

**ARMED ROBBERY IN THE SOUTHEASTERN STATES OF CONTEMPORARY  
NIGERIA: A CRIMINOLOGICAL ANALYSIS**

by

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## **DEDICATION**

To my senior sister Mrs. Veronica Mgbo Ajah who gave my brothers and I the most deserving care and love

To

My younger brother Richard U. Otu, in sympathy for his years of travail and ordeals

And

To

My father and mum Chief Otu Agbam and Mrs. Cecilia Uche Otu (Both of blessed memories) for their love for education

Student number: 3156-703-7

### **DECLARATION**

I declare that **ARMED ROBBERY IN THE SOUTHEASTERN STATES OF CONTEMPORARY NIGERIA: A CRIMINOLOGICAL ANALYSIS** is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

.....

**(MR S E. OTU)**

.....

**DATE**

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## ABSTRACT

The calls for the study of criminal actions in different societies as a consequent of the rapid socio-culture, political, and economic changes blowing over these societies is not new in criminology texts (Clifford 1965; Bennett 1980; Brown, Esbensen and Geis 1991).

This study building directly on key insights about armed robbery in contemporary Nigeria: patterns, rates, *modus operandi*, and social organisation (characteristics), begins by noting the importance of these calls, and the need for conceptual revival in this regard. Conscientious approach directed at developing a brand of theoretical framework that approximates the criminal behaviour in question and context is one sure way of achieving this revival.

This research draws 86 samples of armed robbers in three selected prisons and states of contemporary Nigeria to provide first and foremost, a fuller criminological and sociological descriptive analysis of the offence and the offenders.

Analyses of data provide findings from which wide scales of meanings are possible. For instances, results suggest that offenders are more likely to be those at the economic margin of the society; those with a taste of western education—largely educated or quasi-educated as a way of life; those expressing their despise to a system they perceived to be corrupt and highly elitist. They are likely to be armed with weapons; be in groups; and have females as members of the gang/group. They are also and fundamentally, likely to tap other peculiarities of Nigerian society such as the belief in “African insurance” (charms), and pervasive corruption.



Results of test show that there tends to be good degrees of causal relationships between the sources of learning about modern armed robbery and the frequency of committing the offence, planning, and the *modus operandi*.

Within the broad context of sociological theory, and more specifically, the Tarde's imitation, Sutherland's differential association, and Iwarmie-Jaja's previous experience strands, the results of the empirical investigation are synthesised and explained. The research draws upon these conceptual threads to suggest a better and fuller model of armed robbery in contemporary armed robbery. This alternative model of explanation is described and referred to as "emulation".

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## **PART 1: GENERAL ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY**

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY**

#### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

In terms of numbers, “the crime problem” in contemporary Nigeria is to an extent primarily a problem of armed robbery. Going by the media reports on the general crime situation and the public concerns, armed robbery seems to constitute the greatest numbers of all violations of criminal laws that are either reported to the police or even go unreported, perhaps only trailing behind white collar crimes.

Robbery, particularly armed robbery<sup>1</sup>, is a common phenomenon, and rightly, daily occurrences in Nigeria. Besides remaining one of the frequent and the most dreadful crimes in contemporary (the period between contact with the western world and especially beginning from 1970s to present) Nigeria, it has continued to cause distress among many Nigerians (see also Iwarimie-Jaja 1987, 1998, and 1999a, 1999b). Shopeju (1999: 16) supports the view of the pervasiveness of armed robbery in contemporary Nigeria when he asserts that armed robbery is a common phenomenon and inundated with national outcry for the public to assist the police in the fight against this menace.

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<sup>1</sup> Not all robberies are armed. But it seems that all seizure or dispossession of one's property against the person's will while armed fit in well into armed robbery definition within the common law. Although most robberies are armed connected. However, it remains that relatively robberies are committed without being armed, or the victim being under real or intended threat, hence the term “strong-arm-robbery”.

Nowadays, modern day armed robbery amongst many other crimes that bear semblance of foreign character is so a pervasive problem that it barely leaves few Nigerians untouched and unharmed. Certainly, armed robbery seems a most social cankerworm confronting contemporary Nigeria and in instances, has been used as excuse to topple democratically elected or on-the-ruling government<sup>2</sup>.

The current scourge of armed robbery is the consequence of Nigeria's past socio-economic and political experiences with its colonial master. This has continued in a very significant way to be a threat to its development within the context of this socio-economic and political setting. To a scholar therefore, engaging in the study of armed robbery in contemporary Nigeria, it is no doubt problematic. This is because it is an every day occurrence, and presents the scholar with the problem of drawing or choosing from the wealth of information what to include and leave behind. So much so is the pervasiveness and the *modus operandi* of both the offence and offenders that today's information is simply made stale, or even less significant tomorrow especially in the absence of a proper time framework.

Armed robbery in contemporary Nigeria takes various forms and in places, ranging from waylaying victims on the highways and on transit points; storming residences, commercial buildings, public and private establishments, religious places; by system of manoeuvring geared towards outwitting victims skilfully; and holding up banks. It looks somewhat unique in nature and outlook. The lost—monetarily, materials, and above all, human resources arising from it are better imagined than revealed.

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<sup>2</sup> It has become customary of military adventurers to cite insecurity among others as the main reason why they had to take over the reign of the country. Though security could,

Although contemporary Nigeria is by no means the only nation faced with the enormous problem of armed robbery. And is probably not the top leading nation in armed robbery either (further research in these areas still need to be carried out). However, the offence currently and apparently seems to be the rule than an exception in the country. Sad enough, less conscious efforts have been made to study for the purpose of understanding, the present form of the crime within the context of contemporary Nigeria, which has metamorphosed through series of polymorphous social, political, economic and religious changes into its current form. That is, in contemporary Nigeria, it seems apparent to suggest that armed robbery—its growth and advancement over time, is yet to be given much appreciable academic attention it deserves. Both the offence and offenders in contemporary Nigeria are merely treated as an isolated, indiscrete act; amenable only to the variables in the western world, and as a social issue, which do not require much academic resources and time. Like in most contemporary issues in all less developing societies, the tendency whenever research into the offence and offenders is made, is to explain the both from the perspective of the western conventional theories and perspectives/paradigms.

In this chapter, certain issues within the framework set above are identified and discussed. They are the rationale of the study; the problematising of the study with the highlight of the research question; the immediate and remote aims of the study; approach to the study with a review of the exact type of the study; the hypotheses, or rather, the hypothesis-generating or exploratory issues; definition and operationalisation of key words, and finally, the structure of the study in general.

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and do take the pattern of political thuggery, but they are also often associated with high

## **1.2 RATIONALE OF THE STUDY**

The origin of this thesis is premised on what is perceived to be a “clarion call” on a cross-cultural (comparative) criminological approach to the study of crimes amongst different societies as these societies evolved and transit (see Clifford 1965; Bennett 1980; Brown, Esbensen and Geis 1991). Like these and other scholars, the researcher came into the realisation that the pattern of armed robbery was changing, and dramatically so with the passage of years. He has thus, come into the self conviction that to comprehend this changing trend and current nature of both the offence and offenders requires transcending beyond the orthodox viewpoints, which to all intents and purposes are western bias and apparently conceal another strong perspective. While searching literature to explore this other alternative perspective, the researcher had stumbled into this “clarion call” and thereby takes it to be the lever within which this research is being carried out.

While generally sensing rather than realising consciously that broad criminal behaviours are undoubtedly unique among different societies particularly in the various stages of development/modernisation, some early researchers on crime matters have called for a study of general crimes in developing countries such as Nigeria and Kenya where the wind of changes were sweeping across the social, political and economic structure of such countries (see for instance, Clifford 1965). Observing with interest the rapid changes: social, political, economic and perhaps cultural blowing over Africa beginning from late 60s, Clifford (1965) pointed out the significance of research on crime in Africa in line with these changes.

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crime rates notably armed robbery.

He had remarked (1965:14):

*In the years ahead even the imperfect attempts to study crime, which we can make now may not be possible in anything like the same context. For the time being, we can find people in Africa comparatively unaffected by industrialisation and economic development and we still have the opportunity to compare their standard and their methods of dealing with crime with those of large city groups who are moving over more rapidly to urban pattern common to all developed countries. Everything indicates this is a situation, which will not last very long. As the years pass, more and more people in Africa are affected by the spread of education and by industrial change and urbanization. As the economies develop will a uniform pattern of living extend throughout these countries. Differences between the various communities will be reduced and information, which might be gathered, now may just not be available in the future. This, then, is the argument for not letting present opportunities slip by without doing the little we can. We may not have the background we require but even crude and speculative work at this stage may be worth a dozen carefully contrived and methodologically sound investigations later when the chance to compare societies has gone by.*

This viewpoint was further given weight by Clinard and Abbot (1973) when they undertook to research crimes specifically in developing countries with a focus on Africa.

What may have escaped the well articulated preconceived viewpoint of Clifford (1965) and those of Clinard and Abbott (1973:5) it is being argued here, is that cross-cultural (comparative) study is a “continuum” whether a society is urbanised, industrialised or socio-culturally transformed. If nothing else, there is the need to study the specific historicity of the emerged or emerging deviant/criminal or conformist behaviours among the different societies, which came about as cultures increasingly stream across frontiers. There is even the greater need to study these behaviours to

discover their unique patterns in each society within the emerged swath of culture complex.

Martin Blumer (1983:3) in the preface of “Social Research in Developing Countries: Survey and Census in the Third World”, a book he co-edited with Donald Warwick, notes that research in the Third World throws up more sharply many critical issues present in research in the developed world. Referring to another study by political scientists, Blumer quoting Rudolph and Rudolph (1958) notes that it was concluded that western survey techniques could not be applied in *pari passu* in the India context because as they argues “our experience indicates that *some* of the questions which the opinion survey can answer in the west can be better answered at least, for the present by the anthropologist using methods of clinical observation” (see Blumer 1983:3). Although this is on methodological approach, yet the same applies to theoretical explanation.

Whatever might have possibly escaped the preconception of these authors notwithstanding, Clinard and Abbott (1973) much concerned with studying crimes in the developing countries raised an important issue. This issue is concerned with finding what happen when certain sociological criminology theories of crimes from the more developed countries such as United Kingdom (U.K), Australia, Sweden, Unites States (U.S) and others are imported and applied to developing countries such as Nigeria, Kenya, South Africa and Ghana. Exploring on this issue, the authors took Sutherland’s theory of differential association and Cloward and Ohlin differential opportunity theory as their point of departures. By focusing on these two theoretical strands, Clinard and Abbott (1973) are cautious not to fall into the trap of making swooping statement of the universality of these theoretical expositions or committing the fallacy of *syllogism*. They,

by so doing avoided the obvious ethnocentric tendency that findings based on their study in one national culture are simply applicable to others, wholeheartedly. Clinard and Abbott thus reject the explicit, but untested assumption that theories and research findings would generally fit in well and *in toto* in all other societies, ready-made.

Clinard and Abbott (1973:2-5) in their study drew the attentions of the other scholars to the fact that some scholars have suggested that many of the American findings in criminal behaviour are limited to American society because of the present of extensiveness of culture conflict in that society, the frequency of horizontal and vertical mobility in the United States, and the fact that extensive migration has distorted the social stability of the country.

What is important to point out is that this assertion is by no means limited to America and American researchers and readers. It is also true of other social problems studies, which are concentrated in the other parts of the industrialised world and societies and is also addressed to scholars and readers from other societies. What was being called for, as these authors note is the importance and the need to study particular criminal behaviour within the specificity of the social systems under which such criminal behaviour emerged. A few notable studies, which seem to have taken cognisance of this call, and taken particular exception in the cross-cultural criminological approach including the system of criminal justice, thus exist, however (see Clifford 1965; Clinard 1965; Mannheim 1965; Wolfgang and Ferracuti 1967; Friday 1970; see also Field and More 1996).

In a similar tone, Gibbons (1965) calls for conscious efforts to be made in developing typologies of criminals and delinquents for a useful casual analysis and in



providing diagnostic systems for treatment purposes. The functions of typologies are two fold: They are needed as the first step in any realistic construction of explanatory theory; and secondly, to provide the basis for diagnostic systems to be used in treatment (Gibbons 1965:39-40). Implicit in this as Gibbons points out is that until a sharp break is made with the traditional approach which looks upon offenders as relatively homogenous class, and more so one would argued, across all cultural settings, little progress is likely to be made towards a genuine explanation, prediction and description of crimes and offenders alike.

Certainly, to ascribe all contemporary criminal behaviours—subtle or simple especially as they currently exist in developing countries to one monolithic factor or factors that have more relevance in the western and more developed societies seem naïve. That is, a predilection towards a single “global” explanation of many of the contemporary complex criminal behaviours and delinquency through the application of one or a combination of sociological variables across nations with differences in socio-culture, economic and political developments and history seems unrealistic, and indeed uppish and inherently perilous. It blocks opportunities of exploring into alternatives explanatory models, which are comprehensive and contextually relevance. Researchers need, and must continue to research into alternative conceptual models of crime causality as means of contributing to the ever-growing body of literature by concentrating their efforts on manageable studies, which hopefully can provide a small section to the jigsaw puzzle of crime causality (see also Pyle, Hanten, Williams, Pearson II, Doyle and Kwofie 1974: 9-10). It may not be too far a herculean task before researchers and scholars alike found that the relative magnitude of both youths and adults’ involvement in crime and

delinquency, the nature and patterns of these crimes and delinquency, their seeming semblance, and to an extent “uniqueness” are considerably shaped by factor[s] either generated as a consequent of external or internal dynamic confronting the different nations. As for instance, there is the effect of colonisation, industrialisation, and urbanisation leading to culture contact and shocks peculiar to most of the less developing countries and also affecting the age-crime relation (see also Mannheim 1965; Christie 1974; Greenberg 1977).

But the background provided by previous scholars is not the only *raison d’etre* for undertaking this study. It is also because in the opinion of the researcher, the subject of armed robbery is perceived with ambivalence amongst scholars in Nigeria. It is ironical that despite the perceptions of the seriousness and high ranking of armed robbery amongst other criminal behaviours in contemporary Nigeria, the subject is yet to receive commensurate academic attention. That is, there is yet to be that commitment and interest supposedly expected on a social issue of concerns both by the government and individual researchers or academics<sup>3</sup>. Large portion of information on the subject remain largely those of media profession, somewhat sensationalising it, and at other times merely entertaining the public with their gothic accounts of it.

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<sup>3</sup> Although, the researcher is not unaware of the few remarkable studies (past and recent), which have given glimpse of what the picture on armed robbery in contemporary Nigeria looks like. For instance, Nkpa (1976); Adeyemi (1986); Mareni (1987); Ekpeyong (1989), and Iwarmie-Jaja (1987, 1994, 1999a and b) are notable few who have conducted researches in Nigeria on armed robbery as a serious property crime since its’ gaining a “modernised” (in quote) status. But the argument being made here is that remarkable of what is known about armed robbery comes mainly from media reports and others grapevines instead of a thorough, more conscious efforts directed at generating far-flung and holistic sociological, psychological and criminological knowledge about the offence and offenders. This undoubtedly will help in coming up with a better model that better

Among the general public on the other hand, greater numbers of people are simply fascinated by it, glued to the news media with enthusiasm to capture the gory gist of reported armed robbery. Others are simply alarmed by the scourge, sometimes in a perverse romanticized manner, and at other times with a sense of fear, or perhaps of righteous indignation. They are fully aware of the incalculable harms that armed robbery causes on the society both in terms of huge financial, material and human losses. They thus, glue to the news on the televisions, listen to other discussants, read newspapers and magazine accounts of what seem to be an endless variety of the transgressions. The resultant questions thus are: When shall the trouble of armed robbery be brought under control? What is the authority doing? What do we ought to do to save and help ourselves? Yet beyond this alarming interest, there is no commitment either on the part of public funding, or and the government to push for research on this area of social maladies.

Against the backdrop of the preceding arguments, current armed robbery in contemporary Nigeria is studied first, within the context that firstly, it now requires concerted and serious academic attention as the threat of it continues to mount. Secondly, it is more understandable, a consequence of culture contacts, which define its patterns, incidence (rate), *modus operandi* (MO) and sophistry.

Although much has been said about the state (general orientation and overview, section 1 and 2.2) of armed robbery in contemporary Nigeria, in the media and in related literature. However, a crucial question that may have not been answered is “why is the problem of armed robbery in contemporary Nigeria is indeed an issue worthy of study in

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captures the contemporary nature and *modus operandi* of the offence and offenders in Nigeria.

the most conscious manner it is being done now in this study”? The answer to this question lies in the problematising of the study.

### **1.3 PROBLEMATISING ARMED ROBBERY IN CONTEMPORARY NIGERIA AND SETTING THE RESEARCH QUESTION**

A look at the daily news media, weekly magazines, and news from Broadcasting Corporations as well as the discussions among the Nigerian general public clearly indicate that modern Nigeria has armed robbery problem. It is by no means alluding to any claim that armed robbery is the only social malaise threatening modern Nigeria, albeit. It only goes to suggest that armed robbery is to many citizens in the country, a most daily occurrence and feared crime, and constitutes a terrible threat and challenge to the modern Nigeria society. Armed robbery among other crimes has though, been in the limelight beginning from 1970, showing both an increase and decrease at an annual average rate of +23 percent and –37.6 per cent (Iwarimie-Jaja 1998: 105). But in the past two decades or so it has reached an alarming proportion and the perpetrators have become more inhumane than previously.

Armed robbery remains one of the most singular leading causes of fear—day and night among many contemporary Nigerians. It pervades all corners of the country. It holes people in their rooms, scared travellers, brings poverty to the people, deprives people of their loved ones and makes the police somewhat inefficient and look like pawns. Quite a good number of the Nigerian public has resorted to spiritual salvation from the pawn of these robbers. Citizens have simply become disillusioned with the authority’s approach to the menace of armed robbery. As a consequent, several

organisations, genuine and spurious have emerged across all spectrums of the society. These organisations have had backlogs and downsides in terms of being devious as well as heinous in manner.

The authority on the other hand has often tried to put their money where her mouth is in an effort to counter the danger posed by it. Besides the conventional police force, special Anti-Robbery Squads<sup>4</sup> (drawn from the police and the armed forces), mobile force, community and various voluntary self-patrol bodies have emerged and encouraged. Curfews have been imposed on different occasions in virtually all nooks and crannies of Nigeria cities and towns. And in cities like Lagos, imposition of curfew has constituted part of the administration routines.

Households are at alert, and individuals, neighbourhoods and communities kept awake all nights. Protection bars, and hard wooden and iron doors in both residences and commercial buildings have become the rule rather than the exception. Skyscraper walls (fences) around modest and palatial buildings have constituted additional financial burden on homeowners and landlords, and even in an unwanted act of obscurantism shielded the beautiful scenery of these buildings and environs.

Police and other law enforcement agents have simply become excessively repressive on innocent and law abiding citizens sometimes selfishly sensationalizing the pervasiveness of the crime. Some governments such as the erstwhile military leaders in

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<sup>4</sup> These special Anti-Robbery Squads assumed a recognised status in the Nigeria history of crime fighting during the Abacha regime. They were of two fold: one that was uniform in nature and simply referred to as “Patrol Team”. The other, identical among all the states, had distinctive characteristics embodied in their different nicknames. Thus nicknames such as “operation Sweep” (Lagos State); “Operation Gbale” (Oyo States); “Operation Flush” (Rivers State); “Operation Crush” (Abia State) etc were common phenomena).

their draconian idiosyncrasies felt compelled and justified to place an exceptional limit on the civil liberties of the ordinary Nigerian people. Succinctly, the civil rights of the mass of the people have been hijacked. Thus, the fears in modern Nigeria inevitable assume a double fear: the fear of armed bandits and the fear of police harassment.

Notwithstanding, armed robbery continues to be on the increase. Thus, when the harms attributed to armed robbery are measured, the task is extremely difficult even if efforts are confined to trying to estimate the cost in financial terms. Scholars too, in the field of sociology, criminology, and psychology and allied have not embraced the problem of armed robbery in contemporary Nigeria with serious interest, vigour, and commitment; thus leaving many vacuums in the academic field of the subjects and topic.

It is not uncommon, however, to easily note that the fear and perception of the severity of armed robbery has led some authors and writers both in Nigeria and beyond to have bared their minds on the issue; reflecting on the seriousness, causative factors, net impacts on the society, policy implications, patterns and outlooks, general characteristics and so on (see for instances, Conklin 1972; Adeyemi 1986, Ekpeyong 1989; Katz 1996; Maree 1999; Iwarimie-Jaja, 1987, 1993, 1998, 1999a 1999b).

The common feature, and a rather unfortunate thing among these studies is the tendency to explain armed robbery, irrespective of the social context under which it occurs within the conventional conceptual model or paradigms that were formulated and developed in the more developed countries of the world such as America and Europe.

Analyses of most studies on crime, especially the conventionally types such as armed robbery, show the relatively inattention to the fact that various crimes vary from one society to the other, that the same type of crime also tends to co-vary among the

different social areas, and that different reasons accounts for the same type of crime. The cause of one type of crime in a particular locality say A, may not necessarily be the identifiable factor that causes the same crime in another locality say B. It could well be another factor, say sociological, psychological, economic, cultural permissiveness, combination of any more of these, or even biosocial.

Besides, the high rate of crime among certain socio-economic groups of people as official records often show is not a sure indicator to determine the major causes of such crime. Many writers have noted with exception while it appears obvious that people in low socio-economic status are disproportionately found in crime statistics (Bernard 1987; Stevens 1990 in Cloete and Stevens 1990: 129; Nkpa 1994 in Otite 1994: 269-270). There is therefore a gap between these studies and an understanding of certain crimes in developing countries such as Nigeria and the particular current form of armed robbery, which pervades contemporary Nigeria. This gap indeed presents a further problem with respect to what the researcher refers to as the “aNigerian” nature of contemporary armed robbery in Nigeria, and is worthy of further exploration.

The problem facing this study therefore, is to seek how the specific kind of contemporary Nigerian armed robbery and armed robbers could be approached methodically to reveal sources of knowledge about the offence and thus provides the credible basis for coming up with an alternative conceptual model to understand and explain them and their activity. Put differently, how could certain orthodox crime aetiologies especially the specific strand of the social learning model be appropriated and then reformulated within the merged research findings as an alternative explanation to the

current pattern of armed robbery in contemporary Nigeria while taking cognisance of its similarity, yet “uniqueness” to other contemporary industrialised societies?

The guiding research question in the light of the influence of the above informed ideas and approach is: “What comprises armed robbery in the southeastern states of contemporary Nigeria and can alternative conceptual framework of reference be constructed or reconstructed to better account for current pattern of armed robbery in contemporary Nigeria”? This question is informed by the understanding that present day armed robbery in Nigeria is alarming, sophisticated, and brutal but is, also in a sense, “unique” and carried out with par excellence.

The structured interview (questionnaire) contains scheduled items that focused on four key variables, namely: differential association (relationships at family, friends and other levels), previous criminal association and past criminal profiles (differential opportunity), emulation (sources of knowledge about armed robbery) and armed robbery. The major exploratory issue here thus is that current armed robbery in contemporary Nigeria is significantly an emulated behaviour from the western world. It is the opinion of the researcher that criminogenic tendency is learned firstly, through association with criminal miscreants, which result into developing previous criminal experiences, and then imitated into full scale criminal behaviour such as armed robbery through association with professional criminals whose ideas come from exposure to the western life styles and criminal behaviours. This is then finally accentuated, polished and nourished by more vicious contacts with these alien cultures as one grows and develops in his or her preteen and teen stages.



#### 1.4 AIM OF THE STUDY

The fundamental error as earlier indicated in section 1.2 and 1.3 above seems often committed when the generalisation of a particular behaviour is made without taking into account the variations in the different social contexts under which they occur. Contemporary armed robbery and armed robbers in the developing countries such as Nigeria, Kenya and Cameroon is one victim of such fundamental error. With specific respect to Nigeria, besides this error the general public and workers of Criminal Justice System are just worried about the alarming rate, bizarre, and daring manner by which the crime is being perpetuated in the present context of the country. This is in spite of the huge resources in terms of man-hour, energy, financial and materials, which are being devoted to fight it and the stiff sanctions such death penalty and indeterminable length of sentence that goes with it as well.

Given this fundamental error—untested generalisation, the huge losses from the spate of the crime in the modern day Nigeria and the seemingly failure of government actions to curtail the situation, a staggering criminology-sociology imagination thus, arise. A simplify of this imagination, provides the researcher with certain aims—as both immediate and ultimate worthy of investigating.

The **immediate aims** of the study are:

- To provide a thorough, analytical description of contemporary armed robbery and armed robbers in Nigeria. That is, the research wishes to reveal and review painstakingly, the characteristics of armed robbery and armed robbers or what he calls a “doing sociology-criminology analysis” of both the offence and offenders—drawing attention to its ubiquitous *modus operandi* as it applies to modern day Nigeria.

- To determine in average weighted manner and at both a glance and face value the major factor that induces people to commit armed robbery in the manner they do so currently. Put differently, what is, at *prima facie* level the overriding unit factor that accounts for the high-armed robbery rate in modern day Nigeria?
- To elicit the views of the offenders with respect to the right measures to control armed robbery.
- To investigate and establish whether contemporary armed robbery in Nigeria necessarily entails involvement in prior criminal activities.
- To make attempt to determine the source (s) of knowledge about the offence of armed robbery.

**The ultimate aim** of the study, arising from the last aim and which, however, is viewed, as the “heartbeat” of the study is to build up an alternative theoretical framework upon which contemporary armed robbery in Nigeria could be far better understood and explained.

## **1.5 APPROACH TO THE STUDY**

The approach, strategy and outlook is designed along the pattern of a cross cultural analytical study, directed towards the central conceptual concern that is focused on the study namely, the business of developing a specific alternative explanation of criminal behaviours in developing countries such as Nigeria, Mali, Ghana as somewhat unique and distinct from the western industrialised countries such as Canada, Britain, U.S and Belgium. The study, besides cutting across several research purposes, seems apparently

“analytically comparative” in outlook. It focuses on developing a unique model of explanation for a high profile criminal activity such as armed robbery in developing country like Nigeria.

The subject matter of “analytical comparative” (cross-cultural) sociology-cum-criminology according to Durkheim (cf. Clinard and Abbott 1973:2), involves three criteria. First, in a single culture at one point in time; second, in societies generally alike; third, after proper modification and test on completely dissimilar societies; which are nevertheless, sharing common features such as those of many less developed countries. Any theoretical formulation in criminology to be explained on universal basis should be tested under all three conditions (Clinard and Abbott 1973:2).

In this study therefore, and following Durkheim’s third process, and leaning on Clinard and Abbott (1973) approach, the study aims to expand the research on armed robbery within the context of the third criterion (stage) namely—in developing countries (Nigeria) that are considered to be dissimilar to the more developed countries of the world, but at the same times are undergoing many similar processes. Specifically, the study is an attempt to explore deeper, the applicability of these frames of theoretical references, developed and found relevant in the developed countries of the world to less developed countries such as contemporary Nigeria.

The approach of the study especially in the process of arriving at the ultimate aim involved developing a structured questionnaire and conducting an in-depth interviews addressed to convicted and detained armed robbers to seek their views on how best they came to know and follow the path to armed robbery while complementing findings with other studies carried out in Nigeria and beyond. And finally, by dialectic integration—

dissecting analytically (i.e. analytical and subtle critical) reviews of the few conventional theories on crime, particularly the social learning, psychological and conflict/political economy, the findings from the empirical study, literature and the relevance of these strands of theoretical ideas are synthesised to provide an alternative conceptual model of contemporary armed robbery and robbers in Nigeria.

Establishing how best the offenders came to know about the offence as well as getting to know other motivations that animate them into remaining persistent in the career through empirical approach are accomplished. This is a step further away from the preponderate conventional, and sometimes “journalistic” approach of general theorising, permutation or speculating (deduction and or induction), the predisposing factors and or theories that make people to engage in armed robbery.

There are three key areas, which are fundamental in the approach adopted for the study. Invariably too, they seem also as constituting the significant contributions of the study towards enhancing the understanding of the problem of armed robbery in Nigeria and beyond.

### **1.5.1 METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH**

There are many methods available to a social researcher while designing data collection technique. They include observation, experimentation, surveying and documentary-historical method. The adoption of either methodological approach determines the data collection technique such as questionnaire or interview. This in turns defines the type of data to be generated such as qualitative or quantitative.

The study reviews literature, describe, test and interpret empirical findings. It interviewed respondents and subjects (armed robbers-both convicts and detainees) on voluntary basis (see the chapter on methodology) by providing closed and open-ended questionnaires to them and in-depth interview. The questionnaires section also include spaces for personal comments and allowed the interviewees the freedom to express their views as much freely and details as they might wish. Therefore, multiple methods involving data collection techniques—survey in addition to in-depth interview; both the quantitative and qualitative approaches; consideration of the different sampling options, analysing data by both the mean of univariate and statistical inferences, and testing of some hypothetical statements are the characterisation of the approach of the study.

This methodological approach and the data it generates—quantitative and qualitative is especially significant because it liberalises the technique of eliciting information from both the respondents and subjects especially among offenders (subjects) like armed robbers whose interest, motives, *modus operandi* and perceptions may never fully be understood under conventional approach of “ask-question-and-see-answers” simplicity. It places no constraints before them by supplementing one method and technique with other, and with respect to questionnaires, by close-open ended questions with spaces.

The close-ended questions afforded the respondents and the subjects the opportunity to focus their attention on the main theme of the research. This approach has helped to understand in greater details the facts about the offence and offenders, and may have thus provided the law enforcement agents and the general public with the “first-aid” or companion reference text to the scourge of armed robbery in modern Nigeria. After all,

“knowledge goes the wise saying is power”, and “any problem known is presumed half solved”.

Furthermore, the methodological relevance of this study is further appreciated by the fact that the revealment of when, where and how the offenders operate (knowledge of this being derived from the questionnaires and in-depth interviews), may have made the general public readers and law enforcement agents to be more wary and conscious of their security. This can assist to ward off some if not many armed robbery incidences. After all it is said, “Prevention is better than cure”.

### 1.5.2 THEORETICAL APPROACH

The strategic approach of the study in the light of the context, nature and the issue set to explore in the study is to construct an alternative reflexive conceptual model that could enhance an understanding of present day-armed robbery within the context of contemporary Nigeria. In other words, since the study was conceived as an explanatory endeavour, theorising armed robbery in contemporary (post-colonial) Nigeria was therefore to become the ultimate and indeed, the central aim of the study. However, the study is also a policy oriented one in addition, and to an extent, inferential (cautious generalising)<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> Social sciences research can be for variety of purposes. It could either be for the purpose of exploring relatively new or inattention area of field, (**exploratory**), or for the purpose of explaining an event, social action, or phenomenon (**explanatory**). Research could also be aimed at **describing** an event or behaviour, and or for the purpose of **inferring** from the study group and making generalisation. This study, no doubt cuts across parts of these multiple purposes, as indeed it is in the opinion of the researcher that no one study is completely and solely limited to any of one these purposes (see Nan Lin 1976).

Generally, a successful propagation and an astute defence of the theoretical idea being advanced in this study may no doubt have stimulated further academic debates, which is no less a tonic to academic endeavours. The specific alternative theory being developed in this study is the result of an evaluated, modified, tinkered, and rethought of grand sociology-criminology theories or ideas, and substantiated by the results of the empirical findings of the research. Though, it is by approach an integrated; a hybrid kind of model, the specific alternative model nevertheless develops its own concepts, principles and wide scale inferences (generalisations) at a level that distinguishes between universal applicable to all societies, and the unique characteristics representative of one or transforming societies such as in developing countries like Nigeria sharing similarities with the more developed countries.

Because of its seeming uniqueness, the specific alternative model is capable of stimulating further research either to validate its claim or to critique it. With today's information becoming stale tomorrow, the model or theory will go a long way to update existing knowledge and thus, provide a springboard for realistic approach to the understanding of contemporary high profile criminal activities in developing countries such as Nigeria which passed and continues to pass through great social transformation with remarkable western influence.

### **1.5.3 PRACTICAL APPROACH**

One significant approach of the study is its empirical characteristic. By this approach, it involved interacting and sharing practical issues of relevance with the offenders themselves. The empirical realm under which information were obtained permitted

extensive panorama coverage of the social, psychological and even to an extent, the biosocial<sup>6</sup> attributes of the offenders.

Although, it is argued that armed robbers could be deceptive and experts at feigning innocence, studying them in the manner carried out in this study brings one into face-to-face with certain paradoxes and incredible encounters. Thus, it is no ridicule to argue that some trials are a travesty and mockery of justice. Some cases and judgments in such crucial issues involving life are sat upon and dispensed off by ad-hoc administrative instruments staffed by incompetent judges and criminal justice staff in contemporary Nigeria socio-political setting. In most cases too, investigation and prosecution are handled by poorly trained, demotivated police officers. The resultant effect is that some innocent suspects are unguardedly convicted and made to be languishing in jails. The practical approach made it possible for such cases to be stumbled at, and is considered an opportunity platform, however, for a case of “plea” or “clemency” to be made on their behalf. For instance, in Abakaliki prison an inmate wrongly detained and being processed through the tangle road of criminal justice on armed robbery was stumbled at. The said person was confirmed by all talked to (officials and inmates) as an innocent victim concocted and entrapped into armed robbery as a result of family feud—who fear the said victim’s heir status in the family following the death of the father. This is indeed one of the central focal points of criminologists and criminal justice experts.

In addition, the results of the findings will be published both in academic journals and little of it in the newspaper. Efforts is also being made to present the findings in

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<sup>6</sup> More and details of the importance of biosocial perspective or what is semantically referred in literature as “behaviour genetics” can be read in the work of Anthony Walsh (2000: 1075-1108).



conferences and to submit a copy of the work to the Nigerian Prisons Services as directed by the Headquarters that approved the access.

## **1.6 HYPOTHETICAL STATEMENTS: GENERATING HYPOTHESES AND/ OR EXPLORATORY-EXPLANATORY ISSUES**

It is indicated in section 1.5.2 above, that the study is a multi-purpose one. That is, it cuts across many research purposes. Like most researchers, there are some particular explanations in the mind of the researcher considered significant to explore. These are within the context of the broad areas about armed robbery and armed robbers in contemporary Nigeria. It is against the backdrop of these ideas that certain research hypotheses are formulated.

A note of caution is necessary with respect to these hypotheses. Albeit some research hypotheses are made in this study but it differs from the typical-traditional hypotheses in social sciences. Instead, the research hypotheses in the study, besides being tested by means of **chi-square**<sup>7</sup>, are also to an extent precursors to what the researcher regards as “typical hypotheses-generation” that are more amenable to other kinds of statistical testing involving different techniques. In other words, the research hypotheses serve to a degree as mere hypothesis-generating issues or assumptions, which to a degree afford the opportunity to conduct a more formal and rigorous statistical testing on these issues, set out (see also Lin 1976:8-9, 142-143). Of course, the reason is because there are many issues about the offence and offenders, which remained relatively unexplored,

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<sup>7</sup> On further elaboration on chi-square, see the method of data analysis, section 5.10, chapter Five and Chapter Seven dealing with testing and validation.

especially in contemporary developing countries such as Nigeria, which are explored and brought to fore. Some of the issues/assumptions generated in the study for exploration are

- 1) That there is no relationship (association) between the educational qualification of the respondents' fathers and their mothers.
- 2) That both the number of wives and the number of children, which the respondents' fathers are not related-or equivalently, they are independent.
- 3) Planning armed robbery operation by the respondents is not related to the organisational structure of the respondents' gang, which is characterised by line of control.
- 4) There is no relationship between female membership in respondents' gang or group, and the role performed.
- 5) Membership composition of respondents' gang or group is independent of the pattern of sharing their loots.
- 6) There is no relationship between the source (s) by which the respondents learned of armed robbery, and the reason (s) for choosing to be involved in the offence.
- 7) Both source (s) of learning about armed robbery by the respondents are independent of the frequency of committing the offence.
- 8) Source (s) of learning armed robbery by the respondents have no association with the planning of the offence by the same respondents.
- 9) The roles that the respondents play in armed robbery group or gang are not related to the source (s) of leaning about the crime.

10) There is no association between the source (s) of learning about armed robbery in contemporary Nigeria, and carrying weapons at the time of operation.

## **1.7 DEFINITIONS AND OPERATIONALISATION OF KEY**

### **WORDS/PHRASES**

Concepts are alterable ideological constructs and malleable, tuning and shaping researcher's mind along a specific line of objective. The need to define and operationalised some key concepts/words or phrases of a particular study in focus cannot be overemphasised. The following key words (as concepts) and phrases are defined and operationalised according to the aims and context of the study. Definitions are based both on the literature on the researchers' personal definition.

**1.7.1 ARMED ROBBERY:** A key object and dependent variable in the study. According to Simonsen (1998:279), it is the unlawful taking of personal property from a person's presence, against the person's will, by force or the threat of force. In this study it refers broadly to, as the unlawful possession of lethal weapons by a person or group of persons with the intent to, or actual dispossess of a person or group of persons of his/her or their valuable(s) against the person (s) will, either with force or the threat of it. By this definition and for the purpose of the study, armed robbery covers any act that takes place in any of the places mentioned above, with any of the objects described, and with *malice* intent leading to either arrest, and or conviction by the agents of law enforcement or the court.

**1.7.2 ARMED ROBBER (s):** Any person or group of persons who engage in any of the criminal act or offence described above.

**1.7.3 CONTEMPORARY/MODERN NIGERIA:** Broadly defined to encapsulate the periods marking the coming into contact of Nigerians with the western world, and accompanied by learning and imbibing of a new set of completely different ideas and ways of life. Narrowly, it is defined to cover the post-Nigeria civil war periods (i.e. 1970- to date) when it is thought that the country began to experience significant turning point in the economic, social and political transformation as a nation. But in its usage in this study, it is, however operationalised to stretch to the moment signifying the contacts of the current people of Nigeria with Europeans conquest and the subsequent changes that followed.

**1.7.4 THEORY OF EMULATION:** This is an independent variable and central key word/concept or phrase in the study. It is a self-professed theory (conceptual model) and antecedent variable. It seeks to argue that the instinct to emulate or imitate, precedes the idea of previous criminal association, differential association and other learning theories and is more of artificial than natural; made possible by certain factors present within the particular emulators' social formation. Its argument is that the combination of quite a number of these factors for instance, accounts for the complex (sophisticated) but unique manner of armed robbery and armed robbers in modern day Nigeria.

**1.7.5 DIFFERENTIAL ASSOCIATION:** This is an antecedent variable or factor upon which the theory/conceptual model of emulation is hinged on. It also acts as the mediating variable in the theoretical idea and processes of emulation. A person's association with a variety of social groups influences the quality of an individual's behaviour with who he/she is in close contact (Sutherland 1950). It refers to the different access individuals have in a social setting or formation, which defines the pattern of

behaviour associated with the resultant group relationship. In this study, it is operationalised as the resultant behaviour that is more favourable to law violation than to conformity, often developed through association with criminal peers, friends, relations, senior criminals or acquaintances either by means of formal or informal contacts.

**1.7.6 PREVIOUS CRIMINAL ASSOCIATION:** This is also a mediating factor as the above. It denotes the process whereby a person gets motivated to commit high level criminal activity through the acquiring of criminal experiences from previous less criminal activity (see Iwarimie-Jaja 1993). In this study, it refers to the act of associating and invariably participating first and foremost, in a predatory criminal subculture or gangsterism peculiar to the western world while interacting with pro-active delinquent or neophytes criminal peer groups, friends, acquaintances, senior criminal friends, and relations who are themselves experienced in criminals or simply belongs to criminal associations as a result of contact with the western world.

**1.7.7 POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL MILIEU:** Defined as the peoples' system of governance, system and means of livelihood, and patterns of co-existence (relations) within a particular prevailing circumstances either as stable or unstable, boom or bust, and strain or cordial. In the study, the context of the milieu is operationalised to covers all changes that have characterised the economic, socio-cultural, political, and the belief systems of the people of contemporary Nigeria beginning from the first contacts with the western world.

**1.7.8 EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND:** This is an independent variable. It is measured by the level of academic qualification of the offenders' parents or custodians

and the offender prior to his arrest in the armed robbery case for which he is convicted or detained for.

**1.7.9 ACTIONS, LAW, LEGISLATION AND POLICIES:** This is also an independent variable. It refers to the various steps being taken by the government to address the offence of armed robbery in contemporary Nigeria.

**1.7.10 MARITAL STATUS:** It is an independent variable and is measured by the numbers of the offenders who are either married or unmarried before they committed the offence. And also the marital status of their parents

**1.7.11 HITMAN:** This is the person within armed gang who is designated to carry out bodily harm or injury on the victim (s) by actually applying either the weapons or objects that is part and parcel of the robbery appurtenances when occasion requires. Although all others are more likely to carry arms, but he alone is often times the authorised person to actually use his when commandeered.

**1.7.12 THE WHEELMAN:** The wheelman is often associated with armed robbery operations that entail the use of automobiles of any kind, albeit. In this study, the wheelman is used to refer to the person stationed to get away the team out of the scene of operation either by foot or by automobile immediately after successful execution or when operation is fraught with potential risk. He is the person who gives clues of the routes in the area of operation when automobile is not use. Sometimes, he plays the role of the watchman and wheelman together.

**1.7.13 WATCHMAN:** He stays at the entrances, gates, or strategic positions to ward off any intruder, and to give signal of an impending danger.

**1.7.14 O.C (OFFICER-IN-CHARGE)/COMMANDER:** This is the person that commands the team in an operation. He gives order, instructions, and commands, which are obeyed with utmost respect.

**1.7.15 MOPOL (MOBILE POLICE):** He is the action man that issues threats, beat, harasses, tortures the victims as well as guarding, directing and monitoring of “prime victims” and sometimes interplaying the role of the hitman.

**1.7.16 SERGENT MAJOR, CORPORAL AND INSPECTOR:** Those in the actual operation. They search and gather proceeds and pass reports of a satisfactory operation to the officer-in-charge<sup>8</sup>.

However, it must be bore in mind that these key words as (concepts) and phrases are no more than constructs; semantics, and vary from one team to the other and place to place. In other words, they are fluid and often times interface with “different terminologies peculiar to the different armed robbery gangs.

## **1.8 STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY**

Contemporary armed robbers and robbery in Nigeria are not only pervasive, but both also extensive in terms of the contents and context. From statistics to *modus operandi*, from typologies to perceptions of fears, from peculiar characteristics to the socio-economic and political milieu, from crime scenes to patterns, from terminologies to causes, and the list goes on, armed robbery covers a wide range of issues and areas. The challenging task

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<sup>8</sup> The last three key words/concepts or phrases are derived from the Nigerian police and defence forces and have become terminologies peculiar to armed groups.

therefore to any scholar undertaking a study of it is to set out the invested areas of interest and to put them in a well-structured perspective.

The layout of the study reflecting on the contents and context is by and large such that it is divided into five parts (see for instances, Bernfield, Farrington and Leschied 2001; Maguire, Morgan and Reiner 2002). The outlay is according to the one in these sources. Each part has a broad theme on which it addresses. Within each of the part is either a chapter or chapters, which address the specific issues and areas of concern within the broad themes.

#### **PART I: General orientation to the study.**

Part I contains only one chapter. And as the broad title suggests, it is concerned with orienting readers into the whole phenomenon of armed robbery particularly as it affects contemporary Nigeria.

##### **Chapter 1: Orientation to the study**

The chapter provides an insight into the phenomenon of armed robbery in contemporary Nigeria. The aims of the study are two fold: the immediate and ultimate; and the approach indicating to an extent the significance of the study shows a multiple approach. In addition, the key words/concepts/phrases containing the variables that are either measured or simply richly explored are identified, defined and operationalised. And finally, some exploratory and explanatory issues/assumptions as hypothesis-generating ones are generated for description and explanation in the study.



## **Part II: The literature study of armed robbery as a crime phenomenon**

This part is structured to include three chapters, each focus on the history and extent of armed robbery; armed robbery: the offence, offender and *modus operandi*; and the risk factors of armed robbery from the perspectives of different scholars.

### **Chapter 2: The history and extent of armed robbery**

Chapter Two focuses on the history, the extent, ideological parameters, definitional perceptions, and a host of other related matters. It is discernible, the presence of ideology among scholars in conceptualising the offence. With different jargons, semantics, and perspectives in the definition of the offence, some of these are reviewed.

Chapter Two besides, that it provides these different definitions, also describes the study focus in the context of the research setting; embodying the historical antecedent of armed robbery and armed robbers. It also introduces a brief overview of the current socio-economic and political system in Nigeria under which contemporary armed robbery and armed robbers thrive. The chapter provides a further general overview of the crime or offence, and illuminates however, not in absolute terms, the extent of the problem especially in Nigeria.

Generally, there are problems in compiling reliable statistics on crime in general, and armed robbery in particular, in both the more developed and the less developed countries. Notwithstanding the “dark figure” in crime statistics, greater numbers of statistics that show the extent of these crimes are documented. Literatures on armed robbery, and public perceptions indicate that the crime is endemic not only in the more developed countries such as the U.S., but also in the less developed ones especially Nigeria. Sources on the extent of armed robbery include official crime reports—Office of

statistics and police reports, self-reported surveys, eyewitness and logical deduction accounts, the media, and general public feelings about the offence and offenders.

### Chapter 3: **Armed robbery: The Offence, Offender and *Modus Operandi***

Chapter Three is about the reviews of the important facts of notes about the offence and offenders, the crime/offence's scenarios, patterns, their social organisations, and the specific issue of *modus operandi* of the crime.

The social organisations of the offence and offenders are complex, and writers such as Iwarimie-Jaja (1993, 1999a), Gibbons (1965), Conklin (1972) and Einstadter (1975) have reflected on the various social organisations (characteristics) of both the offence and offenders. Similarly, the typologies of both the offence and offenders exhibit a diverse form. These various types of them identified by these various authors are reviewed in this chapter.

Robbery by and large is not carried out haphazardly. There is a systematic *modus operandi* which embodies the relevant factors, and the stages of planning that are essential for any effective robbery operation. With illustrations as anecdotes, chapter Three also focuses on these aspects of the offence and offenders. It discusses the factors that play important roles in the decision on the particular *modus operandi* to employ, and the various phases of it. Finally, the chapter also reviews the perceptions of some writers on the policy matters on armed robbery.

### Chapter 4: **Risk factors (causes) of armed robbery**

The search for the causes of armed robbery has also occupied the efforts and times of both the armed robbery scholars and those who study it as a hobby (*Dilettante*). Both at the global and Nigeria levels, efforts have been made to offer the different factors or

reasons, and to understand the upsurge in armed robbery phenomenon through different perspectives. These viewpoints are either an orthodoxy or modernist. Thus, the economic variables—deprivation, abundance, unemployment and general poverty; social development; socio-political climate; previous criminal experience; and contacts with the western world are some of the risk factors and perspectives that have been adopted to understand armed robbery either in the more developed and less developed countries including Nigeria. Unemployment general poverty in particular, are discussed both critically and in in-depth on account of their apparent as social mantra in all criminal and delinquency discourses—attracting widespread of proponents and rebuttals. Chapter Four as part of the literature study on armed robbery deals with all these factors and perspectives referred above.

Besides being capitalist oriented, contemporary Nigeria has serious features of a pseudo-capitalist society: weak economy and political structures, massive social unrest, strong traditional reflections, mismanagement and extensive corruption. It has indeed, transited and oscillated greatly between the periods of economic “boom” and “loom”, political “military” and “civilian”, “interregnum stability” and “lengthy instability”, and “interim social cohesion” and “chaos”. The accompanying consequences have been economic brigandage and social mayhem, with hostility towards one another as the order of the day. These amorphous changes have created a socio-milieu under which contemporary armed robbery in Nigeria is further accentuated, and certainly, better appreciated. The task to explore into the state of the art with respect to the context of contemporary socio-economic of Nigeria as an enabling environment for contemporary armed robbery is also part of the focus of Chapter Four.

### Part III: **Empirical Study**

Part III of the study deals with the issues that relate to the empirical aspect of the present study. That is, it focuses on the practical endeavour aspects of the study with regard to the fieldwork and presentation of findings, discussion and testing of hypothetical statements or exploratory and explanatory variables for validation. It has three chapters; each focuses on an aspect of the broad theme of the empiricism.

#### Chapter 5: **Research design and methodology**

Chapter Five deals with the research design and the methodology employed in the study. It draws attention to both the level and unit of analysis, the techniques of data collection, the sample measurement, method of data collection and analysis, fieldwork experience and the general research settings.

#### Chapter 6: **Presentation and analysis of data**

Chapter Six is about the data presentation, analysis and interpretation. Data is presented both quantitatively and qualitatively. However, analysis is by means of univariate (i.e. describing one unit variable at a time). It is well complemented by statistical inferences, and draws from previous researches—theoretical and empirical, while utilising the table matrix of frequency, percentages and cumulative frequencies to present a neat, cohesive and easy to understand of the findings.

#### Chapter 7: **Testing the hypotheses-generating**

Chapter Seven is about testing the degrees of relationships or associations between the issues raised, or the simply described hypotheses-generating testing raised in section 1.5. There are ten of these hypothetical statements and each is statistically cross-tabbed with all the details set out to demonstrate the degree of their correlation and subsequent

acceptance or rejection. It is from the results that a wider scale of meaning about the offence and offenders could be read from.

#### **Part IV: The Theoretical Foundation**

This part focuses on the theoretical foundation or premise of the study. It has two Chapters: Chapter Eight and Nine.

