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Socio-cultural Conditions of Victims and their Crime Reporting Practices in Lagos, Nigeria

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Socio-cultural Conditions of Victims and their Crime Reporting Practices in Lagos, Nigeria

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Abstract:

Socio-cultural conditions of victims are critical components for effective policing of traditional neighborhoods. Nevertheless, little research attention has been paid to how these conditions drive victims' reporting decision-making. This study examines the influence of socio-cultural conditions on reporting among victims in Lagos, Nigeria, using quantitative and qualitative methods. Multistage sampling consisting of purposive and simple random techniques was used to select study locations and respondents respectively. Quantitative data were analyzed at three levels. Qualitative data were content analyzed. Logistic regression results indicated that respondents, who reported that extended family connections frustrate crime reporting, are eight times more likely to discourage crime reporting relative to other factors. Moreover, respondents who reported that cooperation, which the extended family connections provide sometimes conceal crime, is over two times more likely to discourage crime reporting relative to other factors. The study concludes that socio-cultural conditions are significant correlates of reporting. It suggests that government should make community norms drive reporting to restore hope for justice and build less violent communities in Lagos.

Keywords: Socio-Cultural Conditions, Crime Victims, Norms, Reporting Practices, Lagos.

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Introduction

"Social acting" is the action that is related to others' behavior (Weber, 1922) therefore, there is no way by which the question of victimization can be examined without a consideration of how the act affects and is viewed by others. Macionis (2000) sees culture as involving all that entirely surround a person: beliefs, rules for behavior, ideas of right and wrong and material objects; he views culture as the social heritage of a people, those learned patterns for thinking, feeling and acting that are transmitted from one generation to the next, including the quintessence of those patterns in physical objects. But Erturk (2007:8) conceives culture as the 'set of shared spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of human experience that is created and constructed within social praxis.' How an individual therefore responds in the context of victimization is significantly influenced by the socio-cultural environment in which he/she has learnt to live his/her daily life.

By nature, human beings evolve shared meaning that shapes their cultural practices. It is in the context of shared meaning that members of a cultural community come to construct what concepts such as offender, victimization, victim and crime reporting mean. Therefore, it is normal for community members to attempt to evolve a set of normative reactions through a collective interpretation of acts and reactions toward transgressions. This captures the collective moods of members of a community that cherishes practical social protection. Therefore, the value, which people place on whether or not to report a crime, the body to which it could be appropriately reported, time to do so and the way such an action affects others, the possible opinion of those others that may be so affected are all concerns wrapped up in a people's socio-cultural conditions. Ultimately, culture determines individual reactions to everything and particularly, victimization.

The Yoruba culture is made up of strict rules, norms, and mores that govern the ways an individual must behave. A cultural individual, living in a traditional community, must therefore respond in appropriate ways to the norms of his/her society or community. To achieve this, he or she must appreciate the relevance of social control mechanisms and internalize certain societal values associated with these through the process of socialization. It is for this concern that the Yoruba culture transmits critical communal values through the family, age sets, elders and secret societies (Ayo, 2002). As a result, to apply cultural wisdom that has been gleaned from socialization to establish enduring relationships among people, particularly in the context of victimization, it is important to identify and understand associated socio-cultural conditions. Etobe, Enang and Ojua (2004:14) describe socio-cultural conditions as "those belief systems, cultural practices and socio-economic factors, which make people behave in conformity to or rebel against social normative expectations". The elements of victims' socio-cultural conditions include beliefs, values, attitudes, habits, forms of behavior and life styles of persons as developed from cultural, religious, educational and social conditioning (Adeleke, Oyenuga & Ogundele, 2003). To this extent, this study holds socio-cultural conditions as a broad based concept, which comprises all human interpersonal relationships within social and cultural contexts that could be improved through a deliberate reconciliation of

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commonalities and variations in conduct to promote value-consistent attitudes, lifestyles and behavior for healthier interaction, integration, development and safer communities.

Within every cultural setting, there are moral and amoral members. While some members condemn acts that hurt collective conscience, some others put group solidarity behind the offender against the victim. Except shared meaning is sought and found, culture which is supposed to be the gum that ensures community cohesion may serve as an agent that tears the community apart. As yet, only few, if any, studies have explored the impact of socio-cultural conditions on the crime reporting practices of victims in Lagos, Nigeria. It is against this background of pervasive ignorance about the socio-cultural conditions of victims that they form the focus of this inquiry, which provides answers to the following questions: (i) What are the socio-cultural conditions that influence crime reporting practices of residents in Lagos? (ii) How do these conditions determine the patterns of victims' crime reporting interests? (iii) How can the socio-cultural conditions promote the crime reporting strength of mind of victims in Lagos?

The Problem

Research has established the impact of weak criminal justice system (Yishau, 2005) and corrupt socio-political institutions (Olonishakin, 2008) on the crime reporting practices of victims in Lagos, Nigeria. The invasion of the Nigerian cultural environment by the cultural values from the West and the Middle-East (Salami, 2006) poses a critical challenge to the development and sustenance of an indigenous cultural character for Nigerians. This is especially felt in the context of culturally driven responses to victimization, which has caused the culture of crime reporting by victims to become a life-threatening community duty. Except the extent to which culture contributes to the efficiency or deficiency of victims' crime reporting responses is investigated by research, the police may never solve crime, criminals may continue to victimize innocent residents with impunity, cause endangered and therefore abandoned investments to foster the growth of poverty and crime.

Significance of Study

Crime rate in Lagos increased from 12% to 21% between 2011 and 2012 (Cleen Foundation, 2013). Crime reporting declined from 30% in 2005 to 11% in 2006 (Alemika, Igbo & Nnorom, 2006). The scientific community knows very little about the role, which socio-cultural conditions of victims played in the preceding fluctuations to predispose residents to high rate of victimization and low rate of reporting crime in Lagos, Nigeria.

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Theoretical Context of the Current Study

Theoretical Framework

The study adopted Weberian social action theory as the theoretical framework to explain the problem which this study addresses. Experts in criminology hold the key to understanding crime reporting behavior of victims lies in the social environment as true. To the extent that structural, cultural, and social process models are more suitable to look at societal conditions to explain criminal behavior (Kelly, 1990), the choice of social action theory as the theoretical framework to explain the problem of victims' non-reporting behavior is appropriate for two reasons. First, it a*ppears better placed than others to explain reporting practices* because it captures subjective explanations involved in crime reporting commitment of victims. Second, it relates victims to offenders and the contextual situations, taking due account of the crime reporter's shared values, beliefs and norms with other members of the community. This may pave the way for an adoption of restorative justice paradigm. To the extent that Weber sees *Sociology as a comprehensive science of the subjective meanings of the understandable motives of human actors, these subjective meanings are attached to human actions in their mutual orientations within specific socio-cultural contexts. Therefore, any behavior outside of this web, Weber insists falls outside the purview of Sociology. Human behavior, like all events, and in this specific instance, crime reporting behavior, displays both connections and regularities in its course. 'What distinguish human behavior from others are the connections and patterns whose course is understandably (verständlich) explicable'* (Weber, 1922:403-404).

Sociology is 'a science which attempts the interpretive understanding (deutend verstehen) of social action in order thereby to arrive at a causal explanation of its course and effects' (Weber, 1947:88). It can provide a sound sociological account of the impact of crime reporting on the network of relations of the reporter and that of the reported. It does this without losing sight of the need to emphasise the environmental vigilance or lack of it, which keeps the community secure or unsafe. Thus, non-crime reporting constitutes 'a social action to the extent that non-reporting is a part of human behaviour when and in so far as the acting individual (non-crime reporter) attaches a subjective meaning to it (non-crime reporting) and takes account of the behaviour of others (network of relations of victim and offender) and is thereby oriented in its course' (Weber, 1947:88). Therefore, Weber considers two elements as obligatory requirements of social action. The first is the attachment of a subjective meaning. The second is the orientation of the acting person to another individual (or other individuals). Social action, in the context of crime vis-à-vis its reporting, embraces reporting an offence, its non-reporting or indifference to it, which often occurs subjectively as the crime reporter attaches a meaning to his or her action or failure to act. Individuals who choose not to report crime events, in the context of social action theory, are nonetheless displaying social actions.

