Okin, Okekere, Omoda and Ita-Merin*. Therefore, youth related programmes such as capacity building workshops and skills for entrepreneurial leadership for the youth in the areas have become highly important. It is also important that political resources be evenly distributed, and the political class should desist from recruiting youths into violence. State security agencies should embark on strict measures to police violence prone areas to prevent the havoc of youth violence from transcending to the so-called socially, economically advantaged areas (Abdullahi and Issah, 2016).

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