##### **Chapter 8: Theoretical overview**

Explaining contemporary armed robbery and armed robbers in Nigeria is based on the literature and empirical findings. So there are some broader perspectives, which offer substantial relevance towards a better understanding of the offence and offenders, either in parts or on the whole. These perspectives found their origins among many early and contemporary—old and new sociology-criminologists. Indeed, no one particular theory or strands of it is autarky. Each theory or idea leans on one or some of these theories and theorists to come up with own's version of model/theory/ideas, while subsuming it in ones' immanent ideology, orientation, social context, and empirically validated results.

Chapter Eight reviews some of these models or theories, or rather the perspectives that are salient to the build-up of the conceptual model, theory or the idea of emulation as a credible alternative to understand contemporary armed robbery and armed robbers in Nigeria. The process the researcher describes as a “dialectic, analytical, and relatively critical stance” does them. By this, these theories and their basic assumptions and contributors are dissected as presented in literature, somewhat critiqued, and/or credited; It brings to fore their individual's relevance to the theory being developed in this study.

## **Chapter 9: Theoretical framework: Explaining “emulation” and armed robbery and armed robbers**

Chapter Nine is very central in the study. In fact, it contains the lever against which the study revolves, as indeed it contains the theme, which represents the ultimate aim of the study. Contemporary armed robbery in Nigeria is undoubtedly, different from the kind that operated prior to contact with the western world, and the period immediately following the gaining of “flag” independence. Each of the conventional models developed and tested in the more western advanced countries has certain degrees of weaknesses. As a consequence, offers little relevance to the contemporary nature of the Nigerian armed robbery and armed robbers arising from these external contacts. This makes it imperative to develop an alternative perspective that embraces the influence of these contacts—reflecting on the source of the crime, its similarities to western archetype of armed robbery, and its obvious “uniqueness”.

It is recalled the earlier clarion calls by some sociology-criminology scholars, to conduct what the researcher in this study calls “emergency” study among the developing countries of the world especially in Africa. Contemporary armed robbery and armed robbers in Nigeria are increasingly similar to the archetype of the western world class of the offence and offenders, but, with one important added attribute: the need to excel by utilising other peculiarities of the Nigerian society (e.g., charm-“African insurance”, corruption, and traditional ties) consequently, “emulation”. The development and expatiation of emulation as the polymorphous conceptual framework—theoretical exposition, which offers a better understanding of armed robbery in modern Nigeria, is the focus of Chapter Nine. The development and explanation of this theoretical

perspective is based on both the literature and research findings as discussed in Part II and III.

## **Part V: Conclusion and recommendations**

### **Chapter 10: Summary, conclusion and recommendations**

Finally, chapter Ten is about the recapitulation of the study. It relates findings to the aims set out in chapter One—showing what extent of progress that has been made in linking these goals and results. It once more, clears the ambiguities that may be read into the entire study. By this, it deals with the premise of the argument, the strategy adopted, the outcomes (findings) of the study and its logical argument, and a “caveat” about the study. It draws, at this juncture, some statements of policy—recommendations.

Finally, and worthy of notes as it constitutes part of the structure of the study is that footnotes that expatiate on some relevant issues related to the discussion on the main themes in each of the chapters, but can lead to digression are provided. Some chapters such as Four and Five contain much of these footnotes because in the view of the researcher, there are a lot of issues which are significant, and which needed to be further explained without losing focus on the central themes. At the end of the thesis are appendices—the questionnaire and the letter of approval from the Nigerian Prisons Headquarters, Abuja. These are *appendixes* A and B.

**PART II: LITERATURE STUDY ON ARMED ROBBERY AS A CRIME  
PHENOMENON**



## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **HISTORY AND EXTENT OF ARMED ROBBERY**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

Firstly, it is stated that although Part II is about the literature review of the offence and offenders, but by this it is not suggested that the areas covered in this part are either exhaustive on literature on armed robbery and armed robbers in contemporary Nigeria or perhaps merely limited to existing literature. To an extent, literature review is a continuous process in all academic works and Part II of the study to all intents and purposes also contains assertions that are part of the idiosyncrasies of the researcher.

The need to describe the offence and offenders; to determine the average weighted risk factors (causes); and to develop an encompassing and reflexive theoretical idea to explain the contemporary pattern of the crime in the country, are some of the immediate and ultimate aims of the study (see section 1.4). These aims however, it seems, can only be effectively achieved by providing substantial statistics substantiating the extent and perceptions of fears of the offence and the offenders.

Generally, statistics on armed robbery confirm the feelings of its widespread. Obtaining statistics is, however, fraught with deficiencies especially on crimes and in developing countries such as Nigeria. This is the focus of chapter Two as it provides the history and extent of armed robbery in contemporary Nigeria and beyond. It also covers the perceptions about the severity of armed robbery. It is done to strengthen the statement of the problem.

Chapter two therefore addresses the question of the rates of armed robbery and armed robbers—providing what the researcher perceives as the “in-depth-general-overview and orientation” on the crime phenomenon; how its’ seriousness or severity is determined; what armed robbery is all about; the ideological parameters in conceptualising it; the history of armed robbery (world and Nigeria), and a brief analysis of the context (social, political and economic settings) under which it thrives.

The strategy is first, to provide in greater details, the general overview and orientation to the crime/offence in contemporary Nigeria; and to review, however cursorily, how it has been variously conceptualised by the different authors writing on the subject. Attempt is made to establish/determine the extent of the offence (statistics), while taking into cognisance some issues (limitations) involved in determining that. The issues focused on while attempting to determine the extent of the offence and offenders include problems relating to general crime statistics, the problems relating to crime statistics comparisons among different countries, and problems relating specifically, to crime statistics in Nigeria.

Other issues for attention both within the offence statistics include the trend of armed robbery in both developed and developing countries; the trend and rates of the offence and offenders in contemporary Nigeria; perceptions and severity of armed robbery: the global perspectives, and the Nigerian perspectives; the risk factors of armed robbery: focusing on economic deprivation, unemployment, poverty, socio-political climate and others.

Statistically, figures lifted from literature and government sources are provided to concretely depict variation in reported armed robbery incidents among some selected

countries (more developed and less developed) and the rate and distribution of this reported armed robbery cases amongst most of the states in contemporary Nigeria. They are presented both in tables and expressionistic form. Unfortunately, delineable statistics that could permit for specific periods to periods, states to states and cities-towns-to-cities-towns presentation in Nigeria are either hard to obtain, or simply not available. It is therefore not atypical to find that the available statistics are used as the basis of drawing some inferences or conclusion, or rather still, from which a wider scale of meaning about the offence and offenders could be read. And more fundamentally, about the close relationships between the empirical realities of the offence and the theoretical premise that is favoured in the study.

## **2.2 GENERAL OVERVIEW AND ORIENTATION**

Criminology and sociology scholars in Nigeria such as Iwarimie-Jaja (1987, 1999a; Ekpeyong 1989) are of the view that of all criminal behaviours in contemporary Nigeria, armed robbery is seemingly the most pervasive and the most feared crime. Accordingly, these authors further assert that armed robbery as a criminal action has had the adverse effects on both the development efforts and social well being of Nigerians. Iwarimie-Jaja (1998:103) more or less underscores the prevalence, sophistry, pervasiveness and the adverse impacts of armed robbery when he argues that it occurs every day and night, has unabatedly killed, maimed, and stripped victims of their property. He adds further that they have also continued to instil fear in people, in their homes, work places, schools and neighbourhoods.

In the recent past, and till present, the crime of armed robbery in Nigeria has also markedly attracted the public attentions. Perceived as a huge social threat, the demands are but that of immediate and critical solutions. The impression one gets from some literature is that the crime of armed robbery is one but the most serious of the myriad of factors that led to the fall, or the overthrown of vast a number of the different administrations in modern Nigeria (see Falola and Ihonbvebere 1988; Momoh 1995; Amuwo 1995). The high level of insecurity it brings about both by the armed gangs and the police who now increasingly mow down innocent citizens have as often, led to calls in ironic and dramatic way by the general public for a vote of no confidence on the ruling regime. Indeed this attitude has seemingly to an extent had the tendency of spurring the military “boys” to stage a coup as evidenced in most of their states’ broadcast and statements.

The year beginning from the mid 80s till moment, and especially in the recent past years (1985-2002), has seen more robbery incidence with devastating effects than any other periods in the past. And there is ample evidence that robbery incidences and its sophistry would increase in the future. To the general public, there is “armed robbery state of emergency”. Armed robbers in contemporary Nigeria have demonstrated the tendency to “rule” and wield greater degree of power than government in some parts of the country (e.g. the case Anini saga between 1985-1986). General perceptions of major increases of it in contemporary Nigeria has therefore, constituted *crime waves* and led to calls for “law and order” catch phrases for combating them.

The wave of armed robbery, varies in concentration, and in the sophistry, among towns, cities, villages or semi-towns and urban in contemporary Nigeria, but no part of

the country and time is immune to the menace posed by the scourge: private residences, highways, commercial and business premises, police stations, armed barracks, hospitals, schools and sacred places (churches, mosques and shrines).

In the past, armed robbery followed a predictable and conventional pattern—swinging in upward-downward trends (lying low when the heat against it is intense and outcries on them is high, and only to re-surface when passions appear to cool). But it seems recently, as evidence shows that it upsurges and remains more daring and brutal when outcries pour, and government actions intensify.

On daily basis, hardly is any newspaper not without either the gory or scintillating news of armed robbery incidence. This reflects only those that occur in big urban centres and cities, or that are chosen for attentions by the police, government officials and stakeholders in newspapers and magazines houses. So, if a ground statistics of robbery incidence in the contemporary Nigerian cities, towns and villages are adequately compiled, the staggering picturesque would be alarming than current situation shows, and would really demonstrate that the country is under a system the researcher chooses to describe as “kleptomancracy” or “armedtocracy”—a system of government ruled by armed bandits.

So far, the number of life lost, maimed and rendered useless within the periods under review are also heart throbbing. The quantum of properties lost is gargantuan, and the psychological harms it caused on the survived victims and the hapless and hopeless citizens who are potential victims, enormously debilitating. Policemen, harmless low, middle and high-class citizens, and prized professionals have fallen at the mighty hands of these offenders; most of the time, in cold blood and merciless manner. Women have

also been occasionally, raped, and on several instances, are eyewitnesses to the gruesome murder of their loved ones and breadwinners.

Driving on the highways—day and night is frightening. Sleeping in the houses, a complete nightmare. Welcoming visitors or relations is fraught with utmost risk as these armed robbers use all kinds of trick to surprise their victims. Windows and doors protectors and high skyscrapers fences are the order of the day in virtually all homes in cities, towns and villages. So worrisome is the fact that no time is immune to the robbers. These robbers easily tap morning and dead hours. They come in groups; large enough to send ones heart down the throat. So much so that eyewitness accounts sometimes put the number as ranging from 20 members and above.

On several occasions, letters have been sent to potential victims with demands for “this” and “that”, and compliance is elicited. Both ironically and intriguingly, victims are called “criminals”, and severely chastised for disobeying armed robbers “orders”. And threats on non-compliance have been dutifully carried with impunity and utter disregards to the perceived feeble and corrupt law enforcement agents. Indeed, the mood of Nigerians with respect to robbery situation in the country is one that could be described as that of absolute indignation to sheer bewilderment and resignation.

Government and the general public have not left the problem unattended to. On its side, in addition to conventional police force, various measures as they, government often vowed to do everything possible to arrest the situation, have been taken. This includes setting up special anti-robbery squads to deal with the situation. These have been made up of people drawn from the conventional police, mobile police, and military force. The popular “Federal Road Patrol Team” is an effort geared towards addressing the spate of

highway robberies in the country. Furthermore, Federal and the various states anti-robbery mobile squads have also emerged at various times. These also are characterised by socio-psychological ego-boosting connotations such as “Operation-Fire-for-Fire”; “Operation Smash”; “Operation-Gbale” (clean), “Operation flush”, “Rapid response unit”, “Operation shoot-at-sight”.

On the public part, community policing otherwise known as “vigilante groups” are also formed, and remained relatively effective. There have been, however, some backlogs, which arise from these bodies. Some of them turn into witch-hunting and scour settling among members of the same community. New criminological concepts or constructs have also entered into the criminological vocabulary of Nigerian Criminal Justice Systems. There is for instance, the “necklace treatment”, and “red-knife”<sup>1</sup> as forms of immediate community and neighbourhood justice.

The peculiar situation of armed robbery in contemporary Nigeria is therefore, a dreadful one. It has continued to cast doubts on the police by the general public. It is important, however, to contextualised the upsurge, the nature of the crime and the attitude of the police and public so that a proper understanding of this could be grasped. So, what is the prevailing socio-economic and political context under which armed robbery in contemporary Nigeria thrives? But first and foremost, putting an understanding of armed

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<sup>1</sup> **Necklace** treatment denotes a situation where a tyre doused with petrol is put round the neck of the suspect apprehended and who is subsequently set on fire as an instant kangaroos judgment. This system arises because of what is perceived to be the frustration and disenchantment with the police in handling armed robbers.

**Red-knife** on the other hands, denotes a situation where a suspect is made to pass a test of innocence or guilt by a flash of a mystically smeared knife and a sign of blood expected on the knife in the event of the suspect being guilty of either armed robbery or related crime. The suspect is then subsequently killed.

robbery in a definitional perspective and attempting a review of the ideological factors inherent in the definitions and discussions of the subject are necessary.

### **2.3 WHAT ARMED ROBBERY REALLY IS**

Armed robbery criminologists, like their counterparts in the field of crime have conceptualised and offered lucid definitions on both the object and subject. So, different definitions have resulted. It is interesting, however, to note that these definitions are more or less semantic—they all have one thing in common—“an aggravated assault and larceny” (see Loewy 1981:103).

Loewy (1981:103) defines the subject as a “larceny” from a person or in his presence by force or the threat of immediate force.

Louw et al. (1978:71) quoted by Stevens (1988, cf. Naude and Stevens 1988:163) define armed robbery as the unlawful, wilful and violent taking away of another person’s moveable properties, and its appropriation without, the person’s consent either with actual violence against the person or the threat of violence.

Beirne and Messerschmidt (2000:28-281) define it as the unlawful taking or attempt to take something of value from another person or persons, by using some types of violent force or threat of force; it involves a direct confrontation between offender and the victims.

Iwarimie-Jaja (1993:19) offers a detailed and simplified definition of the offence, He argues that it is the criminal act of a person or group of persons, who take arm whether guns, knives, club, bow and arrow or even spear, with the intent to commit robbery, or actually commits robbery, at day or night, on a person, premises or residences



owned by another person or persons. This definition is the same with the meaning and definition given to the offence by Decree 2 Amended 1978 of the Federal Military Government of Nigeria.

Accordingly, armed robbery as defined by Decree 2 (Amended 1978) of the Federal military government, states that it constitutes the taking of property from a person who has ownership of such property, either with force or the threat of force, before, during or after the taking of such property, against the wish of the owner.

Calitz (1988 cf. Naude and Stevens 1988:164.) intones that it is the unlawful and wilful use of violence, or threats of violence, to force another into allowing property in his immediate control to be stolen.

The common law tradition standard, which also applies to contemporary Nigeria, and the U.S. contemporary Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) and National Crime Survey (NCS), define armed robbery as the taking of property from another by force or threat of force (see Brown et al. 1991:554).

Armed robbery in the opinion of the researcher is an act whether or not premeditated, which is directed at the dispossession of another person's belongings, without the person's consent, either with force or threat of it, with any objects capable to inflict bodily harm on the victim, or the potential of it, and whether or not the offence was committed in the public, private, morning, afternoon or night.

Common element in all these definitions is that the offence is so construed because of the presence of a felony—the possibility or ability to cause bodily injury or shows the potential to wanting to do so.

## **2.4 IDEOLOGICAL PARAMETERS IN CONCEPTUALISING ARMED ROBBERY**

Ideology is discernible amongst criminologists focusing on armed robbery as a specialised field. But unlike other ideologically ridden concepts, there is a unanimous agreement on its contents, rather than the context.

Miller (1973:42) concludes that ideology is the permanent hidden agenda of criminal justice and its appurtenance. In fact, in a survey of leading criminologists, Geis and Meier (1978:280) found that ideological bias is the least healthy development in the field. This implies that it reflects on how the concepts and issues within the criminal justice field are defined and approached. Marxist criminologists have biases, which inform their definitions and perceptions of armed robbery that is different from their functionalist counterparts. Thus, the conceptualisation and definition of armed robbery is to a great extent, the product of this life long socialisation process.

Whatever is the ideology—manifest and latent, the conceptualisation of armed robbery makes sense, insofar it has the property of “violence”, or the threat of it. The crime is violence-prone, because it involves the use of force or the threat of it to obtain goods. The amount of force or threat, and not the value of property stolen, determines the degree of armed robbery. So, the criminal justice system responsibility is to establish the degree of violence or force used, which of course, is also ideologically beclouded.

But what really is the extent of the problems in Nigeria? That is, what does statistics on armed robbery show in contemporary Nigeria? Responding to this question involves confronting the problems inherent in gathering crime statistics both at the global level and in Nigeria.

## **2.5 PERCEPTIONS ON THE SEVERITY AND RANKING OF ARMED ROBBERY**

### **2.5.1 Global Perspectives**

Career criminologists and the general public perceive armed robbery relative to other crimes as a “threat” (see Beirne and Messerschmidt 2000:281). Given that reliable figures and statistics on armed robbery, especially in Nigeria are hard to obtain, and are also viewed with scepticism, one important alternative method for assessing the severity and seriousness placed on the crime situation in any country may probably be the public’s concern about it. This is often expressed through the mass media. Indeed, news media remain an important means of transmitting public anxieties (Clinard and Abbott 1973:21). But public surveys are probably the best measure. Other measures of public’s concern about the seriousness of crime—armed robbery are the pressures for tough legislation, harsher punishment and general security apparatuses reform.

Perception on the seriousness of a crime is significant because, it is the basis upon which proscribed sanctions or sentencing under the criminal justice system are predicated. It also reflects on the fundamental aspect of human cultures. Among some cultures, certain offences are not view as serious, while in others they are. For example, adultery would be viewed differently in terms of perceived seriousness amongst most western countries and the traditional African societies. Seriousness of crime is also described as crucial to understanding of the social psychology of crime. People are more likely to estimate the relative frequencies of different crimes on the basis of their seriousness (Warr 1980).

Public sentiments unfortunately may, reflect a sudden expansion of awareness rather than a great increase in a particular phenomenon. But consistent and persistent complaints by the public, and expressed through the mass media about a problem, indicate some basis for a realistic concern. After all, the central goal of all governments is to ensure greater happiness, which is predicated on the guarantee of security to the majority of its citizens. Using the contents analyses technique, it confirms the importance and seriousness that the general public, including their Nigerian counterpart and the editors of news media, give to armed robbery situation.

All over the world, armed robbery constitutes one crime that is so much in fear of (real or imagined). Perceptions of the offence differ from a person to person, and society to society in relation to their perceived seriousness and severity. It however unarguably, represents one of the most feared crimes because of its “double tragedy”: taking away of one’s property, and causing bodily injury. For instance, in the U.S, a number of studies (Sellin and Wolfgang 1964; Rossi, Waite, Bose, and Berk 1974; Cullen, Link, and Polanzi 1982; Brown, Esbensen, and Geis 1991) to determine how the public rank the severity of crimes show that armed robbery ranked the 5<sup>th</sup> in the list of 78 criminal offences. The study by Rossi et al. (1974) of Baltimore residents’ rate of 140 offences observed that armed robbery in the bank was considered to be the 9<sup>th</sup> most serious offence. Wolfgang (1985) in another separate study to determine the perceived seriousness of offences, ranked “robbing at gun point and the victim dying in the process”, a classical case of high profile armed robbery as 2<sup>nd</sup> amongst a carefully selected list of 37 offences.

In another related development, Brown et al. (1991:554) reports that in 1987, in the U.S, approximately 577,000 robberies were reported to the police. About twice as many (1,030,00) were recorded by interviews in the victim survey. This they argue demonstrates that robbery is the second most frequent violent and feared crime following assault.

Conklin (1972) in one of his best known studies of armed robbery, dubbed it the most “feared” crime; it entails a double element of fear: losing ones properties and, especially risking physical harm. He maintains that bank and armoured robberies received extensive media coverage, perhaps as the researcher of this study evince, because a large sum of money is involved, or they represent strategic position in the capitalist economy. This is also the perception hold by (Beirne and Messerschmidt 2000:281).

In one of the study conducted in U.S in 1980 (cited in Warr and Stafford 1983), armed robbery was one of the leading categories of crime and comes in numerous forms—ranging from the simple burglary, to the organised robbing of banks. So, this study ranked it as the most dreadful, and grouped it into what he referred to as “hit-and-run”. Warr and Stafford (1983) in their study of the perceived fear, risk and seriousness of 16 offences amongst the Seattle respondents, ranked “having something taken away from someone” (armed robbery) 7<sup>th</sup>, surprisingly somehow, coming behind others such as having one’s home broken into; being murdered; threatened with knife, club or gun; and rape among others.

Pitfield and Naude (1999) studied public opinions on crime’s seriousness and sentencing among 22 selected crimes in South Africa. They found that armed robbery

with assault is ranked 6<sup>th</sup>. They compared their findings with the South African UNICRI 1992 and 1995 surveys, which show for example, that the perceived seriousness and subsequent rating of robbery and assault or threat rose dramatically between 1992 UNICRI research and 1993.

At this juncture, the question is: what are the perceptions of the seriousness and severity of the offence amongst Nigerians public and scholars?

### **2.5.2 Perspectives in Nigeria**

Beginning from the mid 80s to the present time, majority of Nigerians unarguably, perceive major increases of armed robbery in Nigeria as constituting a “crime alarm”, phenomenal, and disturbing. There is no formal survey, study or available literature to the attention of the researcher, on crimes ranking in Nigeria. Yet the perception of the seriousness of the offence has, however, not escaped some scholars (Rotimi 1984; Mareni 1987; Ekpeyong 1989; Olurode 1990; Otu 1992; Iwarimie-Jaja 1987,1999a). These authors in their studies, directly or indirectly explained the seriousness and the menace of armed robbery in general, and in Nigeria, in particular.

Iwarimie-Jaja (1987, 1999a), Ekpeyong (1989) and Otu (1992) note that people now live under constant fear, and seem to cage themselves in a self-imprisoned style—behinds heavy iron bars and doors for protection. This is also in addition that innocent souls and breadwinners have been prematurely mowed down in the hands of these armed bandits. Iwarimie-Jaja (1999a: 156-158) captures vividly, the perception of the seriousness of armed robbery in contemporary Nigeria when he writes *inter alia*:

... Of all crimes committed in Nigeria, none is horrifying to the Nigeria people as armed robbery... Indeed, the enormity of armed robbery and the

violence associated with it has become major source of concern not only for the Nigerian citizenry but also for the various levels of government in the country. People are scared to go to the streets, dark alleys and building without security; hence they pay more for security measures such as watchdogs night watchmen, security alarm devices, barricades, and widow protectors. Our high ways and express roads have become dreary for fear of armed robbers who rob, injure and murder travellers.

He goes further to describes the hopelessness and helplessness of the whole situation in terms of managing the quagmire of armed robbery when he says thus (157)

Armed robbery has remained a chronic crime, which is systematically and flagrantly committed with unabated violence. It has been reproduced, reinforced and perpetuated by the tactic collaboration of the different segments of the society.

Odey (2000:69) echoes the view about the perceive seriousness and scourge of armed robbery in today Nigeria when he explains, that armed robbers have virtually taken over the country. According to this author, this has not only raised so many questions about the usefulness of the Nigerian Police, but it has also given rise to the emergence of parallel vigilante groups and or ethnic militias such as Odua People's Congress (OPC), and the Bakasi Boys who have suddenly become the people's darling to the consternation of both the federal government and the Police.

Mareni (1987) while trying to depict the seriousness of the offence notes that the majority of Nigerian citizenry feel that the country is unsafe, and is besieged by armed robbers who are better organised, and committed than the police. So, he argues that life is uncertain. Indeed, the situation in the country over the past few years can be described as one in which daily-armed robbery operations have left people gasping for breath. A good number of promising young men and women have been brutally stripped off all their belongings, murdered or maimed.

Agekame et al. (2001:26) writing in the *Tell Magazines* recently re-echoed this perceived seriousness and the alarming dangers associated with armed robbery in contemporary Nigeria. According to these authors, the country has been under the tormenting siege of armed robbers and assassins alike. They also write that these “hoodlums”, as they referred them, are day in, day out moving about on the streets, and wrecking havocs on innocent citizens. As a consequent, a number of people, both the lowly and highly placed, have either being killed in their prime, or those who are lucky to stay alive have been maimed, traumatised or dehumanised. In addition, according to them, never at any time in Nigeria chequered history has the country been subjected to such horrendous reign of armed hoodlums as everyone now tremble with fears-the fears of the unknown (26).

In his sarcastic, but well-founded treatise warning visitors to Africa titled “So You’re Planning A Trip to Africa”, Scott Bidstrup (1999:3) illuminates the seriousness of armed robbery in modern Nigeria. He warned the would-be-visitors to be wary. As he put it inter alia:

... Never travel at night. Armed robbery is always everywhere in Nigeria, but is much worse at night...Daytime travel isn’t safe, but it is much safer than nighttimes travel. Never carry all your money with you. If you get robbed, and they find your money (and yes, they will, no matter how clever you think you are), you’ll end up penniless in a country that doesn’t know the meaning of the words “credit cards”, “wire transfers”, “ATM”, or “bank credit”. Although the new government is making inroads into the problem, it is still serious, and the possibility it could happen to you quite real. The best defence is to be prepared...

The media too, have time often, reflected on the incidence of armed robbery and its unrivalled perceived seriousness an gory, with titillating headlines and editorials, reverberating series of highly impassioned news, about the wave of the offence, short of



saying that it ranks first among all other crimes in modern Nigeria. These feelings and perceptions no doubt influenced the Obasanjo government of 1999 to set aside the sum of two billion naira (N2), described, however, as paltry for the police to buffer up their equipment in the fight against it. This singular effort in monetary term demonstrates the concern over the seriousness of armed robbery among other conventional and non-conventional crimes in modern Nigeria.

There are also of course, unlimited public reactions and discussions on the perceived seriousness of armed robbery relative to other crimes, now rooted at the community levels, sometimes, in a perverse romanticised manner, and at other times, with a sense of fear. To the general public, armed robbers who assume devilish and “spiritual” during operations are sons, relations, friends, well-wishers and those well known to them. They live with them and also partake in the discussions about their activities. Importantly, the apparent general public’s perceptions on the seriousness of the crime are expressed through pressures for tough legislation, harsher punishments and general security apparatuses reform as earlier noted.

There are exceptions to the viewpoints expressed above on the seriousness of armed robbery. Schur (1965:24) noted that public perceptions of crime and its consequent ranking is a direct function of crime reports, and its seriousness that are often times, done in a manner to ignite alarm, and to provoke impassioned reactions. While reviewing the statement of the U.S. Presidential Commission on law enforcement and administration of justice that worked on the FIB 1965 figures, Schur argued that the common assumption and fear of attack by strangers lurking the shadows, heightens the general public perception of crime alarm (24).

The perceptions and the general fear of armed robbery, and its high ranking relative to other crimes, is not because of loss that are measured in monetary values. According to Adler, Mueller, and Laufer (1991:224) it is important, because of other consequences such as the psychological and physical traumas in their wake. These authors are of the views that these later consequences are grave, and that the aftermaths became more glaring if the decay in the society caused this pervasive fear and anxiety are taken into account.

It is worth reviewing, however cursory, the history of both the offence and the offenders. Indeed, only a cursory of notable few armed robbery escapades and armed robbers are reviewed because the exact date when this form of contemporary armed robbery started, and all the seasoned (professional) armed robbers that have emerged either in any part of the cosmopolitan world, or in specific terms, Nigeria may never be correctly ascertained.

## **2.6 THE HISTORY OF ARMED ROBBERY**

The history of outlaws shows that it is not a recent origin in all societies. As a matter of fact, the pre-historic and middle ages were certainly, violent epochs. These periods were characterised by different kinds of anti-social behaviour and crimes. These crimes and behaviour sometimes, were weird, and at other time simply deviance and intriguing by outlook. Prominent among these anti-social and criminal behaviour is armed robbery<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> In a simple term, it refers to the taking away of another person's belongings with the threat of force or with actual use of the force against the person's will. (For details definition, see section 1.6 or 2.3).

Armed robbery is a feared behaviour universally, and apparently, has a long history of early abhorrent and criminalisation. In short, it seemed obvious to have been incontrovertibly criminalized by all societies: formal or informal, traditional or contemporary.

In the literature, it is hard to assert correctly, when the first armed robbery took place either in any part of the world, in general or in Nigeria, in specific terms; or the first truly seasoned or professional armed robber to emerge. The reasons could be probably because of the absent of a proper formal documentation during this pre-historic periods. It may also be the result of categorisation, which may have simply grouped what is today regarded as armed robbery together with “stealing” and “thievery”. For instance, McLynn (1989:90) also notes that during the medieval England (eighteen century) to be precise, the dividing line between actual robbery and burglary was often a shadowy one.

Available records, however, point to one or two identified notorious armed robbers and robbery operations that are associated with one epoch or the other across nations of the world. The Encyclopaedia American (1963 23:576) for example, identifies “Robin Hoods” as an armed robber legend unique to the medieval England. Hood’s robbery mission statement and *modus operandi* was to rob the propertied class (rich) people and to share his loots among those he described as the less privileged individuals (the less propertied class).

McLynn (1989:5) identifies the species of London criminals feared most as the “footpad”—armed robbers operating on foot; and usually in gangs, and whose *modus operandi* was to waylay victims in one area, and then retreat to safety in the “flash houses” (safe houses) of one of the notorious “rookies”. Others kinds of footpad—armed

robbers he identifies, are the “White Brothers”, and “Obadiah Lemons” gangs that emerged and took sway in London during the 18<sup>th</sup> century. There are also the dacoits (band of armed robbery bandits) that were associated formerly, with India and Burma (see Clinard and Abbott 1973:41). Eugene Vidocq of France, and Everett Debaun of U.S are other notable professional-heavy armed robbers that have captured attention in history. In U.S., there is the famous Brink’s robbery that occurred in Boston in 1950 carried out with the flavour of professionalism (see Gibbons 1982: 25 for the amazing details).

However, going by literature review it may be read to suggest that the first known and recorded sophisticated armed robbery in history, identified by McLynn (1989: 95), and quoted from *New Newgate Calendar* (1818 edition), was James Turnbull’s attempt in the winter of 1798 in medieval England. The telling of the story is that Turnbull in company of an accomplice called Dalton, clapped a pistol to the head of the apprentice that was left to take charge of the coining room, wherein incidentally, he was also an attaché guard that guarded the Mint, having pretended to have gone on breakfast, and then demanded the keys of the chest where the finished guineas were kept. The duo made away with four bags containing 2,380 guineas and effected their escape before the alarm could be given. According to the same author (McLynn 1989: 95) this robbery escapade was a startling one, and an omen of the shape of things to come.

Available literature do not provides with specific history of armed robbery in any part of the traditional Nigeria society. Iwarime-Jaja (1998:31) is, however, of the opinion that unemployment and armed robbery were not at all, in existence in the pre-colonial economy of Nigeria in general, and Port Harcourt metropolis in specific terms. This

according to him was because of the absence of a wage employment, and its concomitant inequality in the distribution of produce and associated services. Implicit in his argument therefore, is that armed robbery came with the advent of colonisation and the effective monetisation of the economy and institutionalisation of formal paid employment.

Because no society is not without a history of dispossession with violence or threat of it, armed robbery may have as well, been entrenched in the traditional component units of contemporary Nigeria. Oral history suggests that in most component societies that constitute contemporary Nigeria, ownership of properties, particularly landed properties, were determined by the extent one is able and capable to subdues his opponents—in a show of violence, or threat of force. The point being made is that armed robbery, however, rudimentary and crude it was, may have thrived under the different traditional settings of what is now aggregately, referred to as contemporary Nigeria.

The birth of contemporary Nigeria by and large, which began from early contact with the western world, gradually and steadily brought about the scientific pattern of current armed robbery, however. From this period, there are in historical records, scores of notorious armed robbers. Scholars such as Olurode (1990) and news media reports have alluded to such armed robber personalities such as “Dr. Oyenusi and his gang of troop”, “Anini and co” alias the “Law”, “Oyazimo and co”, “Mighty Joe and gang”, “Machine and the gang”, “Clement Ozorobodo alias Ekwensu” to mention but a few, as notorious and professional armed robbers that have terrorised modern day Nigeria from time to time. In recent time, gangs of armed robbers bearing different ego-boosting sobriquets have equally, and continuously, emerged across the wide spectrum of Nigeria.

Armed robbers and armed robbery in all its ramifications exists in contemporary Nigeria, and in a manner deems as very high, but it remains that there is a disappointing documentation of what approximate the true reflection of this crime in the country. Statistics on social phenomena such as armed robbery is importance especially when prioritised attention on such swath of social problems is mostly, based on the degree of their occurrences. At this juncture, it becomes an exercise worth doing to have a look at the issue of crime or armed robbery statistics, and the problems encountered thereof. But before that, it is of germane to provide a brief description of the context of cotemporary armed robbery and armed robbers in Nigeria, and to demonstrate further why the problem is worth studying in contemporary Nigeria in the manner it is being carried out by the researcher.

## **2.7 THE CONTEXT OF ARMED ROBBERY IN CONTEMPORARY NIGERIA**

Debate between crime-free society and crime-ridden society as they relate to both socialism and capitalism—the two dominant and competing mode and relation of production, has remained unending among scholars interested in comparative crime studies.

Armed robbery and in the current form it exists in modern Nigeria is not just as given. To an extent, it is a product of the combined factors of socio-economic and the political settings under which Nigeria citizens passed through in the past, continue to transit, and are currently in. The predisposing elements present in these factors reflect the constraints the individual find him or herself in all social formations.

Nigeria in its present form is, by historical antecedent significantly structured after the capitalist economic system. It is thus, an integral part of the existing and dominant world economy system. Given as it is, Nigeria's economy is highly susceptible to the crises and fluctuations in the capitalist world economy. The result is contradiction between the social surpluses and investment problems. Bangura (1984: 44) notes that "most of the social surpluses, have not been utilised in the economy; that the various arms of capital, have either transferred large amounts of such surpluses overseas by way of dividends; that corrupt import practices are covered for capital transfers and the actual importation of manufactured commodities, raw materials and capital inputs". In spite of what the enormous profits being generated in all sectors of the economy in the country, the level of development remains, abysmally, low because a big chunk of the profits is either spent on conspicuous consumption or in overseas investments. They are also mostly stacked in foreign accounts by the class of compradorial bourgeois, who by happenchance, are in top political class and pseudo-economic sector of the country.

A further analysis of Nigeria economy shows that it is by its very nature of dependence on the western economy system, simply a *compradorial and periphery*<sup>3</sup>. The political structure, dependent on the economic organisation is by this arrangement, very feeble, weak, parasitic, and oppressive with wide range of implications. Olurode (1990:67-68) has described the Nigeria political settings, and transition under which Anini—a notorious armed bandit in the mid 80s freely operated with success. And

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<sup>3</sup> A comprador and periphery economy is one in which the economy lacks the independence to effectively make decision on what to produce, for whom to produce and how to distribute the produce. There is no political will backed with economic power to decide which sector of the economy need be popped up for the betterment of the mass of the citizens.

rightly, he notes, that he (Anini), was disgruntled and disgusted by the oppressive system, which made many to suffer in the midst of plenty. Anini, he asserts, was a rebel with a purpose and objective in mind just like Robin Hoods. The oppressive economic strategies and the political repression adopted by the ruling military elites, represent a theoretical premise upon which Anini's saga through the popular press has to be understood (Olurode 1990:68).

Part and parcel, and indeed, most significant of the capitalist mode of production, its attendants social values, and political system, is the media in its various forms. The powerful role of the media in promoting the culture of the prevailing system of production, system of governance as well as the social value could not be overemphasised. The media, particularly Television and newspapers, are indispensable in the current world economic and political system order. They, in no small measures, influence the mass of the world populace, particularly the less developed countries. So, the prevailing way of living: the good, the bad, and the ugly of contemporary Nigerians has been imitated, learned, and emulated through these media particularly Cinemas, TV and books, including newspapers and magazines. Box (1996: 273) observes that the media, particularly TV, which ironically, is a form of entertainment affordable by poorer people, pumps out "the good life for you" every hour of the day, creating in those who haven't got it a sense of disillusionment and deprivation. Olurode (1990:65) reiterates this view when he asserts, that different TV programmes often eulogise man and women of violence, but who are rich as *Olola*<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> Olola is a Yoruba (one of the three important ethnic-lingual composite of contemporary Nigeria) which denotes a person of "great". In other words, it is a symbol status.



Thus, the peripheral nature of the Nigeria's economy, the weak but repressive political structure, and the attendants' internal and external social pressures, exert significant pull-and-push forces on the Nigerians particularly, those that are in the economic edge of the country, to engage in armed robbery. The engagement is, however, not only in its conventional manner, but it is also with added sophistry and ruthlessness. In other words, it is the unique dynamism, embedded in the structural changes, which Nigeria has passed through since contact with the western world, are what account for the high incidence and sophisticated form of present day armed robbery in the country. The contact is essentially a cultural one. It generated conflicts and contradictions, which are measured in changes in the value system leading to what the researcher describes as a "sublime of inescapism". These conflicts and contradictions vividly explain while armed robbery is greater in urban areas than in rural areas, and even more prevalent in large cities because these cities and urban areas are the true reflection of these structural changes. Quinney (1979:225-26) notes that urban areas—especially larger cities, provide the cultural and structural environments that lead to the development of behaviour patterns that may result in criminally defined activities. Capitalist development is most pronounced in the city, and it is in the largest cities of capitalist society that crime is prevalent (Quinney 1979:226).

The sudden upsurge in armed robbery in Nigeria today therefore, is seen as a clear manifestation of the distortion in the socio-economic environment predicated on the capitalist mode of production. It is also better appreciated as the result of the attendant political structure that came about as a result of this mode of production. The intervening variable in this argument is that distortion causes unemployment per se, and or economic

inequality (see also Danzigar 1976; Stack 1978; Carroll and Jackson 1983; Box 1985; Samson 1985).

From earlier writers like Henry George, Karl Marx, Charles Booth, Jane Adams, to recent scholars like Clinard and Abbot, Iwarimie-Jaja, Ekpeyong, Odekunle, and United Nations Organisation (UNO), the general increase in the rates of crime and delinquency in developing countries, is a product of the economic deprivation that causes social problems. Iwarimie-Jaja (1998:96) further adds that most people arrested, prosecuted, and imprisoned for crimes are from the lower socio-economic groups. So, literature on armed robbery, both in the contemporary Nigeria and elsewhere, unreservedly linked crimes in general and armed robbery in particular, to the economic and to an extent, the political conditions of social formations. In the view of the researcher of this work, there exists substantial data, which proof that crimes and armed robbery in particular may have significant link with the economic and political conditions of a social area.

Beyond the theoretical assertions establishing the pervasiveness of the offence and offenders in contemporary Nigeria, the question remains “are there empirical data that substantiate these claims”? That is, what figures exist that give indication of the demographic trend of this offence and offenders? However, before attempting to provide these figures, suffice to say that the problems inherent in gathering of crime statistics are highlighted so that caution could always be the watchword in their interpretation.

## **2.8 THE EXTENT OF ARMED ROBBERY**

### **2.8.1 The problems relating to general crime statistics**

Statistics have become an important tool in the study of social phenomena. In the field of crime, criminologists and criminal justice workers have for years, confronted themselves with crime trend dilemma. Indeed, statistics on armed robbery like in other social events is a vital aspect of the study. In most cases, theories on armed robbery causation are grounded in crime statistics, and popular and professional perceptions of its extent and distribution are shaped by this information (see Brown et al. 1991:127).

Generally, armed robbery statistics are based on reported cases, and the few arrests made. Fortunately or unfortunately, most of them go unreported and even un-arrested. This leads to the popular “dark figure” crime statistics, and appears in the vast literature. People are scared to report armed robbery for fear of reprisal, and in some countries such as contemporary Nigeria, the lacklustre attitudes of the police makes it more problematic. Police hardly respond promptly to any reported cases of armed robbery and have in most cases, to the consternation of the members of the public turned their inefficiency and corrupt attitudes against innocent ones, or even corruptly and summarily released arrested known armed bandits. There are also lots of inconveniences in reporting to the court for any trial processes. This makes a good number of robbery incidences go unreported.

In addition, public response to crime and criminals is largely based upon views regarding the seriousness and magnitude of the crime problem. The general feelings about a particular social action is expressed, when many people begin to feel the heat of such action directly or indirectly, and also because news about it subsumed empirically or otherwise, are fed to the general public appetite. As a result it is argued that any study of

crime statistics must determine, in the first place, how many transgressions there are, the nature of the crime, and the social background of the transgressors (see Gibbons 1978:78).

Paradoxically, the task of having a reliable and good crime statistics is a herculean one—not even on the traditional method of depending on official crime statistics solves this problem (Hagan (1987). So, most armed robbery criminologists like their counterparts, have adopted the victim survey and self-reporting studies in order to have a fairer and reliable statistical data (Rotimi 1984; Hagan 1987; Olurode 1990); Maree 1999). The problems of crime statistics become more discernible when the goal is, as it is often, the current standard to compare crime statistics across cultural boundaries or countries.

### **2.8.2 Problems relating to comparisons of crime in different countries**

Problems inherent in comparing crime rates among the different countries have made some authors such as Stevens (1990 in Cloete and Stevens 1990:128; Nkpa 1994 in Otite 1994:269; Brown et al. 2001: 83-121) to caution that statistics on crime and criminal must be interpreted with extreme caution. According to these writers, it is because they give only an approximation of the amount at any given time; they also useless in determining the trend over a period of time. Harlow (1986), Brown et al. (1991; 2001) and (Stevens 1990 in Cloete and Stevens 1990) have therefore, levelled some criticisms against the Official Crime Statistics.

The study of crime and criminology is better enhanced by their comparative approach, which have been increasingly employed in recent years. Yet such an approach

especially, when concerned with comparing crime rates and incidence is problematic because of a number of factors which include the following.

- Definition of different types of crimes varies, and the legislation regulating such offences also varies from one country to the other (notable is the offence of terrorism, corruption, rape, battery, incest).
- Crime gathering statistics differ remarkably among countries, and not all countries keep accurate statistics. This is because of several reasons: ranging from political to ideology and religion. Others could be lousiness, and wide corruption. For instance, while some countries may feel the need to suppress the figures for political reasons, others may wish to show that they are advanced, and are more efficient in the act of crime handling.
- Cultural differences make reporting of offences and offenders vary among different countries. Crimes are more likely to be underreported in the less developed countries, which still have greater cultural ties with one another, than the more developed countries where individualism seems more to be a common feature of the society. Such countries are bound to have different crime statistics.
- There are sometimes, haphazard in crime taxonomy. Crimes are not just neatly and correctly classified. For instance, depending on the arresting officer, assault over a female partner could be turned into statutory rape, demands for arrest warrant could be termed into a further resistance of arrest.

- Law enforcement differs considerably. Countries with highly trained officers, and equipped with modern crime detective devices, will record more offences than countries where law enforcement are ill trained, equipped and poorly motivated as prevalent in most of the less developing countries. The situation becomes exacerbated when and where the ratio of a policeman to a civilian is wide. Indeed, not all offences are detected by the police, as evidenced by the large number of missing persons in some countries, many of whom may have been murdered.

Therefore, it is not always meaningful to compare and take the incidence (extent) of crime in different countries as given, because it may be difficult to find a reliable and valid measure. Importantly, it makes little contribution to compare crime rates of the more developed countries with those of the less developed countries because of the specific different levels of human resource development and socio-economic, political and demographic (cultural) factors (see Dantzker 1998; Mawby 1999).

### **2.8.3 Specific problems relating to crime statistics in Nigeria**

The specific difficulties in compiling crime statistics and especially on armed robbery in contemporary Nigeria is worthy of note. Mareni (1987:259-281) supports the view of a hard time success for reliable statistical data on general crimes, and armed robbery in Nigeria each year. This is notwithstanding the public perceptions of the seriousness and potential risk associated with it. Indeed, collation and/ or presentation of crime statistics by the police and Federal Office of Statistics are generally fraught with scepticism, danger and inaccuracy.

Furthermore, in contemporary Nigeria as in some developing countries, there is a paradox in that the police, quite often, have turned around to harass genuine armed robbery victims and informants in what staggers peoples' imagination. As a result, many robbery victims and those with reliable information on armed robbers are hesitant to report to the police.

There are several reasons that could possibly account for the specific difficulties in obtaining up-to-date and reliable statistical data on armed robbery in Nigeria in particular. Some of them are:

- One of the reasons is the manner police handle arrest and categorisation of the offence.

It goes without saying that the police upon whose lies the responsibility to handle armed robbery cases has often, made arrest inappropriately. In most cases police have failed to respond to reported or alerted armed robbery cases with promptness, and in other cases received gratification from suspects and let them off the hook. The resultant effect of this is that a good number of armed robbery cases never appear in the official crime statistics. Certainly, a regular visit to the police stations reveals the lacuna that exists between recorded crimes rates on the police information board, the annual police bulletin and the daily accounts of robbery cases by the media and public at large.

- Another contributing factor is that in Nigeria, there are too many bureaucratic bottlenecks; this makes the collation and access to official information cumbersome. There are delays before annual statistical information are compiled and made available to relevant institutions.

- Strict attention to the importance of statistics is either not taken seriously or are simply just treated as things of the past. As a result, vital statistical compilations are either simply belated, or thrust aside as non-issue.
- The continuum changes in the socio-political composite of Nigeria; this truncated by incessant military incursion, it makes any meaningful and reliable compilation of statistics especially on crimes cumbersome. As a consequent, states and local government councils are constantly created and re-created. This system adjusts not only the boundaries, but also the administrative processes. So, relevant documents and official appurtenances are deftly altered and dislocated, or they simply distort the geo-political crime figures.

In sum, statistics on crimes and armed robbery in both other countries and contemporary Nigeria is, problematic and hard to obtain. In fact, there is a severe gap between perceptions of the extent of armed robbery and documented official statistics. Bureaucratic bottlenecks, administrative inconsistencies, lack of neat categorisation and the lacklustre attitude of the police force, are some of the obstacles to a reliable statistics on crime and armed robbery in contemporary Nigeria. There are increasing efforts by the Federal Office of Statistic, the Nigerian Police, Office of the Federal Ministry of Information and other related agencies to ensure that up-to-date and more comprehensive statistics of social events in contemporary Nigeria are supplied regularly.

Since this study is critical of the western approach to the explanation of contemporary armed robbery in the less developed countries, and especially Nigeria, both the offence and the offenders therefore, are not studied as in isolation. It continues to



make reference, and to reflect on both the offence and offenders at the global perspective. Thus, a cursory reference to the extent of the offence in some selected states, cities and years in other countries of the world, is worthwhile.

## **2.9 STATISTICAL TRENDS ON ARMED ROBBERY IN DIFFERENT COUNTRIES**

### **2.9.1 More developed countries versus less developed countries**

As noted in the last paragraph of section 2.8.3 above, the need to document some armed robbery figures in both contemporary Nigeria, and across its border, is necessary. It provides the basis for a cursory cross-reference study. There are few armed robbery statistics amongst some selected countries, which as more developed than contemporary Nigeria, and on few others, which are within the same development axis as Nigeria.

The importance of the comparative review of this figures is that besides, that it provides a glimpse of the trend of armed robbery in both the more developed and the less developed countries, it also can be read to strongly suggest, that armed robbery reflects the level of development associated with a particular society. Therefore, contemporary armed robbery in the less developed countries may no less, be the resultant effect of what the researcher describes as the process of increasing “osmotic cultural permissiveness” between, and amongst these countries (more developed and less developed).

With particular reference to South Africa and U.S., while there is commonalities between South Africa and Nigeria in terms of their crime problems including the sophisticated armed robbery, the U.S. on the other hand represents a perfect example of the more advanced countries whose crime statistics, is comparative to the less developed

countries, but which also nevertheless, are passing through the same processes, the differences notwithstanding.

While reflecting his mind on the trend of armed robbery in the U.S, Sykes (1978:94) notes firstly, that armed robbery is the least frequent crime against property reported to the police because of its double elements—the theft of property, and the use or threat of violence as the means. He, however, further reports while citing the Uniform Crime Report, (1976: 19-21), that a total of 420,000 armed robbery cases were known to the police in 1976, scaling down from 465,000 from the preceding year (1975).

There are quite a remarkable number of other crimes besides, armed robbery in the cities and the states amongst these countries, but the reports and evidence from crime information sources consulted for this study, shows that armed robbery both with aggravating circumstances and without, are reasonably on the high side when it is compared to the other major crimes in the cities and states (for details, visit the sources)<sup>5</sup>.

Analysis and/ or interpretation of these figures suggests that the figures against Uganda, Egypt, Argentina and Brazil, represent those surveyed and recorded against each of the major cities in the states or countries. They indicate either a percentages increase or decrease. The figures in other countries or states (the more developed) are recorded as the totality of armed robbery in these states or countries.