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Such inactivity is brought into being as a result of a subjective interrogation of the subject matter of crime, offender, victim and overall social order. Furthermore, a non-crime reporting activity may be oriented to the past, present, or expected future behaviour of others. Hence, non-reporting may be oriented by revenge for a past criminal invasion, defence against present, or used as a mns of protection against future attack. The others, in this regard, may be individual persons, who may or may not be known to the non-crime reporter. It is also possible that others may constitute an indefinite plurality and may be entirely unknown as individuals (Weber, 1947). If victims do not make crime-prevention data available to the police, a lot of tragic events will elude the law enforcement agency. As a result, numerous criminal activities may disrupt social order in the community. On the other hand, particularly in the study site, reporting crime portends lots of danger for the wellbeing of the crime reporter. The crime reporter, his or her close associates and their socioeconomic integration in the community may also experience reprisal attacks from the reported offender(s). Hence, victims and witnesses will rather internalise the pains of crime than report its occurrence to the police.

Hypothesis:

i.   Socio-cultural conditions of victims have a significant relationship with crime reporting.

Data and Methods

The study, conducted in Lagos State in the South-West geopolitical zone of Nigeria, was based on quantitative and qualitative data. Survey questionnaires were administered to 1040 respondents selected by multi-stage sampling procedure. In-depth interview conducted with 3 traditional rulers (customary custodians of culture) and 3 religious leaders (heads of different religious denominations) selected equally from each of the three Senatorial Districts, 12 key informant interviews conducted with 3 Crime Police Officers, 3 Chairmen of Landlords' Associations and 6 Members of Victims' Family and 10 case studies conducted with victims of serious crimes provided complementary qualitative data for the study.

Through multistage sampling techniques, the study selected participants using the following procedure: Stage 1: Categorized Lagos into three - Lagos East Senatorial District, Lagos Central Senatorial District and Lagos West Senatorial District (National Population Commission, 2006). Stage 2: Mushin from West Senatorial District representing semi urban communities of Lagos, Ibeju Lekki from East Senatorial District representing rural communities of Lagos and Lagos Island from Central Senatorial District representing urban communities of Lagos were randomly selected. Stage 3: the

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study adopted the Government created 245 wards constituting the 20 statutory local

Local Government	2006 Population of Residents 18 Years and Older	No of Respondents Selected From Each

government areas in Lagos State as its sample frame (see figure 1). All the 13 wards in Mushin Local Government Area (LGA) were included while 10 wards from Lagos Island LGA and 5 wards from Ibeju Lekki LGA were randomly selected to reflect population strength. Stage 4: From the selected wards, 2 streets (or communities where applicable) were randomly selected. From each of the streets, 20 houses were randomly selected.

Overall, 42 streets and 10 communities were randomly selected. One household was randomly selected from each of the selected 20 houses, making 520 from Mushin LGA, 320 from Lagos Island LGA and 200 from Ibeju Lekki LGA. The sum of these gives 1040 houses. However, in a case where more than one household occupied a house; lottery method (yes or no) was used to select the respondent interviewed in such a situation. Copies of a questionnaire were administered to each of the 1040 household representative persons. At the end of the exercise, 948 copies of a questionnaire administered were found suitably completed for analysis. As noted earlier, the number of political wards selected from each of the local government areas reflected their population sizes so as to make for proportionality in representation as shown in table 1 and thus facilitate the generalization of findings of the study over the entire population.

Fig. 1: Map of Lagos Metropolis

Source: Bohr (2006)

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Table 1: Population of the 3 Selected Local Government Areas in Lagos Data Analysis

	Male	Female	Total	
Ibeju-Lekki	59544	57937	117481	200
Lagos/Island	108057	101380	209437	320
Mushin	328197	394812	633009	520
Total	495798	1187138	959927	1040

The method of data analysis involved both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The univariate analysis used frequency counts and simple percentages to present data. Bivariate analysis involved cross tabulation and the use of inferential statistics such as chi square test to establish the relationships between variables. Multivariate analysis established the correlation between socio-cultural conditions and crime reporting practices among victims in Lagos State. All these were processed through Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 20.0 Version). For qualitative data, raw data from in-depth interviews, key informant interviews and case studies were transcribed, sorted and labelled. Data were sorted in agreement with the objective of the study. In addition, verbatim quotations, ethnographic summaries and content analysis were used to corroborate quantitative data. In all, both quantitative and qualitative analysis complemented each other.

Empirical Context of the Current Study

Results
The results consist of demographic variables and responses to the three research questions.

Demographic Variables

Table 2 presents the selected socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents. The sample included 66.1% male and 33.9% female respondents. Male household heads are predominant in traditional Africa. A woman only becomes a household head in the absence of her husband. It is in this light that the proportion of male to female has implications for the socio-cultural conditions of crime victims in Lagos particularly about who more ably qualifies and frequently does respond to victimisation by reporting. In most Nigerian communities, male adults are more commonly and culturally recognised to report crime than females. Patriarchal sentiments appear to drive this assumption. However, in modern Nigeria, education is successfully challenging this state of affairs by compelling gender equity in residents' access to the criminal justice facilities. Along this direction, a female key informant interview participant observed:

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In most homes, male household heads will consider it an affront for their wives to report crimes for which they had not given their prior tacit approvals to the police.

**Male KII Mushin LGA/Member of Victim's Family
(November 16, 2012)**

In some important ways, age affects exposure to, avoidance and report of the experiences of crime in Lagos. In this study, a 10-year age grouping was used. The age patterns of respondents indicated that only 1.9% of the respondents were aged less than 20 years and 21–30 years (44.6%). Respondents between the age brackets of 21-30 and 31-40 years account for 72.4% of the total study population. These respondents are frequently assumed to possess more strength that makes them more able to live attractive lives and acquire items that can be easily stolen by offenders. Also at their disposal is a more vigorous power of expression and access to diverse powerful social networks that enable respondents to pursue the reporting of crimes in the study area more intensely.

The data indicate that only 8.1% of the respondents did not have the advantage of formal education at all while 61.2% had tertiary education. Illiteracy cannot therefore be isolated as a reason for the respondents' unwillingness to report crimes to the police. Data on the marital status of respondents revealed that 46.5% of respondents are single; married (44.6%), and separated, divorced or widowed (8.9%). Moreover, 68.7% of the respondents are Yoruba, Igbo (20.6%), and other ethnic groups (10.8%). In terms of the religious affiliation of the respondents, Christians constituted 56.3%, Muslims (42.7%) and traditional religion (0.9%). The religious profile of respondents is likely to tilt them to resorting to faith-based model of crime reporting which favors the reporting of crime to men and women of God. On the place of residence of respondents, 54.4% lived in the semi urban, urban (38.6%) and rural communities of Lagos (7.0%). The strength of respondents in terms of place of residence is a pointer to the dynamics of urban migration in Lagos. The income distribution of the respondents showed that majority (53%) earn N10, 000,001 ($63694.3) and above and 23.1% earned less than N2, 000,000 ($12738.9) per annum. Majority of respondents earn enough to probably give the police the impression that their 'customer victims' have enough money to meet their illegitimate crime reporting demands. The distribution of occupation showed that respondents engaged in various occupational activities such as businesses (61.7%), students (19.6%), others (7.6%).