What is remarkable and worthy of note is that the figures on recorded armed robbery cases are higher in the more or most advanced or industrialised countries such as

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<sup>5</sup> The International Crime Victims Surveys, Leiden University (<http://rujis.leiden.nl>)  
U.S Department of Justice Federal Bureau of Investigation, Washington, D.D. FBI.  
National Press Office. <http://www.fbi.gov/pressrel/99>.  
Crime Information Analysis Centre, Crime Intelligence, South African Police Service.  
Head Office, Pretoria 1/2000 and 2001.<http://www.saps.org.za>

U.S, Sweden, England and Wales than other less-developing countries such as Kampala and Argentina. This therefore implies that contemporary armed robbery is principally a product of modern day industrialisation and development. So, as a country imbibes and follows the line of contemporary development, so also it is more likely to learn, and to emulate the negative sides of it—chiefly is armed robbery.

Further analysis of the figures from these sources shows a remarkable high incidence of armed robbery cases in all the cities and states. There is, however, another remarkable feature observed. The trend passes through three stages: increase, stabilises and decreases or the other way round.

## **2.9.2 TRENDS AND RATES OF ARMED ROBBERY IN NIGERIA**

Notwithstanding the difficulties enumerated in section 2.8.3 above as inherent in the compilation and presentation of crime statistics, and the specific armed robbery in contemporary Nigeria, a fairly good number of armed robbery statistics, which depicts the trends and incidence, are documented annually in all states and in the. Statistics on armed robbery, crimes in Nigeria come mainly from the media reports, academic studies, Federal Office of Statistics, the Police reports and to an extent, public perceptions.

### **2.9.2.1 Academic Reports**

Clinard and Abbot (1973:39), quoting a report in the Daily Times Newspaper of Nigeria Annual Review, 1971 note that more than 40 convicted armed robbers were executed by firing squad before thousand of spectators in various parts of the country during the early

70s. In another incident, these authors quoted another two robbers that were publicly executed in Lagos for robbing a man of \$8.58 worth of personal articles.

Adeyemi's seminar paper in *This Week Magazines*, 15 September 1986, and the *Vanguard*, 22 September 1986, on: "armed robbery and its countermeasures", drew data drawn from police reports on armed robberies covering 1966-1985. These sources showed that the largest figure recorded was 2381 in 1980 and 2370 in 1966; the lowest is 883 in 1974 and 1194 in 1985. The above presentation reflects Rotimi's (1984) view on the offence in Nigeria as he took a comparative analysis with the New York City in U.S. While Nkpa 1994 in Otite (1994:271) in his submission asserts that between 1970-1977, armed robbery records stood at 3258 with the number of female being 29.

Iwarimie-Jaja (1999a: 149) drew from other important sources, and documented armed robbery trends in the city of Port Harcourt between the periods 1970-1990. He observed that the least recorded years are 1971 and 1972, that each had one case. This apparently reflects the inadequacy in crime statistics as earlier pointed out in section 2.8.3 because it is fraught with suspect, to assume that only one robbery incident each occurred during these two years. The maximum record is against 1984 and 1985, with 50 and 45 cases each. Incidentally, these latter periods mark the gory entry of Nigeria into the era of economic and social morasses.

Reviewing further literature, Iwarimie-Jaja (1999a: 155-156) notes that armed robbery which he rightly described as the most horrifying crime to the Nigeria populace, recorded a total of 2258 cases between the period of 1985 and 1987 in twenty one states of the Federation. Of this, 343 figures he notes involved lost of life. Lagos state, the

commercial nerve centre of the country, had the highest recorded incidence of armed robbery.

#### **2.9.2.2 The media**

“*The Observer*” newspaper in a report on 25 November 1984 states that more than 80 people had, by then, been executed following the coup of December 1983, and that over 800 more people were awaiting execution on armed robbery related offences. According to the *Guardian* and *Sunday Vanguard* newspapers 19 March 1986 and 21 November 1986 while reporting about crimes in Lagos, the police in 1985 reported a total of 324,296 criminal offences. The break down shows among others, a total of 1194 armed robbery cases with an estimated lost of properties worth about 350 million Naira.

While also reporting on the state of the nation with regard to the trend and incidence of armed robbery, *Tell magazine* (2000), reports that between 15 August 2000 and 21 November 2000, a total of 563 armed robbery cases were reported in Nigeria. Number of the victims killed and injured stand at 113 and 275 respectively. The number of armed robbers killed on the other hand, is 271, and those arrested are 763. Two hundred and nine (209) weapons were recovered, while 29 policemen’s weapons were lost. Also, 81 policemen were injured and 24 killed.

Similar report is provided in *Thisday Sunday Newspaper* of 29 October 2000. It reports estimate, that by December 2000, about 1350 people would have been shot and killed by armed robbers in Nigeria during the year under review. Another 2564 would have been maimed. Still, another 3064 armed robbery operations would have been

accomplished. The paper (2000: 11) concludes that this data is not exhaustive. It depicted and graphiced the gory scenario of armed robbery in modern Nigeria as:

Every day, at least three people somewhere in the country will be killed, and as readers go through the paper, a head is being blown away, a stomach is being ripped open and limb is being shattered by bullets whizzing of the barrel of an armed robbers' gang.

Sweeping the above remarks appears; the obvious fact is that the statements confirm some truths. Certainly, armed robbery is a serious problem; and a cankerworm in contemporary Nigeria, whose victims know no boundary. So much so, that in the opinion of the researcher, the situation in contemporary Nigeria with respect to the offence could be is best described as:

No place is inviolable, no one is sacred: peasants and presidents; robbers are levellers of sort. They are in charge! From banks to barracks, from home to hospitals, from roads to religious places. Anywhere they set their dark feet, they loot, they kill, they maim, they even rape...

#### **2.9.2.3 Federal Office of Statistics and Police reports**

According to the office of the Federal Statistics, in 1990, a total of 307,202 crime cases were reported to the police. Of these figures, armed robbery and extortion put together represent 1700. In 1991, a total of 283,166 were reported by which armed robbery and extortion stood at 1054. In 1992, the figure stood at 143,576 with a total of 1569 armed robbery cases alone. The 1993 reports depict a total of 204,022 with the crime of armed robbery taking a share of 1975. Analyses of these figures show clearly a rising trend and incidence.

Police reports (see *Tell Magazines* December, 2000: 26-35 and *Thisday* newspaper October 1999:11), put it that between 27 September and 3 October alone, 43 reported cases of armed robbery were recorded in 16 States of the Federation. In these

cases, 9 people were killed, and 24 critically injured. The reports also state that in Lagos alone, an average of 280 armed robbery cases are reported in various police stations monthly.

According to the Lagos police command reports reproduced in *Thisday* newspaper 29 October 2000, between August 1999 and July 2000, an average of 184 robbery cases were reported in Lagos. A total of three hundred and eighty seven (387) armed robbers were killed in an encounter, 484 were arrested, 26 policemen killed, and 69 injured. Armed robbery trend in modern Nigeria is no doubt, on the high side and very endemic. As the *Thisday* 29 October 2000:11 further put it *inter alia*:

From Lagos to Abuja, Kaduna to Bida, Onitsha to Yola, armed hoodlums showing neither mercy nor pity have unleashed a reign of terror on Nigerians. They are all over-in towns and villages, in ghettos and GRAs. No one is safe, no place is sacred, and no security is inviolable. The armed hoodlums are just daring, they are ruthless. They steal, they maim, they rape, and they kill...

#### **2.9.2.4 Documentations based on the academic, police and Federal Office of**

##### **Statistics reports**

As the trend and rate of armed robbery in Nigeria are reviewed and discussed, a few available statistical tables of the spatial dimensions, distributions and concentration of the crime becomes insightful, and it is worthy of presentation. Tables 2-1 to 2-9 below reflect the general patterns, and its distribution of the crime of armed robbery in contemporary Nigeria. They are presented to demonstrate that their concentration and distribution reflects the premise of the argument of the study—that the crime phenomenon is the consequent of western contact or simply the level and patterns of development. An indicator of this contact is the number of cities, urban and townships, which are the characterisation of these states.

The states that constitute the study areas (Rivers, Ebonyi, Imo, and Umuahia states) are reflected in most of the tables, but where possible such as in Ebonyi state, separate figures and statistics are obtained, and presented differently. More generally, the tables bearing the figures presented in this study reflect the accessible ones, and they tend to reveal the trends and concentration of the offence. The most important in these documentations—tables are the statistics against 21 states of the federation and the specific one in Port Harcourt between 1970-1990 and adapted from Iwarimi-Jaja (1999a: 148).

Because of the several difficulties enumerated above in section 2.8.3, for access into a reliable and far-flung statistics in Nigeria, it is instructive to state that statistics that were obtained or adopted in this study may not be a true reflection of the contexts and time frame of the study (1970-2002), or even far behind that. No doubt, that it is a herculean task to access the rate of armed robbery in all the states sampled, and against all the years such as the boom and the loom periods. In fact, it is against the backdrop of these difficulties that the researcher has viewed it necessary to adopt the figures provided by scholar such as Iwarimie-Jaja (1999a), in addition, to those he gathered from other sources—police, federal Office of Statistics.

The purpose of this documentation is two fold: Firstly, to provide a glimpse of the armed robbery variation between the period describable as the “boom” and the “loom” in contemporary Nigeria. Secondly, to further demonstrate the links between armed robbery and urbanisation or industrialisation, as the consequence of the experiences of western contact, and the attendant “culture infiltration, dominant, and conflict”. All these are the characterisations of contemporary Nigeria. Iwarimie-Jaja (1999a: 178) had asserted that



a trend-analysis of armed robbery offers the opportunity to determine whether there is a significant difference in the frequency of the crime between the period of economic boom and economic crisis (loom).

**Table 2.1 Armed Robbery in Port Harcourt Metropolis (1970-1979): Moment of Economic Boom in Contemporary Nigeria**

Year	Population Figure	Armed Robbery Figure	Rate %	Annual Increase/decrease
1970	329,137	6	0.0018	-
1971	352,647	1	0.00028	-83.3
1972	366,752	1	0.00027	-83.3
1973	376,156	13	0.00345	+117.0
1974	399,666	5	0.00125	-16.7
1975	399,944	9	0.00225	+50.0
1976	418,351	7	0.00167	+16.7
1977	437,648	3	0.00068	-50.0
1978	457,884	7	0.00152	+16.7
1977	479,103	7	0.00146	+16.7

**Table 2.2 Armed Robbery in Port Harcourt Metropolis (1980-1990): Moment of Economic Loom in Contemporary Nigeria**

Year	Population Figures	Armed Robbery Figure)	Rate %	Annual Increase/decrease (Base year = 1970)
1980	501,352	12	0.00239	+100.0
1981	524,688	11	0.00209	+83.3
1982	549,163	16	0.00291	+167.0
1983	574,695	14	0.00243	+133.3
1984	601,639	50	0.00831	+733.3
1985	629,887	45	0.00714	+650.0
1986	659,521	33	0.005	+450.0
1987	690,599	31	0.00448	+417.0
1988	723,208	17	0.00235	+183.3
1989	653,685	22	0.00336	+267.0
1990	686,949	12	0.00174	+100.0

Sources: Adapted from Criminology: The Study of Crime (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition). By Darlington Iwarimie-Jaja (1999a) SIJ Publishers, Port Harcourt. Figures arrived by the statistical correlation of ANOVA.

From table 2.1, it is clear that the highest increase is recorded against 1973, with an average figure of +117. Significantly and coincidentally, this was the peak period of contemporary Nigerian economic hey day; it is the period which preceded the popular “Udoji Commission”. So this result demonstrates a somewhat paradox explanation.

By 1977, barely two years into the change of baton in the military leadership, armed robbery decreased by about 50 percent. Unfortunately, during this time, there had begun, a dwindling in the revenue accruing to the federal purse; signalling an impending

doom ahead. The contradiction, which characterised this decrease of this crime, and the decline in economic fortune, may be because of the self-disciplines, that characterised the social and economic way of life of the people, which the late Head of State, Murtala Mohammed had started, and was continued by his successor, Olusegun Obasanjo. It could also have been that average Nigerians were watchful, and indeed hopeful that the good old times would be brought back.

However, by 1980, the period, which describes the real beginning of the economic morass of contemporary Nigeria, armed robbery had increases so dramatically; it reached all-times high during the period of 1984, when the destructive and suicidal economic policies began to be the characterisation of the government. Oil revenues continue to decline as industries continued to be hit hard (see also Olukoshi 1991: 92).

Generally, one significant feature in table 2 is the steady rise in the level of armed robbery at an average of 299 percent. The truth is that beginning from 1980, the economic crisis in Nigeria continued to grow, alongside with its political bigotry. As Amale (cf. Iwarimie-Jaja, 1999a: 181) notes, unemployment was very high so much that almost about 6 million Nigeria were unemployed. By 1985, many Nigerians had started to engage themselves in every manner of economic survival tricks.

The high rate of armed robbery in Port Harcourt a—direct reflection of what obtained in all other parts of Nigeria during the economic crisis, may be because of the hardship being experienced. However, it may possibly also be because of the increasing discontentment amongst many graduates and school leavers over the continuum slipping of the political system of the country.

**Table 2.3 Armed robbery among 21 states between 1985-1987**

States	1985	1986	1987
Abuja	na	na	2
Anambra♣	32	24	44
Bauchi	na	12	5
Bendel/Delta	83	170	90
Benue	12	16	13
Bornu	16	28	13
Cross River	9	10	4
Gongola	12	13	22
Imo♣	18	22	33
Kaduna	6	6	3
Kano	8	16	31
Kwara	16	19	25
Lagos	376	358	188
Niger	6	12	4
Ogun	129	99	86
Ondo	6	8	13
Oyo	13	6	53
Plateau	13	5	8
Rivers♣	17	10	4
Sokoto	2	2	7
Grand total	774	836	648

Number of lives lost	99	124	120
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Source: The African Guardian, October 1, 1987, and adapted from Iwarimie-Jaja:

Criminology. The study of crime (.2 ed.) SIJ Publishers, Port Harcourt 1999a:154.

The figures in table 2.3 above are revealing, and are very important in line of the perspective and discussion being adopted in this study. Analysis of the data in the table shows consistency with the argument of a strong link between western influence and the current form of armed robbery in the country. It is evidence that virtually all the states with higher number of documented cases are those in the Southern part of contemporary Nigeria. For instance, Anambra, Bendel/Delta, Imo, Lagos, Ogun, Oyo, and Rivers, are all concentrated at the core of the Southern part of modern Nigeria. Kwara and Plateau states, with relatively high figures could be understood in the context of their proximity to the Southwestern part of the country.

These states are principally those whose indigenous inhabitants had much earlier and profound contacts with the western colonisers. They therefore, demonstrate substantial level of embracing the western ways of life in addition, to their experiencing significant level of socio-economic developments above their Northern counterpart. Inhabitant of these states were thus, more probable to imitate, to learn, and to borrow the culture of their colonial masters with dexterity, and purpose. This of course, was not without initial resistance.

Lagos state in particular, well situated in the Southwest part of the country is significant because it portrays the obvious effect of this culture contact. Imbued with an excellent natural ecology—sea for use by the colonists in moving their products to their

homelands, it became a natural habitat for the colonisers, and fostered faster development and faster culture transmission.

The result is that Lagos later became the centre of attraction, or as now presently referred to, “centre of excellence”. All modern forms of behaviour are concentrated there. Because of the effect of osmosis earlier on referred to in section 2.10.1, this behaviour corroded and disseminated to the hinterlands, and in the specific direction of the Southern part of the country than in the North. It does this mainly through the means of cinema, clubs, Television (at later stage), senior citizens and so on (see also Ake 1986). It must be stressed, however, that the reception of this new form of behaviour were made more possible by the prevailing traditional social ethos, values, norms, and religion in this part of the country which were more amenable to this new ways of life.

Bendel/Delta and Ogun states with higher rate of armed robbery in the table is understood in the light of their proximity to Lagos state. So, they also witnessed an early and profound contact with the western culture. Rivers state was also another gateway of penetration into the Southern part, especially the Southeastern part of the country. It also has a coast through which contacts and penetration were easily made possible. Surrounding this state are Imo/Abia, Anambra/Enugu/Ebonyi and Delta whose style of life found it far more amenable to the western capitalists than their Northern counterparts.

**Table 2.4 Top 5 States of Reported Armed Robbery Cases in Nigeria between 1989-1992**

States	1989	1990	1991	1992	Total
Edo/Delta	318	567	48	321	1,254
Anambra/Enugu♣♣	102	94	124	174	494
Imo/Abia♣	118	129	66	91	404
Lagos	99	95	68	109	371
Oyo/Osun	66	30	91	111	298
Total for top 5	766	915	397	804	2,882

Total for all States	1,469	1,830	794	1,610	5,547
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Source: The Nigeria police Force/Federal office of Statistics, 1995 (ed.).

Table 2.4 above shows the rate of “documented”<sup>7</sup> armed robbery cases by both the Nigeria Police force and the Office of the Federal Statistics between 1989 and 1992, amongst the top 5 states. There is a further reveal of quite a unique pattern and incidence of armed robbery, which is in line with the pattern of the culture. The states in the table are all situated in the Southern (West and East) part of contemporary Nigeria. In addition, they are, by no means the only states, but those characterised by more towns and cities, and with extensive urbanisation and industrialisation in the terms of modern world. The point being drive at is that these states are representatives of the indigenous, whose contacts with the western culture as colonies and subsequent pattern of development were profound. These states, and their indigenous inhabitants posses greater degree of western ways of life in all its ramifications

Examples of towns and cities in these states with profound appurtenances of modernisation and industrialisation are Warri, Sapele, Benin, Ugheli, Asaba in Edo/Delta which has a total of 1254 armed robbery cases; Enugu, Onitsha, Oka, Nnewi, Abakaliki, Awonmama and so on in Anambra/Enugu with a total of 494; Aba, Owerri, Umuahia, Afikpo, Orlu, Okigwe and so on in Imo/Abia with 404 recorded armed robbery cases; and Lagos in Lagos state which has a total of 371; Oshogbo, Ile-ife, Ilesha, Ogbomoso, Ede and so on in Oyo/Osun states with 298 armed robbery cases.

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<sup>7</sup> The use of the word “documented” is because it is not all cases of armed robbery that are reported to the Police (see reasons above). Even where cases are reported, they are sometimes not reflected in the official documentation for reasons that include the fear of sanction by the boss. So documentation as used here is more of academic than statistical.

**Table 2.5 Top 5 States of Reported Armed robbery Cases in Nigeria between 1993-1995**

States	1993	1994	1995	Total
Delta	275	400	148	823
Lagos	272	112	375	759
Rivers♣	83	150	86	319
Bauchi	93	110	88	291
Anambra♣	148	111	Na	259
Top 5 Total	871	885	696	2,452
All State Total	1,742	1,768	1,393	4,903

Source: The Nigeria Police Force/Federal office of Statistics 1996 (ed.).

Table 2.5 further provides armed robbery distribution among the 5 top states between 1993-1995, under the 30 state structures. There is however, a new dimension from the preceding table. Bauchi state, well situated in the heart of the Northern region of Nigeria now features amongst the top five. Another dimension, but not completely strange is the presence of Rivers state in the table. Apart from Bauchi, all the 4 states are found in the same southern part of the country. And as earlier indicated in the preceding table 2.4, these states habit those Nigerians that were more receptive to the western ways of life.



Rivers states, which is one of the top 5 has a total of 319, and “Port Harcourt”<sup>8</sup>, Bonny, Patani, Yenogoa (prior to creation of Bayelsa state) are cities and urban areas situated in the states, with strong influence of the western culture. Even Bauchi state lays strong claim to the influence of the contacts with the western World. Historically, the state, and specifically the city of Bauchi state, produced the first Prime Minister Nigeria ever had. Implicitly, Bauchi state therefore, represents one of the few in the Northern part of the country where the idea of western education, and its accompanying goodies and baddies were embraced in earnest. It has quite notable cities that are developed assiduously, along the line and the taste of the western world and many elites of western character.

One observation peculiar to figures in both tables 4 and 5 is the variations in the rate and incidence amongst the states, and over times. Therefore, the argument is that the rate and incidence of armed robbery, is not in any pre-conceived didactic pattern. There is a clear form of “shifting”, and or “rotating” the bases of operation among armed robbers. This shifting, and hence variations among states and locations are an important aspect of the *Modus Operandi* (MO). And the essential reason is that when awareness among the residents, and the heat (campaign) from the law enforcement and public at large increases, offenders tend to lie low, or change their base. This reason may perhaps, account for the apparent low or high figures against Lagos state, for instance. It may also be in the same logical sense, that the inclusion of Bauchi state—a far Muslim state in the heart of the Northern part of modern Nigeria may be understood, yet chosen because of its perceived westernised pattern of life style.

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<sup>8</sup> Port Harcourt, and indeed Rivers state is the seat of Nigeria oil wealth. It has huge

Notwithstanding the peculiar changes of bases common amongst armed robbers, certain areas are by their given phenomena, have consistent high rate of reported robbery cases. In contemporary Nigeria, such areas abound in the Southern part of the country. Lagos state and city seems to be the most attractive to armed robbers. Analyses of armed robbery reported cases among 21 states of the federation, between 1985-1987, shows Lagos as the state with the highest recorded figure and most of the times (see also Iwarimie-Jaja 1999a:156). Of the total 2258 armed robbery cases documented and published among 21 states, Lagos state has a total of 922, and a total of 343 loss of life.

Important observation of interest also in both tables is the changes in the trends overtimes; there is a slide down in the rate and incidence during the early and middle 90s. What is argued is that this trend during these periods may be the direct consequence of this “shifting tendency” argued to be peculiar to armed robbery *modus operandi*.

**Table 2.6 Summary of Armed Robbery extortion Reported (1990 –1993 among 24 States**

1990	1991	1992	1993
1,700	26,776	21,715	20,077

Source: The Nigerian Police Force/federal Office of Statistics.

**Table 2.7 Armed robbery reported cases in Ebonyi state between 1996- 1st quarter of 2001**

1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
8	56	67	62	108	40

Source: The Nigeria Police Force: State Police Headquarters, Abakaliki.

**Table 2.8 Armed Robbery reported cases in Imo state between 1991-2000**

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migrants of different races and all the faces of western ways of life.

1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
110	98	120	36	72	89	55	67	85	88

Source: The Nigeria Police Force, State Police Headquarters, Owerri.

Figures in the three tables (6-8) above show some patterns of progression, stagnation, and retrogression. There are several reasons that may have accounted for this. First, is the tendency to manipulate the figures. As one officer put it: “We sometimes tinker with these figures to avoid being sanctioned by our bosses”. Another reason could be because of the various intervening strategies, which have impacts on the rate and incidence of involvement in armed robbery. Offenders interviewed in this study, indicated that the various control measures that is being adopted by the government and communities do affect their level of participation in armed robbery.

Generally, the figures in tables 2.7 and 2.8 revealed in specific note, that between 1993-1997, the rate and incidence of armed robbery among the states are lower than the preceding and after years. That is, prior to 1993 and after 1997. The researcher elects to interpret these years, to be those that was characterised by a stiff and drastic measures, which were the hallmarks of Abacha’s regime, and his lieutenants in all the 36 states of the federation. These leaders, in their resolved to confront the danger posed by increasing wave of armed robbery in the country, were both repressive and aggressive in approach.

**Table 2.9 Selected armed robbery cases among some states (1997, 1998, 1999, 2000**

States	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Abuja	na	na	24	na	122
Abia♣	80	na	63	na	53
Niger	na	na	74	na	31
Cross	74	na	47	na	32
Imo♣	55	na	67	na	114
Ebonyi♣	17	na	32	na	31
Kaduna	na	na	na	na	120
Rivers♣	173	na	171	na	104
Bayelsa	5	na	26	na	Na
Akwa	71	na	92	na	122
Kogi	na	na	na	na	94
Anambra♣	265	na	278	na	63
Ekiti	na	na	na	na	82
Enugu	na	na	na	na	Na
Imo	55	na	67	na	114
Edo	89	na	91	na	Na
Delta	144	na	162	na	Na
Kebbi	na	na	41	na	Na
Sokoto	na	na	14	na	Na
Zamfara	na	na	9	na	Na
Total	1028	na	1258	na	1082

Source: The Nigerian Annual Police Reports, 2001

Table 2-9 above is about armed robbery cases in some selected sates, and in some crime busting zones in contemporary Nigeria. As observed in the table, all the states “symbolised”, constitute the states with a city or cities where the study was carried out. They also represent all the states in the contemporary Southeastern literally, region of

modern Nigeria. These states demonstrate greater tendency towards the western ways of life, particularly in the area of private capital accumulation, and the accompanying egotism.

Anambra and Rivers states with a very high rate of robbery incidents remain notable, and they constitute part of modern Nigeria, that not only had earlier contacts with the western colonialists, but they also imbibed their culture and constituted. They still remain, some of the nerve centres of modern general economic and the specific commercial hives of contemporary Nigeria. This is by no means a suggestion that armed robbery in these states is committed only by the indigenous people in these areas. And indeed, these cities are densely populated by non-indigenes, who streamed from all corners of the country and outside the country. But it suggests that these states provided the enabling environment that permitted the learning, and indeed, the emulating of these western sophistries of behaviour. They play hosts with ease, all the different background classes of people such as armed robbers both among the indigenous and the large numbers of migrants in these cities. As would be arguing later in chapter Nine under the theoretical framework, these criminal emulators did not just stop at what they have learned and emulated. They soon perfected their strategies, tapping on some peculiarities of the complex modern Nigeria.

## **2.10 CONCLUSION**

Ideology seems apparent amongst armed robbery scholars, and they continue to demonstrate this characteristic by the way they define and conceptualise it. Different definitions have been adduced to both the object and subjects. However, what is common

to all the definitions is that the subject matter of armed robbery found commonality amongst all authors and has two elements—the taking away of one's property, and the use of force/violence or threat of it. So, the degree of armed robbery is not determined by the amount of property taken or stolen, but by the amount of force or threat of it used.

Armed robbery remains one of the crimes that threaten the majority of contemporary Nigerians. This crime is alarming, and it poses challenges to the authority and its law enforcement agents. Greater numbers of individuals of all social classes fall prey to the psychopathic indifference to the brutality of contemporary armed robbers. Properties counted in millions of naira are also lost, and incalculable damages being inflicted on the law-abiding Nigerian citizens.

Government and the public have responded, and taken measures, which are both drastic and draconian to tackle the menace. While results are produced, the respite has often been dashed because these armed robbers continue to be more ingenious, to prod and to unleash more deadly havoc on the innocent citizens. However, worrisome is that despite the potential danger of the crime in the country, apparently there is little interest in the subject by the academics, general public and government alike beyond raising alarms and panic. Available studies on the topic explain both the offence and the offenders from the perspectives of the models and methods developed and applied in the more developed western countries. It is in this regard that armed robbery is problematised as worthy of further study in contemporary Nigeria (see section 1.3).

It is possible that armed robbery in any form may have occurred in the traditional Nigerian society. But it is not clear when the first robbery, or what pattern of robbery that occurred in the traditional Nigerian society since literature is silent on that. Therefore, it

suffices to argue that the current pattern of robbery in contemporary Nigeria reflects the result of learning, imitating and emulating from culture contacts with the western world, which began in the early part of fifteen century and have continued till present. However, there is the medieval armed robbery in the ancient England and Nigerian erstwhile societies. There are scores of daredevil and sophisticated armed robbers of the western archetypes who have emerged in the contemporary Nigerian armed robbery criminal profiling.

The prevailing socio-economic and political setting of contemporary Nigeria is concomitant and congenial for the prevailing rate and kinds of armed robbery as currently obtained. Contemporary Nigeria—beginning from contacts with the western colonists became capitalist oriented, but mere compradorial and quasi-capitalist, socially disjointed and politically hostile and anarchical. The prevailing arrangement has created misery and poverty, value crisis and brutish environment where conscience, reasoning and respect are thrown overboard by virtually everyone in the system.

The extents of armed robbery are well documented in literature, but the statistics on a crime phenomenon are seemingly, fraught with inaccuracy because of the numbers of inherent difficulties in obtaining and using of official statistics. This is exceptional in the less developed country such as contemporary Nigeria where additional difficulties present themselves. Problems of statistical compilations are therefore, highlighted.

Amongst other crimes, armed robbery is ranked very high, but not often the first. Indeed, the perceived seriousness of the crime amongst Nigerian and outside scholars and the general public is very high. Such perceived seriousness is because of its “double tragedy”—taking away of property and the possibility of harms.

The reviews of literature present evidence, which shows that the prevalence of armed robbery in most contemporary countries including Nigeria is on the high side. Analyses of the various sources of information particularly the news media demonstrate consistent upward increase in the rate of the crime and the offenders from day to day, week to week, month to month and year to year. Most of the more advanced countries of the western world have or tend to have a high-recorded armed robbery rate than their less advanced counterparts. Sweden, Netherlands and U.S for instance, have a remarkable incidence of armed robbery cases than their counterparts.

In Nigeria, from the time it assumes its contemporary status and especially the years, which followed the aftermath of the civil war, armed robbery has increased markedly. And the Southern part of the country shows a high record rate of the crime more than its Northern counterpart. Lagos, Edo/Delta, Anambra/Enugu, Oyo/Osun, and Imo/Abia states are particularly the five top states with the highest armed robbery cases. Other states across the federation such as Bauchi, Kaduna, Gongola, Ebonyi, Kano and a host of others (see tables above) experience at different points in times high armed robbery cases—joining the club of “armed robbery states”; and they are at other times relatively insulated as these criminals shift bases in response to the situation in the country. So, there are changes in the prevalence of robbery amongst the towns, cities, states, and overtimes. This may no less be a reflection on the operational strategy of the offenders, and the direct consequent of the reactions toward them.

The next chapter focuses on examining and reviewing some further facts about the offence and offenders. These are the patterns and selected scenarios, the general characteristics, and the *modus operandi*.





## CHAPTER THREE

### ARMED ROBBERY: THE OFFENCE, OFFENDER AND *MODUS OPERANDI*

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

In examining a particular crime, it is important to pay attention to a number of variables that allow for the offence to be placed in its full social context (Sykes 1978:84). These variables are diverse, and they appear distinctive among the varieties of criminal offences. Yet, they however, overlap in some instances. With reference to armed robbery and this present study, these variables include among others, providing an overview of the offence in question, why is it worthy of study or further investigation, what the offence really is (operational definition), what are the available statistics on this crime, and the public and individual perceptions on its relative seriousness.

Others include the age, sex, socio-economic background of the offenders (characteristics), the socio-economic and political settings under, which armed robbery occurs (crime ecology), and the nature (outlook) of the offence, the *modus operandi*, the typologies of the offence and so on.

These variables are summed up as constituting some important issues about the offence, the offenders, and their *modus operandi*, hence the title of the chapter. Some of these issues e.g. the overview, why the issue is worthy of being further investigated, the operational definition, the statistics, perceptions on the seriousness, and a brief of the socio-economic and political context have been discussed in the preceding chapters, or are discussed in more details in later chapters (e.g. socio-economic and political context) in chapter Four. The reason is to avoid interfacing or mixing up the analysis of the

offence and the offenders, which chapter Three is more concerned with, with the risk factors and the perspectives and context of the offence, which is the concern of other chapters—chapter Two and Four.

In addition to addressing the wide range of these other variables, chapter Three discusses the patterns—with the reviews, of some selected scenarios of the offence in contemporary Nigeria. In the light of this, it also documents specifically, some illuminating illustrations on the *modus operandi*. Both the scenarios and the illustrations of *modus operandi* are viewed as essential because they are consistent with one of the objectives, and indeed, the perceived significant of the study—to provide the readers and general public with “first-hand-aid” information on the offence. The perceived policy implications of the offence from the perspective of some authors are also briefly highlighted.

### **3.2 IMPORTANT FACTS OF NOTE ABOUT ARMED ROBBERY AND ARMED ROBBERS**

There are some facts worthy of note in the discussion of armed robbery and armed robbers. These facts, sometimes apparently present themselves as characteristics, patterns, or and *modus operandi*. Facts, however, as referred here generally denote those points of emphasis, which need be bored in mind in both the discussion and confrontation with the offence and offenders.

Firstly, armed robbery is mainly male dominated. That is, there is overwhelming number of males over the females committing the offence. Several reasons are adduced for the preponderance of males and single people in the armed robbery. They include

deliberate under reporting of female criminals (armed robbers); the fact that the offence demands physical force and brutality which are mainly peculiar to the male youth; the greater impacts of the strain on these youth—the impulsivity and crave for recognition, and for ostentatious living style; and finally, the swiftness, and dexterity with which armed robbery entails (Otu 1992; Nkpa 1994 in Otite 1994:271 and Maree 1999). Another reason, and perhaps very important is the courage and utmost secrecy, which are required.

Secondly, armed robbery in its pattern, *modus operandi* and resultant effect interlocks with other criminal activities. In other words, robbery and armed robbers possess characteristics similar to other criminal offences and offenders such as burglary, stealing, and sometimes, murder since the commission of such offences often times involves the taking away of personal goods or properties (see also Beirne and Messerschmidt 2000:281). This interlock sometimes, makes the definition and classification of armed robbery action problematic.

According to the U.S. Department of Justice 1980, Uniform Crime Reporting Handbook, Washington, DC (cf. Brown et al. 1991:132), robbery is a vicious type of theft, and often committed in the presence of the victim. It most invariably entails the taking away of the personal belongings either with threat or the actual use of threat. It is a premeditated act (*mens rea*) that causes bodily harms, or the psychological fear of a person or group of persons (*actus reus*) to surrender ownership or possession of a property through the use of violence or threat of it before, during or after the taking of such property not backed by elements of the constitutional law provisions. Against this

backdrop, armed robbery is more likely to be committed with the possession of a weapon or related object that may or not be used depending on a number of circumstances.

Analysing robbery, the same U.S Department of Justice 1980 explains that the following subheadings are important for use in classification and definition of the offence and offenders:

- a) Firearm
- b) Knife or cutting instrument
- c) Other dangerous weapons
- d) Strong-arm-hands, fists, feet, and so on.

Armed robbery categories from ‘a’ to ‘c’, are incidents commonly referred to as “stickups”, “hijackings”, holdups”, and “heists”. Robberies wherein no weapons are used may be referred to as “strong-arms”, or “muggings”. This source in addition, explains that the number of victims robbed, those present at the robbery, or the numbers of offenders are inconsequential in the scoring of the categories of armed robbery.

Another important fact of note while discussing about armed robbery is that it is a crime that attracts severe punishment, albeit the degree of severity varies from country to country, and as well from the interpretation and determination of the threat of violence (potential) or real violence (actual). According to Siegel (1998:301), the severity of punishment is because the victim’s life is put to jeopardy, and this depends on the amount of force used and not on the value of the items taken. Adler et al. (1991:243), add that in all most half of all the robberies, the offenders have the tendency to display weapons, mostly guns and knives.

In addition, a fact about the crime worthy of note is that ironically, it is also being described as “easier” than burglary because it involves a direct confrontation that quickly garners a “pay off”, and without the need for a third party to dispose off stolen goods (Brown et al. 1998:474). Or it is as Katz (1996 in Conklin 1996: 178) put it, “a way to get money within a matter of moment, virtually whenever one needs, without requiring any skills; a rhetoric that celebrates the crime as a neatly bounded task, something one can “get in, get out, and get away with” quickly”. The assertion of “easiness” is in the view of the researcher fraught with scepticism since such remark seems not to take into account the high risk involved. Though, robbery may be a high, momentarily rewarding criminal activity, the risk and the accompanying penal punishment tends to make them the most risky and difficult type of property crimes. The researcher also wish to argue that a third party for the disposal of stolen items is required, and is always in handy to armed robbery groups or lone robber. By a direct confrontation between the offender and victim, armed robbery is similar to interpersonal crimes of violence (see Beirne and Messerschmidt, 2000:281).

Moreover, one important fact about the offenders is that a member within a gang or group robbery is privileged to leave at any time, to apply for leave of absence, or to be assigned into a non-threatening role during the course of robbery operation (see also Einstadter 1975:452). As Cook (1990) notes, such absence could occur either for fear of being identified, to shy away from emotional issue involved in the face-to-face contact with the victim, or for the fear that operation may lead to shot a victim who resists, thereby escalating the robbery into felony murder.

Again, armed robbery entails the possession of different skills and acumen, which are very similar to burglary and theft, but may be slightly denser than the latter have. Neal Shover (1996:63) in his recent study of street robbers and burglars to determine while property offenders persist in committing crime explains that with these skills, armed robbery develops at a different pace, with a particular drama, and thus, provides its own kind of emotional reward, notably the opportunity to show “courage”. This line of argument is in concordance to the theoretical assertions of the “previous criminal association”, or experience, and “maturation”—as a process or stages of criminal behaviour (See also Sutherland and Cressey 1940; Iwarmie-Jaja’s 1999b).

The underlying assumption in this skill as in concordance with the argument of the authors above is that “previous criminal association” and “maturity process” precedes the development of a high risk, and hard-core and potential criminal offence attitudes such as armed robbery as a professional criminal career. According to Sutherland and Cressey (1940, 1960) offences such as armed robbery proceeds from trivial to serious, from occasional to frequent, from sport to business, and from crime committed by isolated individual or very loosely organised groups to the one committed by rather tightly organised groups (1940:220) Hence, the authors call this scenario the *process of maturation*.

There is also an understanding that armed robbers and robbery is characterised by self-confidence, an ability to manage other people in moment of stress, the possession of “guts” or fearlessness and the ability to thrive on surprises. Shover and McCall (cf. Brown et al. 1998:474) used evidence from one-robber to show that the joy of being in

command, organising, and directing victims with the power of “weapon” gives most robbery offenders their *self actualisation* need in preference to burglary and theft.

And finally, a somewhat important fact about the offence and the offenders is that armed robbers also appear to be conscious of their life-long criminogenic tendencies, which they acquired from years of anti-social and delinquent behaviour with its accompanying status.

At this juncture, there is the need to examine few of the various patterns and likely scenarios that is the characterisation of contemporary armed robbery in Nigeria.

### **3.3 EXAMINING THE PATTERNS AND SELECTED SCENARIOS OF ROBBERY IN CONTEMPORARY NIGERIA ARMED**

#### **3.3.1 PATTERN 1 (STATUS OF VICTIMS)**

Wright and Decker’s (1997:64) study on armed robbers revealed that robbers prey upon individuals who themselves are involved in lawbreaking; and the drug dealers being the likeliest victims—normally have money with them, and are less likely to report the crime to the authorities. There is perhaps a sense in the assertion. But it must be argued that robbery incidence and their patterns in contemporary Nigeria do not fit *in toto* into this theoretical observation.

Robberies in modern day Nigeria do not necessarily, and also prey only on those that are referred to as “money bags”, or the “marginals” of the society. Instead, most robberies in modern day Nigeria are on clearly selected victims—upper, middle class and ordinary street members of the public, who are often as capable of being robbed without



the robbers experiencing much confrontation, difficulty, or able to escape. However, and plausibly, it seems more likely that the victims of armed robbery in contemporary Nigeria are mostly those individuals at the razor edge of economic disadvantages. But on the whole, neither the upper-upper, upper-middle, upper-lower; upper-middle, middle-middle, middle-lower; nor upper-lower, middle-lower and lower-lower classes of people any more excepted or less-targeted by the contemporary armed robbers. Any one and everyone are more likely to be victims of armed robbery depending on the categories of robbers involved and the opportunities presented to the robbers.

### **SCENARIO I**

On 27 July 1999, a gang of armed robbers according to many newspapers reports (see for instance, *Thisday* 29 October 2000:11-12) trailed Retired Commodore Anthony Ikazabo, former Minister of Sports, and an influential member of the former military ruling body from church to his home. As he was about to enter his house, a hail of bullet was pumped into him and he died instantly. The bandits then broke into his house and took everything they wanted and also made away with his car. On September the same year, Alhaji Adamu Chiroma, a former Central Bank Governor, and Minister of Finance had a date with the hoodlums. The bandits broke into his house while he was not around and took away thousands of naira and jewelleries. In 1998, an Assistant Commissioner of Police, Kehinde Oyenuga was attacked in Lagos. By the time the robbers left, they had deposited 29 bullets in his mouth and chest. Only a plastic surgery in Europe saved him from the hand of death.

On the early part of the year 2000, the Foreign Affair Minister, Alhaji Sule Lamido was away in New York to attend the millennium summit of the United Nations

General Assembly when armed bandits broke into his bedroom in his house. After threatening to rape and shoot his sister-in-law, they stuffed two suitcases with all the items that caught their fancy and drove away in the wife's car. Within the same period of the year, the one described as the most ironic, however, was the case of Major General David Jemibewon (Rtd.), the Minister of Police Affairs whose Lagos home was invaded by the armed robbers on February. In the operation, his Police guard was killed.

And to cap up the list of top-shots—very important personalities (VIP) victims, the hoodlums had strolled into the current President's farm at Otta, Ogun state—a close settlement to Lagos, killed a driver, and snatched a Toyota Jeep belonging to the Executive Director of Obasanjo's Africa Leadership Forum, Ayo Aderinwale. A few weeks after, it was followed by an attack on the President's only sister residing in Lagos.

The roll calls of the hundreds of thousand "common men" victims include: A computer scientist whose company transferred to South Africa. On the eve of his departure to South Africa, the unlucky computer scientist had a date with armed bandits. Two twins brothers who had just arrived from the U.S were trailed down to their home and attacked just as their mother was opening the door. A story is also told of a woman who was raped to death by the armed bandits. A whole village in Edo State; one of the 36 states of the federation, and incidentally, but by no means a coincidence of a high armed robbery profile state, was sacked by the bandits. In a wedding in Lagos, the bandits were the unwelcome guests at the reception prompting the wedding to be abandoned mid-way. The *Reuters* of 24 March 2001 reports that a woman was shot and killed by armed bandits in Lagos for invoking Christ when the urban taxis they were travelling with was waylaid and attacked by armed bandits.

On many occasions, ordinary citizens of Nigeria inside the cosmopolitan city of Lagos are daily hoodwinked by the armed bandits of males and females, who pose as co-commuters inside the city taxis only to be robbed of their little possessions with thorough beatings along the roads within the city. The lists are just endless. Anecdotal stories of victims and media reports provide endless chilling accounts of these victims of armed robbery bandits in contemporary Nigeria. In particular, (*Thisday* 18 July 2000, 29 Oct. 2000; *Nigerian Tribune* 17 Feb. 2000; *Vanguard* 22 Sept. 1986, 12 June 2002; *Weekend Concord* 13 May 2000; *National Concord* 4 Oct. 1999; *Tell magazine* 25 Dec.2000 are just a few that are of particular useful in this account as they provide far flung statistics and descriptive account of these victims and their marauders. Though, there are no uniformity with regard to victims of armed robbery in present Nigeria, a cursory victims survey may revealed that potential victims are usually those known to the robbers, traders or businessmen and women, and holiday makers.

By and large, armed robbery in modern day Nigeria affects all classes of people—the rich, the middle class and the poor masses. As noted above, the frequency on these classes of individuals however, varies depending on such factors as the social class of the robbers, the proximity to the victims, the muted risk vis-à-vis the rewards, the type of weapons and means of transportation available to the robbers among others.

### **3.3.2 PATTERN 2 (SHIFTING OPERATIONAL BASES)**

Typical operation of armed robbery in present day Nigeria has assumed the patterns the researcher equates to as “shifting cultivation”, or perhaps “rotational victims and places fallow” among the states, towns, cities, and streets. Waves of robberies are found to move

from one area to the other, or from one particular class of the victims to the others when either the heat on them is much; public awareness seems to be up and at alertness, or when not much gain is expected (see for instance, the scenarios described above in the preceding patterns). They are capable of shifting operational bases from one zone, city centre, and street within cities or towns; one state and region of the country; one form of business or target to the other.

As an operational strategy, robbery is always around the corner for any kind of business and residential places (Simonsen 1998; Iwarimie-Jaja 1999a). According to the analysis of Simonsen (1998:279), financial institutions or businesses that process a lot of cash (large restaurants, race track, department stores, supermarkets) are usually the prime targets. Robberies on these targets are most times carried out in the broad daylight, and they entail extra ordinary bravery on the part of the robbers.

Bank robbery in Nigeria especially in the past few years seemed to be on the decline, however. The decline according to Iwarimie-Jaja (1999a:136) is attributed to the heavy security being adopted by the banks. It is thus, argued that the presence of the police, private security guards, electronic gadgets, and sometimes hidden cameras act as deterrents to frequent bank robbery. But only when robbers perceived that there is little cash gains compared to the high risk involved. Recent development points to new rising trend in bank robbery in Nigeria. Quite few illustrations are provided here:

## **SCENERIO II**

Between 1985-1993—the periods when the country appeared to be under armed robbery siege, particularly during the hey-days of Anini's robbery escapade (1985-1986), the shifting of operations amongst some potential places and target scores was a common

occurrence. Whenever the residents of particular areas or states start becoming alarmed, and put increasing pressure on the government, these armed bandits would relocate or shift their targets.

With respect to bank's robberies, the following scenarios depict the shifting attitude of these bandits. On Monday 20 November 2000, armed bandits whose numbers were not specified struck the Ogba (Ikeja, Lagos) branch of the Union Bank of Nigeria Plc. and carted away N1.368 million about (\$10,000). The robbers who stormed the bank at about 4:45 PM (local time) after closing to customers gained entrance through the back door. They trailed a customer who came in after services had been closed for the day (*Nigerian Tribune*, Wednesday 22, November 2000).

On May 2000, 12 armed bandits arrived at the premises of Wema Bank, Abule Egba (Lagos) branch at about 3:30 PM (local time) in a Mitsubishi bus (*Punch*, 6 February 2000). Workers and customers were held at gunpoint while unspecified millions of naira was carted away. The operation was reported to have lasted for about 1hr.30mins. In January 1997, Ecobank lost an entire billion-naira vanload of money to armed robbers right inside its premises. The same year, Ipaja community bank (Lagos) was raided, and about N.4 million (about \$4000) were snatched. In 1998, Merchant Banks in Kano were simultaneously robbed. They are Indo-Merchant, First City, Stanbic bank, and Bank of the North, Offa. The same year, First bank Sagamu was attacked. On the 21 December, 2000 at about 10:am (local time) a gang of eight armed robbers believed to have stormed Lagos from Benin Republic raided the Ilupeju branch of the United Bank for Africa (UBA) and carted away about N1.9 million (about \$10,000).

Between 1999 and 2000, armed bandits raided a lot of Banks across the country whose list are numerous to mention, and millions of naira lost.

By and large, robbers attack banks where there are opportunities that enhance the act. Hunter (cf. Iwarimie-Jaja 1990:318) explains that the locations of cashier, the number of clerks, visibility within and outside, exterior handling are significant variables to committing bank robbery.

### **3.3.3 PATTERN 3 (OPERATION IN SECURITY ZONES)**

Another interesting robbery pattern is that it sometimes occurs in the police stations and other places that are security prone. This type of robbery is a daring one, and most times, it occurs either as a revenge for betrayal, or against an act or conducts, which considered as inimical to a member of the robbery gangs or to the gangs as whole. Sometimes such robbery is carried out in the desperate need to acquire weapons for a planned operation. The case of Anini led gang; the notorious armed robbers gang in Nigeria between 1985-1986 is a clear case in mind. During their reign of terror, police stations were raided on several occasions—either as revenge for what he the leader termed “betrayal”, or in needs for more weapons to continue their nefarious escapades.

### **SCENARIO III**

On Tuesday 21 December 2000, no fewer than eight armed robbers attacked a police post in addition, to two other houses on Isiokwe Street, Inland Onitsha, Anambra State. During the operation, the policemen on duty were sent pacing, cells were flung opened to free detainees, and the premises including some properties were set ablaze (*Punch*, 23 December 1999). On the month of November 2000, armed robbers stormed and pumped

several shots at the entrance of Adekunle Police Station—a very close range to the Headquarters of Criminal Investigation Department, Lagos. All the policemen on duty ran for cover (*Guardian*, 18 August 2000).

#### **3.3.4 PATTERN 4 (OPERATIONS IN SACRED, HOSPITALS, SCHOOLS, ETC.)**

Armed robbery is also reported to occur in Ministries, Companies, Churches, Schools, Hospitals, Palaces, Newspaper depots and a host of other places where valuables are kept.

#### **SCENARIO IV**

For instances, on the month of November 1999, armed robbers struck at the General Hospital in Idanre, Ondo state killing one of the nurses on duty before carting away laboratory equipment worth thousands of naira (*Tribune*, 17 November 1999). On the month of September 1999, it was reported that armed bandits violated the sanctity of the Palace of an Oba in Ekiti, Ekiti state and loot properties worth millions of naira (*Punch*, 4 September, 1999). The Ministry of works and Public Utilities in Umuahia, Abia state was reportedly attacked by men of the underworld. In the operation, the security men were reported tied up. In Afikpo, the researcher's hometown, the robbery wave of 1998 spread to the premises of the Catholic parish priest. Schools were also reported and indeed, were found bungled by armed bandits.

#### **3.3.5 PATTERN 5 (OPERATION BY SNATCHING)**

Armed robberies in contemporary Nigeria also naturally take the form of snatching valuable items or properties at gunpoint, or by the use of threat, force or physical words

on the victims. In fact, snatching especially at gunpoint has constituted one major pattern as indeed the *modus operandi* of contemporary armed robbery particularly giving the fact that many people do carry cash with them, and also the fact that cell phone has become a common taste among the contemporary general Nigerian public.

The terms such as hijack, carjack, muggings and so on, which are characteristics of many western patterns of criminal actions, may no less be a typical kind of armed robbery by definitions. In the buses and streets, armed robbery takes place in the various forms. Some victims are robbed undetected, while others are robbed in the presence of people or passers-by. In some cases, the fear of becoming a secondary victim of circumstances deters people from intervening on robbery scene. Instances of this kind of robbery pervade in the country.

## **SCENARIO V**

The *Daily Times*, Saturday 20 March 1999 reports that a middle age woman who had just emerged from a bank at Ketu Lagos with a fairly large sum of money decided to take “okada” outside the precinct of the bank to hasten and make her movement safer, had her pushed out to the gutter by the okada man. She was tricked into taking a particular route described as faster by the okada man, who on getting to a relatively quiet street pull off as if he wanted to check something in his okada only to push off the woman and smartly snatched the money from her and sped off.

Also, Iwarimie-Jaja (1999a: 135) reports that on 27 November 1987 at Wogu Street, D/Line Port Harcourt, Mr. Ogie in the company of another person, now at large robbed at gunpoint, Mr. Ike of a Peugeot 504Saloon car bearing the registration No. IM2563 X. In Abakaliki in 2000, a family friend who had just emerged from the bank



with some monies was trailed and followed on the heel by two armed bandits on motorcycle posing as mere okada men, and she was subsequently robbed along the road at gunpoint.

### **3.3.6 PATTERN 6 (TRANSIT ROBBERY)**

There are also robberies on highways and on transits, and this form of robbery is well accounted for in details by McLynn (1989:57-82). Robbery on the highways is old in age and was the most prevalent in the medieval England and in the pre-colonial component units of Nigeria, as people were reported often overpowered by individual or groups on the desolate roads. In modern day Nigeria, highways or on transits robbery is not infrequent, and has accounted for the overwhelming nation-wide use of “police escorts”—armed policemen to protect commuters on the highways and particularly the business commuters who transport cash and other valuables.

Highways or transit robbery occurrence has no specific time frame. In the morning, midday and evening, highways robbery is a common scene. But available data (reports) and victims’ accounts suggest that they do occur mostly in the night or late evening. Because robbers are, to all intents and purposes very skilful, operation times are often changed such that some robberies have been found to take place on the very early part of the night or the late part of it. The reasons for varying the time of operation depend on such factors as security, season, and excitement.

Transit or highways armed robbery is unusually high towards festive periods especially towards the tail ends of the year, which do coincide with Christmas time, and when business activities is high, and more people travel home.

## SCENARIO VI

On 10 September 2000, armed robbers killed eight passengers who had just boarded a vehicle from Enugu en-route to Lagos. The gang struck shortly after their vehicle took off from a popular motor station in the city. On 11 October 2000, nine people were killed when armed robbers stopped their vehicle along Kwali-Abuja road. Several others were wounded in the raid. This gang was reported to have armed themselves with highly sophisticated weapons. In the early part of the year, robbers snatched a jeep at the premises of a bank along Ahmadu Bellow way, Kaduna. (see *Tell Magazine* 25 December 2000).

On 25 June 1998, six people were killed in a row along the Lokoja-Oshokoshoko-Kabba road. The same year (2000), four luxurious buses from Onitsha bound North that ran into armed robbery had their passengers thoroughly beaten before they were robbed of their money and other valuables (*ThisDay* 18 July 2000). Sometimes between 1996-1999, there were daily reports of a series of highways robberies on all major highways across the country. Both the two frontiers highway roads that lead to the researcher's hometown (Okigwe-Afikpo, and Abakaliki-Afikpo) were no exception as daily-armed robberies were the rule rather than exception. Several people who could not go with "escorts"<sup>1</sup> were murdered, robbed or maimed by the prowling armed bandits.

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<sup>1</sup> This refers to a body of armed policemen that took extra-miles duties in accompanying the large numbers of Nigerian travelers especially the businessmen, who travel to and fro the major commercial cities to do their businesses. It was more of a gentleman agreement between members of the Nigerian public and the respective police officers in their localities. These police officers are usually remunerated/compensated by contributions made by individual travelers on daily basis.

Typical pattern of highways robberies is the waylaying of vehicles when they drop speed usually as a result of the multiple potholes (bad roads) that characterise most of the roads (federal, states and local councils).

### **3.3.7 PATTERN 7 (RESIDENTIAL ROBBERY)**

The most common pattern reflecting invariably, the type of armed robbery, especially in contemporary Nigeria occurs in the residential areas, and usually at nights. The typical scenario is that the vicinity to be robbed is surrounded up by some of the bandit members while the other members enter into the targeted building.

Operation takes different kinds, but the usual mechanism is to identify the breadwinner or the prime person or persons in the building whilst intimidating the other occupants. Where and when getting to the prime target proves difficult, an occupant is usually hijacked and is commandeered to lead the gangs, and to give clues on how to reach the target.

### **SCENARIO VII**

On 25 January 2001 armed bandits attacked Mr Adewale Adeeyo at his house in the Government Reservation Areas (GRA), Ikeja. The robbers gained access into the residence at about 3.30A.M (*Guardian*, 26 January 20001). On 27 May 1999, amid heavy rainfall at about 3.PM, robbers struck the residents of Isheri-Olowora communities—a Southern outskirt of Lagos. They were reported to have been moving from house to house with impunity (*Daily Times*, 19 June 1999).

Wale Oladepo, *ThisDay* newspaper Managing Editor was attacked and shot in his house at Ogba, Lagos (*ThisDay, the Sunday Newspaper* 29 October 2000). On April

2000, Chuks Ojim, a Texas American based Nigerian car dealer was attacked and mercilessly shot at his home town, Igbodo, Delta State (*Weekend Concord* 13 May 2000). The period between 1997-1999 was a period of 'siege' as far as armed banditry was concerned in Afikpo. Victims who were daily attacked in their homes are legion and well spread among the villages, compounds, communities and locations of the town (personal experience and observation).

The above patterns and illustrations are not exhaustive with regard to the patterns and scenarios of the contemporary armed robbery in Nigeria. They are, however, pointers to the array of the part and parcel of the ubiquitous archetype of contemporary Nigerian armed robbery, and they also reflect the intriguing prevailing *modus operandi*, which characterised the offence and offenders.

### **3.4 SOCIAL ORGANISATION OF ARMED ROBBERY: AN OVERVIEW**

The social organisation of armed robbery and armed robbers reflects the general characteristics of both the offence and the offenders. It covers such areas as the physical and psychological characteristics—gender (sex) issue, age, race (ethnic compositions), moods, and the temperament, which have been discussed by many writers (Einstadter 1975; Wilson 1975; McNeely and Pope 1981; Jones 1987; Olurode 1990; Stevens 1990 in Cloete and Stevens 1990; Otu 1992; Iwarimie-Jaja 1994 and 1999a; Maree 1999). Although the characteristics discussed are not uniform to all armed robbery and robbers. They nevertheless, represent quite common traits that could be deduced among most contemporary armed robberies and armed robbers across many geographical boundaries.

On the overall, studies at different times and places suggest that many armed robberies are mostly the offence of the individuals and groups that are mainly single (unmarried), male, age between 17-30 years, residents in the urban slums or low class areas, those that have low income, low education, and in the case of countries of plural races, by the black. These categories of people are more probably found in the margin of the society (Gibbons 1965; Conklin 1972; Nkpa 1994 in Otite 1994: 270; and Iwarimie-Jaja 1999a). This is, however by no means suggestive that description of the offenders is merely limited to these categories of people. In fact, references are made to others for instance, the very young and older age groups, middle-income people, professionals, fairly educated ones, and of course, other races in a pluralistic society (see for instance Adler et al. 1991 discussion on age and criminality).

With regard to sex-role-equality, and despite the assertion made in section 3.2 above—being male dominated, and further strengthened in the preceding paragraph (section 3.4) above, various criminological studies have made references to the increasing roles of women in the offence of armed robbery (see for instance, Pollack: 1950; Adler 1975; Simon 1975; Stephen et al. 1979; Hagan et al. 1987 and Daly 1994 cf. Brown et al. 1998; Nkpa 1994 in Otite 1994: 271). Nkpa in Otite (1994: 271) observes that of the 3,258-armed robbery record in Nigeria between 1970-1977, 29 were females.

In her study of women who commit robberies, feminist Daly (cf. Brown et al. 1998:476) notes that women were just likely to brandish a knife or gun as men, and they do take active participatory roles as men in carrying out the offences. The significant difference according to the author is that women robbed in mixed gender groups, whilst

most men's groups were all male. Besides, the women tended to rob the people they "know", and "males" only.

The roles of female robbers in contemporary Nigeria could be down played to activities that are limited to providing social supports (social companionship) and security assistances. Concrete research or reports—media and eyewitness accounts that identify females in active robbery operation in Nigeria are still scanty. The involvement of females in robbery in the contemporary Nigeria, and the role they play is significant, however in understanding and explaining general uniqueness of this crime in the contemporary Nigeria, and it lends further credence to the argument that the offence an emulated behaviour.

This emulated idea relates to the prevailing notion in the modern world especially amongst the western ideas that roles differentiation between genders are a thing of the past since what men can do, women can equally do the same, and perhaps better. It is a clear reflection of the changing social and economic roles of the women in the complex modern world. So, Adler (1975:6-7) notes that as the social and economic roles of women changed in the legitimate world, their participation in crime would also change.

The preceding analysis therefore, provides ground for undertaking the review of the offence and offenders' typologies at least, from the perspectives of the various armed robbery criminologists.

### **3.4.1 ARMED ROBBERY AND ARMED ROBBERS TYPOLOGIES**

According to Gibbons (1965:21-26) much attentions in the field of criminology, psychology, psychiatric and sociology have been devoted to the development of

typological and categorisation views of the offenders. Korn and Mccorkle (1959; Sutherland and Cressey 1960; Cava 1962; Block and Geis 1962 cf. Gibbons 1965:24) are few among others whose attentions have been directed toward the investigation of specific offenders' types.

Violators generally, Gibbons (1965:23) argues, can be classified in terms of a multitude of variables: offence, hair, colour, race, urban-rural residence, age, and so on. He explains that any criminologist undertaking this approach must choose one system from the many that are available.

In the field of armed robbery, limited classifications and typologies of both the offence and offenders have been attempted. The reasons the researcher thinks could partly be that many armed robbery criminologists do not think it logical and any more worthy to categorise them. Secondly, it could be because the legal definition of what constitutes armed robbery and armed robbers is very clear and explicit enough that many criminologists do not find it equally worthwhile doing so. Thirdly, many armed robbery criminologists may have find doing so tautological (circular argument) given, the important similarity of the social organisation of the subject.

Nonetheless, few scholars have made conscious efforts to provide categorisations using certain criteria. While some scholars have focused specifically either on the offence or offenders, others have focused on the combination of both. The classifications like the characteristics are by no means exhaustive. In each of the typologies, the researcher describes the categories while bringing to fore what he feels are further peculiarities to each of these categorisations or classifications. The best known of these classifications

seem to be the work of Conklin, and he rather, more consciously, focused on the offenders (1972:69).

### **3.4.1.1 CONKLIN'S CLASSIFICATION BASED ON THE OFFENDERS**

Conklin (1972:69) identified four types of armed robbers:

#### **3.4.1.1.1 PROFESSIONAL ARMED ROBBERS**

This group has commitment either to robbery exclusively. So, robbery has become their way of life. High-level skill is not always the issue, yet robbery planning is done with extreme care, and usually in-groups during which each member is assigned a specific role. They go for the big and profitable targets (big scores) in the word of Conklin; and usually, they carry loaded firearms (69). It is important to add here that further profiling of members suggest they are more usually from respected family members in the society, and they carry out robbery at a relatively limited numbers per year. They are calculative, with less membership. They normally hit at banks and other huge financial outlay organisations.

The goal is typically to obtain money to support a lavish life style. As Conklin (1972:70) observed, once their fund is nearing depletion, planning for the next “score” is initiated. Professional robbers may be perceived as in their habit to dress immaculately, remain composed, respectful, and often do take necessary precautions. This type of armed robbers has since emerged in Nigeria though, in a limited number and shifting base from one state of the federation to the other. Going by the logic of a grammatical



function of a linguistic, the robbery or offence involved by the professional armed robbers described above is called the professional armed robbery.

#### **3.4.1.1.2 OPPORTUNIST ROBBERS**

These are the occasional robbers who rob at the slightest opportunity. They are usually from the lower class members of the society. Plans operation are haphazard, and robbery involves carrying of firearms, but not the sophisticated type of the professionals. They select vulnerable, but not usually the profitable targets.

According to Conklin (1972:70), this group prey on the weak, the elderly ladies with purse, drunks, cab drivers, and the people who work alone in dark streets. Opportunist robbers look unkempt, rash in decision-making, and often violent in their actions. Opportunist robbers by this description seem apparently common in most Nigerian cities, towns and rural settlements, but sparsely, however—the intermediate armed robbers. By the same grammatical logic, the form of the offence engaged by this category of armed robbers is referred to as opportunist robbery.

#### **3.4.1.1.3 ADDICT ROBBERS**

According to Conklin (1972:70), these are individuals who do not show commitment to robbery. They go into the crime only when they are in dire need of money to acquire drugs and keep the habit. They are “more opportunists” in the real sense of the word with little or no planning, and select targets less carefully. In the view of the researcher they also carry firearms sometimes, and usually, other forms of dangerous objects like cutlasses, axes, and clubs are adopted in the case of Nigerian experience. This category of

armed robber in the view of the researcher simply hit, robs, shared the little booties (either cash or proceeds from stolen properties) and then disappeared. The robbery they engaged in is called the addict robbery.

#### **3.4.1.1.4 ALCOHOLIC ROBBERS**

Although Conklin (1972:71) argued that armed robbers here do not plan operations. But this in the view of the researcher is not completely true. Robbery is planned, as indeed all kinds of robberies are planned at different degrees. Instead, robbers of this category show low commitment to robbery, and can often easily leave the pathway to robbery. But most of them do graduate into the main robbery career.

Firearms are not usually employed, although, offenders routinely carry one. Memberships changes over short period of time, and they are usually fairly large in numbers, accompanied by an after-thought assaults. The basic characteristic among this robbery is that robbers are debilitated by alcoholism, although may or may not be under intoxication when perpetuating the crime.

#### **3.4.1.2 THE GIBBON'S CLASSIFICATION BASED ON OFFENDERS**

Gibbons (1969) did not to all intents and purposes focused his effort with a causal analysis and classification of armed robbery and/or armed robbers *per se*. He indeed, was much concerned with the casual analysis and classification of the totality of offences and offenders alike. Using some developed conceptual criteria, Gibbons provides a wide range of classifications of these swaths of offenders or lawbreakers and their offences (1969). From the reading of his work, the author seems to have focused on the offenders,

however, So, he seems to have categorised armed robbers into two classes as follow (Gibbons 1969:104):

#### **3.4.1.2.1 The Professional “Heavy” Criminal**

He described them as highly skilled-armed bandits, who sometimes, resort to elements of coercion and threat of violence, but rarely employ actual force. Planning is relatively of lengthy periods, and then accomplished swiftly, with the offenders employing element of surprise to avoid the risk of apprehension. Most of their activities are carried as a team or “mob” operations, and crime partners tend to specialise in particular roles so that one of the participants may be the “rod man”—“mopol” or “OC”, while another is the “wheel man or watcher” that is, specialist in providing escapes. This seems apparent among contemporary armed robbers in Nigeria.

#### **3.4.1.2.2 The Semi-Professional**

According to Gibbons (1965: 104) the skills among this category are relatively simple and uncomplicated. There is no careful planning and careful execution, and the latter is accomplished with the use of crude physical force. Most of the members of this class tend to carry on crime as an occupation. Many of the offences too tend to be a two-person affair—involving an offender and a victim, for example, strong-arm robbery and liquor store and gas station stickups. There is no doubt that the classification seems more appropriate with what obtains in the western world, as it is relatively few in contemporary Nigeria

So, implicit in Gibbon's classification is that there are two kinds of armed robbery namely the professional and the semi-professional armed robbery.

The preceding classifications are typologies based specifically from the perspective of studies on the criminals or offenders. That is, the authors seem to be more concerned with identifying the various kinds of armed robbers that have emerged or operate in the contemporary societies.

Conversely, McClintock and Gibson classifications (1961), and Baumer and Carrington's (1986) classifications are based on the offence. Specifically, these authors' classifications are based on the nature and location of the offence.

#### **3.4.1.3 McCLINTOCK AND GIBSON'S CLASSIFICATIONS BASED ON THE OFFENCE**

McClintock and Gibson identified the following kind of armed robbery:

##### **3.4.1.3.1 The robbery of persons by position**

This is robbery by person who, as part of his or her employment and the nature of his or her position is entrusted with money, goods or valuables. This category includes robberies in the banks, jewellery stores, offices and other places that money hand.

##### **3.4.1.3.2 Robbery in an open area**

This robbery includes street offences, snatching of purse, mugging, robbery and rapes, and attacks. McClintock and Gibson (1961) describe these categories as the most common type, especially in the urban areas. Accordingly, these authors explain that street

robbery is most closely associated with mugging or “yoking”—grabbing victims from behind and threatening with a weapon.

#### **3.4.1.3.3 Robbery on private premises**

This is the type of robbery that involves robbing people after breaking into homes. In the view of the researcher this is the most common form of robbery in modern day Nigeria. It may probably have accounted for about 75% of armed robbery cases being reported in the country. And it quite well takes place mainly during the nights or dark hours, usually when there are power failures.

#### **3.4.1.3.4 Robbery after preliminary association of short duration**

According to McClintock and Gibson (1961), this type of robbery comes in the aftermath of a chance meeting—in a bar, party or after sexual encounter.

Another kind of robbery these authors further identified is the one described as occurring after previous association of some duration between the victim and the offender.

#### **3.4.1.4 BAUMER AND CARRINGTON, AND DUN’S CLASSIFICATION BASED ON THE OFFENCE**

Other classifications include those provided by Terry Baumer and Michael Carrington (1986), and complemented by Dun (cf. Naude and Stevens 1988:170) classification. Terry Baumer and Michael Carrington provide classifications that are based mainly on

bank robbery. Analysis of their classification reviews that it cuts across both the offence and the offenders.

1) The first of their classifications is the unarmed bandit who simply passes a note to the teller demanding money and often leaves without raising the suspicions of other employees. This category is rarely known or reported in Nigeria.

2) The second type is the armed lone bandit, who usually shows a hand and makes an oral demand. Two-third of the authors' samples fell under this category. This is also rarely observed in Nigeria, but may probably have been reported in some places.

3) The third are armed teams who present themselves as robbers; order employees, customers and all present to "get down on the floor", and then proceed with a well-formulated plan. This type of robbers usually carts away large sums of money. This is the most feared according to the authors. It also represents the most common bank robbery in the modern day Nigeria, and may probably have accounted for well over 85% of all bank robberies.

#### **3.4.1.5 DUN'S CLASSIFICATION BASED ON THE OFFENCE**

According to Dun 1976, (cf. Naude and Stevens 1988:170) robbery can be categorised on the basis of the role the victim played at the time of the crime, or at the place where he/she was. This is another form of classification that focuses on the offence. According to this classification, a person whose job puts him in charge of money or other valuables can be robbed after a sudden attack in an open area; on private premises; after a short meeting between robber and victim; or after a long allegiance between the parties.

#### **3.4.1.6 EINSTADTER'S CLASSIFICATION BASED ON THE OFFENCE**

Einstadter classification (1975 in Rushing 1975:457-458) of armed robbery is not only rich in analysis, but also bear remarkable relevance to the pattern and style prevalence in contemporary Nigeria. Describing the tactics of armed robbery, the author, notes that the style of career robbery, which corresponds to its approaches falls under three headings:

##### **3.4.1.6.1 The Ambush**

Einstadter describes this kind of robbery as the type characterised by least planning; it involves the storming of a target in a guerrilla-militia style. All armed robbery relies on the element of surprises to succeed, but it does seem that the ambush armed robbery and robbers rely greatly on this. Attack by the participants is aimed at obtaining whatever might be found—cash or other items of value. No specific criteria are applied in the selection of target as they are simply randomly done. In the view of the author, it is the robbery most likely to be characterised by high violence, involves no sophistication, and the least from the point of view of robbery careerist. This type of robbery is rampant in most contemporary Nigerian towns and cities.

##### **3.4.1.6.2 The Selective Raid**

In this form, there is minimum planning in that targets are tentatively chosen and *cased*-guarded. Planning, however are more likely to be done casually. But at least, the conditions are analysed in a determined and calculative manner of weighing the cost-benefits. Several robberies may be committed in quick successions. This type of robbery has become fashionable among contemporary Nigerian armed bandits.

#### **3.4.1.6.3 The Planned Operation**

This describes the type of robbery that involves detail and elaborate planning—spanning to months. The “scores” involve here is usually large so that no stone is left unturned in planning the operation. Conditions are carefully analysed and rehearsals, or what the author (1975: 458) describes as “dry runs” are undertaken to reduce risk to the barest minimum. This kind of robbery too is not uncommon in contemporary Nigeria.

### **3.4.2 CHARACTERISTICS OF ARMED ROBBERY AND ARMED ROBBERS**

Many authors have also in their various studies or writings on the offence and the offenders reflected on certain features as running through both. Characteristics are seemingly derived from the physical, psychological and social dimensions of both the crime and the criminals.

Sharing many things in common, it is interesting to note, however, that these features as put forward by the various authors vary, and each seems more likely to depend on the author’s approaches to the study, his or her sense of intuitiveness, and the findings from the respondents and subjects interviewed. The researcher finds some of these characteristics a somewhat contentious most especially amongst those attributed to some of the western scholars. Some of them are either simply too bogus to accept, or simply doubtful. Notwithstanding a handful of authors’ derived characteristics are reviewed.



#### **3.4.2.1 IWARIMIE-JAJA'S PERSPECTIVE**

Iwarimie-Jaja, whose expertise lies on armed robbery in Nigeria, has in his series of studies (1987, 1992, 1994, and 1999a), deduced certain traits as constituting the social organisations—the peculiar characteristics of armed robbery and armed robbers. And more specifically, while focusing on his latest studies of 56 convicted armed robbers in Port Harcourt city, he deduced some remarkable features of the offence and offenders (Iwarimie-Jaja 1999a: 141-143). They are:

- That armed robbers are deviants who see themselves as different from all other persons in the society.
- That the offence and offenders are characterised by heavy drunkards and drug addicts which stirs them during robbery operations.
- That both the offence and offenders lack any investment orientation and motives as they are characterised by lavish spending on women and luxury goods.
- That they are characterised by strong ability to pre-empt their victims by adopting what he referred as the psychological technique known as “Projection” which enable them to calculate and rationalise quick enough.
- That they are more secretive than other criminals, being recidivists of other crimes, have a high sense of organisation, wealth of criminal tactics and passwords to communicate information, being stone-hearted, and do not reject their acts till death. This last phrase the researcher feels, is fraught with scepticism and need further investigation

because like all other human endeavours, people tend to quit in their careers as they peak their maturity age. The numerous respondents and subjects in this study expressed truthfully or otherwise, regret for their involvement in armed robbery and maintained that they will quit with time.

- Armed robbers and armed robbery entails a good market survey. They have knowledge of items in high demand and also the prevailing market prices.

- There is a mutual agreement on the need to respect group territorial boundaries. In other words, gang operates within certain located zones, and each tends to respect the other gangs territorial zones.

- Armed robbery and armed robbers are characterised by people that have been previously poor, and contemplated suicide. They are courageous and desperate people. This point also needs a re-examination. This is because it merely reduces the offenders to mere economic person. Besides wanting to earn “crazy money”, people sometimes choose “hoodlum” status in order to assert their dignity by refusing to “sling a mop for the white man”, and in the case of contemporary Nigeria, “big men” so defined for “chump change” (see also Anderson 1976: 68). Employment, or better yet, self-employment in the illegal economy accords one a sense of autonomy, self-worth, and an opportunity for extraordinary rapid, short-term upward mobility that is only too obviously unavailable in entry-level jobs in the licit economy (see Bourgois 1997: 71).

- Armed robbers and armed robbery usually have sponsors call “Area Fathers”—publicly recognised individuals in the society as businessmen, artisans, and preachers. They thus,

play the role of godfathers or mediator, being very influential with the police, and are able to provide immunity for the robbers under their patronage.

- There is the importance of information leak through agents such as the police, custom officials who act as collaborators to targeted victims.

Iwarimie-Jaja's analyses further reveal some other important salient feature of both the offence and the offenders. They include proportionally being single, male, less educated or none at all, and mainly of age bracket between 19-49. His findings find concordance with Pollak (1950), Mareni (1987), Olurode (1990.), Otu (1992), and Maree (1999). These authors in their different studies have deduced several characteristics similar to those enumerated above by Iwarimie-Jaja.

#### **3.4.2.2 EINSTADTER'S PERSPECTIVE**

In his studies of 23-armed robbers, Einstadter (1975 in Rushing 1975: 450-453) documented certain observations, which an in-depth analysis depicts as constituting important characteristics of the offence, the offenders and concomitantly, their *modus operandi*. These observations are teased out as including among other things, the fact that:

- Members are honestly disposed to their group only on matter of immediate present.
- Leaderships and roles performed are routinely changed from one operation to the other, depending on talents available, and on the mood or temperament of individual partners.

- There is individual responsibility as members are responsible for their fate in the event of mishap. Arrestee expects no assistance from partners. Group relations are not permanent, but are perceived as mere loose confederation bonded together for a specific purpose on short-term basis.

- One individual robber to the other finances the financial outlays of the armed robbers.

That is, by contribution to the total outlay. This is usually when large expenses, such as the purchase of an automobile or the purchase of weapons are needed.

- Gains are equally shared among associates including those not directly involved in the actual robbery since there is no such thing as “outsider” in robbery exploits.

- Robbers give little thought to being arrest while actively engaged in the crime.

- Members are expected to perform assigned roles independent of other except where it becomes expediency to offer assistance.

- Careful panning, and the determination to successfully carry out the execution precede robbery.

- There is more likely the presence of what Einstadter (1975 in rushing 1975:455) describes as *planning consultant* whose role behaviour is more of guiding rather than directing.

- Typical career robbery triad is made up of three men—two who enter the establishment armed, and the third who remains outside in the vicinity in an automobile, may be armed or not.

### **3.4.2.3 GIBBON'S PERSPECTIVE**

Gibbons (1965) perception on the characteristics of armed robbers is a rich, interesting and illuminating. By a thoroughly worked out model, he described and grouped the social organisation which he thus, refers to as the characteristics in terms of the following headings:

- Offensive behaviour, interactional setting, self-concept, attitude and role career.

Together, he referred to them as “definitional dimensions”.

- Social class, family background, peer group associates.
- Contact with the definitional agencies, which he referred to as the “background dimensions”.

Gibbon's detailed perception, which reflects on the characteristics of armed robbery, is that both the offence and offenders are characterised by high skills, lengthy planning periods, teamwork of comradeship, a sense of dignity in their profession, and an aversion to violence. Others include the fact that they are mainly people from urban, lower class backgrounds with years of apprenticeship; involvement in conventional marital relationship, a good social relationship with criminals and non-criminals, and an astute life style that makes them avoids the police and other law enforcement agencies.

#### **3.4.2.4 CONKLIN'S PERSPECTIVE**

Conklin (1972:71), outlined the following as constituting the features of armed robbery and armed robbers:

- Most of the robberies occur in large cities mainly in the city centres, and in sub urban business centres and especially on the streets.
- Professional armed robbers strike mainly at banks and businesses and take away large sums of money, while the juveniles strike on the streets.
- Race and sex play an important role with firearms often in use.
- Robbery and robbers prefer a victim with large sums of money.
- There is always the need to use violence.

### **3.5 ARMED ROBBERY AND ARMED ROBBERS: THE *MODUS OPERANDI***

#### **3.5.1 GENERAL OVERVIEW**

An important aspect of armed robbery and armed robbers that quite often overlaps with the characteristics, the patterns, nature and incidence is the *modus operandi*. *Modus operandi*, hereinafter referred to as (MO) is a Latin term, which denotes the method of operating. And by definition, it refers to the attitudes that are committed by an offender for the purpose of a successful completion of the particular act or behaviour (Burgess,

Burgess, Douglas, and Ressler 1997). This MO is what Iwarimie-Jaja (1999a: 134-40) may have meant by the term the “nature of armed robbery”.

A criminal’s MO comprises learned behaviour that can evolve and develop over time. It can be refined as an offender becomes more experienced, sophisticated and confident (Geberth 1996). *Modus operandi* most often serves one or more of three purposes: to protect the offender’s identity; ensure the successful completion of the crime; facilitates the offender’s escape (Turvey 1999:152).

Changes in this MO are not usually on the positive direction— progression. It can also change in a retrogression manner. Such changes may be due to the criminal’s mental state; the influence of controlled substances (drugs), or due to an increased confidence that the law enforcement will not successfully apprehend an individual career offender (see also Turvey 1999:153). In either case, offender’s MO may become less skilful, less competent, and more careless.

There are factors, which are important in the manner that the *modus operandi* of criminals can be learned. Turvey (1999) provides some of these factors. So, armed robbers’ MO is learned, imbibed and emulated by means of some of these factors. The effect of these factors, however, seems to vary from an individual to individual, and place-to-place. Some of these factors are examined below.

### **3.5.2 FACTORS INFLUENCING THE LEARNING OF *MODUS OPERANDI***

According to Turvey (1999:154-156), common ways that any offender of crime—and indeed, an armed robber can learn how to more skilfully commits crime, evades capture, and conceals his or her identity include:

a) **Educational and technical materials**: This includes professional journals, college courses, textbooks, and other educationally oriented media that are available at the public library or on the Internet. According to him this can provide the offenders with the knowledge that is useful towards refining their particular MO. Arsonists for instance, may read Kirk's fire investigation by John Delta; rapists may read practical aspects of rape investigation by Burgess et al., or listen to "Oprah" show on rape discussion; and armed robbers may subscribe to security magazines. Or they may lay hand on a number of Hadley Chase's novels, or they might even read Smart's thesis on armed robbery.

b) **Media**: Media which provides an offender with an insight into the precautionary act, as well as adequate information to "copycat", a particular series, and differ investigative suspicious.

c) **Criminal experience and confidence**: Committing more of the same type of crime, makes the offender becomes more proficient, and confident at it. And in the case of contemporary armed robbery, criminal experiences and confidence are strong pre-requisite both to gain the confidence, and perfect the MO.

d) **Contact with the Criminal Justice System**: Contacts may teach an offender an invaluable lesson about how to avoid detection by the law enforcement in the future. In fact, the argument may be that since Criminal Justice System—particularly the Law Courts is to an extent, characterised by intrigues, lies, and corruption, offenders are able to imbibe this culture, and to know what lies to tell, and how to skilfully tell them.

Further to this is the fact that the prisons are currently referred to as "going to criminal college" These two related facts are important sources of learning and emulating the present day armed robbers in Nigeria. For instance, a case witnessed in the court by



the researcher demonstrates vividly, how this frequent contact of a criminal with the criminal justice system can influence and enhance the skilfulness of the criminals. In that instance, a notorious recidivists armed robber holding two little babies of about 6 and 7 years old told the entire members in the court that the only brother and person he has was crushed in a motor accident a day before his case was heard. He even inquired from the presiding judge if he did not hear about the ghastly accident that was reported to have killed a Barrister.

e) **Trade or professional experience:** This refers to the fact that the offenders may have been or currently be employed in trades or professions that utilised special knowledge, or which require proficiency with some specialised techniques—electricians, plumber, telephone company, law enforcement, computer, military, and pilot. For instance, the *Reuters* of 24 March 2001, monitored in Lagos reports that in Lokoja, on the 2 April 2000, three policemen were sentenced to death for armed robbery. Some reported armed robbery cases described as skilfully executed has also been linked to the activities of retired or unscrupulous serving members of the forces and other skilled individuals.

f) **Offender's mood:** An offender's mood on a given day can influence their aggression level into an offence, and the manner in which they subsequently react to the victim (s) and the crime scenes. Just as the popular saying goes, "he who woke up from the wrong side of the bed is more likely to act irrationally and ill tempered". So, an offender whose day is marred by one reason or the other is more likely to act perhaps, more aggressively, than the other offender who received love and compassionate feelings before crime operation.

g) **X-factors**: This refers to unforeseen circumstances such as victim being under the influence of controlled substances, unexpected witnesses, and unexpected victim responses.

### **3.5.3 FACTORS OF CONSIDERATION OF *MODUS OPERANDI* ON ARMED ROBBERY**

The *Modus operandi* of any activity depends on quite a number of considerations. With respect to armed robbery, and in Nigeria in particular, the consideration and *means of operandi* are of mixed; they depend on the place of the offence and the targeted victims. Some of these considerations and means represent the criteria that need be in place for a successful robbery operation. They are:

a) **Transport**: The means of transport to use depends on the scale of the operation, the location, and the professionalism involved. Motorcycle bikes and Motor vehicles are notable automobiles that are usually used in the contemporary armed robbery operations in Nigeria. Foot are rarely used in modern day armed robbery, but they still found amongst some robbery operations especially in a clustered settlements, or in the rural settlements. For instance, “Footpad” armed robbery is still widely used, and featured more prominently in most of the robbery cases in Afikpo—the researcher’s hometown. Indeed, footpad remains an indispensable means of executing most criminals’ activities.

b) **Time**: The time to carry out operation is also of crucial as far as the *modus operandi* of armed robbery is concerned. Timing depends on the nature of the target, the desperation of the robbers, and professionalism as well. Available literature and media reports, however, suggest that most operations outside the commercial and banking robberies are

done in the night in Nigeria (Mareni 1987; Iwarimie-Jaja 1987and 1999a; Otu 1992). Night robbery is usually associated with residential robbery.

Iwarmie-Jaja (1999a: 138) explains that most of the robberies in Port Harcourt were carried out mostly between 6.00 P.M and 12 mid-night. His findings are in line with the findings of the National Crime Survey (NSC) in the U.S, which shows that about 53% of all violent crimes are committed between the hour of 6:00 P.M and 6:00 A.M. Banks and commercial building robberies occur mostly in the morning, and during the broad daylight. This is usually during working hours (see also Maree 1999:55).

In some countries like those with power fluctuations, the timing becomes especially of importance. For instance, in the contemporary Nigeria, robbery is common when there is “power failure”—electric power is off, and darkness pervades.

c) **Weapons**: There is no fast and hard rule on the types of weapon to use. However, researchers (Maree 1999:56; Iwarimie-Jaja 1994 and 1999a:137) have noted that such weapons as 9mm pistols, revolver, Ak47, short guns, Mark IV, the FNC, K2. Beret and LAR assault riffles are often times used. Other likely weapons as the researcher has noted in his hometown and surroundings and from the interviews with the subjects include the double barrel guns, locally fabricated long and short guns popularly known as “Oka”, knockouts, axes, cutlasses and clubs.

d) **Security**: The incognito of the offenders are paramount in the consideration of how to rob, who to rob, and where to rob. Disguise—the idea to camouflage the offenders’ identities is viewed as an important aspect of the game. So, masks are often used (Iwarimie-Jaja 1999a:139). Maree (1999:57) in addition, notes in her study of bank robbery in South Africa that apart from the balaclavas or stockings that are used, a false

moustache and beard, dark spectacles or make-ups are also frequently used. These views collaborate with Honan 1995 (cf. Maree 1999:57), which confirm that 72% of the bank robbers in New Zealand use balaclavas or crash helmets to disguise themselves. Robbers in Nigeria do not necessarily wear masks. Perhaps this may be due to the fact that they are emboldened, and do often operate under the condition difficult to be identified. No doubt that contemporary robbers in the country are aware of the relative difficulty in identifying them by any forensic means which are almost in none existence in contemporary Nigeria's investigatory system.

e) **Mood:** The prevailing mood of the offenders also feature in the consideration of the *modus operandi*. Mood is important because offenders must be in a frame of mind, which are congenial to confront the victims and the crime situation. Einstadter (1975 in Rushing 1975: 452) explains that a robber in a gang of participants may also “sit one out”—opt not to participate if he feels a particular robbery will be dangerous for him.

Drugs and ‘African insurance’ (charms) are of important factors of consideration here. Findings in this study indicate the use of drugs among these offenders, albeit, this is not a common phenomenon (see also Iwarimie-Jaja 1999a:137). But importantly, is the fact that many armed robbers in contemporary Nigeria believe in, and do fortify themselves with African “black power” (charms). This is what Clement Eze—the repentant armed robber whose interview is reported in the *Nigerian Tribune* Online hotmail.com, 18 August 2002 described as an “African insurance”. In most of the reported cases of arrest by the police, charms have been found to be a common phenomenon amongst the offenders (see for instance, *Lagos New* 4 February 1987). And

in some other instances, some offenders have been apprehended on tip-off at the residences of their charms makers or African insurers.

There is also the tendency on the part of these offenders to get “boozed up” (get relatively drunk), to gratify themselves with women, and sometimes receive prayers and blessings from the so “called-man-of-God” before going into an operation. This assertion or rather imagination is based on reveal from members of the respondents who were interviewed orally, and anecdotal stories.

f) **The Use of Violence:** The decision to use or not of violence occupies a prominent place in the *modus operandi* on armed robbery, and remains one indispensable means to the crime. Indeed, the use of violence or threat of it is at the centre of armed robbery, and also remains one of its distinguishing characteristics.

This characteristic becomes obvious, and conspicuous during the execution phase of the robbery (see also Beirne and Messerschmidt 2000). Violence, or the threat of it is used because the robbers wished to safeguard themselves, feel protected from any unwanted intimidation from the victim, and to avoid confrontations from within and outside (Iwarimie-Jaja 1999a:137; Maree 1999:57). Significant numbers of armed robbers interviewed in the course of this study concur that the use of violence, or threat of it is indispensable to the commission of the crime. According to them, its immediate aim is to achieve a successful armed robbery operation without much confrontation. Their argument is that without it, most of their victims would not co-operate.

As one robber put it:

We don't want to kill. But if anyone proves difficult, we gotta show him or her that we meant business. After all they can turn around and kill us.

With respect to the violence, or threat of it, illustrations below are provided to further demonstrate how contemporary armed robbers in Nigeria can, or do display extreme aggressiveness and wickedness on the victims, and at other times show empathy and sympathy towards their victims.

## **ILLUSTRATION**

On 20 August 2000, Customs Officers on duty at the Nigerian Airline Cargo Office (NACO) were tied up, while one that resisted was reportedly shot by armed hoodlums (*Tribune* 17 January 2000). On 10 October, 2000, a gang of armed robbers trailing the wife of former chief of General Staff, Vice Admiral Mike Akhigbe, pumped bullets into the naval officer's wife at the wheel who died instantly (*Guardian* 12 October 2000). In 1997, in a broad daylight, a gang of terrified armed bandits, dressed in war-like manner stormed the Onitsha main market, robbing and shooting like what looked like a fictitious film act. Several people were wounded in the mayhem (eye witness account by the researcher).

Robberies despite their observable common characteristic—aggressiveness and harms, are however, sometimes carried out in a “gentleman” manner. Simonsen (1998: 279) argues that robber probably does not want trouble, and would wished to leave without any one being hurt if the victim is courteous and co-operative. According to Wight and Decker (1997:113) robbers are only likely to turn to violence when a victim fails to comply, and response to such recalcitrant victim is only likely to be severe, but nonlethal in the hope of convincing the him or her to co-operate. Usually, it appears that the accompanying commands, the tough talk, fierce demeanour, and the display of deadly weapons are to secure compliance and avoid wilful damages and loss of life.

In one incident that demonstrates that armed robbers probably do not want trouble, or wish their victims harmed, one Oyetola, a victim relayed how five gang members burgled into his house on the 17 October 2000, and their leader shouted “where is the money”? When he answered “which money”? The leader then warned him that he had better co-operate with them otherwise he will be shot. In another incident told by the victims, a group of sports students and officials of the university of Port Harcourt who were on a trip to an inter University competitions when they were attacked by armed encountered the scenario, which demonstrates pure restraints on the part of the hoodlums. According to the report, the leader or the commander was reported heard saying “Do not shoot”. “Ladies and gentle men kindly co-operate”. “We don’t want to shed blood...” Robbers studied in this research reflect a mixture of this gentlemanism and aggressive attitudinal disposition.

Violence is also sometimes used as revenge as demonstrated by Anini—the notorious armed robber in Nigeria between 1985-6. Indeed, Anini argued during his trial that he and his gang embraced violence—directed mainly against the police when he could not secured the release of his cousin arrested for armed robbery, and who was summarily executed after a huge amount of payments to member of the police. He also stated that the same police went to his businesses and looted everything (Olurode 1990).

So, violence or the threat of it, some researches show is typical of armed robbery, but also depends on the prevailing circumstances (Conklin 1972; Einstadter 1975; Stevens 1988; Iwarimie-Jaja 1987, 1994; Wright and Decker 1997; Maree 1999). Such violence can be verbal in nature, brandishing of violent object, or the actual use of weapons or even palliative comments such as to “remain calm and avoid bloodshed” as

have discussed above. However, where resistance is encountered, or where armed robbers find it difficult to gain entrance, or have their ways as a result of certain tough security measures, or to reach their targets—either the booties or items of worth stolen as a result of the ingenuity of the supposed victim, violence is more likely to be employed to serve as a deterrence to the other would-be-victims.

#### **3.5.4 STAGES OF *MODUS OPERANDI* OF ARMED ROBBERY**

There are a handful of writers who have described what seems as the processes by which the decision to carry out armed robbery is conceived and carried out to a successful completion. These views when analysed, point to the different phases of the *modus operandi* (see, Luckenbill 1981; Weight and Decker 1997; Maree 1999). These authors are concerned with an understanding of how the decision to rob is made, how the actual operation is organised and executed, how to do away with the objects used in the operation, and finally, how to go about reconsidering further operation.

These stages of the *modus operandi* it must be emphasised are not completely peculiar to all armed robbery gangs or groups. Perhaps, they are more common among the professional or career, semi-professional armed robbers, planned and selective kind of armed robbery raid. However, what is important to note is that the stages of the *modus operandi* of armed robbery reflect and resemble what is conventionally obtainable in other professions. According to Luckenbill (1981) each stage involves “transaction”, and it defines an important task that the offender and victim co-jointly execute.

Maree (1999) although, focusing on the bank robbery, provides a good description of the phases or stages involved in the *modus operandi* or the transaction of



armed robbery between the offenders and the victims. She notes that there is the planning, the execution, the disposal, and the reconsideration phase (1999: 53-58). However, going by intuition, the findings in this study and from the literature, this researcher is of the view that planning presupposes the decision to engage in an activity, hence the decision stage otherwise known as the “incubating stage” is further identified in this study.

a) **Incubating Stage:** Plans of robbery is preceded by the decision to rob. Sometimes such decision emanates from a lone robber, who then seeks and identifies with others who must be willing to partake before effective plan takes off. At other times, the decision to go on robbery is a collective one. There is therefore, a group of robbers whose interest and desire simply coincide, or who have simply completed one and is poised to go for another in accordance with an agreement amongst members—to shift and rotate operations amongst member’s chosen target. As Clement Eze, the repentant armed robber cited above (e) section 3.5.3 further states, the collective decisions to go on an operation are also often taken when members are broke. Wright and Decker (1997) explain that most robbers decide to commit the crime when faced with pressing need for cash, or get involved in self-indulgent activities—drugs, alcohol, gambling or ostentatious living as common among most Nigerian robbers. The important point being made here is that the decision to rob is a crucial one, and it represents the first ever-single stage in the *modus operandi*.

b) **Planning stage:** At the planning phase Maree (1999:54) argues that crucial decision regarding the target, and the security of the place as it affects operation is made. And this also varies from person to person, and period to period, and depends on experiences.

During this phase, the target is well studied, in most cases visited—a kind of a surveying, and the getaway routes are also properly noted. What are again needed to ensure effective robbery operation is at this phase muted and gathered. Sometimes rehearsals are made.

Information is considered very important at the planning phase. Most armed robbery operations are based on information so that success or failure is hinged on the type of information received and utilised in planning. According to the interviewees (subjects and respondents) they are usually fed with important information about a particular crime victims and the in particular the scene. In some of these instances as earlier explained, the police are important source of this information in the contemporary Nigerian armed robbery. The same repentant Clement Eze adds credence to the importance of this information when he intones that in most robbery incidence, they are preceded by prior information provided by somebody who is either an insider of the target organisation, or who knows and understands the victims fairly well enough.

c) **Execution stage:** This phase is concerned with the actual carrying out of the planned operation. It is a crucial phase, and is handled with all seriousness and attention. Violence or threat of it is a feature of this phase (see reasons for the use of violence above, in “e”). At the execution stage, individual armed robbers assume the roles assigned to them, and are expected to carry out the responsibility attached therewith. What happens at this stage—bodily harm, stolen property or money, the non-use of violence and so forth, to a large extent determine how the general public and the law enforcement agents react to the offence and the offenders.

d) **Disposal stage:** The disposal phase, which the researcher refers to as the stock taking stage is concerned with the setting out of the criteria to apportion the “produce” of a

successful operation. It also determines how to dispense away the items used in the operation, and to dispose off the properties stolen that are not of immediate need to the members.

At this stage, the appraisal of the operation either in line of a successful operation, or the failure or lapses is conducted. The looted booties are shared according to the pre-determined formula while at the same time efforts are made to erase out any lining of evidence that could lead to detection, or provide *alibi* against members. At this stage participants keep abreast with the news on the robbery escapades, and tend to monitor attempts at reaching on them by the law enforcement agents. Maree (1999:58), however, notes that the idea of getting rid off the robbery equipment is never as planned, and often, exposed the robbers to arrest by the police. It is emphasised that the disposal stage is facilitated because of the wide network of the robbers who know very well not only how to dispose of their booties, but also on how to safe guards their weaponry.

e) **Reconsideration stage:** The reconsideration phase though separately classified by Maree (1999:58), is seen as an appendage to the former, and it involves the rethinking of the idea and the possibility of going into another operation, or quitting as the case may be. In the former option, new plans are made, which includes target layout and strategies of operation and how to get the necessary weapons and transport to be used. In the latter option, the individual robber who seeks to quit, or switch allegiance to another group of gang is permitted to do so provided that the overriding rule of the profession—territorial respect and secrecy are adhered to.

### **3.5.5 *MODUS OPERANDI* OF SELECTED ARMED ROBBERY OPERATIONS IN CONTEMPORARY NIGERIA**

Turvey (1999:152-3) explains that the general types of MO behaviour include the amount of planning before crime; offence location selection; pre-surveillance of crime scene or victim; the involvement of a victim during crime; the use of weapon during crime; the use of restraints to control the victim during a crime; the offenders precautionary acts (e.g. covering the victim's eyes during attack, wearing a condom during rape, and forcing the victim to bathe after a sexual attack); and the offender's transportation to and from the crime scene (e.g. the use of bicycle, walking, motorised vehicle).

The specific types of *modus operandi* of armed robbery in modern Nigeria in addition to the above are intriguing and unique to some extent. It includes such actions and manners such as, but by no means limited, to all kinds of the operational strategies to be adopted or that is being employed to beat the would-be-victims and the law enforcement agencies. Such strategies are legion, and they also vary from one gang group to another, and depend on some factors such as the professionalism, scale of operation, location of target, knowledge of the victim, innovativeness and facilities—weapons, charms, and mobility at hand. A few of these strategies would suffice, and are highlighted here as illustrations.

#### **ILLUSTRATION I**

There could be a thunderous and a fierce attack on the victims, and it is usually with a spontaneous, unceasing heavy and deafening banging on the doors. This is often accompanied with a wild shout, command and threat, sometimes with an immediate

indiscriminate shooting. Kasmir Mba, a victim of armed robbery attack on November 14 1999 explains in concurrence to this view:

“...suddenly there was heavy banging on the door of my shop, with shout of “open the door”, “open the door”

(see the *Guardian* 24 November 1999 and *National Concord* 4 October 1999).

This is a kind of the ambush-guerrilla-militia type of robbery described by Einstadter 1975 above in section 3.4.6.1.

## **ILLUSTRATION II**

The victim house is surrounded, and there is an outburst by a robbery group or gang member with a command “Don’t move”? “Remain calm”. “Everybody lie face down”. This is a very common general *modus operandi* (GMO) with the bank robbery, and indeed, most of the robberies. The emphasis on the victims to lie face down is to ensure that the offender does not come into face-to-face contact with a known victim. This is also a kind of the ambush robbery.

## **ILLUSTRATION III**

Robbers sometimes board a commercial vehicle alongside with other passengers suspected to be in possession of large amount of money and/ or valuables. The driver of the vehicle is forced at gunpoint to stop at a particular spot, and the mass of unsuspecting passengers are consequently attacked and robbed. The arrangement of the robbers is such that they usually positioned themselves in different locations in the bus so that they can exercise effective control on the commuters. Sitting positions are usually in the front, middle, back, window and aisle. This kind of specific strategy or mechanism is highly dependent on information and/ or “set ups”, which is the characterisation amongst

Nigerian traders—usually the victims, and who transacts their businesses mostly by cash. This kind of robbery cuts across the ambush, the selective raid and the planned operation because all the basic elements of each of them are clearly identifiable.

#### **ILLUSTRATION IV**

A powerful strategy as a kind of the general *modus operandi* of armed robbery in the contemporary Nigeria is what the research prefers to describe as the “trailing technique”. That is, following an unsuspecting victim to a point before being attacked. Retired Anthony Ikazhabo earlier mentioned was trailed from church to his house, killed as he attempted to enter and robbed of valuables. Mrs Josephine Akhigbe, wife of the former Chief of Staff also earlier on referred to was trailed to her residence where she was attacked and robbed, leaving her driver who was perceived as threat dead.