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Variable	Frequency	Percentage	
Sex			Table 2: Socio Economic Characteristics of Respondents
Male	627	66.1	
Female	321	33.9	
Total	948	100	
Age			
Less than 20 years	18	1.9	
21 – 30	423	44.6	
31 – 40	264	27.8	
41 – 50	135	14.2	
51 and above	108	11.4	
Total	948	100	
Education			
No Formal Education	77	8.1	
Primary Education	99	10.4	
Secondary Education	192	20.3	
Tertiary Education	580	61.2	
Total	948	100	
Marital Status			
Single	441	46.5	
Married	423	44.6	
Separated/Divorced/Widowed	84	8.9	
Total	948	100	

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Ethnicity		
Ibo	195	20.6
Yoruba	651	68.7
Others	102	10.8
Total	948	100
Religion		
Christianity	534	56.3
Islam	405	42.7
Traditional/Others	9	.9
Total	948	100
Residence		
Urban	366	38.6
Semi urban	516	54.4
Rural	66	7.0
Total	948	100
Occupation		
Civil Servant	105	
Business Person	585	
Students	186	
Others	72	
Total	948	100
Annual Income In Naira		
Less than N 2,000,000:00 ($12738.9)	219	23.1
N 2,000,001($12738.9) – N 4,000,000:00 ($25477.7)	69	7.3
N 4,000,001 ($25477.7) – N 6,000,000:00 ($38216.6)	30	3.2
N 6,000,001 ($38216.6) – N 8,000,000:00 ($50955.4)	74	7.8
N 8,000,001($50955.4) – N 10,000,00:00 ($63694.3)	54	5.7
N 10,000,001 ($63694.3) and above	502	53.0
Total	948	100.0

Data in table 3 show that respondents experienced numerous criminal victimizations. They adduced many reasons that ranged from value of loss, seriousness of injury, victim/offender relation, fear of revenge, cost of crime reporting, court processes and others to their unwillingness to report their experiences of crime. This is specifically in the context of the type of crime that victimized them. For instance, 81.8% of the respondents did not report their experiences of fraud, theft (71.1%), armed robbery (65.3%), threat to life (60%), burglary (57.1%), assault (56.2%), rape (55.6%) sexual harassment (23.1%) and others (25.0%).

A male in-depth interview participant acknowledged:

> *Up till today, some residents maintain solidarity with criminals which make the crusade for improved crime reporting a little bit problematic. Rather than joining*

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community crime reporters to condemn the bad conduct of offenders, some

Crim	Most Important Reasons Why Crime Went Unreported

community people take solace in fraternizing with criminals by discrediting and describing crime reporters as intolerant of neighbors little excesses. This is rather odd because it is anti-culture. Even if one ignores all that, language is a cultural issue. The official language of the police is English. How do those of us who cannot speak English and want to report crimes get across to the police, in our cultural environment, in a comprehensive language? Is this not a major cultural challenge?

Male IDI Lagos Island LGA/Member of Victim's Family
(November 14, 2012)

Respondents' Crime Type

Table 3: Crime Type and Respondents' Report of Crimes

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e Type	Value of loss % (n)	Seriousness of injury % (n)	Victim /offender relation % (n)	Fear of Revenge % (n)	Cost of crime reporting % (n)	Court processes % (n)	Others % (n)	Total % (n)
A/Robbery	65.3 (192)	6.1 (18)	3.1 (9)	13.3 (39)	9.2 (27)	3.1 (9)	0.0 (0)	100.0
Assault	56.2 (54)	18.8 (18)	3.1 (3)	15.6 (15)	3.1 (3)	3.1 (3)	0.0 (0)	100.0
Burglary	57.1 (12)	28.6 (6)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	14.3 (3)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	100.0
Theft	71.1 (207)	7.2 (21)	4.1 (12)	6.2 (18)	3.1 (9)	6.2 (18)	2.10 (6)	100.0
Threat	60.0 (54)	10.0 (9)	6.7 (6)	13.3 (12)	3.3 (3)	3.3 (3)	3.3 (3)	100.0
Rape	55.6 (15)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	33.3 (9)	11.1 (3)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	100.0
Sex Hara	23.1 (9)	15.4 (6)	7.7 (3)	38.5 (15)	15.4 (6)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	100.0
Fraud	81.8 (54)	9.1 (6)	0.0 (0)	4.5 (3)	4.5 (3)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	100.0
Others	25.0 (6)	12.5 (3)	0.0 (0)	37.5 (9)	12.5 (3)	12.5 (3)	0.0 (0)	100.0
Total	63.6 (603)	9.2 (87)	3.5 (33)	12.7 (120)	6.3 (60)	3.8 (36)	0.9 (9)	100.0

There is synergy between quantitative findings and qualitative data on crime type and crime reporting as a key informant interview participant said:

> *Assaults occasioning bodily injuries are most commonly reported. Similarly, armed robberies are reported not primarily to recover lost items but prevent re-victimization. However, the most unreported crime type in this community is rape. This kind of crime is hardly ever reported because they directly affect the victims' human dignity and family integrity. Therefore, victims of rape avoid stigmatization by not reporting.*
> **Male KII Mushin LGA/Member of Victim's Family**
> **(November 16, 2012)**

Another key informant participant from a semi-urban community of Lagos observed that:

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> *Community residents exercise caution whenever they decide to report crimes. One thing is for a victim to crave for the apprehension of his or her assailant; the other thing is the customary desire to maintain family dignity so as to remain connected to significant others and integrated into the mainstream of their cultural society, especially in the aftermath of crime. Cases of incest are never made public just as rape cases, when the offender and victim come from the same family, the crime in that instance is treated as purely a family affair.. On the whole, crimes involving relations as offenders and victims are handled with utmost cultural caution in most communities.*

Male KII Mushin LGA/Member of Victim's Family
(November 16, 2012)

Socio-Cultural Conditions of Victims that Influence Crime Reporting

Data in table 4 show that the responses of community residents especially in highly traditional settlements were determined by the prevailing socio-cultural conditions. As to whether or not socio-cultural conditions are in existence in Lagos, 52.3% of the respondents acknowledged their existence while 47.7% said they do not. It should be recognized that the proportion of Lagos residents who are not Yoruba may account for the kind of responses recorded here. Based on the above, 47% respondents agreed that there are cultural beliefs which dictate how victims could be supported to report crime in the community. Disagreeing with the above position, 53% of respondents said that though diverse issues drive the pattern which crime reporting takes in the community, cultural beliefs were never among these factors. This divergence of beliefs is understood given the diverse cultural population of Lagos as a megacity.

In-depth interviews conducted also corroborated the quantitative findings above. According to a participant:

> *The truth of the matter is that most crime reporters belong to different religious bodies. Before they finally decide to report or avoid reporting, they seek the advice of their pastors, alfas or priests. These men of God, by their interventions, help to shape whether a victim would eventually report his or her victimization or altogether drop the idea of reporting. Each time a man of God intervenes in whether a victimization should be reported to the police or not, members of these religious bodies see the suggestion their men of God come up with as being divinely issued by God. It is therefore non-negotiable.*

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Male IDI Mushin LGA/Traditional Ruler
(November 16, 2012)

Table 4: Socio-Cultural Conditions of Respondents

Existence of Socio-Cultural Factors	Respondents' Report of The Incident of Crime					
	Yes		No		Total	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Socio-Cultural Factors Exist	52.3	(174)	47.7	(159)	100	(333)
Socio-Cultural Factors Do Not Exist	45.4	(279)	54.6	(336)	100	(615)
Total	47.8	(453)	52.2	(495)	100	(948)
Existing Socio-Cultural Factors						
Age	52.8	(38)	47.2	(34)	100	(72)
Traditional Rulers' Resolution Of Conflict	46.4	(89)	53.6	(103)	100	(192)
Masquerade	46.6	(109)	53.4	(125)	100	(234)
Ethnocentrism (*Excessive Love of One's Ethnic Origin*)	48.2	(68)	51.8	(73)	100	(141)
Nepotism	52.1	(61)	47.9	(56)	100	(117)
CDA/Landlord Association	51.0	(49)	49.0	(47)	100	(96)
Religion	40.6	(39)	59.4	(57)	100	(96)
Total	47.8	(453)	52.2	(495)	100	(948)
Cultural Beliefs that Influence Crime Reporting						
Sex	47.8	(75)	52.2	(82)	100	(157)
Age	45.2	(57)	54.8	(69)	100	(126)
Witchcraft	46.2	(117)	53.8	(136)	100	(253)
Ethnicity	58.0	(58)	42.0	(42)	100	(100)
No Beliefs	42.5	(31)	57.5	(42)	100	(73)
Traditional Voodoo	46.9	(83)	53.1	(94)	100	(177)
I Have No Ideas	56.8	(21)	43.2	(16)	100	(37)
Others	44.0	(11)	56.0	(14)	100	(25)
Total	47.8	(453)	52.2	(495)	100	(948)

Another in-depth interview participant also noted:

Ordinarily, when a crime occurs, members of the extended family become concerned and involved. If the crime was committed by an outsider, they will partner with their relation to report it. But if a member of the family perpetrated the crime, for example rape, the members of the extended family usually provide justifications for the need to conceal the crime even from neighbors how much more of externalizing it by reporting the incident to the police. This is often done to protect the collective integrity of the family.