#### **ILLUSTRATION V**

A good strategy, though less often used, is to keep vigil on the gate of the would-be-victim. If an unsuspecting occupant of the building, or the particular house open the gate, then the bandits, who had laid siege, would simply and swiftly catch on the opportunity to enter into the building. This is often made easy for them if there is a visitor coming into the building, or if an occupant is driving in. These bandits usually hang around and watch the door open for the visitor. As soon as the gate is flung open, the robbers will match with alacrity into the compound with the visitor or occupant.

Relatedly, in a clustered residential neighbourhood, the general mechanism of *modus operandi* is to grab, or to lay hand on a person, and order or commandeers this person in ransom to be knocking at neighbours’ doors. Since the face and voice is familiar, the doors are usually opened for this neighbour in an unsuspecting way. The

robbers who usually hide very close behind while the familiar face and voice knocks, will emerge with speed and threat as soon as the door is thrown open.

There is also the tendency on the part of the robbers to appear cool and benign, and to personally knock gently on the door of the victim. Sometimes, information is sought, which have direct bearing on the occupants. This, however, usually depends on the substantial knowledge about the would-be-victim. As soon as the door is flung open, the robbers immediately swing into action. For instance, on 4 September 2000, a landlady of a house where one Jola Ajomale lived in Ketu, Lagos came to knock in her door. Seeing it was the landlady, the househelp responded by opening the door. But rather than the landlady, a young boy clutching a gun ordered everybody to lie down. It was armed bandits who trooped in and surrounded everywhere (see more in *Tell Magazine* 25 December 2001). These strategies fit in well into the ambush and selective raid kinds of robberies.

Other strategies as mechanisms of the general *modus operandi* remain numerous, and they include diverse ranges such as a hot-chase of the victim either within the inner cities or along highway roads; blocking of roads with logs and other dangerous objects; spontaneously throwing of glowing gun powders or dynamites; cunning such as hypnotising, drugging or deliberate causing of discomfort to the would-be-victim like splashing pepperish substances into the eye; using of women or unsuspecting youth as ploys; feigning of innocence and helplessness that could attract sympathy; disguised dressings and acting as impostor.

### **3.5.6 PERCEPTIONS ON POLICY**

The views and perceptions on armed robbery with respect to the preventive measures are legion in the literature. The review of these views shows that they are largely guided and shaped by the different ideological orientation of the writers. Thus, Wilson (1983) explains that criminologists, sociologists and the criminal justice system writers and the public are often impassioned and emotionally disposed to calling for a stiffer penalty against the criminals. So, he argues that these attitudes, more than any thing else, make us look more violent than the violators. The report on crime therefore, is an unguarded exaggeration policy, which do not only serves the interest groups, but often times shapes government policies (Wilson 1983).

This perception collaborates Schur (1965) who observed that crime reports, and how seriously they are, are normally done in the manner calculated to ignite an intense alarm, and to provoke an impassioned reactions from the general public and government. McNeely and Pope (1981: 13) also underscored the official response to crime and armed robbery in particular. They see it as been dramatic, and characterised by a high profile rate of national, state and local investigating commissions; the number of recommendations about major changes in crime control strategies; and the proposal and enactment of the legislation that aimed at a supposed solution to the crime problem.

Gibbons (1978:258) based his policy perception on Evertt De, Baun, and a former heavy armed robber, who turned into a successful freelance author and television writer. According to this author, it is very possible to repress very heavy crimes of certain kinds by the law enforcement and legislative tactics, which increase the risk of detection and apprehension. This view finds support with Clark 1980 (cf. Maree 1999:59), who reflects



his mind on the importance of reducing the physical opportunities for the offenders to commit crime, while increasing the opportunity to arresting them.

Mareni (1987:259-81), Iwarimie-Jaja (1989:2-4; 1999a:265) Olurode (1990:65-67), are of the views that policies and strategies, which are geared as preventive measures must be rooted in the socio-historical experience of the particular country in question. So, the internal dynamism, grounded in the socio-historical, political and economic transformation Nigeria has undergone and continues to undergo for instance, forms the bedrock for any meaningful policy implication.

Odekunle (1978:95-97), and Ekong (1989:6), Nkpa 1994 (in Otite 1994:282-83), Iwarimie-Jaja (1999a:265) specifically focused on the criminal justice system as a presage to any meaningful policy action. These authors explain that the criminal justice system must be radically overhauled. In particular, Iwarime-Jaja (1999a: 267) drawing from the relatively incipient nature of the discipline of criminology in Nigeria, which he describes as the right beginning to effective criminal justice policy, summed it up thus:

... When criminology is likely to be accountable for itself and the Nigeria society, the society may adopt a self-assisting, co-operative attitude, crime will very likely reduce, and criminology would become a humanistic field of study, which would foster such positive climate as would the entice deviants and delinquent away from identifying themselves with anti-social and criminal behaviour to a life of self respect for oneself and neighbour, and for law and order, peace and harmony.

Stevens 1988 (in Naude and Stevens 1988: 172) and Maree (1999:59) perceive general policy and specific actions as holistic in nature, which should involve the government, its agencies, and the would-be-victims (public at large). Accordingly, they reasoned that while government are taking bold actions which include addressing the issue of bail and reducing parole, people should be trained and educated on the robbery

itself, and on its *modus operandi* to be able to spot out suspicious behaviour and thwart off certain robbery plans. Maree (1999: 59) explains, that above all other things, the media must be given a prominent role to play in this regard. Stevens (1988:172) on the hand, notes that better street lighting, protection of the bus and taxi drivers by placing bullet-proof glass between the driver and the passengers, and more effective police patrols of streets are of paramount.

According to Conklin (1972:184-185) policy should be encompassing; it should involve the individual, community and state in joint efforts to minimise the risk of armed robbery. In particular, policy should address all the conditions that propel people into robbery, and eliminate or rather reduce thus. So, the author recommends higher salaries, better housing, general economic and social reform programmes aimed especially at the lower strata of the population.

By and large, public perceptions of policy on armed robbery are such that are characterised with scepticism. Because of the difficulty and frustration to prosecute armed robbers through the criminal justice system, and the fact that armed robbers are more likely to incriminate innocent people as their accomplices, victims have often been reluctant to perceive any policy as yielding results.

### **3.5.7 CONCLUSION**

There are some issues and facts, which are very much worthy of note when studying or dealing with the offence of armed robbery and their offenders. They include the fact that generally, it is a vicious type of crime, it is perceived as relatively easier than other related offence such as burglary, it is a highly rewarding offence, it entails the possession

of skills and acumen necessary for its commission, and it is mainly male-dominated. Weapons carrying, hence their violent nature is also a common feature. Members within gang is permitted and privileged to leave anytime.

Although victims are carefully selected, it goes without saying that all classes of individuals and places are targets, and dependent on the classes of robbers involved, however.

Armed robbers and armed robbery has many characteristics in the same vein it has been taxonomised by many scholars. Both the characteristics (social organisations) and the typologies of the offence and offenders are extensive in literature, and they vary from writer to writer. Typologies and characteristics are based on factors such as the social psychology, the physical outlook of the offenders and the offence, and the methodological approach. Typologies are also further based on the pattern, place and the objectives and subjective of the offenders and the offence.

Characteristically, the subjects are mainly male; predominantly age of active members of the working population—mainly those from lower class income. The offence and offenders are also violent in nature; it is also more a product of the modern cities with its attendant social malaise, and where violence is a daily occurrence and incited by the mass media T.V in particular. It is also an activity that rely on information; being more secretive; has the ability to pre-empt victims, and routinely change leaderships. Others include ingenuity, unemployed, brave and audacious.

Typologies include the professional armed robber, the opportunist, addict, alcoholic, career, intermediate, predatory armed robbers, the professional heavy and the semi-professional armed robber. There is also an unarmed robber, armed lone bandit, and

armed team of robbers. In addition, typologies such as robbery by position, robbery in an open area, robbery on private premises, robbery after preliminary association, ambush, selective raid and planned operation robbery have been identified.

The *modus operandi* of the armed robbers presents quite an interesting part of the crime to the readers. Defined as the mechanisms of operating, the MO is extensive and depends on quite a number of risk-predictive and protective factors. The MO is never static, and it may swing in either direction—in progression and/ or in retrogression.

Factors which influence the MO include time, whether to be violent or not (mood), available means of transportation, whether to maintain incognito or not, and so on. However, the *modus operandi* is not learned over night. There are factors, which serve as the sources as well as aiding and abetting the learning process. They include, the educational and technical materials, the media, criminal experience and confidence, the frequency of contact with the criminal justice system, trade of professional experience, the offender's mood, and what has being referred to as “X-factors”.

*Modus operandi* of the offence involves five stages: the decision, the planning, the execution, the disposal, and reconsideration phases. Each is crucial to any robbery operation, and each carries definite targets and responsibilities.

With respect to armed robbery in modern Nigeria, given its uniqueness, the general *modus operandi* is numerous and includes such actions as chasing of the victims, blocking of highways, using baits, spontaneous attack, cunning—feigning innocence and hypnotising.

Perceptions on policy are a matter of the ideologues of the different writers. While some call for a measure of drastic response on the offenders, others have focused on the

criminal justice system, a holistic approach, and on tinkering with the existing social structures. Yet, others have drawn attentions to the fact that policy may no more than represents a response to the provoked impassion reactions from the public and government. Whatever being the case, policies on armed robbery may never be unanimous as few people are still bound by ideological difference to differ from the popular views of tough sanctions.

In the next chapter Four, further issues about the crime and criminals are addressed. The first part of it is the risk factors (causes) of the crime—a basically from the point of views of the literature. The second is the contemporary socio-economic and political context, which seems to have facilitated the idea of emulation against which the current armed robbery in Nigeria is predicated, reviewed and interpreted.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE RISK FACTORS OF ARMED ROBBERY AND NIGERIA SOCIO- ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL MILIEU

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

The focus of chapter Three is to bring to fore, some important facts of notes about the offence, the offenders and their general and specific *modus operandi*. Based on the typologies, the characteristics, and the *modus operandi*, the financial gain and ingenuity seems to be an important factor in most of robbery cases in contemporary Nigeria.

In this chapter, there are reviewed, the various predictive and risk factors of armed robbery. Risk factors are defined as the totality of the multiple risk-predictive and conducive variables—as common features of the contemporary Nigeria, which facilitates and promotes the occurrence and perpetuation of armed robbery in the country.

So, within this risk factors are the broad review and the discussion of the general socio-economic and political context of Nigeria under which contemporary armed robbery is facilitated and thrives. And because of the commanding viewpoint, which explains that the main risk factor of the crime is the economic underlying factor—the lack of unemployment, general poverty level, and the relative greediness associated with material possession, these economic variables are discussed in greater details. Thus, this “economic man” viewpoint of armed robbers is critically reviewed and analysed both from the perspectives of the proponents and opponents.

The main purpose for this review and discussion of the general socio-economic and political context of contemporary Nigeria is to continue to demonstrate, as much as it

is the central argument of this study that both the offence and the offenders—their current sophistry is a product of the socio-political and economic metamorphoses and its attendant complexities, which becloud the country as a result of the western contacts. This led to culture diffusion, infusion, shocks, miscegenation and supremacy.

## **4.2 RISK FACTORS OF ARMED ROBBERY**

Risk factors represent one of the most important aspects of armed robbery phenomenon. Many armed robbery and robbers' criminologists have accounted for the causes of the crime in their respective societies and others (see Conklin 1972; Clinard and Abbott 1973; Einstadter 1975 in Rushing 1975:449-459; O'Block 1981; Haran and Martin (1984 cf. Thio 1998:326); Katz 1996 in Conklin 1996: 172). In Nigeria, guest and Nigerian scholars have endeavoured to reflect on the risk factors of armed robbery within the socio-economic and political milieu of its contemporary nature. These authors draw from the knowledge of the grand theories, the empirical realities, and sometimes intuition and conjecturing (Mareni 1987; Ekpeyong 1989; Iwarimie-Jaja 1987, 1999a, 1998; Olurode 1990).

Analyses of the various viewpoints, which have been expressed by these authors, show that there are greater emphases on the economic factors as the causes of armed robbery—the direct result of economic deprivation, or more inversely, the inability to achieve economic goal of a society by legitimates means. By and large, emerging risk factors seem obvious to have clustered around such micro conceptual frameworks such as the general economic deprivation, poverty, unemployment, and other extenuating factors

such as the “civil war”, the socio-political climate, differential association, differential opportunity, and culture contact, diffusion, infusion and permissiveness.

#### **4.2.1 General economic deprivation**

Clinard and Abbott (1973:172) explain that the cause of armed robbery is the economic factor (approach), which the Economic and Social Council and the Secretariat of the United Nations stressed and underscored. The Economic and Social Council and the Secretariat of the United Nations (ESSUN) avers that crime problems lie deep in the process of economic and social development, and must also be resolved within them.

The views of many economic writers and social workers, including earlier writers such as Karl Max, William Bonger, and Jane Adam recognised the importance of the economic factors in the individuals’ social life. So, from the broad conceptual framework of the socio-economic condition, to its reducible elementary units such as unemployment, poverty, low income, low education and income inequality, writers like Ferman et al. (1965), Brenner (1977), Quinney (1977), Odekunle (1978), Klein (1981), Jacob and Britt (1979) cf. Iwarimie-Jaja (1999a: 126), are few among many writers who subscribe to the popular notion of the broad economic deprivation, and the specific unemployment-crime nexus.

Olurode (1990) does not find significant relationship between armed robbery and income amongst the number of armed robbers he studied. And in the same vein, Iwarimie-Jaja’s later study (1999a:164) notes that unemployment is not the only and simply the predisposing factor to committing armed robbery amongst his subjects in Port Harcourt metropolis—it is mediated by other intervening variable. Yet both authors



explain, however, that Nigerian mode of production, which is fanatically entrenched in the capitalist, but pseudo system also accounts for the disproportionate armed robbery and robbers' increase.

In his latest publication: "Criminology. The study of crime", [2<sup>nd</sup> ed]. Iwarimie-Jaja (1999a:90) becomes specific in affirming that the broad economic system is the source of the high rate of crimes including armed robbery in contemporary Nigeria. No doubt that like any other theorist or theory, the prevailing circumstances may have coloured this latter author and his theory. Iwarimie-Jaja's basic argument is that the peripheral nature of the capitalist mode of production of Nigeria, which defines its political economy, accounts for the high rate of armed robbery in the manner it is now. Being mild with this political economy factor or model, the author, therefore, depicts and locates armed robbery as a consequent of the structural mode of production and the material acquisition of the society, which he argues, gives top priority to this material wealth, but fails to provide the youth with an adequate means to achieving these. This is akin to Mertonian analysis and cause. Iwarimie-Jaja's point of departure in this later study is that the pattern of the socio-economic inequality that becomes institutionalised in the post-independence era, and which was not only reproduced in the period under reviewed, but also exacerbated, is the major cause of the high incidence of crimes and especially armed robbery in the modern Nigeria (1999a: 91).

#### **4.2.1.1 Unemployment**

Unemployment remains one key risk factor of the broad economic deprivation, which seems reasonable in the argument for any direct and immediate links with economically

motivated crime such as armed robbery. From most of the early radical writers such as Vold, Karl Max, Bonger, Chambliss to their contemporary allies such as Glaser, Rice, Box, and Fleischer, unemployment, poverty and the general abysmal socio-economic conditions—the consequences of the general economic deprivation, are the harbingers of crime, especially property crimes which include armed robbery.

Diejomaoh et al. (1971: 129 cf. Iwarime-Jaja 1999a: 159) observe that crime including armed robbery is the unmitigated consequence of a chronic unemployment. Iwarime-Jaja in addition notes and reports Reilly and Witt 1992 most empirical findings that remain as he put it (1999a: 160) “unequivocal about the causal link between unemployment and crime including armed robbery”. Box (1996 in Caffrey and Mundy 1996:267-95) also supports the views that a positive correlation between unemployment and crime in general exists.

Jones (1981: 90-109) studies of crime, race and culture in Guyana seems to have find results, which dangle between the crime and unemployment links on one hand, and the lack of it on the other hand, amongst the different races particularly between the African origins offenders and their East Indians counterpart. On the overall, Jones (1981:104) still notes that amongst both East Indian and African prisoners, the proportion of the unemployed who commit property offences is higher than in the case of the unemployed. In specific terms, the author finds that amongst the Africans, majority who are more receptive to the Anglo-Saxon (western) way of life, and who mostly live in the urban areas and towns, unemployment seems to have a special relationship to criminality. The Guyanas of East India origin who mostly maintain their indigenous backgrounds and live mainly in the rural areas of Guyana are more likely to commit crime not necessarily

linked to unemployment. Thus, to Jones the link between unemployment and criminality, or the lack of it depends on other intervening variables part of which include, culture or race, age and development stages.

In the same manner, Parker and Horwitz (1986) and Ekpeyong (1989) support the views that a positive link between armed robbery and unemployment exists when they argue that there is always the increased motivation to commit crime produced by unemployment and the resultant criminal behaviour. Ekpeyong (1989:21) specifically asserts that armed robbers are also citizens trying to react to the social conditions of their existence. They are brought about by the denial of what they consider to be the basic necessities of life. Improvement in the life condition of the people are more likely to induce them to hold higher expectations of enjoying as many opportunities as the privileged few, but when they fail as often the case to realise these expectations, they felt frustrated, and as a consequence, tend to commit robbery (22).

The causal significance of unemployment as a risk factor in crime and in particular armed robbery lies mainly in the fact that under normal circumstances, unemployment exercises a disruptive influence on the individual's personality (see Cloete 1990 in Cloete and Stevens 1990:82). Accordingly therefore, the author (1990: 82) explains that a disruptive personality adversely affects family relationships such that the individual's sense is eroded. The frustration and stress that comes from unemployment may undermine a person's moral power to withstand the temptation to commit crime.

There are enormous viewpoints—both advocates and rebuttals scattered in the literature on the direction of unemployment-crime nexus. Indeed, apparent in literature is the varying degrees of explanation of criminal actions from the socio-economic

viewpoint with the emphasis on the unemployment-poverty status of the offenders (see also Pyle et al. 1974:22). However, analyses of these numerous studies suggest that very little agreement exists as to the “exact” relationship. So, there exists a link between unemployment and juvenile delinquency, and unemployment and adult crime, but the dimension still defies conclusive and/ or categorical statement (see also the argument of Pyle et al. 1974: 30).

The significance of the notion of unemployment and the subsequent poverty as anecdotal to criminality has of course, been adequately stressed under the macro social structure theories. This is understandable since all other negativities of the social structure seem to have their root entrenched in unemployment. There is an overwhelming acceptance that a considerable correlation between the labour market and crime exists, yet as recently noted above, the strength and magnitude of the link are more subtle and difficult to determine than one might expect. Many countries including the erstwhile socialists have emphasised a similar economic explanation for crime. However, the dominant viewpoint is that crimes particularly the economic motivated ones are as a result of the employment-poverty of the working class in a competitive capitalist society.

Freeman (1983 in Wilson 1983: 89) writing about unemployment and crime notes a U.S. Congressman, Rep. John Conyers in Hearings before the subcommittee on crime of the House of Judiciary Committee, who was not wanting in his remarks when he intoned:

Are there people walking around saying there is no relationship between crime and unemployment? Are we beating a dead horse? Is there a unanimous consensus on the subject or do we have something more to prove?

As a major risk factor of the economic crimes, and armed robbery in particular, unemployment—a micro paradigm of explaining criminal and delinquent behaviour is what is sometimes referred to in literature as economic determinism. This is subsumed under the rubric of the “Means/Ends Paradigm”. It was pioneered and developed by Merton in 1938 in opposition to the Freudian thinking popular at the time as was seeking the sources of deviance within the social structure (see Pyle et al 1974:12). Clinard and Abbott (1973:173) refer to the criminal as an “economic man”.

Box (1996 in Caffrey and Mundy 1996:267-95) supports the view of unemployment-crime-nexus when he argues that recession lead to more crime of violence, but obviously affects more, the economically marginalized. According to his analysis, this happens through thwarted ambition and relative deprivation. Box’s argument is that there are numerous sociological reasons for linking recession (unemployment) *per se* with crime. According to the author, unemployment-crime-nexus may not be excusable. But the fact that recession, which is the brain behind unemployment so lead to more crime of violence, it obviously has more impacts on the economically marginalized. Box thus, called for setting aside the issue of whether “unemployment is no excuse” while the issue of causation—why should recession lead to more crimes is considered. This is so since there are bewildering arrays of evidence—theoretical or otherwise (later word mine) relevant to assessing whether there exists a link between recession and crime.

Further studies linking unemployment and crime such as armed robbery include the works of Tarling (1982) cited in Reilly and Witt (1992), and reproduced in Iwarimie-Jaja (1999a:160), Ekpeyong (1989) and Iwarimie-Jaja (1998 and 1999a, 1999b). All these

authors had earlier on been mentioned. Tarling examined a large number of empirical studies and reach the conclusion that a positive correlation exists between unemployment and criminal actions including armed robbery. He, however, confirms or rather, warns that the effect was attenuated when additional variables were allowed to enter the analysis in (see Reilly and Witt 1929:214 cf. Iwarimie-Jaja 1999a: 160).

In his list of criminogenic variables contributing to crime rate in Chicago 1960 Allison (1970) found that the percent of male civilian of the work force over fourteen years of age who remain unemployed ranked first in order of importance in a variable list of fifteen. In a recent survey of 56 armed robbers carried out by Iwarimie-Jaja (1999a: 162), 42 (75 per cent) indicated that they were unemployed. On these findings, Iwarimie-Jaja concludes that a positive correlation exists between unemployment (recession) and crime, but that it is also attenuated by an intervening variable, which he found to be “previous criminal association”.

The result of the test, which is carried out in this study, shows a probable positive association or relationship between unemployment as one of the major reasons for going into armed robbery and a number of other variables (see section 7.3.table 7.6). However, the sources of learning about the crime, which many indicate as through friends and from the western media are indicative of the force of an intervening variable. This table deals with sources of learning about armed robbery and reasons for getting involved in the crime. Many reasons are given albeit, suffice to say that the variable of unemployment rank first (see also section 6.4.4, table 6.4.4.1).

Notwithstanding the wide range of theoretical and empirical richness showing a causal link between unemployment and crime such as armed robbery, there have been

quite proportionate contrary viewpoints opposing the idea. Clearly, an increasing number of scholars have debunked the idea that a clear-cut and positive relationship between unemployment—poverty, low income, low education and so forth and crime such as armed robbery exists, or at least, is given and taken for granted. For instance, Taft and England (1964:100-27), Box 1996 in Caffrey and Mundy 1996: 267-95) observed that western criminologists do not just perceive unemployment as a phenomenon that has absolute relationship with criminality.

Clinard and Abbott (1973) further raised an important issue concerning the unemployment-crime relationship. The authors (1973:172-79) provide a more detail analysis to explain while social and economic conditions may not have been all times significant to criminal behaviour. They argue that it is important to appraise the validity of this factor or model of economic man who is a criminal because of the elementary socio-economic forces. Their argument is that there are several objections to the concept of economic-unemployment-poverty as a basic explanation of delinquent or criminal behaviour proper, whether the country is highly developed, or is in a low state of development. This is notwithstanding that most people arrested, prosecuted, and imprisoned for crime both in the developed and less developed countries do come from the lower socio-economic group (Clinard and Abbott 1973:172-79).

These authors' argument is substantiated by the obvious claim that as at the time they wrote, and perhaps even currently, two countries with the highest per capital income (Sweden and United States) have particularly serious crime, which includes armed robbery (see Clinard and Abbott 1973:175). There is also the viewpoint of Middendorf, which arose from his worldwide survey and referred to in Clinard and Abbott (1973:174)

that shows that improvement in living conditions, or what is called a better “standard of living” does not necessarily by itself, reduce juvenile delinquency or criminality. Citing Galbraith (1958) they assert that a stronger case can, instead be made for the relation of affluence to crime.

Vold (1958:176) had, while restating Ploscove’s theory expressing doubt about the positive link between unemployment and crime intoned *inter alia*:

...The unparalleled economic and social progress of the last century and a half has given the ordinary worker a much better economic position than he had ever enjoyed in the past, but it has also brought new pressures and demands that often result in criminality.

In the views of many scholars including, Wilson (1983), considered as the doyen of the American ‘policy-oriented’ criminologist, unemployment seems to bear little or no relationship to crime...arguing that there is no basis for prediction that a deepening or continuing of the recession will lead to increase in the crime rate.

Morris and Hawking (1965: 45) are of the view that social and economic circumstances are either unrelated to behaviour, or too complex and subtle to be captured by a sociological imagination. In their eloquent *Honest Politician’s Guide to Crime Control*, Morris and Hawkins (1969:45) state bluntly and sarcastically that:

The search for the causes of criminality... is generally thought to be an illusionary quest, not unlike the 18<sup>th</sup> century Chemists’ search for the elusive hypothetical substance phlogistic.

Lopez-Rey (cf. Clinard and Abbott 1973:174) acknowledges that social and economic conditions play a certain role, but one that should not be magnified and transformed into the explanation of all crimes, and indeed, armed robbery. Other scholars like Friday 1970; and First 1976; Wadycki and Balkin, 1979 cited in Iwarimie-Jaja



(1999a:159) have also affirmed of no positive discovery on the relationship between unemployment and criminality.

Iwarimie-Jaja previous studies (1987, 1994) on armed robbery subscribed to the economic variables, albeit. Yet, he seems to differ rather somewhat from the mainstream argument when he explains that armed robbery may not really have a direct positive link with unemployment as crime statistics both during the periods of economic boom and lull in modern Nigeria indicate. He found no much variation in crimes records between these periods. He also differs somewhat from the conventional writers of the didactic positive link between armed robbery and unemployment when he introduced later what he refers to as *previous criminal experience* as an intervening variable in armed robbery-unemployment causative theory.

In a similar manner, the concept of relative deprivation and economic abundance advanced above (section 4.2.1) under the postulations of Conklin (1972); Gould (1969), is in the view of this researcher an art of logical disputations or rebuttal directly linking economic disadvantages to crime—armed robbery.

Mareni (1987) does not dismiss armed robber as an economic and a rational man. But he notes, using Anini—the notorious armed robber between 1984-1986 as his point of departure that the hostile and the repressive socio-political climate, far more than mere economic strain can breed an armed robbery situation, as was the case in Nigeria during the period under reviewed.

What is important and worthy of note at this juncture is to appreciate the fact that unemployment, income inequality, poverty and general recession may not have been conclusively linked to criminality and in specific terms, armed robbery, however they

may have been convincingly linked to it. Stevens (1990 in Cloete and Stevens 1990:83) rightly notes that in examining the causal connection between unemployment and crime, the total surrounding milieu of the social and cultural reality must be considered. This implies that causal link between unemployment-crime is not simply as given.

Freeman (1983 in Wilson 1983:90) adds another dimension to the argument of the unemployment-crime nexus. According to this author, there is usually less emphasis on the relationship between the Labour market and crime, while much attention as to the effects of the criminal sanctions on crime rates is given. This approach have created an unfortunate imbalance, and thus, encouraged disproportional attention to the “stick” of deterrence rather than the “carrot” of improved employment prospects, despite the fact that the behaviour of potential criminals depend on both,

Whether or not a positive correlation exists between unemployment and crime, it is an ongoing debate and may remain impossible to resolve. While proposition of a positive relationship seems logical and commonsensical, and even to a greater degree, supported by empirical findings, it is never to be taken so much as axiomatic. The non-positive relationship seems also theoretically logical; and empirical findings too have also cast serious doubts on the supposedly positive relationship. With both proponents and opponents having compelling evidence to support their different claims, the direction of the pendulum would only be dictated at one point in time or the other as one group talk past the other.

By and large, most archetype causes and explanation of criminal action and indeed, armed robbery amongst different authors revolve principally around the economic factors or variables with an emphasis on unemployment. Unemployment, low

income, low educational qualification and poverty are characteristics, which more or less push and pull people into committing most property crimes and the specific armed robbery. Other indirect economic risk factors as (Means/Ends) paradigms are, however important in efforts to explain these crimes. Such factors are the socio-political outlook prevailing in a social system, previous criminal experiences, and contact with western world.

#### **4.2.2 Social- economic development**

There is a further risk factor—a cause, and an explanation of the contemporary armed robbery by way of the development, which a particular society is confronted with. These development parameters are the dimension of the urbanisation, industrialisation and technological advancement of the particular society. Clinard and Abbott (1973:39) underscore the rise in armed robbery amongst most developing countries on the spread and growth of the industrial and business enterprises. These developments require the transportation of a large pay roll and other funds to the Local Corporation whose security may be limited to a meagre force of unarmed private guards. The rewards to robbery they argue, more than compensate the muted risk of capture and imprisonment.

The social economic development factor in the opinion of the researcher seems to be in line with the argument of the differential opportunity theory. As a country experiences these indicators of development—industrialisation, urbanisation, and technological advancement, its wealth of the nation increases. So, there is more cash in-and-outflow between and amongst these rapidly developing cities and towns. Unfortunately too, the system of inequality seems to be consciously guarded so that many

individuals find themselves in continuum misery in the presence of abundance. The individuals with money problems feel particularly frustrated when they know that others around them have this money, and are doing well because of the general affluence around everywhere (see also Gould 1969). This is more apparent amongst the youth who are always most susceptible to the temptation to measure up to the standard set by the society and their peers. Researchers such as Christie (1974), Greenberg (1977) described the role of industrialisation especially in changing the age-crime relations. They thus, explained that the relative magnitude and degree of youth involvement in reported crimes are considerably smaller in the developing nation than in the more advanced ones.

In addition, the economic abundance brought about by this social development led for instance, to many banks, especially the branches to be located close to highways and rural areas amongst other convenient places—a convenience obviously designed for customers, but has proved very alluring to the robbers as well (see, also Duffalla 1976). This view is similar to Iwarimie-Jaja's (1987:76) ecological and Mertonian study of armed robbery, prior to his logical disputation with the factor or perspective as the case may be. The author argued that urbanisation, which arises from industrialisation accounts for the high incidence of armed robbery in Port Harcourt and other Nigerian cities.

Other authors explained that economic abundance enhances what some sociologists have called “target suitability” for robbery (Cohen, Cantor, and Kluegel, 1981). McLynn (1989:243-244) also notes while he cites many commentators such as Henry Fielding's *inquiry into the causes of the late increase in robbers*, that the increase in wealth and prosperity in the medieval England was seen as having a remarkable impact in crime. It increased the amount of money and portable property in circulation; gave rise

to new forms of entertainment on which the new wealth could be spent; encouraged idleness and inefficiency; worst of all, it introduced a “revolution of aspirations”.

#### **4.2.3 Previous criminal experiences**

While expounding on their postulation, which causes an increase in armed robbery amongst the developing countries, Clinard and Abbott (1973:42) assert that the lumping together of convicted-armed robbers with other criminals is a major disposing risk factor to the expansion and rise in the armed robbery networks, and its population. So, it is in the prisons that the criminal techniques, the rationalisation, and the required courage to go through the act are leaned and internalised. The experiences gained in this place not only provide the means to secure the firearms, but they also offer the tough courage to go through the act upon relapse. This is akin to Iwarimie-Jaja’s (1999a and 1999b) later “previous criminal experience or association”. In sum, it seems that Clinard and Abbott (1973 explained the causes of armed robbery in a somewhat ambivalence manner. Firstly, they perceive it as constituting a “wedge” to the development and growth of both the economy and the social well being of every society infected and affected with such. Secondly, they also perceive it on the other hand, as a direct consequent of the same development and growth.

According to Iwarimie-Jaja (1993, 1999a and 1999b) armed robbery involves high skills, experiences and expertises that no one wakes up one day and dabble into it. It involves, first, associating with the peer delinquents and acquiring experiences through participation in the various predatory crimes. In the view of the researcher, it also involves identifying with the senior criminal friends especially in the urban cities where

there is weakness in the traditional-informal ties. Armed robbery therefore, seems undoubtedly to be the end product of the criminal processes or maturity.

Sutherland (1939) emphasised previously, that the life histories of persons who become in adult life robbers and burglars show that criminality proceeds from trivial (predatory) to serious (high profile), and from occasional to frequent; this includes the learning of the techniques, the skills, and the slang (see also Shaw 1930, 1931; Sutherland and Cressey 1940, 1960).

#### **4.2.4 Socio-political climate**

Armed robbery is the consequence of a socio-political factor, or rather, has also been explained through the perspective of this factor. This factor therefore, underscores the fact that property or economic crimes are not only limited to an economic motive. It to the existing socio-political institutions although, the degree of separation between economic and politics is a matter of imaginary than real especially among the political economy scholars.

Robin Hood's robbery exploits of the medieval Europe were no less an expression of the dissatisfaction that he with the prevailing political and social institutions that were conspicuously pitted against the mass of the poor citizenry. He was renowned for robbing from the rich (propertied class) and giving the same to the less propertied class.

Mareni (1987:259-281) using Lawrence Anini—a notorious armed bandit between 1985-1986 in contemporary Nigeria explains that Anins's robbery escapades were an expression of his discontent and hatred over the dominant political ideology of the time. His argument is that the socio-political climate of modern Nigeria, and the

manner by which Anini and his gangs operated—throwing off their loots to the masses is an expression of their utter rejections of the then *militaristic* (word mine) as both the dominant socio-political and economic ideology of the period. This viewpoint finds vivid support with Olurode (1990:38) who, while also using the same Anini as a point of departure writes *inter alia*:

...Anini phenomenon has to be explained as symbolising a combination of social issues; it is probably a product of interplays of petty ethnic rivalries that went out of hand, and it is possible that it is a genuine revolt of an oppressive and dehumanising system...

In a related manner, in the recent past, and until recently, the spate of armed robbery in contemporary Nigeria was largely attributed to the civil war of 1967-1970. Scholars of this view hold that the aftermath of the war, which includes damaged economy, balkanised social infrastructures, mass demobilisation of combatants, and the availability of weapons provided the gateways to the upsurge in armed robbery in the country. Many erstwhile combatants it may be argued further took to armed robbery because they felt that the system they fought and defended has abandoned them. However, these views are fraught with scepticism, and as Iwarimie-Jaja (1999a:132) notes thus:

The scientific status of this argument is questionable. It is considered as a superficial and pedestal. At any rate further research is required to determine the relationship between the civil war and the incidence of crime in Nigeria.

The impact of the incessant political-ethnic-religious wrangling that is the characterisation of contemporary Nigeria cannot be explained away as a likely potential factor that animate people into getting involved in armed robbery. During the upheaval, which often assumes the complex political-ethnic-religious dimension, many able-bodied

males and females are displaced, and their legitimate means of livelihood destroyed. No doubt that some of these energetic young victims may have out of frustration taken to robbery as a way of maintaining their previous standard of living, or to gain access to monies that they can possibly re-invest in their business. Many interviewees during the course of the in-depth interviews explained that a good number of armed robbers have one kind of business or the other—the most common being stores (common in Nigeria and used equivalently, as supermarket) where different items of goods are sold. Most armed offenders were also able to obtain their weapons (guns) during these mayhems.

#### **4.2.5 Closeness and contact with the western culture**

An insight into the distribution of robbery incidence among the states of the federation substantiates the claim of the idea of contact and closeness with the western culture. Scholars in Nigeria such as Olurode (1990) and Iwarimie-Jaja (1999a) have done well by carrying out some empirical studies on armed robbers, and documented such. It does seem, however, unfortunate that both scholars have failed to examine deeply, and to explain why the states that record the highest figures are so. Although Olurode tried to link the high rate of the offence in Lagos state to its historical closeness and early contact with the western culture—a case of the idea of “emulation” as the risk factor, he neither made any concrete efforts to explain it further and in details, nor perceives it as a discrete factor that is likely to motivate individuals to engage in armed robbery in contemporary Nigeria.

The old Soviet Union it is reported, maintained and guarded both their philosophy of development and culture by setting up many barriers to hinder the diffusion of cultures



from their western capitalist counterparts particularly the U.S. Late U.S. President, Roosevelt was reported as having said that what would win Russian from Communism in the end was the Sears and Roebuck catalogue. This statement captured the interest of the Soviet leaders (see Landis 1958:74).

A close look at those states with high incidence of armed robbery shows that they constitute the ethnic groups and individuals who are highly advanced in the western's way of life *per se*; they are rooted in the capitalist ways of life. What this means is that these states as they still account for the highest armed robbery rates, had, and continue to have, a strong predilection to the western ideas—imitating and emulating them with dexterity and purposefulness.

On the overall, the argument of Adler et al. (1991:224) is relevant in any attempt to understand the repository cause of armed robbery. Whatever may be the explanation for the causes of armed robbery the authors note, it is essentially an egoistic crime motive; predicated on the need to provide one with a good means of leaving or surviving through violent routes. Beirner and Messerschmidt (2000: 281) in addition, explain that the primary motive of armed robbery is not violence, but economic gain. This makes it more sociologically appropriate to be designated as property crime. So, the implication of all these arguments is that armed robbery is essentially a crime motivated by economic interest.

### **4.3 SOCIAL-ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL CONTEXT OF CONTEMPORARY NIGERIA**

#### **4.3.1 INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW**

The beginning of the birth of what is regarded today as modern Nigeria is both conceptualised and contextualised within the colonisation of Africa in general, and Nigeria in specific terms. This occurred and began during the fifteenth century and intensified during the last three decades of the nineteenth century. There are considerable disagreements amongst the historians and the social scientists about the causes of the colonisation of Africa and elsewhere. And as Ake (1981:26) points out, it would be crude to reduce colonialism to a single motive because several factors contributed to it, but that economic factors played the central roles.

Whatever the motives for the conquest as indeed, it is not within the discourse and of interest of this study, the important point of emphasis is that African economies essentially became integrated into the western capitalist system in the manner of “co-optism” or “entryism”. Integration or co-optism was much more than just economic integration. The system of political structures, the social, cultural values, and the general orientations of the colonised societies (Nigeria) were also supplanted and enmeshed in the colonisers’—westerns ways of life; so much in the manner, which describes as entrapment, opprobrium and inescapism. Therefore, a pattern of dependency of the Nigerian economies, the political and social-cultural paraphernalia became the consequence.

The birth of the present neo-colonial Nigeria—or more derogatorily, modern Nigeria was, and remains characterised by disarticulation, disjointment or incoherence.

Disarticulation or incoherence as Ake (1981:43) consistently used it is one whose parts or sectors are not complimentary. So, the seemingly sense of *brotherhoodness* amongst the sectors or parts of the society was absent. The whole working system was dismembered.

The economy of the colonised Nigeria constituted the centrepiece of this colonisation. It was exploited and expropriated in the most capricious and vicious manner. Following capitalist rationality of minimum input for maximum output, the economic activities of the colonisers were invested only in what they had to, and where they had—based on interest and arrogance. It was within this mindset that development was concentrated in places, which were convenient for the businesses and private capital accumulation interest of these imperial powers. In Nigeria, such places were mainly Lagos, Port Harcourt, Benin City, Calabar, Kano, among others. It also meant a concomitant development of the political structure and satellite towns that helped to facilitate and perpetuate these economic motives.

These centres gradually assumed a character quite different from that of the surrounding country. Amenities such as tap-borne water, *cinemas* (italic for emphasis), hotels, tarred roads, railway stations, electricity, a scattering of buses, an excellent recreational facilities were provided in these centres so that they now became the “piece of Europe” in Africa and Nigeria in specific term (see also Ake 1981:44). The contrast between the amenities in these centres and the lack of them in the villages or peripheries, between the commodities living of the European districts, and the intolerable wretchedness of the peasants brought the meaning of this external contact home and clearer. For it meant that the mass of these impoverished people were inescapably enticed

from the vast of these impoverished villages to the little more or less urban centres, which now boast of more comforts vis-à-vis these villages.

So, the argument of Ake may be interpreted as also meaning that apart from the manifest disarticulation of the indigenous economy, there was also implicitly, the disarticulation and distortion of the value system of the indigenous. The colonial economy was not only incoherence; it stood, alienated, became hostile, and incomprehensible to the environment.

An important observation worthy of emphasis in Ake's (1981:21-48) discourses (analyses) lies in his identification of cinemas. This became one of the most important means in the numerous ways that western's "ways of life" was introduced to the colonised. The introduction of cinemas, which was meant for the comforts of the colonists' representatives and their few privileged indigenous ones found their ways into the mass of the indigenous. This accentuated the idea and the opportunity to borrow, imitate, learn and even to emulate (the crave to excel) by these indigenous. They perceived the new ideas these cinemas propagate as a better and improved style of life and behaviour. So, this cinemas and the ideas it propagates reinforce consciously or subconsciously, the idea of class system and individualism—more fundamentally predicated on material wealth and class antagonism, and also subsumed in prestige and status.

Reference to class system is by no means a suggestion to the fact that there was no class structure in the indigenous Nigeria for instance. There was indeed a class system, overtly or covertly, however. But apparent antagonism and undue bickering did not characterise these classes, such as it is peculiar with the present colonial arrangement. As

a result of the absence of this manifest class struggle, institutionalised and violent crimes like armed robbery—in the most destructive manner that they are today were rarely known. The strong traditional ties, and the cultural cohesiveness and strong informal system of social control helped to monitor what were learned, emulated, and the individuals vicious behaviour both within and across cultural trajectory.

The attainment of nominal or what some individuals refer to as “flag” independence by Nigeria in October 1960, did not change the structure of the country—a its colonial social, political and economic structures in any meaningful way. In fact, it further demeaned the working of the colonial economy to the disadvantage of the mass of the people through the process that has become a dictum in the social sciences discourses as “neo-colonialism or imperialism”. This is the argument of quite a lot of scholars explained that the post-colonial economy did not change, least of any significant manner (Turner 1975 in Panter Brick 1975:167; Ake 1981:22; Eteng 1994 in Otite 1994:197; Olaitan 1995 cf. Adejumo and Momoh 1995; Williams 1996: 1-11; Iwarimie-Jaja 1998:37). Ake argued that by the time that political independence came, the post-colonial or colonial economy had, so to speak, matured; its’ structure firmly set that it could not easily change. The assertion is that at independence, there had evolved the *assimilados* (*petit bourgeoisies*) with compradorial backgrounds whose intention it was to reinforce, and to intensify the colonial exploitation and subjugation within the context of mere institutional transfer (Eteng 1994 in Onigu Otite 1994:197; Momoh 1995 in Adejumo and Momoh 1995:33; Iwarimie-Jaja 1998:37).

The socio-economic and political context of modern Nigeria seems obviously, periodically categorisable. Each of these categories bear significant impact in the manner

that the contemporary armed robbery is discussed as the consequence of the dynamism and the interlocking of factors among these periods. These socio-economic and political contexts are briefly discussed to highlight their congeniality for this crime in contemporary Nigeria.

#### **4.3.2 Economic milieu**

From the economic point of view, Nigerian economy by its classification and stages of development or growth is dual. The economy is better understood as both the public and private sector, and the period of boom and lull (crisis). The public sector comprises those economic fields of endeavours that are under the firm control of the government of the day. In its political outlook, it comprises the parastatals, the corporations, and the joint multinational corporations which the government has some shares. It probably employs a large chunk of modern Nigeria labour force in the formal paid employment.

The private sector comprises business activities that are not under the direct control of the government, but it is however, regulated by the same government. They are concentrated in the manufacturing, services, and general merchandising, and trading. Benien (1985:121) reports that by 1970s, the private sector was booming, and with high education in the country, wages were higher than in the public sector. The private sector has continued to be a magnet for highly educated people in Nigeria. This is also aided by the uncertainty that often beclouds employment in the public sector. The indigenisation programmes of the 1974, which emphasised greater national integration in the 1970s, gave the private actors a wider field on which to play a role (Benien 1985: 122).

Within the neo-colonial economy, two periods relevant to the study are discernible. They are the economic boom and lull.

#### **4.3.2.1 Economic boom**

Modern Nigeria enjoyed a relatively period of economic boom and social enhancement after independence in 1960, but it was not until 1970, however, that what could be properly referred to as “the wealth of the nation” (e.g. to borrow from Adam Smith) and affluence came to fore. Thus, the years between 1970, to the beginning of early 1980s, is often described as the “boom” moment in the socio-economic chequered history of the country. The Nigeria economy it is asserted did not slide into crisis until early 1980s (see Olukoshi 1995: 139).

The general consensus is that the economic boom came about as a result of the petro-dollar windfall, which accrued to the coffer of the state in the periods from 1973 to 1981 (Olukoshi 1995 in Adejumobi and Momoh 1995:139; Iwarimie-Jaja 1998:85). In the word of the Economist (1984 cf. Iwarimie-Jaja 1998:139), “wealth beyond the dreams of avarice” is the best description of the scene as it appeared to the Nigerian leaders after the oil price rise. Revenue from oil exports rose from N4733 million in 1975 to N15, 234 billion in 1980 (See Central Bank of Nigeria 1983). This represents about 300% increase.

Added to this were royalties, rents, petroleum profit tax, and license fee that added to the burgeoning purse of the state. These revenues were stimulants in themselves. It was employed to support a huge public and private expenditure programmes that only manifested in the expanded economic and social roles for the state. It, at the same time increased the ranks of indigenous trading and contracting sector, and

the churning out more petit bourgeoisie classes. The government in the area of public expenditure programme, to ensure that the various utility and social services were provided rather cheaply further introduced a subsidy. It could have also be the feeling of the government that massive spending on the public goods was a sure way to heal the wounds—psychological and physical of the just ended civil war (1967-1970). In fact, government eloquent economic macro policy was clearly outlined in her key developmental issues— Reconciliation, Reconstruction and Rehabilitation.

Furthermore, the strong exchange rate of naira—what has been economically tautologised as “over-valued” also contributed in boosting the boom period. There was enough foreign exchange to import cheap food and consumer items for the populace. Olukoshi (1995 in Adejumobi and Momoh 1995:139) explains that in addition to benefiting the generality of the populace, the subsidy system and the strong naira exchange rate created a considerable room in the economy for rent seekers and smugglers. So, rent seekers, speculators, contractors, commission agents, importers of commodities, local and foreign manufacturers, and urban working class all benefited to a varying degree from the largesse.

The endpoint of the era was the most published Udoji Public Service Commission, which recommended a substantial salary increment and payment of arrears. The payment spiralled a multiplier trend that quickly led to a hyperinflation (Williams 1976:18). Consumption was high, unemployment low, and the overall economy appeared to be what the researcher referred to as “over heated”. The nation’s affluence could be clearly discerned in the ubiquitous elegant, and sometimes, superfluous infrastructures that were springing up, concentrated in the urban centres, albeit.



Transport, educational sector, Port facilities, manufacturing and services sectors were all in the competitive race. It is said that Gowon, the military Head of State, during the hey-moment of the honeymoon intoned that the “problem of Nigeria was not money, but how to spend money”. So rapid was the growth of the public investment that it outgrew the government’s management capacities (Iwarimie-Jaja 1998:86).

Although armed robbery seemed to have been at low ebb throughout most of the period, decreasing considerably in certain instances, when compared with the period described as economic boom (see for instance, table 2, section 2.9.2.4). Yet, it dramatically increased in what seems a clear paradox to the conventional viewpoints on the economic-crime nexus. In fact, so much is this paradox that the year that contemporary Nigeria recorded its highest economic prosperity (1973) was the same year it also recorded its highest rate of armed robbery in the metropolitan city of Port Harcourt (see table 2 section 2.9.2.4). This city in all circumstances represent the typical case of a city patterned after western cities—it has all the attributes of its outlook—a high taste, the crave for material wealth, status, honour, entertainment spots, higher institutions, influx of many people, break down of family and neighbourhood attachment, and the increase in the level of insecurity, which lead to withdrawal into self-protection and subsequent possession of both legal and illegal arms.

The attendant boom brought in its wake a whole different set of orientation, and further deepened the already battered cultural value of the people of modern Nigeria, which this western civilisation brought about. The period of the boom in Nigeria was indeed, characterised by the upsurge of social networking, manifested in the high rate of clubs, parties, cinema and video attendants, and an unquenchable thirst for more material

gains and acquisition. More specifically, it became the norm and a measure of standard to live more to the western style of life. Nigerians became passionately and aggressively attached towards the need to acquire both the materials and knowledge of this western life—television, radio, and reading more books, novels and comics that contain vivid description of the new acquired idea. Crime like sex work, burglary and especially armed robbery became high. No wonder that some scholars (Wilson 1982; Morris and Hawkins 1969; Friday 1970; Wadyck and Balkin 1979 cf. Iwarimie-Jaja 1994:82) have not found direct positive relationship between crime and economic condition measured essentially by unemployment or poverty.

The dynamic of the world market economy, the internal contradiction Nigeria inherited from the colonial economy, and the ineptitude of the Nigerian leaders meant that the “good time” would soon be over. So, by early part of 1980s, there have started to emerge, some cracks in the economic boom wall of the country. By the beginning of 1982, Nigeria’s past economic and social glory have plummeted; it gave rise to what has been variously described in economic discourses as “recession”, “economic depression”, “economic crisis”, and “economic loom”.

#### **4.3.2.2 Economic loom**

Iwarimie-Jaja (1999a: 82) has succinctly described the economic crisis as a situation whereby the level of economic resources was not able to sustain the majority of its people. Scholars and Nigerian officials have often explained the country’s economic crisis in terms of the world oil glut—the context, which saw it, depends on oil exports for over 90% of its foreign exchange earnings. Thus, this period saw wide recession, low

savings and low investments, low wages, unregulated and excessive government expenditures in the country (see for instance, Usman and Bangura cf. Iwarimie-Jaja 1998:87).

The truth of the matter—to subscribe to the Marxian analytical framework is that the collapsed of the oil market did not only cause economic crisis, but it simply exposed the disarticulated nature, the vulnerability, and the structural imbalances inherent in the post-colonial economy, which the petro-dollar boom of 1970s had merely concealed, disguised and deepened<sup>1</sup>. The combined weight of the low value (prizing) for all local manufactured goods, the steep decline of the agricultural output, and the high import dependency in addition, to other socio-political problems aided the enthronement of the economic crisis of the period. From the peak of N15.2 billion in 1980, revenue accruing to the state from oil exports fell sharply to a low of N5.1 billion in 1982—a time when import requirements stood at an average of N1 billion a month. Between 1980 and 1981, the country's import requirements rose by 45 percent to a staggering of N13.1billion and worsened after 1982 as the oil price declined further (Olukoshi 1991).

The crisis engulfed all sectors of the economy and all classes of individuals. Approximately half of the capacity of the industries was operating. Workers were retrenched, and the country was confronted with an acute shortage of consumer goods. Imported good hit the economy hard and resulted into hoarding, and fuelling an already despicable inflationary situation. The country debts worsened, and the internal public

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<sup>1</sup> There are no forward and backward linkages between and amongst the sectors of the economy as supposedly the case in a well-articulated economy. Manufacturing stood aloof of the agriculture and mining. There were indeed no conscious efforts to establish a pattern of manufacturing that could link the immediate-intermediate-capital goods into a wholesome and continuum process.

debt rose from N4.6 billion in 1979 to N22.2 billion in 1983. As the government resorted to borrowing, the external debt also dramatically rose and stood at N15 billion in 1983, the backlog in trade payments notwithstanding.

As the years passed by, it became clear that the situation was not in any way being ameliorated. By now, the running of the government was in the hand of the civilian government of Alhaji Shehu Shagari, the baton of governance having changed from the military in October 1979. The government of Shagari and the National Assembly was of the strongest hope that the provision of the 1982 Act would help stabilise the economy particularly if the instability of the world oil market proved to be short-lived. They were thus, a bit hesitant to invite the International Monetary Fund and World Bank. Not even the continued deterioration of the world oil market price and the continued deepening of the government's fiscal crisis could change the attitude of the government. The disappointment encountered by the government from the private financiers and the unabated fiscal pressures prompted it to finally approach the world financial players (IMF and World Bank) for assistance. This, however, was not until the invitation had been put forward for a national debate.

To all intents and purposes, and in all fairness, Shagari government refused to accept all the conditionalities of these world financial bodies. As the negotiation was going on, the economy continued to plummet rapidly. Plus an unsavoury political bickering and bigotry amongst the politicians and parties, the military junta were once again back on course, overthrowing the government in a *coup d'etat* on 31 December 1993. The coup by and large, marked the end of the Shagari led civilian government, and it signalled the era of Muhammed Buhari military led government on 1 January 1984.

In a bid to grapple with the deepening economic crisis, a blue print was adopted, incorporating some elements of the Shagari recovery policies and strategies. Olukoshi (1995:143) explains that what emerged from the Buhari-Idiagbon's strategy was a strong emphasis on the re-introduction of the budget deficit, public expenditure, and the balance of payment deficit<sup>2</sup>. But as perceived it by the researcher, more obvious in the administration's macro economic policy was the instilling of financial discipline into the consciousness of the Nigerian public and officials through a more regulated spending, guided by a general re-orientation of style of life and the need to be more self-sufficient.

Within few months, there were reports of an implicit return to the negotiating table with the two world financial bodies (IMF and World Bank). Unable to sort out the differences, a stalemate soon ensued. There emerged an alternative—the pressing needs to approach some private western financiers and governments for assistance<sup>3</sup>. With this option not forthcoming, the impasse on the negotiating table continued to appear unresolved. Meanwhile the political, economic and social pressures were mounting on the regime so that the problem began to look more complex and intractable. It was therefore, not to be too long before another batch of military juggernauts struck on 27 August 1985 in what was described as a well crafted “palace *coup de`ta*”.

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<sup>2</sup> There was a massive retrenchment of public sector employees. Cost recovery measures in health and education were hastily introduced, a wage freeze was imposed as was public sector employment freeze, and an effort was made to further reduce the import profile of the economy among other steps. (For details, see Olukoshi and Adebayo 1985 cf. Adejumbi and Momoh 1995:144).

<sup>3</sup> It is argued that while this debate among the general public was going on, government had began subterranean discussions with the World bank on an adjustment packages for the country. Part of these packages was the ill-popular wage and salary cuts of between 20 and 25 percent for both the public and private sector employees.

By the time Babangida assumed power in the aftermath of the 1985 coup, the world oil market price had fallen to as low as US\$10 per barrel. This meant an unmitigated path to a further economic lull or doom, which then deepened to an intolerable level in a short time. Jobs became acutely scarce, and unemployed graduates soaring higher and higher. There was also a further decay in the social services and public infrastructures accentuated by the dwindling public expenditure.

Faced with this intractable problem of continuum economic crisis, and probably found to be left with, but the devil's alternative—option IMF and World Bank, the regime of Babangida set off once again to invite the public to debate on IMF and the world Bank loans. Although the final reports showed a preponderate voices in opposition to IMF and World Bank loans or assistance, the administration, however, and subtly in his 1986 budget proceeded to lay the basis for the introduction of the IMF or World Bank sanctioned adjustment programmes. It insisted it was a “home-grown”, and a sacrifice that the Nigerians have to make for the economic recovery initiatives. This programme slashed the petroleum subsidy—the basic moving force for the commoners by 80 percent. The government also committed itself to the privatisation and commercialisation of public enterprises. Non-statutory transfers to all economic and quasi-economic parastatals were reduced by 50 percent. The Nigerian National supply company (NNSC) that the former administration of Buhari-Idiagbon had refused to abolish was disbanded and a package of incentives for exporters announced (see Olukoshi 1991). Above all, the currency was prop for devaluation in what was interpreted as the centrepiece of the structural adjustment programmes. This policy intention was accomplished through the introduction of the Second-Tier Foreign Exchange Market.

As these measures and economic policies rooted in IMF and World Bank conditionalities were churned out in successions, the situation continued to appear gloom. The “Babangidanomics”—the economic policies of the administration later came to be referred to continued to be fed on the Nigerian public with fiats on monthly, quarterly and yearly basis. They were disappointedly, no panacea to the economic and social woes that behold the country. It became clear to both the government and the general public that the economic quagmire was more than ordinary. Indeed the pains associated were intense and beyond tolerable level such that there was an outpour of condemnations—left, right and centre.

By December 1987, the situation had become pathetic that the former Head of State and current president of Nigeria, Olusegun Obasanjo called for what he termed “adjustment with a human face”. Government thus, felt compelled to introduce a reflationary budget that incorporated several adjustment relief measures and programmes such as the meal subsidy for public servants, the mass transit scheme, and the National Directorate for Employment (NDE) scheme among others.

Notwithstanding, the hardship persisted and continued to have tails of social and political consequences. Criminal activities of all sorts became the characterisation of the regime. One of these criminal activities, and the most troubling to the general public was the rise in the spate of armed robbery, and the sophistry and temerity with which the offenders operate and carried out their nefarious activities. Table 2,3, 4, 5, 6 section 2.9.2.4, which contain the height of the Babangida’s administration show the astronomical rise in the spate of armed robbery in the particular metropolitan city of Port Harcourt and some other selected states. Clearly, there was remarkable an increase so that the country

appeared to be under a “siege” (see also Marení 1987; Iwarimie-Jaja 1987; Ekpeyong 1989).

It was with the combined influence of the public discontent on the administration, and in particular, the administration’s ill-fated transition programmes, continuum economic crass—now characterised by an unprecedented high level of corruption, the insubordination of members of his ruling military class especially the emerging military “Babangida boys”, social discontents—mass unrest and civil disobedience, and the general insecurity that brought the administration to its final exits in a dramatic style that was described by Babangida as “stepping aside”.

The economic backlog continued, however, sometimes stagnating and at other times worsening. By this time, late Sani Abacha was now the Head of State; having assumed the mantle of leadership on 27 November 1993 in what looks exactly like a political chess-game. There was no remarkable different in the economic policies of Abacha from that of his former boss, Babangida. Yet, the tendency to experiment, and to appear as if there was a distinct approach characterised the Abacha’s administration. For instance, there was a reversal of the deregulated economic policy of the Babangida administration to a somewhat regulated economic policy—the state determined the exchange and interest rates amongst other direct actions (Adejumobi 1995 in Adejumobi and Momoh 1995:163). There was a further direct government intervention in the economy—in the financial sector. In the same vein that the government regulated some sectors of the economy, it also extended its liberal arms to others. Imports were liberalised, and bureaucratic bottlenecks were as much as could, reduced, at least, by



policy statement. Statutory allocation of the public expenditure for higher education was also made.

In spite of these doses being injected into the economy from all frontiers, it became evidence that the economy has been bedevilled by the intractable problems of recession. The Nigerian populace were still unable to make out any appreciable improvement in their socio-economic well-beings, and found it increasingly difficult to eke out a living. Coupled with the general leadership style of the regime—described as monstrous and dictatorship, the Abacha regime was destined to doom if not sooner, later. When it finally came following the dramatic demise of Abacha in 6 July 1997, the economic recession that had plagued modern Nigeria for roughly two decades had showed no hope of easing out.

However, to the credit of the administration, armed robbery and other criminal activities, which have been on-all-time high level declined and continued to abate, or rather to stabilise. For instance, as tables 2.5 to 9 section 2.9.4 show amongst some selected states, between November 1993 and July 1997—the period Abacha ruled, armed robbery records show a decline, or better still, stabilised, the continuum in the deepening economic crisis notwithstanding. The main reason behind this trend may not have been unconnected to the tough stance of the administration, which was out to crush not only the political oppositions, but also “black collars” (word mine) criminal miscreants.

Current economic situation in Nigeria under the new democratic government of Obasanjo is still somewhat ambivalence—sometimes tilting towards the path of improvement and at other times, clearly displaying its gloom form. The Obasanjo’s administration has set on course a determination to move the country forward. He has

therefore continued to embark on programmes—macro as well as micro policies that it seems may have direct bearing on the mass of the people of Nigeria. The poverty alleviation may just be a case in point. There has also been a substantial increase in the earning power of Nigerian workers. All sectors of the economy such as education, health industries, communication, and energy are receiving appreciable attention.

However, the success of Obasanjo's socio-economic programmes will be better assessed in the future to come. Not as there continued to rear their ugly heads, the lingering fuel shortages, epileptic power supply, poor and devastated road networks, high level corruption, inadequacy communication system, and a re-surgence in the spate of highly sophisticated armed robbery that has not only taken away the lives of many innocent Nigerians, but also continued to pose challenges to the economic recovery efforts of the present administration. So, the economy in spite of all doses being injected into it from all frontiers continued to be be-devilled by recession and increasing sophisticated armed robbery and armed robbers.

#### **4.3.3 POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT**

With an area of 923,769 square kilometres, Nigeria is one of the largest countries in the Africa continent (Ekoko 1990:1). It has the single largest population in Africa. Its population is conservatively put at 129 millions, and unarguably, the most populous black nation in the world.

Contemporary Nigeria is a creation of Nineteenth century European colonial imperialism. (Ekoko 1990:1) describes it as the product of compelling and conflicting claims over territories sphere of influence and interests amongst the British, France and

German agents of imperialism against the backdrop of their relations in Europe. Modern Nigeria thus, is a multi-lingual-ethnic nation-state. It comprises about 250 nationalities or ethnic groups (erroneously called tribes) that had existed in various sizes and shapes.

These ethnic groups existed as separate autonomous socio-cultural-cum-political entities before the accident of British suzerainty hauled them together as one country. So, in its present configuration, contemporary Nigeria is a consequent of a long historical process—galloping and metamorphosing along the tangled forest of social engineering and political identity. For it is indeed, no more than the outcome of an arithmetic summation and manipulation of the sociological, political and economic imagination of the colonial masters.

Like most developing countries that are not only beset by numerous socio-economic woes, but were carved and created by artificial political insemination, modern Nigeria is overwhelmingly characterised by political instability<sup>4</sup>. The instability has a historical pedigree. For sixty years of rule by the British coloniser, Nigeria was only bequeathed with a fragile political system—feeble political culture and socialisation, and a neo-colonial economy (see also Falola and Ihonvbere 1985:8; Eteng in Otite 1994:199-202). Therefore, present Nigeria has transited from one system of governance and political leadership to the other in search for stability. A high level of instability and vicious criminal activities such as armed robbery, murder, religious intolerance, ethnic rivalries, and corruption has accompanied this.

Below is a table, which depicts this transition period. Only the periods of the second, the sixth and seventh military administrative periods are considered as having

remarkable impacts on accentuating the trend of armed robbery in contemporary Nigeria during both the period of economic boom and lull. They are briefly discussed to further demonstrate why and how the current pattern of the crime in the country may be aligned to the contact with the western ideas—the economic, political and social system, and explained as the consequence of it.

**Table 4.1 Nigeria political environment: the transition periods.**

Political government	
First civilian republic	1960-1966
First military republic	1966
Second military republic	1967-1975
Third military republic	1975-1979
Second civilian republic	1979-1983
Fourth military republic	1983-1985
Fifth military republic	1985-1993
Sixth military republic	1993-1999
Third civilian republic	1999-date

#### **4.3.4 SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT**

Earlier in section 1.6 chapter One of this study, the social condition was operationally conceptualised as referring to the pattern of existence within the limit imposed by the

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<sup>4</sup> The series of political instability are manifested in the incessant *coup d`eta*, and ethnic-tribal rivalries, class conflict, civil disobedience and so forth.

cultural values, norms, and the general living conditions of the people of modern Nigeria. Thus, the impact of the social environment in influencing criminal behaviour, and in particular, armed robbery needs be understood within the context of the impacts of the features of the modern society—cultural diffusion or influence, modernisation, and industrialisation amongst other things. Anthropologists would refer to this as “acculturation”.

It has been asserted both implicitly and explicitly in different places in this study that the coming into contact of cultures, creates unhealthy competitions, culture conflicts, and culture miscegenation that led to culture supremacy. Culture conflicts lead to the domination of one over the other, and the eventual imitation, learning and emulation of the dominant one (see also Tarde 1890b, and 1903).

Industrialisation, urbanisation, technological advancement and modernisation are generic phenomena, which represent the hallmark of the structural process through which culture conflict are created and perpetuated. As catalysts to growth and development, they have far-reaching implications on the individual’s way of life from the sociological, psychological and criminological point of view. Modern cities, urban, metropolitans, and towns are the direct consequences of these factors and the nuclei of it. Cloete (1990 in Cloete and Stevens 1990: 79) identifies the following as important factors that can lead to crime in cities—exposure to, and the opportunity to criminal activity; urban design and population density; neighbourhood and housing conditions; population composition; socio-cultural stagnation and change; negative psychological factors which are inherent part of urban life; poor family life, and economic factors.

An obvious characteristic of the link between the economic and social the contemporary Nigerian colonial economy is that it is characterised by inherent internal contradiction. As earlier explained in section 4.3.1, there is a conspicuous disarticulation and distortion of the traditional economy, and at the same times an inordinate ambition now more than ever before to get industrialised, modernised and urbanised. But the structures in place are inadequate to harmonise this ambition. So, there is tension between this cultural goal and the means to achieving them. Merton (1971 in Merton and Nisbet 1971: 7) notes that social problem exists when there is a sizeable discrepancy between what is, and what people think ought to be. And as some writers have noted, the postcolonial economy were bequeathed with over-bloated structures that it cannot maintain. The political wills, and a sound economic base to carry on with the structures in place are lacking and are inadequate (see also Eteng 1994 in Otite 1994:205-207).

Socially, modern Nigeria either in its pre-urban or urban, towns or quasi-towns or developing villages outlooks is characterised by extensive conflict of norms and values, rapid social changes, increased mobility of the population, emphasis on material goods, individualism, heterogeneity, and an increase in the formal system of social control. Crucial to these social changes is the rapid expansion in the transportation and communication sector, which aids delinquency and criminal behaviour. Many adolescents are able to communicate and move freely to join their peers and senior criminal friends in the urban centres even without the knowledge of their parents. The numerous criminal and delinquency behaviour are both the extensive and intensive parts of these social phenomena of modern Nigeria. Theft of automobiles and accessories, vandalism, use of juveniles by adult criminals, theft by servant and employees of

government, food adulteration, grafting are quite a good number of manifestations of this social malady. Others include illegal begging, drug trafficking and abuse, political offences, **armed robbery**—the focus in this study, burglary, crime of violence, rituals, religious intolerance, and sex workers.

The socio milieu scenario of modern Nigeria to use Lagos, as a point of departure vividly describes how the socio-ecology of modern world can, and does contribute significantly in bringing about high rate of criminality and delinquency. The scene is that of confusion everywhere, and at all times. *Bustling and hustling, people in different attires, unmindful of who is who, but only of one's business; commercial vehicles are jam-packed hitting and scratching one another, hooting and shouting left, right, centre, back and front. There is chaos, human hold-up and automobiles (a real traffic jam), and sounds of generating plants humming and deafening hearing. Traders of all shades overwhelm roadsides; police and hoodlums are operating with impunity and candour, and are also co-operating. Struggling to find a space are trucks and buses with passengers and items of sales. Parallel markets on all goods and foreign currency are thriving with agents littered and loitering around. Food sellers are in all nooks and crannies. Labourers and those on the famished roads are hanging and looking for any menial job to do. There is twenty-four hours hustling, and not even weekends are spared. Religious bodies are in clusters all days preaching and razzmatizing. There is siren howling everywhere and individuals and groups brawling from spot to spot.*

By and large, the social environment of modern Nigeria reflects the combined weight of both the prevailing economic and political system. It is the consequent of the attendant decadence that has trailed political insubordination and economic

mismanagement of modern Nigeria within the context of an inherited weak socio-cultural system.

#### **4.4 CONCLUSION. EXAMINING THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT OF MODERN NIGERIA AND ARMED ROBBERY: A SYNOPSIS**

The analysis of the contemporary socio-political and economic environment of Nigeria reflects a state of *anomie*. *Anomie* refers to a condition of lawlessness or normlessness, and it describes a situation when the legal structure is unable to control transactions and the tandem (interactions) between various the social groups (see Durkheim 1893, translated by Halls 1984). But extendedly, *anomie* may also be described as representing a situation of complete hopelessness in the confidence reposed in a particular system or set of leaderships so that individuals become hostile towards the system or leaders, and deliberately choose to be outlaws. With respect to Nigeria, it seems logical to argue that the culture contact of the indigenous people in this society with the western colonisers fostered social disorganisation because they offered no concrete political will and economic resources to address the problems created by this contact.

If there was any indelible mark, which this culture contacts left behind amongst the Nigerian populace, it is the culture of aspiration, or as (Durkheim 1897, translated by Spaulding and Simpson 1951) put it “overweening ambition”. Falola and Ihonvbere (1985) explain that part of the legacy of the colonial contact was the transfer of **taste** to the indigenous. As these new tastes emerged from the culture contact, it became overwhelmingly imitated, learned and borrowed. These tastes were by no means limited



to mere eatery. It included the taste of the style of life, the taste of speaking, the taste of perception of worldview, values, norms and standard. Certainly, it was the taste of culture.

There was the concomitant imitation, learning and borrowing of the approved, and unapproved institutional means to acquiring these alien tastes. In all social formations—particularly the prevailing mode of production, there is a severe constraint to the legal, and institutionalised means of realising the approved goals and tastes. So, a disjuncture develops between these tastes and the means, and this further creates an intense socio-economic pressure for instance, amongst the Nigerian populace especially those at the margin of the system. With the ill-conceived political system, this people became frustrated, alienated, marginalized, deprived, and annoyed into taking to armed robbery and other forms of criminal activities—as the sure means to eke out a living, and to vent their annoyance over the entire system, which they perceive as indifferent to their hardships. Many social structuralists of functionalism school of thought and *anomie* theorists share this viewpoint. The repressive and the punitive system of controls—the laws hardened these criminals who perceive the whole environment as nothing less than a hostile one. So, they arm and protect themselves from the hostile authority and general public.

From the foregoing analyses, contemporary armed robbery in Nigeria is one of the consequences of the internal contradiction inherent in the culture contacts and culture transmission. These inherent internal contradictions arise from this culture contact, and it leaves little or no room for the Nigeria socio-economic and political structures so that most of its contemporary armed robbers can be insulated against the crime. Because

modern Nigeria is a periphery-capitalist, quasi-industrialised, and pseudo-urbanised, all these make the woes of this emulated culture to deepen and exacerbate.

As consistently points out in this study, the imitation, learning, and the borrowing of this culture were by no means limited to the positive aspects of it. It was done in *pari-passu* with the imitation, learning and borrowing of the negative parts of it. They were also not accepted as given. Rather it was done with dexterity, polishing, and embellishment. This was made possible by the influence of other factors of the Nigerian traditional-modern society, which are exactly not the same with those of the western world from where this culture shock came. The behaviour were thus, imitated and learned as an economic motives and distaste to the existing socio-political arrangement, and committed with great ingenuity, brutality and daring.

On the overall all, the socio-political and economic environment in its post-colonial era has not only foisted to the Nigerians anew life styles and values with which to imitate, learn, and borrow. But it has also presented to these outlaws the conditions to explore, and be creative in the various acts of their chosen criminality such as the manner current armed robbery assumes.

In the next part, the empiricism of the study is examined. What are done in this section that contains two Chapters (5 and 6) is to discuss the methods and approach and general research design that were followed in the study. And to present the findings, analyse, interpret and discuss them.

## **PART 11I: EMPIRICAL STUDY**

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter is about the strategy adopted for the study. Conceptually, it is about the plan of action (research design) that guided the researcher in the arrangement of conditions for the collection and analysis of data that reflect both the ultimate aim—developing a conceptual framework of armed robbery in Nigeria, and the broad and immediate aim—a criminological descriptive-analysis of the offence and offenders. It takes particular exception on the methodology employed to collate and analyse the data in the study and the reasons thereto.

Research design is basically, the general plan according to which information—raw or ready-made, which are relevant to a proposed study are to be collected, presented, analysed and interpreted. For example, Welman and Kruger (1999:46) explained that research design encapsulates an arrangement and blue print by which, the respondents (subjects) are chosen, and the information (raw data) from them are obtained. So, it is the strategic framework for action that serves as a bridge between the research question and the execution or implementation of the research (Durrheim 1999 in Terre Blanche and Durrheim 1999: 29). Research methodology or design is concerned with an inquiry into amongst other things, the approach to be adopted (survey); methods or techniques (questionnaire or in-depth interview); sampling techniques (probability or non-

probability); forms of data (qualitative or quantitative); analysis methods (quantitatively or qualitatively).

The research design for this study outlines the approaches followed. It also includes the sampling technique, population, size, method and technique of data collection, and method of data presentation and analysis. Others include explaining how the validity and reliability and the ethical consideration of the study have been established and guaranteed.

## **5.2 PATTERN AND DETERMINANTS OF RESEARCH DESIGN UTILISED IN THE STUDY**

Research design is though, a little more above the method (s) adopted or to be adopted in carrying out a social research, it is often used interchangeably with methodology. So, they are used interchangeably in this present study. The choice of any one research methodology depends on certain factors, including (a) the topic to research, (b) the aim of the research, (c) the settings—social formation under which such research is carried out, (d) researcher's characteristics, and (e) the subject—individuals researched.

Peil (1983) notes that the method used for data collection varies with the topic, training, and the inclination of the researcher, but that the usefulness of these various methods is also affected by the situation in which the research takes place. Given an identical topic, it might be possible to use official records in one place, but necessary to collect one's own data in another (Peil 1983).

Durrheim (1999 in Terre Blanche and Durrheim 1999:29) further explains that research design also depends on the orientation of the researcher, and Labovitz and Hagedorn (1971: 13-93) while explaining that the purpose of design is to ensure a

comparison that is not subject to alternative interpretations, add that one determinant of the type of research design is how the problem is conceptualised, and the nature of the problem.

The research design in this study was purposely constructed to gain a comprehensive, in-depth and a broader (sociology-criminology) descriptive (characteristics) of armed robbers and armed robbery in the Southeastern part of contemporary Nigerian. As earlier note, the ultimate aim is to provide the base for coming up with an alternative, and a far-reaching theoretical framework to understand the offence and the offenders. In particular, the present study brings together multiple sources of data (e.g., literature, documents, questionnaires in-depth interviews) to focus on a single point—the sociology-criminology descriptive analysis of both the offence and offenders, and to help describe, explicate, interpret, clarify and corroborate some issues about the subjects and object (see also Lincoln and Guba 1985; Merriam 1988; Katz 2001).

The sources of data for the study therefore, like in all other similar studies are basically two—the primary and secondary sources. The primary sources saw data (information) in their original nature on armed robbery and armed robbers being collated. The other is the secondary sources of data by which data were collected in ready-made. This included literature on the topic both within the geo-political frontier of Southeastern part of Nigeria, the whole Nigeria, and beyond.

### **5.3 APPROACHES TO SOCIAL RESEARCH AND THE USE OF SOCIAL SURVEY**

In social studies or social sciences, there are forms of research design options available to any researcher. Earlier on in section 5.2 above, it is mentioned the factors that influence the choice of any one particular design or method. In some literature (see for instance, Labovitz and Hagedorn 1971:41) research design techniques are described as typologies or varieties, while in others (Lin 1976: 10; Durrheim and Wassenaar 1999 in Terre Blanche and Durrheim 1999:54), it is described as data collection method. In others such as (Gardner 1976; Behr 1983), it is not clear what the various research designs are called<sup>1</sup>.

By and large, in the social sciences research, the approaches\* to collating data are basically four, although others—case studies, life histories and so on literally sometimes, qualify as distinct on their own (see Labovitz and Hagedorn 1971). The four fundamental approaches are (a) observation; (b) documentary-historical method; (c) surveying; and (d)

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<sup>1</sup> The point being stressed here is that there is no clear cut as to what the different research design options are, or under what headings they fall in the theory of general research design. There is confusion as many authors have different approaches with regard to what are the specific techniques, methods and approaches of research design, and data collection. For instance, where does qualitative and quantitative fit in? As instrument of survey or what? Or as approaches, techniques or methods? There are conceptual differences amongst these, the careless manner by which most authors mix them up notwithstanding.

\* The researcher hereby chooses to refer to the research design options as approaches to differentiate them from both the methods and techniques of data collection. But more importantly, it is a prerogative choice, done for his convenience, which in any case, may be no more than a question of semantics.

experimentation<sup>2</sup>. It is important that every study the objective, research question, and the approach notwithstanding, should be able to state the alternative routes through which data could be collected, and conclusion drawn. This is exactly what Donald Warwick (1973 in Warwick and Osherson 1973:189) meant when he argues that every study—comparative or otherwise, should explicitly raise the question of alternative methods; it should ask what is obtained from one that is not available in others.

### 5.3.1 Fundamental approach of this study: Survey

Survey was used to collect data for the study, not without complementing it with other approaches for instance, in-depth interview with the offenders. After all, every approach or method is only an approximation of knowledge. Indeed, each only provides a different, and usually a valid glimpse of reality, and are all limited when used alone (see also Warwick 1973 in Warwick and Osherson 1973:190).

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<sup>2</sup> In **observation**, the researcher may either be participant or non-participant in the ongoing social activities. Observation while it cuts across all other approaches, it is more peculiar with those involved in an ethnography studies and where social activities are more socio-culturally imbued, than where such activities are antisocial or deviance. Social Anthropologists mainly use this.

**Documentary-historical** method involves using documentary evidence such as census data, police records, diaries, and mass media. It is more of what is known as content analysis approach to data gathering and interpretative. It is a comparative approach as well, and seems to be favoured mostly, by early sociologists (see for instance, Durkheim's study of suicide, and Karl Marx's study of the history of the society.

**Surveying** is the approach of collecting data by means of sample representative or general population. It includes the orthodox face-to-face in-depth interview, questionnaire survey, panel discussion etc. It seems to be the most prevalence form of research design in contemporary social sciences.

**Experimentation** is the method of collecting data involving a significant amount of control over the experimental or independent variable and over extraneous factors. Experimentation in social sciences involves manipulation either in the laboratory or natural setting. It is a most favoured approach by socio-psychologists. For more details,



The choice for survey here was because of the purpose and nature of the study. It was and because of its popularity in the field of social sciences. Perhaps, undoubtedly too, the researcher's orientation also influenced him. But on the over all, the choice of survey was because of the immediate interest to do a descriptive study<sup>3</sup>—to describe what exists, how it exists while grasping fully the biosocial, sociological and psychological complexities about armed robbers and armed robbery in the contemporary Southeastern part of today Nigeria. That is, to suggest that

- the researcher wanted to get as much as relevant facts;
- to state the facts quantitatively;
- to identify aspects of community life, and pattern of interaction or association where changes seem advisable;
- to measure the various variable determining the extent of the characteristics of both the offence and offenders;
- to do interpretation bringing to fore some face value observation of the relationship between the descriptive facts;

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read Nan Lin (1976, Martin, Terre Blanche and Kevin Durrheim 1999, and Labovitz and Hagedorn 1971).

<sup>3</sup> In specific statistical term, descriptive survey denotes a sample or survey where the principal objective is to estimate the basic statistical parameters (means, totals, ratios) of the population or its subdivision (see M.G Kendal and W.R Buckland 1971).

- to discuss the causal processes—major paths of becoming involved in armed robbery in the Southeastern states (relatedly in Nigeria) with a view to attempting a theoretical construct of the offenders and offence<sup>4</sup>;
- to cursorily examine (evaluate) policies. No doubt these reasons cut across descriptive, explanatory, exploratory and evaluative dimensions of social research.

Accordingly therefore, data for this study were drawn from a cross sectional<sup>5</sup> survey conducted in three prisons and cities—Abakaliki, Umuahia and Port Harcourt between 2000-2001. It was conducted among inmates who were either already convicted or awaiting trials (arrestees) on armed robbery offences in the central prisons in these states and cities, and who were well established as belonging to the profession of armed robbery.

#### **5.4 RESEARCH DESIGN AND CHRONOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE STUDY**

The study was conceived to last full three academic sessions (1998-2002). For the initial take off, permission was sought for and got from the Nigerian Prison Services

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<sup>4</sup> This is highlighted to draw attention to the fact that the statement consists the most singular important aim of the study and reason for choosing the survey method within the context of the study being a descriptive one.

<sup>5</sup> Cross sectional study refers to the pattern of study, which is concerned with collecting specific information on subjects during a one-time period. That is, information on subjects is required only for the particular time frame that the subjects need be studied. In longitudinal study on the other hand, researchers study a group over an extended period, collecting data on them at intervals.

Headquarters—a body and Parastatals responsible for overseeing the processing of offenders and prisoners alike.

After the permission had been granted, the letter to this effect and the revised proposal of the study were forwarded to the higher degree committee for further assessment and action thereto. With the approval of the proposal, and a formal registration, the researcher began extensive consultations, and the reviews of existing literature while making notes. Consultations with the libraries, prisons, universities, police stations, and some writers on the subject of armed robbery were undertaken.

This step was the first in the collection of data. It was aimed at identifying and establishing the possible repositories for information on the patterns—the sophistry and uniqueness of contemporary armed robbery in Nigeria from which possible alternative explanation of the offence and offenders could be developed. This involved a bibliography of the type of records available in books, newspapers, journals, news media, and oral commentaries. In the process, the following potential sources, which are the secondary source of data were identified—journals, published articles, newspaper press cutting, books, magazines, eyewitness accounts, governments archives and records. And they were located to provide an indication as to where likely materials bearing relevance to the perspective of the study could be located.

In addition, the researcher also used this period to visit all the states Prison Headquarters that were mapped out and chosen for use in the study. The purpose was two fold: The first was to deliver a copy of the permission letter to the prisons and chat with the officials there. The second was to get familiarised with the prison environment so that they do not look too strange to the researcher when the fieldwork commences.

Familiarisation with issues and place of the study afforded the researcher the chance to formulate the research problem properly, and to be in a better position to determine what relevant approach to follow in obtaining the final relevant data for the study.

Fieldwork was structured in a manner that would ensure continuity. For instance, visits to the various prisons were alternated. The aim was to utilise the encounters and experiences in each prison to ensure a wide coverage of the variables on the subject, while comparing the offenders in these different prisons; it also aimed at tapping the advantage of uninterrupted interviewing.

In designing the research and the methodology thereof, it was constant in the researcher's mind to do it in a process that it bears relevance to the important themes present in every well-formulated research design. Thus, the following as they constitute the point of focus of research were bore in mind.

#### **5.4.1 Unit of analysis**

The units of analysis in the study are armed robbers and armed robbery. In other words, it is the offenders and the offence that constitute the point of departure in the study. As earlier stated above, the study is a scholarly attempt to provide an alternative explanation of armed robbery in the Southeastern part of contemporary Nigeria in specific, and contemporary Nigeria in general. It is more fundamentally, about taking a giant leap in the construction of a conceptual framework, which is viewed as holistic to understand the present pattern of armed robbery behaviour as part of contemporary Nigeria.

So, the study's aim too was to depict a graphic statistical description of the sociology-cum-criminology of the offence and offenders, and to investigate to what

extent some facts or variables about the offenders corroborate or are associated in the said part of today Nigeria. This aim is by no means less important to the first one.

What was set off to investigate in the study are attitudes, explanation and the predisposition of contemporary armed robbers and robbery—how and why the current pattern, rate, and incidence. This quest and inquisitiveness saw the researcher slipping into inquiring the precipitous factors for the offence. The units of analysis were incidentally the primary sources of data for the study.

#### **5.4.2 Level of analysis and/ or population**

Basically, the study targets armed robbers in Nigeria in the present context of being defined as “modern or contemporary”. It focuses on armed robbery and armed robbers in the geo-political part of contemporary Nigeria, which is classified as the Southeastern states or region.

The population initially was conceived to cover only the convicted armed robbers in the chosen five states Prison Headquarters. But in the course of the fieldwork, the reality of the indifferent attitudes of some of the subjects were confronted with. Because of many reasons, the target was extended to include detainees (awaiting trials) who besides being known as armed robbers, accepted in self-confession, and made themselves willingly available to be part of the study. These reasons are the lack of a good number of convicted robbers; the system of criminal justice which keeps people for years without trial; the reluctance on the part of some respondents who loathe talking or being talked to by a stranger, and the spirit of to keep to the ethic and protocols of the game of

research—s “voluntarism”. Indeed, the essence of this step was to have sample not deemed too miniscule.

The categories of the offenders utilised in the study therefore, were only chosen amongst those who voluntarily made themselves available, and who deemed themselves as armed robbers without coercion. The convicted and detainee armed robbers in all the selected prisons constituted the *universum* of the study. The cities or towns and corresponding state Prison Headquarters are: Port Harcourt (Rivers state), Owerri (Imo state), Abakaliki (Ebonyi state), Umuahia (Abia state), and Awka (Anambra state).

## **5.5 RATIONALE FOR DEMARCATED AREAS (ZONE, CITIES (STATES) AND PRISONS**

The choice of the Southeastern states, cities and prisons was based on previous researches on crime distribution in contemporary Nigeria, and for personal reasons. There are theoretical assertions that a certain degree of correlation between crime and geographic exists in modern Nigeria (Mabogunje 1977, 1981, 1984; Oyebanji 1982; Aguda 1983; Ekpeyong 1984, 1989, 1992; Akintola 1994; Iwarimie-Jaja 1998, 1999a). Iwarimie-Jaja (1999a:43) thus, explains that Easterners have higher crime rates than Westerners and Northerners. There was further scholarly advice by one of the researcher’s academic mentors on the importance of focusing this study on the Southeastern states of Nigeria to provide the basis for further researches on certain emerging issues in relation to other geo-political states of contemporary Nigeria.

Besides these reasons, the spatial configuration of crime incidence shows that there are varying degrees of sophistication from one state, city to the other, as well as

within cites (Arokoya and Obafemi 1999:19). All these point to the underlying presumption, which finds expressions amongst many Nigeria scholars, and against which also this study is anchored. This presumption is that the Southern part of the country (East and West) was, and continues to remains more receptive to the western way of life (culture) including all its appurtenances. Albeit, contemporary Nigerian society is a capitalist oriented, or a pseudo-capitalist, but less arguably, the Southern states, and especially the Eastern states part of it seem either consciously or subconsciously far more oriented towards the western capitalist system of production, and its relations of production. This is notwithstanding the degree of the indigenous communal system of ownership that still prevails. The choice of this part of the country was therefore, premised on the need to provide a good research base for this study, and for a further theoretical and empirical comparism with other parts of the country.

Another reason for the choice of the Southeastern part of the country, and the states was for convenience. The zone, and states are proximate to the researcher; being also very close to his home state and town. The socio-cultural settings and linguistics are to the researcher's advantage by virtue of being from the zone. The limitation imposed by finance and other supports also contributed to the choice of the zone and states.

Any one very much familiar with the geo-political demarcation of contemporary Nigeria may have reason to question the logic behind the inclusion of Rivers states (Port Harcourt) since its rightful place is in the South-South zone of modern Nigeria. But suffice to state that it was included for three fold. One, River states, and in particular, Port Harcourt is historically and strategically significant in any discussion of the Easterners as a lingo-ethnic composite of modern Nigeria. It still harbours and has the bulk of its

populace who are either Easterners by pedigree, or whose total ways of life are predominantly Ibo-like (Easterners). Two, Rivers state within the geography of the study represents one of the very few prisons where condemned criminals including armed robbers are quartered in large numbers. Three, and finally, Rivers state has often provided a place of further research interest to the researcher—he has lived in the city and, experienced it in a much significant way while going through his university education.

## **5.6 SAMPLE, SIZE AND DESIGN**

The sample, size and its design were affected by the limits of the predictive power of human behaviour. A few factors in specific terms, however, affected the size, sample technique, and design of the study. First, was the unique nature of the subjects under study. This class of individuals shroud their activities or professions in secrecy. This “career concealment attitude” constrained the sample, its size as well as the design. Second, the greatest difficulty in an attempt to survey human beings and their behaviour is to find respondents who will be willing to talk and bear their minds on the issues concern uninhibited (Kehoe 1989:4).

In this study, apart from affecting the sample size, the difficult in predicting human behaviour affected the initial specific focus of the study—convicted armed robbers. This as earlier pointed above in section 5.4.2 led the researcher to include those in awaiting trial lists, although in a rather insignificant way. Thirdly, because the subjects in the prisons are not static; their numbers are characterised by continuous additions and subtractions (releasees and arrestees), the sample, size and design were also affected from what was originally conceived.



Besides the above reasons especially the last one, it was cumbersome even from the onset to fathom the accurate figures of armed robbers held in the prisons. So, it was difficult to determine the sample size beforehand. Disregarding these considerations meant that any pre-determined sample size was going to be fraught with pitfalls. To guard against this, it was resolved that the ultimate sample size would only be determined while in the field, and that it would reflect on the numbers of the offenders in each prison and the limitations imposed by each prison. But the researcher was principally guided by practical constraints e.g. the number of people he had access to, financial resources, time frame for the study, administrative and bureaucratic backlogs (see also Durrheim 1999 in Terre Blanche and Durrheim 1999: 45). In addition, because the research is more basically exploratory and interpretive, it was viewed important to play to the technique called **sampling to redundancy**<sup>6</sup>.

However, the idea of the sample size was not simply left unattended to. The researcher was still inclined to sample between 200-250 wherever the identification and neat sorting of those involved in armed robbery are discernible<sup>7</sup>. But there is no

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<sup>6</sup> This involves postponing the size of sample, but interviewing more and more people until the same themes and issues come over and over again. So, interviews go on until it seems to have achieved redundancy in the sense that no more new information can be gained from sampling further (see Durrheim 1999). As a doctoral colleague of mine also reminded me while reflecting on the sample size: "Smart, you can sample 10 as representative of your population and ask them 50 questions, or sample 50 and ask them 10 questions and still invariably be arriving at the same end of the road. In fact, what the researcher thinks is important is not really the number of interviewees but the depth of ones' question and knowledge of those providing the information".

<sup>7</sup> Some opinions in research literature hold that at least, 5 percent of total population is a somehow respectable standard, and to others the ideal whole number is 500. Accordingly, Godfrey Gardner, 1976 explains that in relatively large populations such as those covered in social surveys, samples less than 30 or 40 percent are usually not adequate for statistical analysis. However, the decision on the sample size as tough as it is depends on the degree of accuracy or precision that is required. Or in other words, what margin of

gainsaying as earlier raised above in section 5.4.2, that the encounter in the field made the idea unworkable and opened up a different method, technique and approach adopted in reaching respondents.

In the final analysis, a total of 86 respondents were selected to participate in the completion of the questionnaires, and 8 subjects to be interviewed in in-depth. Amongst the respondents who were selected to participate in completing the questionnaires, only a paltry sum of 68 respondents responded in what the researcher perceives as “usable” by the completeness of the questionnaires to form analysable data. Table 5.1 below depicts the composition of the sample of respondents and subjects drawn from all the three prisons that ultimately form the basis of analysis.

**Table 5.1 Composition Of The Sample**

Prison	Respondents initially included	Respondents after withdrawals	Respondents submitted useable questionnaires	Subjects interviewed
Port Harcourt (River State)	35	30	27	4
Umuahia (Abia State)	24	20	18	2
Abakaliki (Ebonyi State)	27	25	23	2
TOTAL	86	75	68	8

The respondents were selected in proportion to the individual prisons’ population. More armed robbers were selected from the prisons with higher records. The point therefore, is

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errors researchers is prepared to accept. Nan Lin (1976) also explains that there are rules, which act as factors that a researcher can use to determine the size of his/her sample, namely the population size, the confidence interval for the estimation, the confidence coefficient  $c$ , and the variance in the population. For more read Nan Lin 1976: 159-162.

that the sample size of 68 respondents, which form the basis of the quantitative data analysis, is a reflection of the interplays of the forces of voluntary participation, the attitudes of the prison staff who assisted, the statistics of armed robbers in the prisons utilised for the study, and the degree of completion of the questionnaires.

In Port Harcourt (Rivers State), a total of 35 offenders were selected to complete the questionnaires in two batches. Five respondents objected to participation and were granted the request to abstain. It is against the 30 offenders who concurred to participate that the questionnaires were distributed to and completed accordingly. Three of the 30 questionnaires were, however, not properly filled, and they were sorted out for non-use.

In Umuahia (Abia state), a total of 24 respondents were chosen to complete the questionnaires also in two batches. In the first batch comprising 12 respondents, 2 offenders requested to be allowed to abstain, and were in that light, permitted. On the overall, 22 respondents participated, and against which the questionnaires were distributed to. All the questions were returned and two poorly filled were also sorted out for non-use.

In Abakaliki (Ebonyi state), 27 respondents were selected to complete the questionnaires. Two requested to withdraw and were granted the leave. Out of the questionnaires distributed, filled and returned, two also were poorly filled and had to be withdrawn from the analysable ones. In Owerri and Awka there were no respondents as a result of the unwillingness armed robbery inmates to co-operate (see section 5.12).

In addition to the aforementioned respondents who completed the questionnaires, the following subjects were selected for further in-depth interviews by the researcher. Four (4) offenders from Port Harcourt, and two (2) each from Umuahia and Abakaliki

were selected. They were selected for in-depth interviews during the briefing sessions. These subjects were selected based on their perceived in-depth knowledge of the offence and their willingness to talk freely about it (see section 5.7.1.1). Thus, in the final analysis a total of 76 offenders (68 by questionnaire and 8 by in-depth interviews) are the basis upon which data presentation, analysis, and interpretation of the study is based.

## **5.7 SAMPLING TECHNIQUE**

The initial sampling technique within the context of the research design conceived for use in the study was the simple random sampling technique (SRS). This technique by reference is a simple dip lottery. The reason behind this technique was the presumptions that the population would be fairly large enough and determined beforehand, that the offenders would co-operate in all respects, and that access to the offenders would be less bureaucratised and cumbersome.

In the opinion of the researcher of this study, there are four important things of consideration in the adoption of any one of the broad and narrow sampling techniques—probability, non-probability, systematic, simple random, quota, accidental, purposive, cluster, stratified, and cluster. They are:

- knowing what one wants to achieve, tautologically refers to as objectives;
- who or what one wants to study—its or their idiosyncrasies;
- being conscious of biases and taking other non sampling concrete steps to reduce them as they are likely to affect the study; and

- conforming to the professional ethical standard—ensuring the protection and confidentiality of the subjects under study.

There are basically two kinds of sampling methods—the probability and non-probability. In probability, the first principle is that each unit in the population has a known chance (zero) of being included in the sample. Within each population, each unit has an equal chance of being included. It also supposes that selections must be random—without aim or purpose. Given as above, a non-probability follows quite logically.

Probability sampling undoubtedly, is the commanding technique in social sciences researches. It has remarkable advantages over the non-probability. To an extent, it is preferred to its rival because

- it reduces the researcher's biases,
- it permits to state numerically the degree of confidence researchers have in inferring to the population.

Yet, probability sampling technique is not a sacrosanct technique. In fact, it merely reduces rather than eliminate errors. And it is not feasible in some research contexts and purposes.

Because of the significant departures from these assumptions or presumptions (see section 5.6) above, an alternative sampling technique, which to an extent, has been elevated to a standard statistical concept within the purview of social sciences research methodology, was sought for. The immediate technique of this study was the snowball—a non-probability sampling technique, which is explained below in more details.

### **5.7.1 Non-probability sampling and snowball**

In view of the fact that probability sampling technique is neither a bullet proof, nor feasible in certain research context, and also given some of the reasons earlier on enumerated (see 5.2) above, a technique of a non-probability sampling was utilised in selecting samples of the respondents. So, the broad sampling technique used in the study is a non-probability. Nachmias and Nachmias (1996:184) define a non-probability sampling as a technique by which there is no way of specifying the probability of each units' inclusion in the sample, and there is no assurance that each unit has some chances of being included.

A non-probability sampling is often critiqued on the ground that it does not offer all subjects in the population the chance or probability of being selected. As a result, critiques often argue that there is no way of estimating sampling errors. What is often even more argued is that samples, which emanate from the non-probability, are not representative of the population because the units in the population are not given the chance to be included. Arising from this criticism is that generalisation is fraught with risk, or is, perhaps even impossible.

Daan van Vuuren and Anina Maree (1999 in Terre Blanche and Durrheim 1999:279) however, make a case for the use of a non-probability sampling. According to these authors a non-probability becomes useful when there is no available sampling frame (e.g. no list of all the people who are left-handed); the cost probability sampling in terms of time and money is too high; and researchers are planning or doing an in-depth qualitative research. As applied to this study, and bearing in mind the problem of armed

robbery statistics in Nigeria (see section 2.8.3) there is for. e.g. no sampling frame of armed robbers in Southeastern Nigeria, a non-probability readily becomes appealing. Indeed, it seems logical to argue that there is no reliable list of armed robbers in all the prisons used, as some of the inmates were being released, transferred or even added.

In the view of the researcher, a non-probability procedure is surely a useful sampling method and technique insofar as the researcher is knowledgeable about the area or subjects under study, and he or she is in addition, aware and armed him/herself with a well clearly defined objectives of the study. The merits become more of rewarding when the researcher is also aware of how much error he or she is able to deal with. Therefore, depending on the nature of the study and other factors—singly or in combination enumerated at the beginning of this chapter, a researcher is at best to employ the non-probability sampling technique.

A non-probability and non-random sample, (Broidy 2001:15) explains is not ideal; being neither representative of the population nor generalisable to the population as a whole, but it does also has numerous strengths depending on the purpose at hand. Accordingly, he argues that generalisation is less important in the initial stages of theory evaluation than later—after the explanatory capability of a theory has been established. Early tests like the ones in this study have as their main goal, the ascertaining of the empirical plausibility of a theory (see Broidy 2001:15).

Welman and Kruger (1999:48) note that in spite of its shortcomings, a non-probability sampling is less complicated and more economical in terms of time and financial expenses than a probability sampling. A non-probability technique has been

found to provide an insight at quick pace to issues of great concerns, and which demand urgent attention insofar that they have been professionally utilised, however.

There are three types of a non-probability sampling techniques, which may be identified in the literature—accidental, purposive and quota sampling (see also Atemie 1989:39; Akinkoye 1994 in Otite 1994:28). In this study, bearing few factors in mind, the “purposive” also known as judgemental sampling technique was utilised. The purposiveness is based on the fact that audiences are known, objectives are well itemised, neither the researcher nor his assistants knew the respondents beyond the ordinary bureaucratic (informal) relationship, and this help to reduce biases to their barest minimum.

The researcher in conjunction with the prisons staff purposely chooses both the respondents and subjects who, in their opinion, are relevant to the research topic. In this case, the judgement of the investigator is more important than obtaining a probability sample. The process of sampling in this case will usually involve identification of the informants and arranging times for meeting them (see also Sarantakos 1998: 152).

The specific non-probability sampling technique in used is the “snowball” This is elaborated further because of the importance attached to it.

#### **5.7.1.1 Snowball sampling**

The specific non-probability sampling technique used in the study is the “snowball”<sup>8</sup>. This is a very specialised type of sampling typically used when other methods are not

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<sup>8</sup> The concept of snowball to an extent that it has lately occupied a central place as a sampling technique in survey researches is not yet recognised in the statistical words of meanings (lexicography). What this mean is that “snowball”, though featuring more



practical (Lin 1976: 163; Haralambos and Holborn 1991:725). Haralambos and Holborn note for instance, that for groups such as professional criminals, it is not easy to use other ways of obtaining a sample. Lin (1976:163) observes snowball is useful if members of the target group maintain some kind of formal or informal communication network amongst themselves. This indeed the researcher feels is a typical characteristic of organised criminal syndicates such as armed robbers.