Male IDI Ibeju Lekki LGA/Traditional Ruler
(November 16, 2012)

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Victims' socio-cultural conditions involved all the three main religious denominations and even transcend them. The case study below exemplifies the interactions involved in the dynamics of offending. It shows how aggression could be transferred by assailants to their target's family members, in the event that the prospective victim could not be easily located.

Box 1

I am 37 years old, an atheist, bachelor, BSc holder, and surveyor from Yoruba part of Nigeria. It was on May 21st last year between 5:40 and 6:00pm. I did not incur any financial loss but I was seriously injured. The event took place in the street. I was attacked by a gang, which has an issue with my younger brother. They stabbed me several times. The boys were colleagues of my younger brother. Some of the criminals were arrested along with their parents while some escaped. The apprehended gang members were detained. They were later made to pay my hospital bills. It was really a nasty experience. Having been stabbed several times, I lost lots of blood that caused me to be extremely weak. Therefore, I was not the one that reported the incident. Later, the police came to me to ask questions that will enable them apprehend the gang members. The police tried their best. The experience was a bit bearable because the police made the gang members pay dearly for their criminal conduct. My level of confidence in the police has been heightened by the way they handle the report of the case. The kind of help I got from neighbors was the one I expected. It was relieving that I got the support when I really needed it. The support was useful to the extent that it helped the feeling of retaliation to go off completely from my mind. I will still embrace the system for getting support that will involve the police. Were they not involved, those gang boys would completely have disappeared into the thin air. There would have been nobody to hold responsible for the crime. It is exciting that I got adequate emotional, financial and information support. The providers of the support were the police, my neighbors and my family members. I cannot remember any offer of support that I declined. I am not aware of any culture that forbids neighbors supporting victims of crime. However, if any such culture exists, it should be discarded because it is repugnant to gainful brotherhood. The police should try harder in the area of intelligence gathering and utilization to get to the root of all crimes. This will prevent innocent souls from suffering for the misconduct of the badly behaved members of the community. For crime to be reduced in the community, families, institutions, police and neighbors should partner to review traditions that inhibit crime reduction efforts in the community. However, the support that is available in the community for

where the criminal victimized him or her or allowing his/her property to be where it provided a criminal opportunity for the offender.

Male IDI Mushin LGA/Traditional Ruler
(November 16, 2012)

A traditional ruler, who is a participant, laments the rapidity with which evil displaces normative standards in the communities of Lagos when he said:

> *The way the situation is, in most communities of Lagos, normative values appear to have been completely reversed by the consistent support of community people for the criminal through the negative*

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> *group solidarity in modern communities. To the extent that the paradigm shift, which threw this emergent reaction up, is surviving its embryonic phase, the pressure it exerts on the victim becomes more unbearable. The rapid erosion of cultural values by invading global civilization reduces the supportive effects of the socio-cultural conditions of victims. This unfairly impacts the enthusiasm of victims and witnesses to report crimes. The conspiracy of non-victims with offenders and hostile disapproval of crime reporting discourage innocent crime reporters. They are confused with the majority's implied endorsement of criminality, which tends to present crime not as a cultural abnormality but the vogue.*

Male IDI Lagos Island LGA/Traditional Ruler
(November 16, 2012)

Data in table 4 further revealed that some socio-cultural factors influenced respondents' crime reporting behavior. Some of the factors mentioned included age (52.8%), traditional rulers' resolution of conflict (46.4%), masquerade (46.6%), ethnocentrism (48.2%), nepotism (52.1%), CDA/Landlord Association (51.0%) and religion (40.6%). It looks deceptively attractive to infer that the rising urban megacity profile of Lagos eliminates all the vestiges of culture in the rapidly globalizing city. For example, different kinds of masquerades still enjoy eminent significance in the socio-cultural agenda of the indigenes of Lagos' communities so much that the activities of *Eyo, Oduboye, Igunnuko,* and other kinds of masquerades are fresh in residents' memories. These remind the modern settlers of the Lagos of the cultural past of the original settlers. However, each of the components of culture identified by participants has its varying implications for offending, its avoidance, reactions to its occurrence by victims and their adjustments in the aftermath of victimization. To this extent, these factors constitute some of the intrinsic components of the socio-cultural conditions of victims in the community.

It is commonly assumed even without evidence that respondents' spiritual activity invariably occurs within their openly professed memberships of distinct religious denominations. The reality transcends this naive assumption because participants, who belong to either Christian or Islamic faiths, do patronize traditional priests whenever they inevitably become victims of crime. An in-depth interview participant, who also is a traditional religious leader, explained that crime reporting to him usually comes from members of other religious organizations:

> *Not only members of my faith come to report crimes to us. Adherents of other different faiths, who want immediate justice, report their crimes to us. The fact that these people do not openly consult us does not, in practice, mean they do not patronize us. Our services to these crime reporters are always investigative and sometimes punitive for their victimizers. Our clients often want 'Irunmale' (native god) to expose the offender. Each of these investigations normally lasts for about seven days. If, after the stipulated period, the criminal does not confess, he or she begins to swell until he or she finally explodes and dies. If suspects are produced by the reporters, we give them 'omi oku' (water from*

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human corpse) to invoke instant confession. Our intervention is usually helpful. Most crime reporters are not interested in the culprits' death. They are more concerned about the recovery of their stolen items. Quite generally, we partner with traditional rulers and the police in the effort to ensure social control in society.

Male IDI Ibeju Lekki LGA/Traditional Religious Leader (November 16, 2012)

It is helpful to note that a number of cultural beliefs work in association with these identified socio-cultural factors to drive the crime reporting practices of community dwellers. While 58% of the participants identified ethnicity, 47.8% identified sex, traditional voodoo (46.9%), witchcraft (46.2%), age (45.2%), no beliefs (42.5%) and others (44%). The diversity of cultural factors underscores the fact of cultural heterogeneity of the Lagos in particular and Nigeria in general. The cultural influence of patriarchy may be weaning, nonetheless, it is still felt particularly in most semi-urban and rural neighborhoods of Lagos. Thus, their variety constitutes the uniqueness of the socio-cultural character of the setting.

Another male in-depth interview participant looked at ethnicity as a compelling socio-cultural factor and said:

> *Ethnicity plays a significant role in crime reporting. Nigeria is a multiethnic country. One cannot simply wish away the impacts of ethnicity if one is to remain objective. Its overarching influence plays out in common street fighting among young residents. If a boy from Yoruba ethnic group injures a boy from Igbo ethnic group, chances of home settlement is more remote than likely. But if a boy from Igbo ethnic group injures another boy from Igbo ethnic group in a brawl, the likelihood of home settlement is more imaginable than remote. From this comparison, ethnicity informs the pattern of crime reporting that a victim might decide to follow in the aftermath of crime in the study sites.*

Male IDI Mushin LGA/Chairman, Landlord Association (November 15, 2012)

Influences of Socio-Cultural Conditions on Victims' Crime Reporting Needs

Data in table 5 show that marriage, education, ethnicity and religion are socio-cultural factors which are statistically associated with crime reporting among respondents (x^2 p value < 0.05). For example, separated male respondents (72.7%), married (56.4%), single (41.2%) reported their victimization experiences while among their single female counterparts (50%), separated (41.2%) and married (35%) reported the same. There is

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something in marriage which probably makes its current actors and actresses appear lopsidedly unwilling to report their victimization experiences. In this study, separated/single male and female respondents reported crimes more than married male and female respondents.