Snowball sampling involves using personal contacts to build up a sample of the group to be studied. The simple process involves calling for instance, Mr. A to call Mr. B, and Mr. B calls Mr. C, and the process goes on until the sample size deems appropriate is reached. This is, however, more complex than meet the eyes (for instance, see section 5.12).

The first crucial step in the snowballing process is to identify a key informant or respondent with a substantial knowledge on the issue being researched on, and who possesses the social clout to reach at others with the same in-depth knowledge on the issue, and willing to participate in all respects of the research. McCall and Simons (1969) further explains that the snowball method denotes a sampling technique in which an interviewee provides a clue to the next possible interviewee based on similar features or knowledge needed for the research.

Although, the snowball method is a non-probability sampling technique, it is, by no means, in the researcher's view unscientific. Since the respondents are still to be

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frequently in social surveys is yet to be included in the Dictionary of Statistical Terms, nor is it found in the Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences. This is somewhat a paradox, and thus, its usage in standard social sciences research requires caution. Notwithstanding, snowball, as a technique of sampling can no longer be demeaned especially giving the

observed, quantified, and qualified by numerical measurements, and to be analysed by scientific procedures (statistical tools), the scientific outlook of this technique cannot be overemphasised. In fact, scientism in social sciences seems, more concerned with the advancement of knowledge on the particular issue at hand, and also more probable with techniques of data collection, which could either be quantitative or qualitative<sup>9</sup> rather than the sampling technique. So, sampling technique is more or less no measurement of the scientific status of a particular research.

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sensitivity, complexity and other constraints impinging on certain research subjects such as high profile criminals.

<sup>9</sup> Leo Silberman attempts to establish the conceivable conjunction between science and social analysis, which is also indeed, the centrepiece of the discipline of sociology-criminology, led him to provide five canons that would permits any study like sociology, and extended further, as in this study, any technique or approach as being scientific. Of all the five general standards or principles by which a discipline and/ or methodological technique is either judged as science or not which he provided, the last, in the view of the researcher is the most encompassing and powerful adjudging what is science or not. The canon according to Leo Silberman is “if the writer accepts the platonic injunction that his duty is to stimulate the curiosity of his public and cause people to ask, perhaps for the first time, significant questions about the nature of thought, society and the physical world, to demand more facts, and so re-examine what they had previously considered self-evident”. Implied in the criterion he explains is the suggestion that an item, be it ever so carefully checked, is science only when it “significantly” adds to the established body of knowledge. Experience and tradition he notes are the two judges of what can pass as significant.... The realm of social thought is not exhausted by what is readily accessible to the research worker who wields exclusively, scientific tools of investigation. The multiplicity of motives in human conduct, their subtle overtones of meaning, the beauty, the cruelty, the tedium, the tragic-comic features of the social scene are more often caught by impressionistic methods of the humanist eschewing scientific procedures...” (See Leo Silberman London 1951). George Homans (1967) contributing on the nature of scientism as it affects sociology and possibly all other social sciences also explains that though stating and testing relationships between properties of nature is what makes a science, it is certainly not the only thing that a science tries to do. Indeed, we judge not the existence, but the success of a science by its capacity to explain (for details, see George Horman 1967. For further details on the “science” of social sciences, also see the deliberation of Haralambos and Holborn 1991.

In addition, the reason for using snowball sampling to identify respondents was that Heads of the three Prisons were approached for statistics on armed robbers. Directives were then given to the Welfare sections of each of the prisons for assistance in that regard. There followed a deliberation among the Heads of the Prisons, the Welfare sections, and the researcher on the feasibility of a random sampling. The argument of the Heads of Prisons and Welfare sections was that most armed robbers particularly those doomed for condemn to death may unlikely agree to participate especially if not directly interacted with. It was based on this further deliberation, and in appreciation of factors influencing the choice of any one sampling technique, that the snowball technique was finally adopted to reach the final respondents (for the reliability and validity, see section 5.11).

The other set of subjects were those interviewed in an in-depth, and they were drawn in the similar manner by identifying key armed robbers. They were selected based on their presumed knowledge of armed robbery during the briefing before the completion of the questionnaires and concurred with the assistance of the prison officials present.

In the sense of the snowball technique used in this study, one or two staff from the Welfare Departments went to the different cells and locate a few of the respondents—known armed robbers. With these identified few, the staff then moved around the various cell sections and randomly identified others on the basis of voluntarism. Without even using their official registry, the staffers in the Departments were able to know inmates who are convicted and detained armed robbers, and the various cells that housed them. By this process, the required numbers of respondents willing to be participants were gathered.

## 5.8 DATA COLLECTION

Data collection technique in this study is described as the manner by which primary data (raw information) were obtained from the respondents and subjects, and the secondary data obtained from the literature. The question, which constituted the greatest challenge in the study, was how to reach the respondents and subjects, get them co-operated and teased out relevant, valid, and reliable data from them. Experience had showed that studying inmates, and in Nigeria in particular could be very problematic both in terms of the subjects themselves—they are likely to be unco-operative, and the overwhelming bureaucratic jams involved.

After earlier consultations with the staff had been made, the time and modalities for embarking on fieldwork were then worked out. Prisoners in Nigeria, as indeed else where are not unlocked until specified period of time; in the case of Nigeria it is usually by 9: a.m. Even when they are unlocked, visitors and the public are not allowed access until the morning chores had been observed, and the administrative do's and don'ts set in place. And 12 mid-day lock inmates locked back again as a rule thus, making research a whole tiring and time consuming exercise.

In specific terms, the present study brings together relatively multiple sources of data (e.g. questionnaire, in-depth interview, and literatures) to focus on a single point and to help explain, clarify, and corroborate certain issues about contemporary armed robbers and armed robbery in Nigeria (see also Lincoln and Guba 1985; Merriam 1988).

### **5.8.1 Literature**

It is important to study the subject literature before actual data collection starts. The main purpose of literature study is to enable the researcher to have a better grasp of the research problem.

#### **5.8.1.1 Text books, official documents and journals**

The study benefited extensively from textbooks both written locally and internationally. They also served, and perhaps at greater service, as the single most important sources of secondary data. As later section (5.14) argues better, there is scanty of texts that have a comprehensive and synthesised of ideas, themes, and facts on armed robbery in general and in particular in Nigeria. Statistics on government documents on armed robbery is hard to come by and undoubtedly, fraught with scepticism. Nevertheless, the various text books on crime in general and the specific sections or chapters on armed robbery and behaviour learning, journals and pamphlets on the same fields were instrumental in the study. Government Official's documents on crime statistics (Federal Office of Statistics) including those coming from the police bulletins were of important in the study.

The importance of these sources of data is that they provided the bedrock for the perspective or idea adopted as the framework in the study—provide theories, collaborative figures, scenario and *modus operandi* which are illustrative of the scope and the great concern over the general criminal behaviour, and thus, assist in an alternative reconstructing of the realities of contemporary armed robbery problem in Nigeria. So, text books, journals, and (official documents) provide a rich source of support for the

findings derived from observations and interviews (Jorgensen 1989; Marshall and Rossman 1995).

#### **5.8.1.2 Newspaper articles**

As a secondary source of data, the present study extensively made use of newspapers and magazines articles and therefore, demands special attention. Because there is a paucity of textbooks from which detailed and synthesised views on all issues and facts about armed robbery in contemporary Nigeria could be referred to, the importance and account of the newspapers in this study could not be overemphasised. What is even more than to argue that since newspapers serve as a forum for the community at large to speak out its concerns, newspaper articles thus, provide a rich source of data on how the community feels about the crime of armed robbery in contemporary Nigeria.

Newspaper articles and magazines offer a different, but strong and synthesised view on the menace of the crime as it affects the country. It also offers different, but equally synthesised opinions as to how armed robbery problem should be approached. The newspapers and magazines' articles and commentaries used in this present study therefore, provided a range of insightful ideas on the risk factors (causes), *modus operandi* (MO), effects, crime scenes or scenarios, public perceptions, and so forth on armed robbery in contemporary Nigeria.

There was no fast and hard rule guiding the choice and selection of any one newspaper, magazine, and even the articles. Media houses in addition to Universities and public libraries were visited, and the libraries in both provided the starting points. Personal library owned by a senior friend was also consulted for newspaper articles.

Lucky enough, there were extensive neat categorisation of press clippings especially in the media houses—each relating to the diverse issues such as politics, arts, crime and economics. With the assistance of the library attendants, the particular clippings on crime and related matters were readily sorted out of the shelves, consulted and flipped through to select interesting stories on the diverse aspects of armed robbery, which are relevant to the study. It was observed that a fairly percentages of the clippings (about 85%) in the past couple of between five to seven years (1993-2000), were on armed robbery alone.

Sorting out of these several hundreds of articles were made less difficulty by the fact that some of them provided only a vague idea on the subject matter of armed robbery and they were thus, given lesser attention. There was also the fact that most of the articles were amongst the different daily papers related (being similar) in contents and context as the different newspapers it seems likely, competed for the same piece of news. And this meant that most were not considered since the headlines and dates provided the clues. Internet surfing for newspapers on armed robbery in general and in Nigeria in particular was also conducted.

The last method for collecting newspapers and magazines articles related to armed robbery was simply reading any local newspapers and magazines both at the researcher's leisure and during the research period, and clipping those articles that bare minds on the subject and general explication of behaviour. Friends and associates who were aware of the research and the interest of the researcher were also able to draw attentions to articles and write-ups on armed robbery, theory building, and behaviour learning.

## **5.9 DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES (FORMS OF PRIMARY DATA)**

Recall that the study was described as many things by nature—descriptive, interpretive, explanatory, exploratory, numeric, basic, cross-cultural, applied, and to an extent, inferential (see section 1.4.2). These were to generate variables whose measurements were not only going to be limited to either a definite quantification or qualification<sup>10</sup>. Bearing this in mind, and a realisation that no research technique is either mutually exclusive or exhaustive, the research design was structured to include both the quantitative and qualitative techniques, hence the forms of data to be collected. It seems obvious that both the techniques and forms of data are also interchangeably described as methodological (see for instance, Taylor and Bogdan 1984: 5).

The aim of obtaining data in both quantitative and qualitative form is to gain a full subjective and empirical worldview of the offence and the offenders. Rist (1977) explains that qualitative and quantitative methodology is more than a set of data gathering techniques. It is a way of approaching the empirical world. This is a case of combining the empirical scientism with a humanistic approach to understand crimes and criminals alike—with quantitative described as more of scientific, and qualitative as humanistic.

It seems a truism that in most researches, the qualitative and quantitative tend to overlap at one stage or the other as do the sampling technique. The adoption of both the quantitative and qualitative forms of data in reaching an understanding of crime and criminals is what been referred to as “triangulation” and “intermethod cross-validation” (see for instance, Durrheim 1999). Haralambos and Holborn (1991:754) referred to this

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<sup>10</sup> See also Labovitz and Hagedorn (1971) on the determination of the types of statistics that are useful for data analysis. While quantitative involves measurement differing in magnitude, qualitative measurement is concerned with non-differing in magnitude.



as “methodological pluralism”. According to Bryman (1988), the usefulness of a plurality of methods, as they referred to it is:

- Qualitative and quantitative data can be used to check on the accuracy (validity) of the conclusion reached on the basis of each respective method.
- Qualitative methods can be used to produce hypotheses, which then can be checked using quantitative methods.
- The two approaches can be used together so that a more complete picture is produced.
- Qualitative research may be used to illuminate why certain variables are statistically correlated.

Quantitative data produce a rather static picture that allows a researcher to examine and discover the overall pattern and structure of a particular social group or society that is being studied. These are data in the numerical form, and they occur in such manner as official statistics on crime, suicide, and divorce rates (Haralambos and Holborn 1991:707). Qualitative data allow a richer and a deeper understanding of the process of change in a social life or social actions, which occur at a specific place and time (Bryman 1988; Johnson 1975). These are data that are usually collected and presented in words such as description of a group of people living in poverty (see Haralambos and Holborn 1991:707).

Prominent in the study is the in-depth interview “as a qualitative data collection technique”. Durrheim (1999 in Terre Blanche and Durrheim 1999:43) describes qualitative as naturalistic, holistic and inductive, and further explains that either of them

can be used for any form of research<sup>12</sup>. But in the opinion of the researcher social research can be better enhanced by the synergy of both forms of data. This is more so, since there is no conclusive agreement as to where one kind of research ends, and where another starts.

In this study, the live experience—a demographic background is analysed to relate to the emergence of the current pattern of today's armed robbery and armed robbers in contemporary Nigeria as a particular kind of group behaviour of the entire populace on the one hand, and the global armed robbery culture on the other. So, it reflects the unique developmental pattern, trend, and *modus operandi*. And as earlier noted in section 5.8, it is important to study the subject literature before actual data collection starts. Consequently, the main purpose of literature study is to enable the researcher to have a better grasp of the research problem.

As stated above (section 5.8), no one data technique or method is usually mutually exhaustive and exclusive. In most researches, both the qualitative and quantitative overlap at one stage or the other as do the sampling technique. In this study, and within the context of utilising both the quantitative and qualitative forms of data, two

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<sup>12</sup> For further details on the advantages of the qualitative research data or methods, see for instance, Steven J. Taylor and Robert Bogdan (1984). The seminal arguments in favour of qualitative are provided in some works such as Oscar Lewis (1965:xii; Becker 1967; Burgess, as quoted by Shaw, 1966:4 (cf. Taylor and Bogdan, 1984). For instance, Becker wrote that in qualitative studies, those whom society ignores, the poor and the “deviant”, often receive a forum for their views; Oscar Lewis in his famous studies of the poor in Latin America writes “I have tried to voice to a people who are rarely heard”; Burgess, as quoted by Shaw (1966:4) writes that when we learn “...the inner life of the person, his moral struggles, his successes and failures in securing his destiny in a world too often at variance with his hopes and ideas”, and Taylor and Bagdon (1984) explains “when we study people qualitatively, we get to know them personally and experience what they experience in their daily struggles in society. We learn about concepts such as beauty,

techniques of data collections are paramount—the structured questionnaire and in-depth interview respectively.

### **5.9.1 Questionnaire**

This is the major data collection technique used in the study. Generally, questionnaires may either be handed out to respondents while the researcher waits for their completion to have them collected back. Or it may be mailed to respondents. Each has both advantages and disadvantages over the other<sup>13</sup>.

Although utilising the “hand-out-and-wait-for-completion” approach, an introductory letter appeared in the front cover of the 11-page brochure (see appendix A). The questionnaire instrument was subjected to series of revisions and modifications. It embodies new items that focused on information on the major variables of the study while deleting some extraneous. It was pre-tested on a dozen eligible (identified armed robbers).

The design of the questionnaire was such that drafts of it were given to the researcher’s promoters who made suggestions and gave the final document a sharp focus. The final version of it contained 86 items (herein referred to as variables or items of measurements), and it was sub-divided into two parts. Part A deals mainly with the social

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pain, faith, suffering, frustration, and love whose is lost through other research approaches”.

<sup>13</sup> The main advantage of questionnaire handed out directly to the respondents is that response rates are usually high amongst others, while the main disadvantage is that the researcher’s element of biasness is more likely to be discernible. The main advantage of the mail questionnaire on the hand is that it covers wider geographical (spatial) distribution of the respondents, and thus, saves money and time among others, while the main disadvantage is that responses are usually low and not uncommon.

background of the offenders, and part B on the other personal data that focuses on a further and details exploration of the offenders and the offence.

An important characteristic of the questionnaire is that it combined the open-ended options and the closed-ended approach plus provisions for the respondents to comment on as space permits. Both the open-ended and close-ended questions are used so that the respondents could be drawn into specific issues, while at the same time offering a fuller response than closed-ended questions or the open-ended questions alone could have offered. They also offer responses that are both descriptive as well as interpretative. Therefore, both types of questions provide data that are more comprehensive and in-depth than any one of them could offer. Behr (1983:151) in addition, notes that the open-ended questions—free-response as he referred to it frequently go beyond statistical data or factual information into hidden motivations that lay behind attitudes, interests, preferences and decisions.

The advantages of a structured questionnaire include that it ensures that the researcher or assistant is on hand to make sure that the questionnaires are completed according to instructions and to clarify ambiguities. The body of this data-collecting instrument was designed using what the researcher calls “behavioural and perception” responses to measure the main variables of the study. This approach obtains the specific characteristics of the respondents and certain social phenomenon that reveals both the latent and manifest of these characteristics. These major variables in the first part of the questionnaire are armed robbers’ socio-demographic characteristics—family, age, sex, marital, education, religion, occupation, and a host of other related demographics characteristics.

The second part of the questionnaire contains variables that sought out far-flung information about the offenders and the offence in greater details. This part of the questionnaire is about the armed robbery inventory. Under this, the researcher also tried to establish the perceptions of the offence amongst the offenders within the wide range of views of what, how, and why questions. The specific sub-variables include the types of robbery, length of involvement, motives, networks, patterns of involvement peculiar to the offenders, and the offenders' perceptions of robbery as an issue of concern to society.

Within this second part of the questionnaire effort was made to determine **how**, and **if** contact and exposure to western ideas and life styles have influenced the pattern of current involvement in armed robbery in contemporary Nigeria. And importantly, **why** the respondents decided to choose armed robbery amongst other forms of economic or property crimes. In this part of the questionnaire, further attempt was made to strengthen the answers provided in these regards of "why" and "how", when the researcher asked a similar, but more banal question of what do the respondents think is the most precipitous factor to involvement in armed robbery. Finally, questions that border on the offenders' general perceptions about armed robbery, suggestions and other important things that need be known about the crime of armed robbery were sought out.

In a nutshell, and with regard to the divisions of the structured questionnaire, the researcher tried in the first part of it to gather essential information about the socio-cultural background of the offenders and secondly, to gather wide range of information about the offence and the offenders.

Bearing in mind the types of data the researcher hopes to gather, and the varying scales for measuring variables, response categories were constructed to be “nominal”<sup>14</sup> in nature. The questionnaires were self-administered. Those who are literates enough to complete them were asked to do so, while prison personnel and in instances, the researcher assisted those that cannot.

All in all, 75 (see. Table 5.1) questionnaires were administered at different points in times within and amongst the prisons. Out of these figures, 68 were filled to merit usage for data analysis (see section 5.6 and section 5.12).

### **5.9.2 In-depth interview**

As a qualitative technique, the interview is a direct method of obtaining information in a face-to-face situation (Behr 1983:44). Interviews are most suitable for complex topics, or where the investigation concerns matters of personal nature. It provides opportunity for explanation, enables the interviewee to be stimulated, and the mood of the interviewee to be tapped (Behr 1983:145).

The in-depth unstructured interview was conducted among 8-armed robbers not represented in the questionnaire section (see section 5.6 and table 5.1 above).

The purpose of these in-depth unstructured interviews was to access information that could not be captured by the questionnaires. It also allowed a follow-up to the answers that may not be enough in the questionnaire instrument such as the organisational

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<sup>14</sup> Nominal scale consists of two or more categories, which distinguishes the presence or absence of a characteristic or several categories of the characteristics. Accordingly, the categories are described as exhaustive and mutually exclusive—each and every observation can and must be placed in only one category. (see Nan Lin 1976).

structures of armed robbery, the networks, and life experiences which details can only be collected through this method.

This in-depth unstructured interview which some authors for instance, Bless Higson-Smith (1995:107) refers to as simply “unscheduled” were conducted in an informal manner—without any didactic setting. Thus, this kind of interview—in-depth, unstructured and non-scheduled allows the interviewee the freedom to expand on the issue or topic as they see fit (see Bless and Higson-Smith 1995:107). So, intervention was essentially to ask for clarifications or further explanations. The in-depth semi-structured interview format—a mere hand-written draft that was also used, though minimally, provided the opportunity to give directives, or confront the interviewee with probing questions.

Accordingly, (Sarantakos 1998:264) referring to the method as intensive or in-depth interview explains that it has a format that is unstructured and flexible in nature. The main aim of the in-depth interview the author further adds, is to obtain detailed information as it delves into the reasons behind the answers, opinions or emotions given in a survey (1998:264).

The in-depth semi and unstructured interviews offers the opportunity for direct eye ball-eye ball contact, which is of great advantage in observing the body chemistry of the interview. Bailey (1983:182) thus, also explains that one of the advantages of an in-depth interviewee is that the interviewer is able to observe directly, the non-verbal behaviour, which may decrease the internal validity of the interviewee’s story. For instance, it was observed that most subjects were emboldened as armed robbers, and were probable able to have known one another or belong to the same gangs.

Both kinds of in-depth interview utilised in the study in some cases took the form of word association or sentence completion. In this regard, some statements were made halfway to tease out the full response from the interviewees. This was done mostly on occasions when the respondents appeared to have no comprehension of the idea of what is being sought or reluctant to bear mind on the issue raised. For instance, question as “you had rehearsals before armed robbery operation because.....?”, “You combined gun with charm during operation so as.....?” were framed in this sense and allowed them to complete. In some other instances, some were asked to feel free and tell what they think are important about themselves and the offence that they would wish the researcher to know.

An important development during the in-depth interviews was the extent to which the respondents were able to go in giving information that was really not asked for. There were even demands from some of them for a plain sheet and pen to enable them provide more information.

The eight offenders who were selected for the in-depth interviews were chosen so that logically, both their life history and first-hand-criminal behaviour can be understood in *pari passu*. In fact, what was done was to invite these few-selected subjects to give brief accounts of their life history, which they feel parallel with their criminal behaviour with the aim to gain more and deeper knowledge of their memoir. The need for this was to underscore if there was any consistent pattern of life history that cuts previous and current criminal behaviour that is peculiar to most subjects. Their brief comments are represented as part of the data analysis, and their various abridged forms sometimes presented with the quantitative data analyses are describable as anecdotes.



Life history, which represents a person's overall repository behaviour—pro and anti, and constitutes a specific kind of “in-depth interviews”, is uniquely imbued with a specific purpose. It enables the person being studied to tell his or her story in his or her own words. According to Shaw (1966: 1) “the unique feature of such documents is that they are recorded in the first person, in the boys/girl's own words, and not translated into the language of the person investigating the case”. And Lin (1976:215) further explains:

...this technique requires that the researcher rely solely on a person reporting a life experiences relevant to the research interest, with minimal commentary. Such a narration consists of a detailed description of the development of a phase in a person's life (e.g., becoming a juvenile delinquent) or a detailed description of the typical behaviours and activities of a particular life style (e.g., that of hobo).

In each of the prisons, the researcher conducted the in-depth interviews in either the chapels or available space deemed all right, and which the officials in the prisons that monitored the proceeding provided. The prison officials were present within the vicinity of the interviews, but were not in the particular designated place the interviews were being conducted, however. They hanged around and occasionally come in and leave. An average of forty-five minutes each was spent on every interviewee. A note taking was the approach of recording responses as it is forbidden to conduct interview in the Nigeria prisons with either a tape-recorder or any form of electronic gadgets except when it is ascertain as unavoidably necessary, and of benefit both for the inmates and the government.

## **5.10 METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS**

Methods of data analysis are either univariate or multivariate<sup>15</sup>. But it is more conceptually and broadly either descriptively or inferentially<sup>16</sup>, as data analysis has two objectives:

- To summarise and describe the data, and
- To make inferences from the data to the population from which the data is drawn.

The choice of either of them determines the kinds of statistical tools to use, for e.g. frequency, correlation, and chi square test.

Aware of the type of data to be generated therefore, it was conceived to analyse the data by way of univariate. This involved employing certain statistical<sup>17</sup> tools,

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<sup>15</sup> This is determined by whether one or more variables are involved. When the focus is on a single variable as is the case in the analysis of data collected for the study, it is referred to as a univariate analysis. And when the focus is on two more variables simultaneously, it is then multivariate analysis, e.g. when both the independent and the dependent variables are measured at the interval or ratio level, and the relationship described as an associative (linear) one (see Lin 1976: 290).

<sup>16</sup> By descriptive, even at the expense of redundancy, it is meant that the analysis of data on both the offence and offenders is made by an aggregate summation of mathematical calculation, which describes the basic observable characteristics and activities. By inferential (**wide scale reading of meaning**), it means that the data analysis is also carried out in a manner, which entails the process by which findings from “some” cases (e.g. in this case the sample) are interpreted as reflecting the true patterns, *modus operandi* and characteristics of all cases of armed robbery and armed robbers in all the Southeastern states of contemporary Nigeria, and extendedly, to the whole contemporary Nigerian society, but with serious *caveat*. Inferential statistics as a technique of analysis is no more than an advanced stage of the ordinary day-to-day reading of a **wide scale of meaning** from observations and experiences by individual members of the society. And it presupposes that the sample be drawn by means of simple random sampling. Unfortunately this has not been so in this study and attempts have been made to justify the fact that it is considered, to an extent an unfortunate, but does not in any manner affect the scientific quality of advancing knowledge, which general sociology-criminology aims at. However, it does put serious constraints on any attempt to read a **wide scale of meaning** from the results beyond the sample drawn, or the specific population from which samples are drawn. So, the inferential purpose of this study is

however, less complicated they are to analyse and put the data into a readable form, and to do some tests on the relationship between certain variables. Indeed, the univariate analysis permits the description and summarisation of data in a matrix<sup>18</sup> form, and seems most appropriate for quantitative data. Hardon, Boonmongkon, Streefland, Tan, Hongvivatana, Van der Geest, Van Staa, and Varkeviser (1994: 257) observe that the starting point of a quantitative data analysis is usually the description of the data for each variable for all the units included in the sample. The same authors explain that qualitative data analysis is a matter of describing, summarizing, and interpreting data obtained for each study unit or for each group of study units (1994:257).

Data analysis tools on the other hand generally depend on the nature of data—quantitative or qualitative. These tools could be frequencies; percentages; charts or pictograms; cross tabulations; Tests (chi-square, regression, and t-test); grounded theory; content analysis, and discourse analysis.

Like the techniques or methods for collecting data, the methods of analysis were conceived to transcend one method. Before commencing the fieldwork, some hypothetical statements were conceived for verification, and to also serve as serious

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used with extreme caution since it is **not** (bold for emphasis) what the researcher refers to, as “express generalisation” of findings is aimed at, or even achievable.

<sup>17</sup> Statistics in this study is conceived as a tool to describe the information that would be at hand—this is descriptive statistics. In a more strong emphasis, statistics is introduced in this study as a tool to **attempt at reading wide scale meaning (readers should please note this important point of emphasis)** of findings (as opposed to generalising) from a sample of the respondents, to a larger population of armed robbers first, in the whole of Southeastern Nigeria, and second, to contemporary Nigeria. And finally, to the theoretical structure—the inferential statistics. For details on the significance of statistical tools (see Lin 1976).

<sup>18</sup> A matrix is a grid, which has intersecting rows and columns. That is, a data matrix contains information about each respondent of the variables—each of them (row) representing a respondent, and the columns representing the variables.

hypothesis generating. At the end of the fieldwork, two types of data had emerged—the quantitative and qualitative. They were obtained from the responses generated from the questionnaire, the rich qualitative data in the various sources (literatures) and in-depth interview (also qualitative) with the selected offenders in the same prisons.

The quantitative data employing the service of some statisticians, and using the social science statistical packages (SPSS) were coded, edited, and analysed descriptively by the use of frequency tabulation percentages. This was after sorting out and categorising the data, performing quality control check, and coding of the data has been done (see also Hardon et al.1994: 258-259). The presentation of findings is by tables (cross-tabulation). That is, they are presented in data matrix. Frequency distributions remain an important statistical tool or technique because it is

- the basis for computation of many other statistics, and
- an extremely useful descriptive device in its own right.

Labovitz and Hagedorn (1971:67) argues that without such a distribution, data analysis would be limited to mere impressionistic accounts, which is hardly a basis for reliable and comparative research.

#### **5.10.1 Quantitative data analysis: the chi-square test**

Chi-square performs the basic Pearson Chi-square test. The chi-square test detects whether there is a significant association between categorical variables (Field 2000: 62).

The chi-square test utilised in the study needs a bit elaboration because it is on the basis of its results that far meaningful statistical decisions and conclusion (wide scale of scale

of meaning) can be drawn. So, the presumed association between these variables may lead to a certain degree, on the conclusion being drawn about the entire armed robbery population in the Southeastern region of contemporary Nigeria. Most, if not all variables in the study are measured on nominal scale level. In other words, they are arranged according to set of mutually exclusive and exhaustive categories without being able in most cases to make any statement about “more than” and “less than” relationships among the categories.

Accordingly therefore, chi-square test and its distribution (Kurtz 1983) explains, make it possible to evaluate the goodness of fit for a nominal variable. Chi-square is simply an enlarged binominal test to the multi-nominal data—where the probability of a particular set of observed  $p$  and  $q$  outcomes is evaluated against some expectations of the population.

Chi-square aims to determine the relationship or association between the column and row variables. The use of chi-square is premised on the independence of these variables; the independence implying that the conditional distributions for columns as well as the rows are the same (see Kohout 1974:391, Champion 1981:224-5).

The chi-square is set up in a contingency table<sup>19</sup>, where the columns represent categories of one variable, rows represent categories of another variable, and entries in the cell are the frequencies of cases for a given row-column category combinations. In

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<sup>19</sup> It is important to warn as Kohout (1974) rightly notes, that not all cross-tabulated data in what appear to be contingency table are necessarily so. Data cross-tabulated and are not independent cannot be described as s contingency table, and chi-square test is singularly inappropriate for this sort of data. Example is where each case category or individual appears twice in the frequency (cell). Another example is where rows and columns are ordinal or interval variables. Chi-square can in those circumstances be used, but does not make use of the properties of their properties, and thus, appear useless.

constructing the contingency table, it has been advised that data or variable that are accorded primary should be put in the columns, and those accorded secondary emphasis in rows, and that a good practice is to run totals both down and across to check on possible mistakes, and for ready comparison with other tabulations from the same reports (see Hyuha and Mbago 1992).

The level of significance otherwise known as the probability level set out is .05 or the level of confidence is 95%. This is the level associated with the outcomes of the survey (sample), which causes either rejection or acceptance of the null hypotheses ( $H_0$ ) in relation to either acceptance or rejection of the alternative hypotheses ( $H_1$ ). Therefore, this is the level at which inferential (note the comment about inferential-generalisation-judgment in the footnote 17, section 5.10) is made about whether observed sample result is “unlikely” or “likely. It should be noted that the method of chi-square testing is a process, which is suitable for descriptive statistics such as the current study is predominantly (see more deliberations in Chapter 7 which deals with testing of hypotheses). So, the chi-square test, employing the service of a statistician was utilised to test the hypotheses.

### **5.10.2 Qualitative data analysis: contextualisation**

On the other hand, the qualitative data that was generated mainly from the in-depth interviews, and which bear direct impacts on the findings from the literature are presented and analysed in “contexts”—by grouping and sorting of comments and responses. Put differently, and more in social science parlance, it is analysed by discourse analysis—inferring from broad patterns of talk—systems of statements both from the transcribed information and write-ups.

Most information from the primary sources of data (in-depth interviews) were somewhat fragmented. They were transformed into well-organised set of notes, with key statements highlighted. Although most of the statements arising from the qualitative data are incorporated into the analyses of the quantitative data sharing similar or same themes, however, a subsection is designated for the specific analyses of the qualitative data.

Particular statements that make information obtained come alive, are briefly stated as some kinds of anecdotes. In analysing the qualitative aspect of the data, the researcher also brought to bear information from other sources, his experiences as remarkable armed robbery witness, and the telling of victims—some who are relatives and friends of his.

## **5.11 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY**

Reliability denotes the condition whereby consistently repeated studies measure variables which generate similar responses every time it is restudied and in various situations. Therefore, it is the degree of confidence that the same study following the same method at different point in time will likely produce the same result. Validity on the hand is the extent to which measurement variable gives the researcher the operationalised concept, and which reflects accurately the actual social activity it purports to measure. Validity in social research is concerned with proving that measurement of variables does what it is intended to do (see Lin 1976:172-176; Armines and Zeller 1979; Babbie 1989). Both are indispensable with regard to how accurate and reliable findings are to be seen.

There are several steps when designing research, which may be taken to improve on the reliability and validity of the findings. The specific steps that were taken to

improve on the reliability and validity of this study are the adoption of multiple sources of data collection, and a wide coverage of the items of measurement (variables). The multiple sources are complimentary, and they help to correct the respective shortcomings of individual source (Mouton and Marais 1991:91). These include a questionnaire, in-depth interviews, ensuring anonymity, establishing rapport, and pre-testing of questionnaire.

The pre-test was conducted immediately the first draft of the questionnaire was drafted for submission to both supervisors for comments. And it was done among 12 selected armed robbery convicts and detainees in the prison at the researcher's hometown with the co-operation and assistance of the controller—a friend as well.

In addition, all the key words or constructs in the study are clearly defined and operationalised to cover several variables (items) as indicators upon which the description of the offence and the offenders can be correctly inferred. This is a multi-method operation bias, which aims to ensure “construct validity” (see Mouton and Marais 1991: 64-69).

The questionnaire was constructed in English, but translation was provided for the very few respondents who have little or difficulties with understanding English. The translations were made during the completion of the questionnaire by the prison staff that doubled as field assistants, and the researcher who was also present. It was done in Igbo—one of the three major languages in contemporary Nigeria, and the dominant in the Southeast part of the country. The information on the social background of the respondents were checked against the biographical data provided in the official prisons' records.



The returned questionnaires, and the notes taken during the in-depth interviews were compared to spot out inconsistency. Badly filled questionnaires were also sorted out so as not to have overbearing influence on the result of the findings. Intelligence and theoretical sensitivity of the researcher were brought to bear in interpreting the comments and responses of the interviewees—respondents and subjects (see also Strauss and Corbin 1990:180).

Finally, caution was the watchword in the interpretation of the secondary sources of data since it is well known that such data have increased potential for bias and inaccuracies. Hockett (1955: 68) declared that the importance of maintaining a position of critical evaluation when reviewing artefacts and documents could never be overemphasised. Effort was made to apply external and personal criticisms on existing literature with sensitivity. Where doubt about the authenticity of the information existed, or where clarifications were not made, an intuitive sociological imagination<sup>20</sup> was applied to gain insight, and to understand the latent meanings. Though newspaper and magazine reports are never grounded in rigorous scientific analysis of facts, it was never the less, taken not as a reason to dismiss reports as spurious. This fact remained at the back of the researcher's mind all times instead.

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<sup>20</sup> This is often credited to Wright Mills. C, and it describes the quality of mind. It is explained as a socially oriented self-awareness of those who are able to see their individual fate in a historical and structural context, as a link in the chain of the historical process, and as an element of a complex and differentiated social whole. Used in the context of data analysis, it means utilising the researcher's power (knowledge) as a trained sociology-criminologist in reading meaning to the information provided, while taking cognisance of the social context of the source of the information (for more on sociological imagination, see Mills, C.W 1959).

## **5.12 FIELD WORK EXPERIENCES AND SCENARIOS**

The processes undertaken to get to the respondents and what was encountered thereto need be documented especially since they are intriguing, tend to show similarities, and at the same time differ from one prison to the other. Describing these experiences is necessary, as it will continue to guide interested researchers in a closed and classified institution such as the prisons in the ever-complex Nigeria socio-cultural, economic and political context.

Initial visits to the prisons were to get the researcher familiarised with the backgrounds, and what is in this study regarded as the “unique social dispositions” as they pertain to each of the prisons. These visits were the third to the prisons; having visited for formal introduction and pre-testing of questionnaires. Subsequent visits indeed, were less problematic. The techniques and technicalities necessary to have effective control on the prisoners, and to go about handling the unique administrative clumsiness and intrigues of Nigeria’s establishments were by now mastered.

In the light of the above mastery, deliberate moves were made to establish a very cordial rapport with the staff of each prison—beginning from those at the gate or entrance to the prison yards. This was done in the understanding that in contemporary Nigeria everyone sees himself or herself as a “boss”, and wants to be clearly recognised for that. So, those at the entrance can comfortably stifle and scuttle ones plans and good intentions if not honoured in what he or she considers to be appropriate. These people were in this regard treated with caution and addressed as “bosses” at all times. Certainly, utmost decorum was the approach.

The strategies used to gain access, and scenarios encountered in each of the prisons are almost invariably the same, except with minor variations. It must be stated that experiences were mixed—both as rewarding and frustrating.

In all the prisons, the first step taken was to report at the state administrative Headquarters and get introduced to the Controller-in-Charge; still going about this with the original approved letter. After the introduction, which embodied chats on the issue, politics and state of the nation, the researcher was usually directed to proceed to the prison yard, and to liaise with the Assistant Controllers that are in charge.

At the Prison yards, consultations were made with the Assistant Controller, where the themes and methodological approach of the study were well explained to them. Where agreement was reached to proceed, the relevant Departments and individuals within the prison were contacted and briefed. The final meetings were usually in the Welfare Department office where final logistics are discussed and arrived at, not of course, without another round of introduction. Indeed, the Department of Welfare were in all cases, the contact points, and those who undertook all logistic arrangements in conjunction with the other Departments particularly the security wing of the prison yards. What the researcher often requested before the Welfare Departments is the numerical strength (statistics) of all convicted and possibly detained (awaiting trialists) armed robbers. Emphases were always stressed on the importance of following a process deemed “scientific” at least, in the context of social sciences, and the most favoured technique in the field such as the probability sampling technique.

However, it was no coincidence that the staffers in these Departments, and in all the prisons utilised raised the difficulty of going through the process. (see reason in

section 5.7.1.1). The staff of these Departments reiterated that using the registry to select offenders needed might leave behind those they regard as potential respondents, who are capable and much willing to give necessary information wanted. Even when it was pointed out to them the need to give every one of them a fair chance of being selected, they insisted that they know how prisons and its inmates operate much better than outsiders, and that do feel obliged to advise on what they feel would satisfy researchers' aim. After agreeing on the modality, while still in the offices, a few armed robbers were pencilled down for contact. They were seen as those to assist in reaching at others.

Few of these respondents were invited to the office and informed accordingly, with instructions on what is required of them. Few staff of the Departments with the few invited offenders thereafter, took personal visit to the various individual cells to locate the other respondents. This arrangement and efforts sooner than later yields result. The armed squads of all the prisons were also contacted and briefed on the task ahead; to provide security within the vicinity of the designated areas (usually in the Chapels) were the briefings and interviews (by questionnaire and in-depth) were conducted. So, both the briefing and the actual completion of the questionnaires were carried out in the specific paces provided by each of the prison, and usually in the Chapels. The only exception was in Umuahia where both were done in the Welfare Department.

In all the prisons, the researcher did not hesitate to point out before the staff the need to relax the situation in other to ensure a less tensed environment. The emphases of the researcher were that the atmosphere be made more friendly to enable inmates respond with a relax mind. The amiable familiarity that exists amongst the staff and inmates were observable, and it indeed helped to strengthen confidence in the inmates. The non-

negotiable rule in the prison environment, however, is that an officer must always be around to monitor any formal interaction between inmates and outsiders. This is especially so in researches, and where the visitor is a stranger to the inmates and staff alike.

For administrative convenience and security reason<sup>21</sup>, it was agreed in all the prisons that interviews be conducted in two batches where respondents were conceivably viewed as large in numbers. The second batch coming as the first were leaving to be locked up in their various cells. Because of the strict adherence to time factor in the prisons, the whole exercises were to be completed within the time frame, which the respondents are only permitted to be outside their cells.

Once and after all modalities have been worked out, and the logistic requirements put in place, sample of the respondents were assembled at either the prisons' Chapel or as with Umuahia, in the Welfare Department office depending on availability. At this juncture, the researcher was then sent for to come and join in the designated place. This signalled the real beginning of the brief session preceding completion of questionnaires.

On joining, an officer introduces the researcher and further addresses the respondents on the reason for the gathering. Thereafter, the researcher reintroduces himself; and states the mission, purpose, and the manner of interacting with them. Then came the period of **question time**. Inmates were told to feel free to ask questions bothering them. Several questions were asked, and they ranged from **why** the study to for **whom**. The researcher managed to respond to their questions with diplomacy and

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<sup>21</sup> Armed robbers are the most feared criminals within the prison setting. They are viewed as always being in constant networking (touch) with their members outside, and can because of the nature of their crime (violence) do more daring funny things.

intelligence. During the course of the interaction, it became clear to the researcher that most of the offenders are indeed knowledgeable, intelligent, fairly educated, and conscious of their activities and actions. In fact, it was during these sessions that most of the subjects saved by one or two for the in-depth interview were identified and set aside for separate consultation and agreement thereof (see sections 5.6 and 5.9.2).

As part of a confidence build up, the researcher repeated time often that their anonymity, confidentiality, and utmost protection against divulging information given are assured. All information provided would be used solely for the study, they were told. The researcher told them that the exercise is a voluntary one, and that whoever knows that (i) he is not an armed robber—does not see himself as an armed robber either as convict or suspect should leave, (ii) that does not wish to participate for whatever reason should also feel free to leave. It was emphasised that the issue is not whether to say, “I am or not armed robber”. It is about everyone appealing to his conscience, and taking the courage to admit what one is. No names, addresses and any identifiable information beyond those in the questionnaire are to be given, the researcher repeated and emphasised. This exercise was not going to be used either to effect their release, or to further persecute them, the researcher echoed.

After speeches had been made, there invariably emerged in all prisons an offender who apparently assumed the role of the spokesperson on behalf of his colleagues. The spokesperson drew the attentions of their colleagues to all that have been said by the researcher and the staff present. Each spokesperson reiterated that whoever knows that he is not an armed robber or his not willing to participate should take leave. In all the prisons, few did excuse themselves to leave, and they were usually granted and escorted

by an official to be locked back (see table 5.1 section 5.6). The spokesmen assured the researcher and officials present of their willingness to co-operate as one of the spokesperson in one of the prisons put it “insofar that you’ve spoken part of our language and have assured us of no persecution on the basis of the information”. In unison, the spokesperson and their colleagues ordered that the questionnaires be distributed to them.

After the questionnaires have been given out, respondents in all prisons were directed to all go through the questionnaire, and to spot out any difficulties. Few spotted out, and drew the attentions of the researcher and officials to them. They were attended to dutifully, and put back on the track. They were also advised to feel free and to call on either the researcher or any official present to explain anything they may not understand or request they might need. After some minutes of going through the questionnaires amidst smiling, laughing, muttering of words and shaking of heads, they enthusiastically requested that the writing materials that were handy, but yet to be given be provided to them.

What emerged in the course of the discussions in all prisons was that most of the respondents and interviewees requested to know if money would be given to them. They were told that it is unethical to do so because that would amount to influencing them with money, which would have greatly tainted the information they are going to give. Giving any money would only be on humanitarian basis, and not on the basis of participating, they were told. Interestingly, they were all positive in their responses and told the researcher point blankly that they were going to co-operate whether he gives them money or not because they like his sense of humane, humour and good ambition (see section 5.13).

Part of the instructions and the rules guiding the setting was that no body should talk to his neighbour. This is notwithstanding the fact that efforts had been made to ensure adequate seating arrangements with spaces. “You were not to tell your neighbour about what you write, or ask what should I write here or there”. They were told that only the visitor (researcher) and the officials present that were to be talked to. Whosoever finishes was to signify by raising his hand for onward collection, and must remain seated. They all agreed to stick to the rules. There were constant and prompt responses to all those who called for attention.

In all the prisons, briefing session and completion of questionnaires took about one hour and twenty minutes except in Port Harcourt, where it was a bit longer because of the fairly larger number of respondents, and the fact that the prison represents one of the few where condemned-to- death respondents and serious offenders are housed. So, it is often characterised by strict security measures. At the end of each interview, they were given as little money only in show of compassion— having got the permission to go ahead from the staff. They were led back to their different cells, whilst the second batch came in and took their seats.

In all the prisons, where completion of questionnaires were conducted in batches, the usual strategy was to usher in the second batch of offenders who had also been identified as the first batch were been locked back in their respective cells. The second batch was given the same briefing and instructions, while similar questions and answers time followed. Indeed, the same processes as detailed above characterised the second batch towards the ends of the research.



After the whole exercise, the usual thing was to express profound gratitude to the participants and the assisted officers. In Port Harcourt prison, a beautiful hand crafted “fan” object made by an inmate was purchased from one of the respondents. Participants were reassured that the ethics and rules of the game-protection would be observed. The researcher also undertook to buy lunch (give little money) to the officers in the prisons who in turn were appreciative and thankful.

After the sessions by questionnaire in all prisons, appointments for the in-depth interviews with the few selected subjects were booked. Part of those to be interviewed was selected during the briefing based on their perceived knowledge and experience in the offence. Those selected and put aside never participated in the questionnaire interview (completions). There were, however very few respondents from those who participated in the questionnaire, and who were also selected as subjects for the in-depth interviewing. Their knowledge based on the responses to the items in the questionnaire were considered immense and worthy of further tapping. In fact, the manner at which they asked questions and seek answers during the period of briefing, and the quick and detailed manner at which they completed the questionnaires served as the criteria for their identification and further selection for participation in the in-depth interview.

### **5.13 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The subjects for the purpose set forth in this study are armed robbers—both convicts and awaiting trial suspects in prisons. These are the categories of people that responded to the questionnaire and the in-depth interviewed.

By and large, participation was basically voluntary. In keeping with the rules and protocols of social research, which among other things require the protection of the respondents and the subjects under study, provisions were made to ensure confidentiality of information provided. So, no personal data beyond those relevant for the study were sought. In addition, information supplied is used solely for the purpose of the study.

Furthermore, the instruction from the Headquarters of Prisons in Abuja that approved access to the prisoners on condition that no recording or electronic device is taken along while in the prisons was noted and observed. Where criticisms are made, it has been not against any person or group of persons but against institutional frameworks or agencies.

#### **5.14 PROBLEMS AND LIMITATIONS TO THE STUDY**

Social sciences research is, to all intents and purposes supposed to be objective. However, this is hard to come by. So, the result of the study may have been tainted by the ideological disposition of the researcher. There is the problem of how to describe objectively, the offenders and the offence, and to refrain from the personal prejudices.

The research may not have been able to reach a cross-section of the population it attempts to investigate. This is the principal weakness of the study, and is fairly apparent. This is because of the time frame of the study, and the limit imposed by the available resources. Moreover, because of the difficulties in studying human beings who cannot be correctly predicted, there are those armed robbers and public servants with substantial knowledge who may still, and indeed were unwilling to come out and participate. Those who may well have participated, perhaps had manipulated what they said. The pervading

denials amongst the respondents who even volunteered to participate confirm the suspicion of manipulation and the doctoring of facts.

The study of criminals such as armed robbers is suspicious to, and loathed by the offenders themselves. Those that are less educated, less secured, and less articulate hardly trust people, less a bloody academic stranger snooping and prying into their private lives even when they were lectured about enterprise such as researches. There are those who abhor labels; and they do not identify themselves as armed robbers even if their actions are robbery.

The so-called snowball appears suitable and defensible in the light of the nature of the subjects. But it presupposes that the respondents have been mainly those who are literate, literally so to speak, and are articulate. It is even obvious that the research drew sample mainly from the male population who are in the prisons. This excludes others who are not males—juvenile armed robbers, the less articulate armed robbers, retired armed robbers, unarrested armed robbers, and those who are outside the prisons, or who may have direct or indirect link with armed robbery (accomplices) like the females. The sampling process is thus, somewhat biased and selective.

Besides the selection inadequacies, there were other limitations and shortcomings of the study that were spotted and disclosed to the researcher and his teams of official assistants in the course of the study. For instance, the neglect of a detailed inquiry regarding the role of the police and godfathers were highlighted by most of the respondents and subjects.

The non-inclusion of the role of the police as a crucial point of deeper investigation on modern day armed robbery is one of the undoing of the study. It is, however, thought that it invariably opens up another chapter for further research.

In addition, doing research in prized areas like the prison can be a very herculean one, and moreso in Nigeria where everything is almost paid for— including official information. There is the need to exercise patience, tolerance, persevering, sometimes beyond its elastic limit. It also requires mustering the additional spirits to get along with the notorious remark of the “Nigerian system”. Indeed, there were frustrations, part that resulted in the reduction of the number of prisons and respondents initially targeted to cover in the study. For instance, in Owerri prison inmates bluntly refused to participate and in Awka prison, the attitude of the controller was simply unco-operative that both prisons had to be abandoned from the original inclusion.

Literature on armed robbery in Nigeria is scanty. Those available assume the outlook of a hobby academic venture, and hardly are there, saved by the works of the erudite criminologist scholar (for examples Iwarimie-Jaja 1998,1999a, b) any that focus on a **thorough sociological-cum-criminological analysis** or the social world of the offenders and the offence, with a view to theorising about them more adequately. So, there is a paucity of literature dealing on armed robbery and armed robbers in the strict sense of a challenging academic pursuit. Certainly, most information are those provided in the newspapers and magazines.

There is also a further problem of any attempt at reading a wide scale of meaning, or the far more risky “generalisation” of the findings, since other states, prisons, and armed robbers are not included in the sample. The study can only attempt to read a wider

scale of meaning or rather, generalise with great risk, about armed robbers that participated in the prisons, and to an extent, armed robbers in the Southeastern states of contemporary Nigeria. But to do so in relation to Nigeria as a whole is problematic. The three prisons and states used are albeit most notable cities, prisons and states, they are by no means either the only ones in the region or in the country as a whole. There is therefore, the limitation of the selection of only three states in a country with 36 states, and only some prisons, and armed robbers. However, it must be emphasised that the quality of research findings may not necessarily be a direct function of the scale of the study, but the findings, which has serious policy implication on the issue at hand.