A male in-depth interview participant said:

> *Men and women are vulnerable to criminal victimization. Nevertheless, the culture supports men to report crimes but not women. A married woman especially cannot just decide to report a crime to the police. The tradition does not allow that kind of unregulated independence. A married woman requires her husband's consent to report a crime. If a married woman fails to obtain her husband's tacit approval, in an effort to contest the existing power relations, neighbors will label her as someone who has overcome the masculine authority of her husband through the means of powerful potion.*

Male IDI Lagos Island LGA/Traditional Ruler
(November 16, 2012)

Table 5: Influences of Socio-Cultural Conditions of Respondents on Crime Reporting

Socio Cultural Factors Taboos that Influence Crime Reporting	Respondents' Report of the Incidents of Crime					
	Yes		No		Total	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Reporting Crime Is Not The Norm	45.6	(47)	54.4	(56)	100	(103)
Women Do Not Report Crimes	38.9	(49)	61.1	(77)	100	(126)
Children Do Not Report Crimes	46.9	(150)	53.1	(170)	100	(320)
Incestuous Conduct Is A Private Affair	53.0	(178)	47.0	(158)	100	(336)
Taboos Do Not Exist	53.3	(24)	46.7	(21)	100	(45)
Others	27.8	(5)	72.2	(13)	100	(18)
Total	47.8	(453)	52.2	(495)	100	(948)
Influence of Home Training on Reporting						
Control	45.9	(67)	54.1	(79)	100	(146)
Internalize dissent	38.3	(23)	61.7	(37)	100	(60)
Courage to Report To Earn Justice	49.2	(324)	50.8	(335)	100	(659)
Fear to Report May Be Hereditary	49.0	(25)	51.0	(26)	100	(51)
No Effect	43.8	(14)	56.2	(18)	100	(32)
Total	47.8	(453)	52.2	(495)	100	(948)

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Influence of Extended Family On Reporting

Encouragement	43.0	(99)	57.0	(131)	100	(230)
Sympathy	42.9	(48)	57.1	(64)	100	(112)
Cooperation Sometimes To Conceal Crimes	46.9	(214)	53.1	(242)	100	(456)
Discouragement	62.2	(61)	37.8	(37)	100	(98)
Others	59.6	(31)	40.4	(21)	100	(52)
Total	47.8	(453)	52.2	(495)	100	(948)

Effect of Traditional Crime Control on Reporting

Referral	45.8	(77)	54.2	(91)	100	(168)
Through Partnership	47.1	(114)	52.9	(128)	100	(242)
Information	47.9	(116)	52.1	(126)	100	(242)
Provision of Back Up Resources	50.0	(104)	50.0	(104)	100	(208)
Community Place Compliant	47.7	(42)	52.3	(46)	100	(88)
Total	47.8	(453)	52.2	(495)	100	(948)

A key informant participant, who although thinks gender should not be an issue in crime-reporting, explained that for reasons of culture, an unmarried woman is freer further argued:

> *What is it that qualifies a married man and disqualifies a married woman from reporting crime? Any culture that prevents victimized married women from independent report of their experiences is unfair and should be discarded. A victim is a victim. Pain does not recognize gender. Therefore, crime reporting should be crime reporting. Making marital status an issue in crime reporting is irrelevant. However, the truth must be told. A woman, who has divorced, widowed or separated from her husband is more vulnerable to victimization and also less encumbered by culture to report her experiences to the police even take legal action and pursue her case to a conclusive end.*
> **Female KII Lagos Island LGA/Member of Victim's Family (November 16, 2012)**

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A female key informant participant lamenting the gender discrimination in terms of reporting noted:

> *Except a married Yoruba woman lives among members of other ethnic groups, her crime reporting right as a person, may be hindered by conditions imposed on her by culture. It is believed that a married woman, who reports crimes without the prior approval of her husband, is doing something culturally loathsome. It is like the fact of marriage takes away the bulk of a woman's right of self-assertion, particularly in the context of reporting, in the study site. This is wrong. It must be challenged using education as tool.*
> **Female KII Lagos Island LGA/Member of Victim's Family**
> **(November 16, 2012)**

Another in-depth interview participant, who is a male traditional ruler, also talked on gender imbalance, which affects crime reporting, when she said:

> *Yoruba culture is very clear about, who leads in a cultural household? There is no controversy about this. However, a resourceful woman could initiate a brilliant idea. If she does, she still has to channel it as an advice to her husband to whom she is a helper. A situation in which a woman wants to impose her crime reporting ideas on her husband will provoke disagreement. If even the man has no courage to assert his right, his retinue of relations will attempt to subdue the 'overbearing' wife. That is the way it goes in Yoruba land.*
> **Female IDI Lagos Island LGA/Traditional Religious Leader**
> **(November 15, 2012)**

To assess the role played by education in crime reporting, the study asked the respondents if they reported their experiences of crime. Male respondents, who had secondary education (58.8%), without education (55.6%), primary education (53.3%), tertiary education (46.3%) said they reported their victimization experience while among their female counterparts, who had tertiary education (51.4%), no education (50.2%), primary education (22.2%) and secondary education (15%) reported the same. Therefore, education as a socio-cultural factor appears to have significant effect on reporting because more respondents, who have education, reported their experiences of crime than those without education.

On the influence of ethnicity on crime reporting among the participants, more male Yoruba respondents (50.8%), Hausa (50%), Igbo (37.5%), others (16.7%) reported their experiences of crime to the police. About 50% of female Yoruba respondents, Igbo (46.2%), Hausa (33.3%), others (39.8%) reported their victimization experiences. Among male and female respondents, Yoruba ethnic group have reporting majority than all other ethnic participants in the study. Data

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in table 5 show that male Christians respondents (50.9%), traditional (50%), Islam (49.5%) reported their experiences of crime while 55% of female Muslims respondents and Christians (36.4%) reported their victimization. It is interesting to find that female Muslim respondents reported crimes more than their male counterparts while male Christian and traditional respondents reported crimes more than their female counterparts respectively.

Another in-depth interview participant, who is a female Christian religious leader, said:

> *Our faith enjoins married women to be submissive to their husbands. Therefore, it is in compliance with scriptural injunctions that married women should seek the approval of their husbands before externalizing issues that involve the family. All Christian mothers recognize this. It is when wives respect their husbands with submission that children could effortlessly learn and display the virtue of respect for constituted authorities and report crimes desirably.*
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> **Female IDI Lagos Island LGA/Christian Religious Leader**
> **(November 16, 2012)**

Just as offenders often seek spiritual security from traditional medical practitioners, community respondents too look unto traditional medical practitioners for refuge. While offenders ask for escape mechanisms, prospective victims demand target hardening interventions. This was the case of the house which the robbery gang considered too poor to be victimized. The confusion among members of the gang that led to the exclusion of the house for invasion in the following case study is the manifestation of the after-effect of traditional protection.

Box 2

I am a thirty eight year old graduate, Christian and a bachelor. I hail from Cross Rivers. Late last year, on the fateful Tuesday, about 1:30am, my sister was watching late night movie while I was sleeping in the bedroom. There was power outage. Shortly after, dogs started barking. I peeped and saw two ladies pretending to be fighting. From their statures and voices, they were not from the neighbourhood. As the barking of the dog became more disturbing, hiding hoodlums then shot and killed the Alsatian dog. Since nobody responded to their baits, as they probably expected, they resorted to door breaking. The robbers were about 40 to 45 in number with only two ladies. These criminals spread themselves and gave commands in coded instructions. Every house on the Street, except one was raided. The excluded one was already being vandalised before an argument broke out among the criminals that residents of the building were poor. At my house, it took them about 40 minutes before they could enter. I had hidden my sister in the ceiling with my dog. The number of the robbers gave me the impression that if they saw my sister, they might want to rape her serially. When they came in, they took the fifteen thousand naira I had. They then pointed a gun at my mother's belly. I reacted and one of the robbers stabbed me on my left cheek. They left the dagger on me and removed it when they wanted to leave with a warning that if I shouted, they would kill me. Somehow, the police were notified but they did not arrive until after the criminals were done. Six streets away, the police blew their siren and started shooting. So, the criminals leisurely walked away. I did not report the crime because the police knew these hoodlums and their hideouts. If I go to report the hoodlums and the police reveal my identity to them, I might be more brutally re-

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Interest in Lagos

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This section presents data on making socio-cultural conditions of victims promote crime reporting interest in Lagos. Data in table 6 show that some socio-cultural factors that influence respondents' crime reporting practices exist in the communities of Lagos but 53.3% of the respondents said such taboos that influence crime reporting do not exist. However, critical cultural issues, which respondents identified as factors that influence crime reporting, are incestuous conduct is a private affair (53%), children do not report crimes (46.9%), reporting crime is not the norm (45.6%), women do not report crimes (38.9%) and others (27.8%). In spite of the invading pressure of globalisation on indigenous cultures in the world, the impacts of stereotypes and stigma are still considerable in the study sites. For instance, incestuous practices are traditionally frowned upon but it erodes family integrity when it is externalised. This informs the consideration of incest as a private affair. This concern compels most community residents to internalise the pains of most contact crimes and refrain from reporting them.

Table 6: Making Socio-Cultural Conditions of Victims Enhance Reporting

Influence of Extended Family On Reporting	Yes		No		Total	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Encouragement	43.0	(99	57.	(131	10	(23
Sympathy	42.9	(48	57.	(64)	10	(112
Cooperation Sometimes To Conceal Crimes	46.9	(21	53.		10	(45
Discouragement	62.2	(61	37.	(37)	10	(98)
Others	59.6	(31	40.	(21)	10	(52)
Total	47.8	(45	52.	(495	10	(94
Synergy Between Formal And Informal Crime Control Structures						
Referral	45.8	(77	54.	(91)	10	(16

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Through Partnership	47.1	(11	52.	(128	10	(24
Information	47.9	(11	52.	(126	10	(24
Provision of Back Up Resources	50.0	(10	50.	(104	10	(20
Community Place Compliant	47.7	(42	52.		10	(88)
Total	47.8	(45	52.	(495	10	(94

Qualitative data also corroborated some of the quantitative data above as a key informant interview participant said:

> *Males are more involved in crime reporting on the Island than female residents. This may have cultural undertones. In some backgrounds, women are assumed precluded from reporting crimes except they have the tacit approval of their uncles, husbands or fathers. The age bracket that is most commonly involved in crime reporting on the Island is between 20 and 40 years of age. However, crime reporting does not follow any written normative pattern. For instance, alcohol consumption often triggers arguments. Consumers' fury results in conflict. A fight causes crime reporting. To its credit, crime reporting is beneficial to the individual and society in that it limits the level of anger of aggrieved members of society because it ensures that somebody somewhere is positioned to provide them the needed succor. It limits the spread of anger as well.*
> **Male KII Lagos Island LGA/ Crime Officer**
> **(October 31, 2012)**

It is a cultural offence for children to report crimes in the traditional neighborhood. It is generally assumed that children do not have enough skills and

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finesse to report crimes. Even when this position is being aggressively displaced by education, it may take some time more for children to gain community support to report crime to the police. As it is now, it is not likely if a girl who cries to a police station complaining of having been raped without traces of blood will be entertained. She is likely to become a subject of police ridicule. It is not the child alone that requires being orientated, community adults too need to be retrained and the police reformed. In some traditional neighborhoods, crime reporting is considered abominable. This is common among some Yoruba people; especially the uneducated ones, who consider litigious families, deserve to be avoided. Rather than seeing such families as seeking modern solution to their victimization challenges, the society sees them essentially as outsiders, who do not possess appreciable knowledge and understanding of how to use informal mechanisms of social control to prevent the infraction of their human rights without injuring the dynamics of social integration. For the subjugating pressures of patriarchy, women were not to report crimes except their fathers, husbands or uncles act as cultural pillars of support. There is no equity in this position. It is being attacked from all directions. And the orientation appears to be rapidly changing.

Findings further revealed that respondents identified cultural home training as part of a child's upbringing that determines how the child relates with crime reporting as future adults. About 49.2% of the respondents believed that children derive the courage to report crime to earn justice from home training, the fear to report may be learnt in the course of socialization from parents (49%), home training provides the control needed to report crimes as adults (46%), home training has no effect (43.8%) and home training may make children internalize the pains of victimization as future adults (38.3%). Home training remains the bedrock of socialization. To the extent that one cannot give what one does not possess, government should empower and strengthen the family system to function properly as children's first learning institution. In doing this, the primary actors and actresses in the home fronts should be well grounded in the values of crime reporting practices. In this context, government could embark on extended informal education that ensures result-oriented crime reporting practices for adults in the various communities. Teachers in this regards should be credible individuals in the communities who could make learning easily infectious by their personalities.

Considering cultural home training as a socio-cultural condition, a key informant participant observed:

Yoruba residents are more likely to restrain from crime reporting because of the disruptive effects such an act has on cultural relations in society. On the other hand, Igbo residents are individualistic. They are more likely to teach their children to report crime as a way of promoting independence, individuality and social justice.

Male KII Ibeju Lekki LGA/Divisional Crime Officer
(November 15, 2012)

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The extended family network provides a diverse guidance on who reports crimes and which crimes could be reported. Though the extended family system often functions as a reporting tool of two edges, policy makers could examine its critical positive essence and explore it to galvanize the communities into safer domains for residents. On how the extended family network impacts crime reporting practices of community dwellers, 62.2% of the respondents maintained that extended family network exerts discouragement, provides cooperation to conceal crime (46.9), provides the extended family members the encouragement to report crimes (43%), provides sympathy when the need arises (42.9%) and other unspecified influences (59.6%).

Box 3 contains a case study, which shows that in operation, criminals do not only betray the society; gang members too are disloyal to themselves. In the first place, most offenders are pushed into criminality because of their inadequate internal control mechanisms to tame their acquisitive tendencies. Even when members of a gang are united by their inability to maintain an appreciable level of contentment, 'on the field', members short-change themselves because they seem to also probably subscribe to the Yoruba theory *omo eja leja ma je sanra* meaning that the big fish will feed on the smaller ones for sustenance.

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Box 3

I am 47 years old, married, a Yoruba man, Christian and a graduate. I am a businessman. On my arrival from Abuja after a contract, some guys came visiting at 10:00 am. They met my housemaid downstairs doing some washing. The hoodlums asked if she lived in one of the apartments in the building. The girl told them she did cloth washing on contract basis. They left her. They then went to a door that was ajar in one of the boys' quarters. They met a nursing mother. Her baby was barely two weeks old. They collected her phone and ordered her to keep her mouth shut. They asked of other tenants that were at home, the woman said the lady washing outside resided upstairs. On their way out, the one who took her phone went back to return it because of her baby. However, if they showed such consideration and she announced their presence to anyone, he would come back to kill her baby. When they got to where my housemaid was, they simply directed her to take them to her master's flat. She obliged but used the wrong keys for the door. In that process, the hoodlums were becoming impatient with my housemaid. Disturbed by the argument that ensued, one of the tenants downstairs intervened. On discovering that they were hoodlums and well-armed, he too simply cooperated. First, they followed him to his flat and raided him before they now used him to cause me to open my gate.

On opening, I saw three of them already in my bedroom and four with my neighbor's wife downstairs, putting finishing touches to their mopping of her husband's apartment. Prior to this time, my neighbor and his family were driven from Ibadan to Lagos by incessant victimization by criminals. They hoped that Lagos was a better place of safety. My wardrobe was open because I was preparing to go out and in the process of making a choice about which cloth to wear. All the seven hoodlums were holding locally made short guns. They collected my twenty two thousand, my gold necklace presented to me by my wife and my wife's jewelry. I quickly thought the boys might be neighborhood guys. If per chance I knew any of them, the knowledge might qualify me for more hostility. With that reasoning, I decided to lie down facing the floor. Only God knows what came upon one of them who suddenly approached me and hit my face against the floor. Immediately, I lost a tooth! Then, blood started flowing. The hoodlum yelled, 'hey! I don't like the sight of that ugly fluid. Clean it before it gets me angrier.' After cleaning the blood, he told me to look at his gun. He shouted that they did not come to my apartment to play.

He then asked if I could feel the gun. By this time, blood from my mouth had soaked my dress. Again, he reminded me to clean the blood because he said it was irritating him. He screamed 'wipe it now or I waste you!' After re-cleaning it, he ordered me to bring any other precious thing out of my wardrobe. I brought out my digital camera. He collected it, he reeled coded instruction to his other colleagues. They went down the stairs, with me by their side, on instruction. Outside, we met one of them to whom all of them gave account of their exploits. On seeing how badly they had injured me, he asked how much did you collect from him? The man that dealt with me said he did not get money on me that was why he dealt with me. The man ordered that if I had nothing to offer, he should go upstairs and waste my mother. At that point I told their commander that his man actually took twenty two thousand from me. They simply warned us to cooperate as they escaped on two waiting motorcycles. I did not report because it may not result in any helpful outcome. Nevertheless, my mother told the Landlords & Community Development Association (LCDA) chairman. There was no help, in concrete terms, came from anybody outside my nuclear family. However, the chairman of the LCDA came visiting for a couple of times. Without financial means, crime reporting can be self-defeating. The police could be effective if they wanted because they know the criminals, their hideouts and their godfathers.

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Another participant also noted:

> *Ordinarily, when a crime occurs, members of the extended family become concerned and involved. If the crime was committed by an outsider, they will partner with their relations to report the crime. But if a member of the family perpetrated the crime, for example rape, the members of the extended family usually provide justifications for the need to conceal the crime even from neighbours how much more of extending it to the police.*
> **Male IDI Ibeju Lekki LGA/Traditional Ruler**
> **(November 16, 2012)**

The way traditional interactions are structured makes family members' dependence on extended family relationship inevitable particularly in the context of counselling, financial and moral support in the aftermath of victimization. The family network is remarkably being used by family members to actualize primordial agenda, which they often associate with care after members' victimization. Policy re-examination could take the structure to a more useful layer beyond this function. It could be used as a vehicle for mass inclusion of community members in crime reporting crusade. Thus, if it is recognized that the intervention of extended family members could either encourage or discourage crime reporting, public policy could mitigate the wrong uses into which it is put and play up its community support essence in crime reporting. Here, the labyrinth of complex social network involving members of the extended family system at different layers of social interaction should be studied and understood for public knowledge. It is then that it could not be found useable by disgruntled family members, politicians and unethical police officer to threaten the zero tolerance aspiration of community members and government. Rather, it would become a veritable natural agency to impede corruption of any kind and heighten the reporting of such anomaly without endangering individual as well as community safety.

Another in-depth interview participant also noted:

> *Public policy should carefully examine the fine points in the socio-cultural resources of the community residents and use them as the framework for crime reporting standard. If community people see their values, beliefs, norms and standards as essential components of crime reporting process, they will develop justifiable faith in it.*
> **Male IDI Ibeju Lekki LGA/Traditional Ruler**
> **(November 16, 2012)**

On how the relationship between formal and informal structures of crime control can promote efficiency in community policing, 50% of the respondents said traditional crime

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control mechanisms provide backup resources, information (47.9%), traditional structures of crime control are community place compliant (47.7%), maintain partnership with the formal justice system (47.1%), and traditional structures of crime control enjoy referral relationship with the formal justice system (45.8%). Granted that the informal structures of crime control mechanisms are place compliant, it is vulnerable to being abused, especially when members, who sit in judgment, are individuals implicated in criminal events. To the extent that there are no written rules and penalties for infractions of such ethical standards in existence, the latitude of unchecked authority could threaten traditional prosecutors' level of error freedom.

The strength of informal structures lies in their preparedness to partner with the formal justice system to rid the communities of criminality. The traditional structures are in possession of remarkable local intelligence about the hot spots of crime in their neighborhood. There is hope for the future of crime management and reliable crime statistics in Nigeria if the police use the referral resources emanating from traditional structures effectively. This has the ready potential to help the police improve their dented image in the estimation of community residents and ultimately make the communities safer to work and live in.

Table 7: Distribution of Logistic Regression Odds Ratios on the Socio-Cultural Conditions [Extended Family Connections] and Crime Reporting Practices among Respondents in Lagos State

Variables	P values	Odds Ratios
Other factors *(r)		1.000
Encouragement		3.363
Sympathy		1
Cooperation sometimes to conceal crime		1
Discouragement		1

*(r) reference category

Table 7 shows the logistic regression odds ratios on the association between socio-cultural conditions of victims and how it could heighten the crime reporting practices of respondents in the study population. Extended family connections play central role in whether or not a victim will report his/her experiences of crime to the police. Extended family connections as a vehicle of sympathy for victims, encouragement, discouragement and cooperation to sometimes conceal crime are significantly related to crime reporting. Therefore, respondents, who reported that extended family connections encourage their crime reporting practices, are three times more likely to encourage crime reporting to the police relative to other factors. Furthermore, respondents, who reported that extended family connections serve as a bastion of sympathy for crime victims are eleven times more likely to provide succor to victims for the purposes of reporting or not reporting the crimes that afflict them relative to other factors. Besides, respondents, who reported that extended family connections discouraged them from reporting their experiences of

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crime, are eight times more likely to be discouraged from reporting relative to other factors. Finally, respondents, who reported that cooperation by extended family connections sometimes help to conceal crime are twice more likely to cover up crimes that affect the image of the victim and the integrity of the family relative to other factors.

Discussion

Majority of respondents acknowledged that socio-cultural conditions exist in the communities of Lagos that influence their crime reporting practices. Age, in a traditional environment has cultural significance. In most communities of Africa, age is a socio-cultural indicator. Survey data revealed that victimization across the ages in the study, on the average, is very high. For different ages, crime reporting practices did not follow the same pattern. Though, crimes were found to be predominantly reported by respondents between ages 21–40 years, data also reveal that respondents whose ages fall within the category of 21 and 30 years displayed relatively low pattern of crime reporting. Young people have reasons that influence their crime-reporting practices. This finding supports earlier ones that peer pressure and the amount of guilt that young people hold for engaging in frequent fights, among others, are also identified as explanations of low reporting rates for young people (Tanton & Jones, 2003; Skogan, 1994).

The victims' ages were found to be positively related to the probability of reporting in all analyses. In this study too, half of the respondents whose ages were less than 20 years reported their victimization. This is in sharp contrast to findings of earlier studies on reporting practices of crime victims which hold that juvenile victims are found to report to the police less often (Finkelhor & Ormrod, 2001; Garofalo, Siegel, & Laub, 1987). However, their crime-reporting behaviour to the police is much lower than that of older population (Carcach, 1997; Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2003, 2005a, 2007c; Byrne, Conway, & Ostermeyer, 2005; Finkelhor et al., 2001; Hindelang, 1976; Tanton & Jones, 2003). Findings in this study are, therefore, consistent with those in criminological literature that older victims of violence are more likely to contact the police than are younger victims (Hart & Rennison, 2003; Baumer, 2002; Rennison, 1999; Skogan, 1984).

Data also reveal that victimization among respondents from rural, semi urban and urban communities of Lagos was very high. As revealed in the present study, violence against suburbanites was reported to the police at rates higher than violence against urbanites. This finding therefore contradicts those of Hart and Rennison (2003) that violence against suburbanites is reported to police at rates lower than violence against urbanites. The findings of prior studies, which have shown that people, who live in economically disadvantaged neighborhoods are less willing to cooperate with the police is not supported by findings of this study. This is because there was no observed lack of cooperation, in this context, that got manifested in the form of unwillingness to report

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witnessed crimes or victimization events to the police (Smith, 1986; Goudriaan, Wittebrood, & Nieuwbeerta, 2006; Baumer, 2002; Tankebe, 2009).

For this study, respondents identified sex as a socio-cultural index. Data confirmed that male outnumber female respondents. Therefore, just as more male acknowledged the fact of having been victims of crime than female respondents, more male respondents reported their victimization experiences in the study area than female. The finding that when it comes to making the decision whether or not to report victimization events to the police, females are more likely to report crime to the police compared to males is consistent with an earlier one that women are more likely than men to report victimizations (Birbeck, Gabaldon, & LaFree, 1993; Conaway & Lohr, 1994; Felson, Messner, & Hoskin, 1999; Hart & Rennison, 2003; Skogan, 1976).

Marital status was one of the indices of socio-cultural conditions provided by respondents in the present study. Data showed that single and married respondents were significantly more than participants who are separated, divorced or widowed in this study site. For the fact that more separated male respondents and more single female respondents reported more crimes than married participants implies that there is something restrictive of reporting in marriage. Data also established that education among male and female respondents did not make any remarkable difference in reporting among respondents, who have and those who do not have it. Thus, more respondents without education reported more crimes. More male and female respondents from Yoruba ethnic group reported more crimes than participants from other ethnic backgrounds. Similarly, more rural male and female respondents reported more crimes than their counterparts from semi-urban and urban communities of Lagos. Whereas more Christian male respondents reported crimes more than members of other religions, but female Muslims reported more crimes than members of other religions.

Though findings confirmed that single, married, separated, divorced or widowed respondents were victimized at roughly the same rate, participants that were separated, divorced or widowed reported more crimes than their married and single respondent counterparts. Therefore, findings of the present study do not support Baumer (2002); Hart & Rennison (2003) that greater police reporting is associated with violence against those who are married. Moreover, Avakame et al. (1999), Gottfredson and Hindelang (1979), and Baumer (2002) all found that reporting rates to police were lower when the victim was unmarried than if he or she was married. While single respondents, especially female ones, may report crime by indirect means, such as going through their fathers, uncles or male siblings, the elderly respondents are probably prevented by their declining strength and economy.

Data therefore show that Yoruba respondents are more, followed by Igbo, then members of other ethnic groups and Hausa respondents are the least. Data confirm that victimization across the different respondents by ethnic origin was very high but the reporting of these victimization experiences was low. However, Yoruba respondents reported more crimes than Igbo and Hausa respondents. Respondents identified ethnicity as an index of socio-cultural conditions in the study. Therefore, this finding is

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consistent with most the findings of earlier researchers, who have included ethnicity among the main crime-reporting predictors in their studies of crime-reporting behavior. Muslim respondents reported more crimes than Christians, Traditional believers and members of other faiths. This finding confirms Soares' (2004) finding that crime reporting practices can vary due to individual and macro-structural/cultural characteristics.

A constellation of variables reflecting socio-economic status have been found to be important in that respondents from families with higher household income, owner occupiers, those living in least disadvantaged neighborhoods and the employed are more likely to report crimes, as are those who have attained higher educational qualifications (Baumer, 2002; Carcach, 1997). From the foregoing, it is clear that findings of this study complement those of Rennison, Gover, Bosick and Dodge (2011) that the decision to report a violent victimization to the police involves a variety of complex structural and cultural factors. Data show that respondents, who earned over N10, 000,000 ($63694.3) annual income reported most victimization experiences in the study site. This is consistent with earlier finding that older or more affluent victims are more likely to report crime to the police than younger victims or victims, who earn less (Birbeck et al., 1993; Greenberg & Ruback, 1992; Greenberg, Ruback, & Westcott, 1982; Hart & Rennison, 2003).

Social action theory as adopted in the present study to explain the gap in knowledge underscores the need for individuals to consider how their actions promise to structure or restructure the wellbeing and livelihoods of other members of the community. It is in consonance with this expectation that crime reporting is considered a process by which modern societies respond to the challenges of victimization via an objective engagement, using cultural non-violent corrective approaches. In the development of a stable policy of crime reporting, the police, schools and family should be on the same page in the context of orientation of children for saner and safer community life. Therefore, crime reporting follows a cultural pattern, which allows victims and witnesses channel their crime complaints to the appropriate institutional structures. They should do this without threatening to damage existing norms of conflict resolution and sustainable cultural relations in the communities of Lagos.

Limitation of the Study

This study is has its own limitations. The following realities underscore the weaknesses of this study. They are discussed at both the general and specific levels. The intermixture of urban, semi-urban and rural settings for the study created some problems which brought some limitations to the study. Lagos was divided into urban, semi-urban and rural areas to facilitate comparative analyses. On the field, it was discovered that traceable streets exist only in the urban and semi urban areas. Mostly in Ibeju Lekki, communities were in dominant use, not streets. It took some time, working with

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educated Ibeju Lekki indigenes to substitute communities for streets effectively before data gathering began. While on the field, research assistants found that most Yoruba respondents, especially in semi urban and rural areas of Lagos did not willingly want to accept that they had been victims of crime. In Yoruba, the meaning of crime is *Oran*. Thus, a criminal is *Odaran*. The moment the question is put *'Nje awon odaran ti seyin ni jamba kan tele ri?'* (Meaning have you ever been victimized by criminals?).

In the quest of respondents to prove their protection against any form of misfortune, they usually responded by answering, in both semi urban and rural areas of Lagos, that *'Olorun koni jeki nse konge awon odaran ati oran won'* (I reject criminals and their evil deeds in the name of God.) But further probes into which kind of crime they had experienced caused them to divulge diverse crimes such as robbery, assault, stealing, rape, etc. This widespread reluctance to provide the true picture of the respondents' victimization experiences constituted a challenge to the study. Also, the biting economic challenges in the Nigeria are a potent limitation to this study. At some points, some respondents even demanded for gratification on the ground that the time the interviews took from their business hours meant a loss to them, in terms of profit earning calculation. In spite of these limitations, the present study explored the socio-cultural terrain of respondents in Lagos communities to glean useful data for policy intervention in victimization in the study site.

Conclusion

This paper examined the socio-cultural conditions of victims and their crime reporting practices in Lagos, Nigeria. It has shown critical links that exist between socio-cultural conditions and crime reporting practices among victims in communities of Lagos by indicating and identifying individual household condition, communal values, attitudes and practices that influence individual and collective safety. It found that numerous factors determine crime reporting. Prominent among these are the socio-cultural conditions of the victims. When the offender, for example, is related to the victim in the study sites, the need for the family to maintain its integrity causes it to cover crime up. This is usually interpreted by the family and numerous labyrinths of extended family connection. There is no doubt that the amount of crime that is unreported has implications for the victims, offenders, overall public safety and the workings of the criminal justice system.

In line with the analytical focus of Weberian social theory, the paper demonstrated how crime reporters consider their community values, norms and standards to orient the offender and numerous significant others in their courses. This paper seriously attempted to explore a research area that has been under-studied in Nigeria. Every African setting in which tradition directs a greater proportion of its citizens' daily affairs, whether a victim will or will not report will depend on the normative expectation of the mainstream culture. It is in realization of this that this study pieced together socio-cultural evidences from all available sources to present a seamless account of how the social and cultural conditions of the people enable or disable crime reporting. Therefore, the findings of this paper have not only made the diversity in socio cultural conditions of

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residents in different communities of Lagos more obvious, it has also shown which socio-cultural conditions can tilt the crime reporting practices of victims more to crime control than crime enabling outcomes.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the paper and the compelling necessity for government to intervene in controlling the effects of structural changes stimulated by globalization and its transformation implications for community cultural values, the paper suggests that:

i. Government should restructure the agencies of indigenous justice system such as vigilantes, youth groups and cultural cults to align with contemporary needs and reform criminal justice. This will allow for gainful partnership in ways that such an arrangement does not compromise ethical policing and cultural imperatives of communities.

ii. As custodians of the people's culture, traditional leaders should upgrade their knowledge of justice and crime control to meet contemporary realities.

iii. Government should strengthen core values of the family system to make socio-cultural conditions efficiently drive the norm of crime reporting practices in the community.

iv. Government should integrate the values of crime reporting into all levels of the nation's educational system and engage adult extension classes to ensure safer neighbourhoods.

v. Public policy should evolve an inclusive guideline for the management of crime data. This way, the custodians of indigenous justice system will establish credible frequency, distribution and route maps of victimization along ethnic zones for the police to reorder their target-specific law enforcement priorities.

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