The study has been premised on certain theoretical backgrounds, and some few hypotheses or exploratory issues to either test or corroborate and explained. What is merely done is either to test or explore and explained relationship or association between some remarkable variables by means of chi-square. Chi-square test is a good statistical process, but it does little to show the strength of a model such as proffered in this study. This is what T-test, regressions, and ANOVA do best. It is, however, argued that test in this study allows for the examination of various factors or variables that play important roles in generating potential hypotheses for test. This idea of hypotheses-generating only leads to “double researches”, since hypotheses could only be formulated after the data are analysed, and another series of studies to test them are designed. This no doubt is time consuming, and demand extra monetary investment.

In Abakaliki, there was the coming into contact—face to face with a young, vibrant, notorious and famous armed robber from the same hometown as that of the researcher; almost the same community, and whom the researcher knows very well, and

have on occasions confronted with while he was maturing in his robbery exploits. And as well as other armed robbers, who know the researcher and were very anxious to identify with him openly. The negative consequence of such experience and scenario, however, cannot be overemphasised. It further demonstrates the danger of studying high profile criminals such as armed robbers in such societies as contemporary Nigeria where one faces double risks—against the criminals on the one hand, and against the Nigerian police in terms of a likely “entrapment”.

One intriguing development during the pre-session was the clear demonstration of the kleptomania<sup>22</sup> tendency among the respondents, especially in Port Harcourt prison. There were petty stealing and grafting in the Chapel Hall used for the completion of the questionnaires.

## **5.15 CONCLUSION**

A research design outlining the strategies, approaches, techniques and methods for the study was prepared. This provided the frame guide for the study.

It is shown that a triangulation or what is referred to as methodological pluralism in collecting data was employed. Sources of data are both the primary (raw) and secondary (existing) data. Newspapers, magazines, journals, textbooks and official documents are of particular importance in the study. The selection of the samples is by a non-probability method of sampling. The specific sampling technique is the snowball.

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<sup>22</sup> The stealing instinct that is peculiar to armed robbers and stealers alike. It is the criminogenic “Id” which defines the urge to continue to steal and rob even in the circumstances defined as dangerous and uncalled for.

Data collection techniques are qualitative and quantitative, and the methods of data collection are both by questionnaires and in-depth interviews respectively. Questionnaire is structured in the format form, and includes close ended and open-ended questions. In-depth interview is by the informal face-to-face contact, and the format that is largely unstructured, although a bit of it were structured (semi-structured-hand-written) to provide handy clues. During interviews, word associations or sentence completion was employed to assist respondents in areas considered more sensitive and complex. Subjects were asked some specific questions and at others, asked to bare their minds on what they feel are relevant about themselves and the offence that they would wish the researcher to know.

The chapter has also reflected on the experiences and fieldwork encounters. What is shown is that researching in closed system like the prisons and complex societies like Nigeria invokes a mix experience—intriguing, frustrating, rewarding, unique, and strange things. Finally, the chi-test statistics, which is used in testing the hypotheses or corroborating and explaining some explorable issues, is accounted for. The qualitative data are analysed in a context analysis format. Some are however, incorporated into most of the quantitative data analysis, as responses overlap at one point or the other.

In the next chapter of the empirical study, the presentation, analysis and discussions of the results of questionnaires and the in-depth interviews are carried out. This is by the method of a univariate analysis, and in the broad and conceptual manner, by both descriptive and inferential. In common terms, presentation is done in the two forms—quantitative and qualitative.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA**

#### **6.1 INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter, the presentation, analysis, and discussion of the data are carried out. Data analysis is concerned with explaining the variance among the measurable variables. It explains why there is variability in a population or sample drawn from the population with regard to particular characteristics that has some theoretical relevance. So, the question being asked of the data with regard to analysis here is, and relates to the theoretical problems in which the researcher is interested in with regard to contemporary armed robbery in Nigeria today.

Presentations and analyses in this study are done by a technique of univariate, however, broadly by the approach of descriptive and inferential. In the ordinary usage, data as in this study are analysed both quantitatively and qualitatively. From organising and coding, to transferring into a readable form in the computer, the analysis of data involves employing the statistical analytical tools of frequencies, cumulative frequencies, percentages and cumulative frequencies and shown in matrix (tables). This is important since data generated are mainly in nominal form (see the footnote number 17 under section 5.9.1, Chapter Five).

Many authors seem to equate data analysis with statistical analysis. But as Lin (1976:11) rightly notes, there is a difference between the two concepts. While data analysis involves the organisation of the “raw data” and the process is much complicated than performing statistical operation on the data, the statistical analysis on the other hand



is concerned with linking between these data and the theoretical assertions made by the researcher or author in the research problem statement (Lin 1976:11).

So, the presentation, description and discussion of findings are informed by the need to provide an empirical summary of both the subjects (armed robbers) and the object (armed robbery) for easy discerning. Data, which are presented, described, analysed and discussed, are based on the questionnaire distributed to the respondents and collected filled, the in-depth interviews conducted with selected subjects and the information from the secondary sources of data. They are presented both as an objective reflection of the contemporary armed robbery in Nigeria, and in the search for an alternative and far more credible theoretical model of both the offence and offenders in the country.

The presentation and discussion focuses on some selected variables, which are viewed as *highlights* based on the aims of the study. It begins with the presentations, analyses, descriptions, and discussions of what is conceived as the social background—profiles of the offenders in contemporary Nigeria. It also deals with the presentations, descriptions, analyses and discussions of the family structure and other general characteristics of the offenders and the offence. Part two of these presentations, the analyses, and interpretations are about the offence itself—the nature and structure of the crime, the *modus operandi*, network, and perceptions.

In each part of these two major areas, are a remarkable number of sections which findings are logically integrated and summarised. Each of these sections has many tables. A table contains one item, sometimes simply referred to as a variable or item. Each table is given a phrase description as a name with an acronym, which reflects the name given, and appeared on the top of each table. The essence is to give the particular table a sharp

focus, and to make it more conveying to readers. These names are prerogatively done, so, they are by no means perfect.

In the tables are also the frequency against each category, the frequency percentages, the cumulative frequency, cumulative percentages and the “missing”. Missing refers to those non-responses in each of the variable or measurable item. The data in each table are generally analysed, explained quantitatively and then discussed by means of inference, conjecture and *sociological imagination* (see footnote 20 section 5.11 for explanation). In all the tables, the valid percentage are used in analysing responses because the missing values are excluded in this regard, and only the highest and the lowest valid percentages are given emphasises by drawing attentions to them.

## **6.2 SOCIAL BACKGROUND AND FAMILY STRUCTURE OF ARMED ROBBERERS IN CONTEMPORARY NIGERIA**

Information obtained confirmed the findings of some previous studies (Ekpeyong 1989; Adler et al. 1991; Olurode 1991; Siegel 1998; Thio 1998; Iwarimie-Jaja 1999a). Although findings in this study find concordance to the previous studies in many respects (age, gender, income, *modus operandi*). For example, the argument that armed robbery is a high level criminal act, and committed mostly by persons of low-income earners (socio-economic) class. However, findings further show that armed robbery is a much more complex behaviour, and is motivated by diverse, but essentially economic related factors.

With regard to offenders' sexes, many writers have described the predominant of males in criminal statistics as though a myth (Pollack 1950; Smart 1976). Whatever the argument—rightly or wrongly, there are still fewer statistics to counter the view that

preponderate of criminal activities especially the highly skilled, physical and violent types such as armed robbery are perpetuated by males than females. Except on few occasions and instances when females have been linked with certain robbery gangs, knowledge about their extent of participation still remain vague and scanty. When involved, they are more likely to play a subterfuge and subterranean roles. Such roles as confirmed by both the respondents and subjects accessed through questionnaire and in-depth interviews include acting as informants, as a *social gratis* to male partners, as shield to male robbers, and assisting in securing their release or getting them out of troubles with the law enforcement agents. Kathleen Daly (1994 cf. Brown et al. 1998:476), in expressing feministic viewpoint however, is of the view that women do commit robberies, and were as likely as men, to brandish a gun or a knife. Less arguable, women do take active participatory roles as the men in carrying out the offence, but in most instances, their participations are rather more latent and subtle relative and comparative to the their male counterparts.

Table 6.2.1 **Age of offenders**

		AGE3			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0-16 years	6	8.8	9.1	9.1
	17-30 years	46	67.6	69.7	78.8
	31-40 years	10	14.7	15.2	93.9
	41 and above years	4	5.9	6.1	100.0
	Total	66	97.1	100.0	
Missing	System	2	2.9		
Total		68	100.0		

The item (variable) in the table is about the age of the offenders. Most (69.7%) of the respondents are between 17-30 years. Only 6.1% are 41 and above years of age.

Findings in table 6.2.1 reveal that majority of armed robbers are those within the late adolescents or early stage of their adulthood. This finding is similar to the findings of Olurode (1990:10) who studied 146-armed robbers in Kirikiri Maximum security prison Lagos, Nigeria. His findings show that majority of the respondents who responded to the question are of the age bracket between 24-25, and this accounts for about 56.2% of the total valid. This according to Olurode is the most active age group. The age group comprises the ages during which energy-deserving activities do take place. So, since armed robbery requires some elements of coercion and ability to inflict damage on victims, it is natural that majority of offenders are concentrated in the bracket (see also Nkpa 1994 in Otite 1994:270). Nkpa thus, notes that about 90% of those convicted of armed robbery between 1970 and 1980 in Nigeria were between the age of 19 and 25.

These findings have serious implication with regard to policy matter. Because they are the active and productive labour force of any nation, the high rate of this age bracket in armed robbery—a most fundamental economic crime, is a strong reflection on the strong urge, the social pressure and influence, which the broad economic-social-cum political policies of the Nigerian government (past and present) have on this category of people in contemporary Nigeria. There is always the pressure to strive to live and measure up to the standard, which the prevailing western contact and the contemporary Nigerian governments' policies has increasingly fostered on these peer groups of people. Certainly, the effects of these urge and pressure are much more profound and pronounced among the adult youths.

As offenders mature and get older, they are likely to quit their criminal careers or behaviour, and in this case armed robbery either because of sagging energy, family

responsibilities, or they simply engage in providing their wits and experiences by acting as god-fathers.

Table 6.2.2 **Qualifications of offenders**

		QUALIFY1			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Primary	14	20.6	21.2	21.2
	Secondary	35	51.5	53.0	74.2
	College of education	3	4.4	4.5	78.8
	Polytechnic	6	8.8	9.1	87.9
	University	8	11.8	12.1	100.0
	Total	66	97.1	100.0	
Missing	System	2	2.9		
Total		68	100.0		

The educational qualifications of the offenders are represented in table 6.2.2. The item is concerned with establishing the educational level of potential offenders of armed robbery in the contemporary Nigeria. More (53%) respondents have school education at the secondary school level, (21.2%) at primary compare to after high school education (25.7%). The findings revealed in the table (6.2.2) also find consistency with the findings of previous researches (Pollak 1950; Conklin 1972; Iwarmie-Jaja 1987, 1998, 1999a; Ekpeyong 1989; Olurode 1990; Nkpa 1994 in Otite 1994:271).

The findings of this variable is significant because it demonstrates that the bulk of armed robbers in contemporary Nigeria—the Southeastern states, which avail itself more of the western education and concomitant style of life, are invariably, likely to be preponderantly those who either have or had attempted this western type of formal education. However, these formal educations are primarily, the primary and post-primary. So, it demonstrates and reflects on the high values, which are attached to the western kind of education in the whole Southern states of the contemporary Nigeria. Ironically too, it

is the taste and lust for this education that may have been the most precipitous inducement to engagement in armed robbery. The logical argument here is in line to the relative deprivation argument of Conklin (1972:71). This author (1972:71) explains that the absolute improvement in the life of the black American between 1960 to 1969, induced them to hold a high expectation of enjoying as many opportunities as their whites counterpart, but when they failed to realise this expectation, they felt frustrated and, as a consequence, tended to commit more armed robbery.

Therefore, this taste of the western formal type of education exposed the indigenous Nigerians to the dream it promises to hold. And unable to secure these promises (goodies) especially as the economic downturn and socio-political woes besieged modern Nigeria, the tendency was to choose the path to armed robbery, and to do so with dexterity.

To be educated in this manner means to be intellectually awakened, and to question the logics of some of the happenings in the society. So, being aware of the increase in the wealth of the nation, and the same time, to observe a class of people wallowing in abundance, increases the propensity among few of these less-educated lots to go into armed robbery as a one gate way to have a share in the economic plundering by the prevailing ruling class. The prevailing mindsets among many contemporary Nigerians is to have a share cut in the “national cakes”, which they perceived are being merciless plundered by the few privileges. This is the sense of economic abundance propounded by Gould (1969).

Those who are educated are thus, not simply averse to armed robbery in Nigeria today as asserted in some quarters (see Olurode 1990:20-21; Iwarimie-Jaja

1999a:145). The researcher contends that such assertions could only be made to hold insofar that education used in this sense transcends far beyond attempted or attendance of primary and post primary education. What, however, interestingly emerged in the findings is that as educationally level attained increased, the participation in armed robbery declined substantially. The reasons may not just be because armed robbery appears too risky to invite participation, or that it increases one's stakes in the society (Olurode 1990:20-21). But it may, moreso be because a higher education attainments unmask the myths it promises, and consequently brings its' holders into more realities or what Robert Merton (1938) refers to as "ritualists". Merton (1938) explains the term "ritualists" to denote those members of the society who have resigned their faith in the pursue of the common dreams such as the material acquisition of the particular society, but nevertheless uphold the institutionalised means of reaching these goals as against the alternative of innovationists.

Table 6.2.3 **Occupational Status of offenders**

TRADE13					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Student	21	30.9	32.8	32.8
	Driver and mechanic	10	14.7	15.6	48.4
	Civil Servant	3	4.4	4.7	53.1
	Just unemployed	15	22.1	23.4	76.6
	Other	15	22.1	23.4	100.0
	Total	64	94.1	100.0	
Missing	System	4	5.9		
Total		68	100.0		

The occupational status of the respondents deals with their trades or professions as at the time of their arrest. Nearly one-third (32.8%) respondents are students, and 23.4% are

unemployed. The least figure in the table is the civil servants, which accounts for only 4.7%.

Although, unemployed seems relatively high. Findings in the study, however, do not agree wholeheartedly, to the conventionally held views that unemployment would necessarily lead to criminal participation (see Ekpeyong 1989: 20-21; Reilly 1992: 213-214 cf. Iwarimie-Jaja 1999a:160; Box 1996 in Caffrey and Mundy 1996:268-72; Iwarimie-Jaja 1999a:162). It is therefore, instructive to argue that while unemployment do creates the strain that pushes one into criminality such as armed robbery, it does not necessarily do so at all times and circumstances. Rather, it could probably be truer as (Vold 1958; Conklin 1976:73; and later Iwarimie-Jaja 1998:95) rightly pointed out that a better economic position may have also brought new economic pressure and demands, and that often result in criminality. But because armed robbery is essentially a crime of the lower income group or unemployed, it could therefore, at a *prima facie* level be argued that low income and unemployment are sufficient precipitous factors to the offence as is the case in developing countries such as Nigeria

Two things in table 6.2.3 are interestingly worthy of note, and they have explicit implications on policy towards the crime. One is the fact that the majority of the offenders are or were students. Two, civil servants account for the least. Students unarguably, remain one of the most vulnerable to the influence of these western ways of life. The reasons are because they are highly receptive to the western values much more than all other social classes in the social strata. They are also more susceptible to the influence of the senior criminal acquaintances, friends and relations before whom they relish presenting themselves as the quintessence of the archetype western life styles.



Logically therefore, they are more under this strain to live up to this emulated idea. And within the constraints imposed by the legitimate means and their class position— as non-working class, a relatively high number of them tend to choose different forms of criminalities, and which armed robbery is one of them.

The low percentage of the civil servants in table 6.2.3 is simply understandable, and seems obvious to fall in the line of Mertonian theory. According to Mertonian thesis, civil servants are “ritualists”. They have though, simply rejected the goals of the society but stick to the rules perhaps as a matter of principles, values and orientations. So, they have remained less committed to the goals and the general values of the society, but in instead and in paradox, have remained committed to the institutional means. They simply could not afford to undermine their ego. Suggestively therefore, policy on armed robbery in contemporary Nigeria must involve programmes that address the value system of the students especially those in high schools and in the tertiary institutions, and who incidentally, are still at the early part of their adolescents.

Table 6.2.4

**Marital status of offenders**

MARITAL4		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Single	41	60.3	64.1	64.1
	Married	14	20.6	21.9	85.9
	Living Together	8	11.8	12.5	98.4
	Divorced	1	1.5	1.6	100.0
	Total	64	94.1	100.0	
Missing	System	4	5.9		
Total		68	100.0		

Table 6.2.4 focuses on the marital status of the offenders. Most (64.1%) are single. Those who are married are 21.9%, and only 1.6% is divorced.

This finding is also consistent with the previous studies, which had at various times aver that crime in general, and property crime in particular are committed mostly by males, single, and low income group (Conklin 1972; Olurode 1990; Iwarimie-Jaja 1999a). As the table reveals, more “singles” commit armed robbery than their opposite (married).

The implication of the finding is that individuals who do not have family are less likely to be emotionally attached, and so, less likely to think about parental role and responsibilities. They are therefore, more likely to get involved in armed robbery than those who are married. However, it is also observed that a remarkable number of the offenders were not married, but did or do live with a woman in the same house. This characteristic is indeed not uncommon among armed robbers, particularly the career ones.

Table 6.2.5

**The religions of the offenders**

		RELIG7			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Traditional	2	2.9	2.9	2.9
	Christianity	65	95.6	95.6	98.5
	Islamic	1	1.5	1.5	100.0
	Total	68	100.0	100.0	

The variable in the table 6.2.5 examines the religions of armed robbers. There are significance responses to the question. Large pools (95.6%) of respondents are Christians. Only 1.5% is of the Islamic faith. That is, only one respondent indicates he is a Moslem. The overwhelming believers in Christianity among the respondents are not perplexing, and the implication is also suggestive. Generally, it is obvious to suggest, and as indicated in the explanation under table 2.4, section 2.9.2.4 that the Southeastern part of contemporary Nigeria—the focal concern of the research and its western counterpart are the arch receptors of the western nations' ideas and idiosyncrasies, and make no pretence about that.

Significant in this regard is the issue of religion with particular preference to Christianity. In paradox, this religion rather than downplaying the rate of involvement in armed robbery apparently seemed to have done the opposite when compared to its counterparts of traditional and Islam. So, this suggestively, means that religion, the system of production including its social relations, and criminality or deviance is closely related. And in particular, Christianity seems obviously to be closed or aligned to all the characteristics of the contemporary economic, social, and political system, and to have even emphasised on their merits. Weber's theory and analysis of the "Protestant and the spirit of Capitalism" (1958) is very insightful here. This author intelligently, through the

process of historical-casual analysis, demonstrates that the precursors of capitalism were those whose religion of ascetic Calvinism—informed by the belief that sacrifices, disciplines, or and abstaining from the mundane good things of life is the road to gain eternal salvation. By this belief, this people were able to engage themselves in stringent saving and private accumulation of wealth and properties, which form the basis of private capitals.

Table 6.2.6 **Level of participation in religion by offenders**

ACTIVE8					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	57	83.8	87.7	87.7
	No	8	11.8	12.3	100.0
	Total	65	95.6	100.0	
Missing	System	3	4.4		
Total		68	100.0		

A significant part of the preceding variable is the degree or extent of participation or involvement in the belief system. This is the focus of the variable in table 6.2.6. Respondents were thus, asked to indicate either “Yes” or “No”, whether they do participate actively in their various religious beliefs. Measures of active or passive participation were conceived and explained to the respondents as including observing and keeping to the teachings of their various religious beliefs, attending worship regularly, engaging in various necessary activities and so on.

The essence of the question is to attempt to establish how belief and participation correlates so that the influence of a religion in modelling behaviour can be fully teased out or assessed. Interestingly, but in a further paradoxical manner, 87.7% of the

respondents attested to “Yes” for being actively participatory<sup>1</sup>. 12.3% of the valid said “No” to being active participants.

The high number of respondents who said “yes”, that they are actively involved in the religion of their choices are invariably interpreted to be preponderantly Christians since of course, the greater number of respondents are Christian believers. At a face value, it is an indication that belief and concomitant active involvement in the belief system is not a foreclosed from deviance and immoral behaviour, and the means to both learning and playing them out. Fundamentally, this provides support for the previous arguments (see for instances, Sutherland 1973 cf. Huang et al. 2001:75; Benda and Whiteside 1995; Huang, Kosterman, Catalano, and Hawkins 2001). It also concurs with the view of the researcher that parental background, which includes the teaching of religious belief may be significant in influencing later behaviour and self-development, but not conclusive in this regard because the socio-milieu forces such as the peer and external influence and pressures are constantly exerting influence on the individual as he or she grows and matures. In some instances, these new influence overwhelms the dominant culture and early socialisation the receptors were exposed to. As Huang et al (2001: 76-77) point out, within individual changes over time, patterns of behaviour—whether prosocial or antisocial especially among growing adult are learned from other socialising agents—religious, community institutions, peers, and schools.

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<sup>1</sup> Active participation is conceptualised as the commitment to the teaching and practices of ones’ belief system in line of the basic philosophy of such belief system. Operationally, it includes attending of services or gathering regularly in the worship and observance of the ritual of the belief system, participating in promoting the course of the

Table 6.2. 7

**Offenders' home of custody**

		PARENT9			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	31	45.6	47.0	47.0
	No	35	51.5	53.0	100.0
	Total	66	97.1	100.0	
Missing	System	2	2.9		
Total		68	100.0		

Table 6.2.7 is about whether or not offenders lived with their biological parents during the period of their adolescent. The essence of this question too, is the continuum to explore and to further determine the likelihood of the influence of a childhood's socio-background on the current pattern of armed robbery behaviour in the contemporary Nigeria. Not less than 47.0% of the respondents admit to have lived with their parents during the adolescent phase of their life cycle. A little above those who say "Yes" (53.0%), say "No", that they did not live with their biological parents during their adolescence stage.

Findings thus, show that to become an armed robber is not really a matter of whether one lived with one's parents or not. As pointed in the preceding item, there are many socio-milieu factors, which exert considerable influence and pressures on an individual as he or she grows, becomes mature, and start to feel the sense of independent. Such factors are numerous, but may include such more direct effectual ones as association with peer, proximity to senior criminals, the urge and drive to act tough,

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beliefs system, living as quintessence of the belief system, and observance of other related dos and don'ts of the belief system.

smart and autonomous of what has also watched on the screen, read from texts, and learned from friends.

To an extent, and plausibly, it may be argued that living with ones' parents may lead to the child being "spoilt" because of overprotection of the child. That is, some children are more likely to be armed robbers not because they lacked the basic necessities of life, but moreso because their parents or custodian over pampered them, and consequently, they fell victims to the saying of "sparing the sticks to spoil the child".

### 6.3 Socio-cultural profile (family structures) of armed robbers

This sub-section of the data presentation and analysis is a continuation of the findings on the socio-cultural background of the armed robbers. It is, however more concerned with a further deeper probing into the family background of offenders in terms of the religion of the family and their extent of participation, their living patterns, the number of wives to fathers, the number of children per father, and the offenders' position amongst the children. This subsection has four items that it explored.

Table 6.3.1 **Number of Wives to offenders' fathers**

WIVES17					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	one	31	45.6	46.3	46.3
	Two	16	23.5	23.9	70.1
	Three and above	20	29.4	29.9	100.0
	Total	67	98.5	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.5		
Total		68	100.0		

This table (6.3.1) is about the number of wives offenders' fathers have or had. 23.9% indicates two wives; while 29.9% gives three and above wives as what their fathers have or had.

The finding of this variable is important because it shows that there isn't much difference between offenders whose father had many wives, and those whose father had only one wife. By arithmetic summation, those interviewees whose fathers had or has one wife are 3,1 and those with two and above ((16+20) are 36. The implication of the findings therefore, is that it challenges the notion that criminal behaviour and delinquency is more a direct function of family disorganisation; an argument that has the tendency to suggest that a large family is a breeding ground for these behaviour. Part of the causes of family disorganisation especially when they are applied to the non-western cultures, is linked to the idea of marrying many wives and having many kids, which generally are viewed as peculiar to African and/ or non-European cultures. Thus, the findings may have demonstrated that armed robbery is more than the impact of the size of a family. So, it is more a behaviour that is learned and influenced by other factors (see also Mimuchin 1974; Thornman 1980).

Table 6.3.2 **Offenders parents' religion**

PARREL12					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Traditional	9	13.2	13.6	13.6
	Christianity	57	83.8	86.4	100.0
	Total	66	97.1	100.0	
Missing	System	2	2.9		
Total		68	100.0		



Table 6.3.2 concerns with the parents' religion. Parents' religion is often assumed to be the same with those of a child or children. Albeit, while this holds in most of the cases, suffice to say that there are usually differences in religions among parents and offspring. In the contemporary society these differences between the religion of the parents and children are a common phenomenon.

Analysis of responses shows similarity and near consistency to the religions of offenders, however. Most (86.4%) say their parents are or were Christians. 13.6% say their parents are or were traditionalists—believers and worshipers of the traditional belief system. Although one respondent described himself as Moslem, none of the respondents had or has a Moslem

The findings are important not only that it shows a somewhat consistency with the finding in the similar variable about the offenders. But more so because it goes to review that most armed robbers were either raised up or instructed under the guiding influence of the dominant religious creeds and moral codes. Indeed, most of the interviewees were somewhat raised up by parents and/ or custodians under the influence of Christianity and the Traditional belief systems. These two religion sects like any other apparently condemn both immoral and criminal behaviour in its entirety. It is therefore, logical that armed robbery could not simply be attributed to any improper or defective childhood socialisation and experiences. Instead, the reason more than anything else is that as the adolescent grows and becomes mature, s/he is exposed into contacts and associations with the outside world (western) patterns of life. Association with peer groups in schools social gathering, and young and senior criminals, who are visiting from their urban-based settlements become more apparent. So, s/he is by these contacts prone to get more

enamoured to the thriving lifestyles, learn both the legitimate and illegitimate means (techniques) to acquiring these styles, and the justification thereof.

Table 6.3.3 **Level of parents' participation**

PACTIVE4					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	59	86.8	92.2	92.2
	No	5	7.4	7.8	100.0
	Total	64	94.1	100.0	
Missing	System	4	5.9		
Total		68	100.0		

The third issue (item) in this section is contained in table 6.3.3, and it is concerned with the attempt to establish the degree of participation among parents in their religions of choice (see reason under similar item in table 6.2.6 above). Respondents were asked to indicate either “Yes” or “No”, if in their views, their parents were engaged in active participation (see discussion after table 6.2.6) of the religion of their choice. As expected, a large number of respondents responded, and apparently in consistence with the preceding responses. The percentage of respondents who say, “Yes”, that their parents were active in their religious is 92.2%. Only 7.8% say “No”.

This finding is a further confirmation of the earlier argument that religious belief, and the general family background may be influential factors on adult behaviour, but are not to be taken for granted. Although many published studies (see Hirschi 1969; Akers 1985, Hawkins, et al., 1988; Johnson et al. 2000; Jang and Johnson 2001) report significant effects of religiosity especially on adolescent deviance. Yet, it seems these reports lack a clear-cut theoretical framework and empirical validation at all times,

against all crimes, and in all social contexts (see also Title and Welch 1983; Cochran et al. 1994). So, as findings reveal in this study, it is argued that as the individual matures, s/he is more or less exposed to the realities of the prevailing culture conflict, and to go for those that offer the immediate gratification, much less in consideration of the earlier socialised values.

Table 6.3.4 **Educational qualification of offenders' fathers**

EDUPA15					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Primary	12	17.6	18.2	18.2
	Secondary	15	22.1	22.7	40.9
	College of education	5	7.4	7.6	48.5
	Polytechnic	2	2.9	3.0	51.5
	University	15	22.1	22.7	74.2
	None	17	25.0	25.8	100.0
	Total	66	97.1	100.0	
Missing	System	2	2.9		
Total		68	100.0		

The educational backgrounds of the offenders' fathers constitute the variable represented in the table 6.3.4. Measurement indicators of this variable are primary, secondary, college of education, polytechnic (technikon), University and none. As it is summarised in the questionnaire, and explained to the respondents, it consists of school, after school and none. Three quarters of the samples, representing 25.8% say their father never had any or attempted any formal education whatsoever. And 3.0% says it is the polytechnic institution.

Implicit in the findings is that there is a continuum indication to the influence of western type of education as potential gateway or pathway to the choice of armed robbery. Since most offenders had their parents as products of primary, secondary and

even university (holders or attempted), and were invariably encouraged to follow the same route, therefore, these pupils have been exposed early enough to the good sides of the new life—material and money possession.

Table 6.3.5                      **Number of wives to offenders' fathers**

WIVES17					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	one	31	45.6	46.3	46.3
	Two	16	23.5	23.9	70.1
	Three and above	20	29.4	29.9	100.0
	Total	67	98.5	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.5		
Total		68	100.0		

Table 6.3.5 is about the number of wives that offenders' fathers have or had. Figure shows that a great number of respondents responded to the variable. 46.3% of the offenders say their fathers have or had one wife at a time. 23.9% say their fathers have or had two wives.

The findings of the variable therefore, show that a significant number of armed robbers are either likely to come from a monogamy or polygamy background. What this suggests therefore, is that coming from a single parents' marriage (monogamy), or from a multiple parents' marriage (polygamy) is no strong prediction of the antisocial behaviour which could likely lead to armed robbery. Significant part of the argument of the causal link between family disorganisation and criminality or delinquency is that most delinquents, and/ or criminals are more probably to come from a more or less large family where less attention are given to the children.

Table 6.3.6 **Number of children to offenders' parents.**

KIDSPA18					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	2-4	15	22.1	22.7	22.7
	5-10	35	51.5	53.0	75.8
	10 and above	15	22.1	22.7	98.5
	Don't know	1	1.5	1.5	100.0
	Total	66	97.1	100.0	
Missing	System	2	2.9		
Total		68	100.0		

Table 6.3.6 is about the number of kids that the offenders' parents (fathers) have. The question is asked in because marrying many wives is no assurance of having many children, and vice versa. A fairly above average (53.0%) gives 5-10 children. Between 10 and above and 2-4 children are given by 22.7% of the respondents each respectively. Only 1.5% gives "I don't know" as a response.

On overall, there are a significant number of offenders' parents who have over and above three children—the number considered in official circles as desirable, and which are actively campaigned for in most parts of contemporary Nigeria. Interpretation of this "large family" so considered, needs caution because why to an extent, a large family may have some degrees of negative influence in family upbringing of their offspring, which can lead to antisocial adolescents, they are not necessarily so. In fact, large families do sometimes have the effect of wielding together all members of the family in the direction of prosocial behaviour.

Table 6.3.7

**Offenders' relative positions in the family (children)**

YRPOS19					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1st child	21	30.9	33.3	33.3
	2nd child	5	7.4	7.9	41.3
	3rd child	16	23.5	25.4	66.7
	Other	21	30.9	33.3	100.0
	Total	63	92.6	100.0	
Missing	System	5	7.4		
Total		68	100.0		

The offenders' positions *vis-à-vis* the number of children to parents is represented as the measurable item 8 in this section. This item is viewed as important to determining the pathways to armed robbery in any social cultural setting such as Nigeria where *familiar* cord (bonding) is still very much presence, and strong too. That is, the question is raised to determine the level of the socio-cultural and economic responsibility, which may act to impact on the decision to either choose or refrain from armed robbery. A total of 33.3% respondents are 1<sup>st</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> and above born or child to their parents respectively. 7.9% are 2<sup>nd</sup> born or child in the family.

From the figure above, it is difficult to suggest that one's relative position in the family has any meaningful impact on his or her involvement in armed robbery. Although being the first child in African setting places much responsibility on one since it is part of the cultural obligation of the early child or children to take substantial part in caring and sustaining those who follow them. But instead of influencing the decision to go to

robbery, there is a greater tendency to be a role model to the younger ones, and also to be given substantial training by parents. In the same vein, being the 4<sup>th</sup> and above presupposes being amongst the last-born. There is also a greater possibility that such a person or persons are taken care off by the combine efforts of the older ones. So, they would unlikely choose to armed robbery. This explanation, it must be emphasised is an ideal type. In real life situation, the first-born and the last are also more susceptible to temptations, and can go astray by choosing to criminality. This is because they are more likely to be over pampered by their parents, which may predispose them towards the path of antisocial. The interpretation of the low number of most second-in-rank children could be because of their relative advantage position which enable them to either tap the role model of the first children, and/ or to take a more proactive social path in occasions when the first has gone astray.

Table 6.3.8                      **Patterns of relationship between offenders' parents**

PARREL20					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very peaceful	36	52.9	54.5	54.5
	Always quarrelling	5	7.4	7.6	62.1
	Sometimes quarrelling	13	19.1	19.7	81.8
	Averagely peaceful	12	17.6	18.2	100.0
	Total	66	97.1	100.0	
Missing	System	2	2.9		
Total		68	100.0		

Table 6.3.8 is about the relationship of the offenders' parents' (father-mother). It asked these offenders how and what they perceived the relationships between their parents to be? Most (54.5%) say that they (both mother and father) related or relate well with each other (peacefully). 18.2% offenders see the relationship as being "average" in manner.

Those who said it is “quarrelling always”, are 7.6%. 19.7% are of the view that the relationships were characterised by intermittent (sometimes) quarrelling.

The indicators of this item are important because they describe the prevailing pattern of relationships between the offenders’ parents. The importance of this is that the pattern of relationships influences the upbringing of the offenders especially during their adolescent stage of development. If a common arithmetic summation of the figures of peaceful relationships and the average peacefulness are made, then, one is tempted to state that most (72.7%) contemporary Nigerian armed robbers do have or had a stable home (good parental relationships). They were thus, by implication raised up under a peaceful environment, with adequate attention. The only likely explanation for turning into hoodlums therefore, is to assume that it is the result of some external factors, and most principal, is the exposure to the culture of the western world and criminal seniors and friends.

Table 6.3.9 **Offenders’ armed robbery history in the family**

RELATE23					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	3	4.4	4.5	4.5
	No	59	86.8	88.1	92.5
	Don't know	5	7.4	7.5	100.0
	Total	67	98.5	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.5		
Total		68	100.0		

The offenders’ family-armed robbery background is represented in table 6.3.9. Respondents were asked to state either “Yes”, “No” or “I don’t know” if there is an armed robbery traces or footprints in their family. The essence of this variable, which bears the question, was to determine if there is a genetic or historic influence of the



family's activities on the current offenders' line of action or behaviour. In other words, theoretically, whether there is a biogenetic influence on the offenders. Most (88.1%) say "No", that there is no traces of the crime in their families, and 4.5% say "Yes" in that regard. 7.5% responded that they do not know.

The finding therefore, shows that armed robbery is neither simply biogenetically inherited, nor bears any more readily direct link with the pattern of activities among family members. It is thus, a more or less an imitated, learned, borrowed and emulated behaviour.

#### **6.4 PART TWO: THE CRIME, CRIMINAL, NATURE, PERCEPTIONS AND *MODUS OPERANDI***

Part two of data analysis is of particular significance because it dwells on the detailed analytical description of the offenders and the offence as a significant point of departure of the study. It has multiple indicators—of asked questions. Direct quotations arising from the in-depth interview—about the offenders, the offence, and the perceptions thereto are used to strengthen the research findings from the quantitative questionnaire.

In constructing each indicator, the researcher identified and combined items that have significant influence on the offenders and the offence. These are peers, family, community (society), school or apprenticeship, and some other exogenous factors hypothesised to influence the socialisation process (see Catalano and Hawkins 1996). These factors include external constraints e.g. government policies; position in the social structure of current Nigeria e.g. ethnicity, tribes, social class, and states; individual factors (personality) e.g. cognitive ability, and hyperactivity. This is viewed as a holistic

and in-depth approach. The rationales transcend the need for a mere thorough analysis, description and explanation of both the offenders and the offence, which the perspective of the study entails. But it is more also to create indicators which Huang et al (2001:840) notes that individually, represent what they call an “across domain composite picture” of subjects’ perceptions, attitudes, or and experience.

#### 6.4.1 Nature of relationship

This sub-section takes a look at the pattern of relationships, which existed between the offenders, their other various agents of social interaction—e.g. peers and schools, the accompanying information, and knowledge arising thereof. They include the family, peers, and law enforcement agents and how knowledge of the crime became known to them.

Table 6.4.1.1 **Offenders’ family relationship**

MEMBERS1					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	very good	31	45.6	47.0	47.0
	good	28	41.2	42.4	89.4
	bad	7	10.3	10.6	100.0
	Total	66	97.1	100.0	
Missing	System	2	2.9		
Total		68	100.0		

Table 6.4.1.1 contains measurement indicators that seek to understand what the relationships of the offenders to their family members were or are like. In consistence to similar question asked in part one table 6.3.8 above, a great number of respondents answered the question. Near half of the respondents (47.0%) had a very good relationship with their parents. Only 10.6% says it was a bad one.

The responses to this item especially when the “very good” and “good” are added together are indicative, and a further confirmation of a likely harmonious homes amongst armed robbery offenders in contemporary Nigeria. So, as earlier stated, the socialisation of an offender within a family or a custodian, which is not imbued with abuses and neglects, is not a sure risk-predictive factor of early childhood maladjustment and ultimate criminal behaviour such as armed robbery. As one robber eloquently put it:

“my relationship with my parents was okay. They provided fully for me. Rather, it is because of my friends”.

These harmonious relationships do, however, in some instances, serve as a precursor to anti-social behaviour, which less doubted, may or do leads to high a profile crime like armed robbery. The possibility of this is high when this harmonious relationship leads to the adolescents being overpampered by either or both parents (see the discussion in table 6.3.7).

Table 6.4.1.2 **Offenders’ pattern of relationship to peers**

LOOKLIK2					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	very good	26	38.2	38.8	38.8
	good	35	51.5	52.2	91.0
	bad	6	8.8	9.0	100.0
	Total	67	98.5	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.5		
Total		68	100.0		

The item in the table 6.4.1.2 reveals the offenders’ perceived relationship to peers—friends and age groups. There is also an almost unanimous response to the question as only one respondent chose to abstain. 38.8% says the relationships with their peers were a “very

good” one. Most (52.2%) respondents say their relationships were a “good” one. However, very few (9.0%) say they were a bad one.

These findings are important in two ambivalent manners. Firstly, it shows that respondents had a nice and harmonious peer relationships, which in any case may have provided the enabling socio-milieu for an active prosocial behaviour. The figure clearly shows that a large number of respondents (91.0%) arising from the “very good” and “good” enjoyed an atmosphere of cordiality with their peers and friends at the crucial stages of their maturing.

Secondly, and paradoxically too, the prevailing pattern of relationship may also have, as indeed researches have shown, been instrumental in fostering a favourable atmosphere for easy learning of antisocial behaviours from peers and friends which seems to be precursors to armed robbery. This is consistent with the basic underlying assumption of the general theory of learning (imitation, differential association, previous criminal association, differential opportunity and emulation). It strengthens the argument that first and foremost, a good working understanding must be in place between and amongst these peers and friends at all levels of learning before cross-fertilization of ideas and behaviour could be successfully transmitted and imbibed, and emulation thought thereafter.

The existing good relationships ensure an opportunity for a greater intensity, frequency, and duration of contacts, which make these chances of learning criminal or non-criminal behaviour greater (see Sutherland 1939). The summary of the findings, which however shows preponderantly, the influence of friends in addition, to reading

from the media, confirms that the degree of good or bad relationship among peer groups and friends may either or not be of significant to conformity and or deviance.

#### 6.4.2 Previous criminal profile

This section investigates the general past criminal records of the offenders, not only within the context of armed robbery, however. It also investigates their involvement in the other predatory crimes, which serve as a precursor to current high profile of armed robbery. It contains some important revealing.

Table 6.4.2.1 **Offenders' pre anti social life pattern**

TROUBLE3					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	41	60.3	64.1	64.1
	Sometimes	22	32.4	34.4	98.4
	Always	1	1.5	1.6	100.0
	Total	64	94.1	100.0	
Missing	System	4	5.9		
Total		68	100.0		

Table 6.4.2.1 contains a variable, which reflects on the criminal profile of the offenders. It specifically seeks to establish the frequency of these offenders' past anti-social behaviour prior to their involvement in, and arrest for armed robbery. They were asked to indicate the degree and frequency—how serious and often they do get into trouble while at schools or apprenticeship. The options provided include “never”, “sometimes” and “always”. Responses were impressive. A great percentage numbers (64.1%) says they never got involved in trouble while they were at schools or apprenticeship. Surprisingly, only an infinitesimal number of respondents (1.6%) say it was always.

The question is considered important because it constitutes a further enquiry into the paths to armed robbery amongst the offenders in terms of how frequent they were repeated law violators, or engaged in juvenile delinquency before becoming armed robbers. The findings show that armed robbery offenders may not be peculiar to those who had a substantial record of antisocial behaviour. The policy implication is that it therefore, calls for caution, the idea that adult criminals, especially the high profile types such as armed robbers necessitate previous criminal experience (see Iwarimie-Jaja 1999b:58). Although, while the idea of previous criminal experience is a likely normal factor—this indeed is one of the premise of the theoretical idea of emulation (see Chapter 9 for details argument), it is important as the finding reveals that such assertion must always be treated with caution. It seems that many interviewees became armed robbers without necessarily exhibiting the usual juvenile delinquency, or get involved in other conventional predatory crimes. So, the argument of the idea of emulation is that it involves stages, but that some emulators are capable to beat these stages, and to move straight up to the highest stage of the behaviour so imitated, and borrowed. After all some people are just exceptionally ingenious, imaginative and smart.

Table 6.4.2.2 **Offenders arrest records**

ARREST4					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	30	44.1	46.2	46.2
	No	35	51.5	53.8	100.0
	Total	65	95.6	100.0	
Missing	System	3	4.4		
Total		68	100.0		

Table 6.4.2.2 is more specific in the direction of armed robbers' current status. It asked the offenders to indicate whether "Yes" or "No", if they have committed any offence other than armed robbery, which warranted their arrest by the police. The question was conceived in recognition that having contacts with law enforcement agents particularly the police, and the frequency (lambda) of it has serious repercussions on the offenders' recidivistic attitude, and is more likely to reinforce deviant or criminal behaviour than mere committing of an offence. After all, prisons, and in no less degree, the police detention cells have been described as going to criminal or delinquent colleges (see Cinard and Abbott 1973).

The responses were almost equal to the preceding one. Generally, (46.2%) says "yes", that they have committed offences that got them into trouble with the police, and a fairly above average (53.8%) says "no". The findings also tend to confirm the argument presented in the preceding variable in table 6.4.2.1.

Table 6.4.2.3. **The nature of offenders' pre- anti-social behaviour**

NATURE5					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Fighting	11	16.2	28.2	28.2
	Assault	2	2.9	5.1	33.3
	Stealing	4	5.9	10.3	43.6
	Drug taking	4	5.9	10.3	53.8
	House Breaking	1	1.5	2.6	56.4
	Other	17	25.0	43.6	100.0
	Total	39	57.4	100.0	
Missing	System	29	42.6		
Total		68	100.0		

In the table 6.4.2.3, respondents were asked to indicate the type of offences they have committed that warranted these their arrests. Fighting was top in the list, and it accounts

for 28.2%. House breaking was given by respondent 2.6%, assault—differentiated from fighting by being in the form of mob attack on either individual or the law enforcement agents (police) by 5.1%, stealing and drug taking by 10.3% respectively, and “others”—not specified, but which include, rape, vandalism, secret cultism, and public disorder by 43.6%.

Finding shows no remarkable difference from the respondents who answered yes to the preceding item and table. In fact, only a little above half (39) answered the question. It goes further to strengthen the line of argument, which continues to reflect in this study—that involvement in antisocial behaviour is no guarantee to armed robbery in modern day Nigeria.

#### **6.4.3 Offenders’ background knowledge and information about criminal activities**

This sub-section focuses on exploring into the nature of the respondents’ prior knowledge about criminal activities and armed robbery in particular. It begins with an inquiry into the person (s) who the offenders lived with as they began to mature. Were they talked to about the danger of vices, delinquency and criminal activities? The maturing stage of a child during which time important personality development occurs, is considered very crucial in acquiring adult behaviour (see Cron`je, Van Der Walt, Retief, and Naude 1982).

So, probing into whom the respondents lived with while maturing is important because it bears significant interpretation on the social control theory (Hirschi’s social bond) as a favoured causative factor to criminal behaviour and delinquency. In sum, it is noteworthy from findings that most armed robbers are those who are more likely to have



lived, and nurtured either by their biological parents or not. That is, living outside ones biological parents is no excuse or guarantee to becoming an armed robber in contemporary Nigeria.

Table 6.4.3.1 **Offenders knowledge about crime**

CRIME7					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	20	29.4	31.3	31.3
	Sometimes	23	33.8	35.9	67.2
	Always	21	30.9	32.8	100.0
	Total	64	94.1	100.0	
Missing	System	4	5.9		
Total		68	100.0		

With regard to information about the danger of criminal activities, offenders were asked if they were at any point in time educated by their parents, custodians or relations on criminal activities. 31.3% respondents say they were “never” told about crime. While 35.9% says they were “sometimes” told. (32.8%) says they were “always” told about vice, delinquency and crime.

Although, it seems quite clear that a significant number of respondents were never told or taught about crime especially armed robbery by the their parents, or and custodians. None the less, a combination of those who answered “sometimes” and “always” (78.7%) represents a good statistical indication that quite a good number of offenders were indeed brought up with a teaching and moral inculcation, which emphasised on the negative impacts of criminal and delinquent activities. These responses are in consistence with the claim by many respondents that they had good relationships with their parents, peers and friends prior to involvement in armed robbery proper. The slipped into robbery it is argued, may have been principally because of the

impacts of the pressures of the western contact—unemployment and the media, and the concomitant tendency to imitate the culture with dexterity.

#### 6.4.4 Motive and extent of armed robbery

This section of part two deals with establishing in weighted average manner the main reasons why offenders ultimately got involve in the crime. It also reveals the onset-age into the crime and the frequency with which they have indeed engaged in actual robbery.

Table 6.4.4.1. **Reasons for armed robbery**

CHOSE11					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Government in place	2	2.9	3.8	3.8
	To get money easily	1	1.5	1.9	5.8
	Unemployment	18	26.5	34.6	40.4
	My friends were involved	3	4.4	5.8	46.2
	To get money and help others	6	8.8	11.5	57.7
	What I've read and seen on TV	2	2.9	3.8	61.5
	Easily lay my hands on weapons	1	1.5	1.9	63.5
	Other	19	27.9	36.5	100.0
	Total	52	76.5	100.0	
Missing	System	16	23.5		
Total		68	100.0		

Table 6.4.4.1 is crucial for this study because it touches on one of the fundamental point of departure of most studies of criminal behaviour. In the table 6.4.4.1, the basic reasons for choosing armed robbery are represented. In other words, item in the table focuses on “why” the armed robbery question. It simply asks the offenders what are their reasons for choosing to be an armed robber or being in armed robbery. Expectedly, unemployment accounts for the highest single reason for getting involved in the crime. 34.6% respondents attest to the reason. Only 1.9% gives the need to get money easily, and

because of the easy access to weapons. Other reasons not specified are given by 36.5% of the respondents. Such reasons may include a high taste, the perception of insecurity to life and property, family disorganisation, parent deprivation, low self-concept, and unforeseen forces such as devil or a curse (see also Iwarimie-Jaja 1999a:172).

The findings are of crucial as they further point to the fact that unemployment though not excusable for involvement in crimes, nevertheless remains a critical causative element. Box (1996 in Caffrey and Mundy 1996:286) explained inter alia:

“...that the conditions of social and economic contribute to crime because they constrain, limit or narrow choices...”

Some respondents and subjects added:

“The act of robbery is the fastest process of getting money due to unemployment in the country. That is why we the young boys are badly in it”.

What is interesting as the findings revealed is that it is not often (in fact, far from it) the need to get rich, and quickly too that motivates individuals such as contemporary Nigerians to get involved in armed robbery. Given the high risk involved in the crime, and especially in contemporary Nigeria where the offence carries death penalty or mob lynching, the common sense would be to quit as soon as a substantial amount is raised, and to lauder the proceeds into the legitimate form of economic activities (although suffice to say that in some instances, this do happens). However, this is rarely so as the lifestyles of armed robbers show—reckless and insatiable. Taken at face value, a fair good number of armed robbers are motivated by the Robin Hood’s ideology of robbery—the belief to rob the propertied class, and to give the same to the less propertied class. The responses of some offenders in this direction are worthy of note.

Another important revealing of the findings is that the curiosity to practice what was imitated from readings and observed in the electronic media also constitutes a motivational factor, which animate some people get involved in such criminal activities. Ake (1981:21-48) rightly notes that part of the colonisers' trick was the introduction of cinema, which displayed all kinds of western ideas and entrapped the indigenous. There are various films as part of the broad media of communication such as the "Italian mob", and the "Heat" portrays the daring armed robbery escapades that carry the aura of masculinity. These are freely sold to the armies of unemployed youth; many who have also taste these contemporary styles of life (see *The Guardian* 11 November 2000:6).

Table 6.4.4.2                      **The frequency of robbery commission**

TIMES12					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Only once	19	27.9	35.8	35.8
	2-4 times	7	10.3	13.2	49.1
	5-8 times	2	2.9	3.8	52.8
	Cannot remember	8	11.8	15.1	67.9
	other	17	25.0	32.1	100.0
Total		53	77.9	100.0	
Missing	System	15	22.1		
Total		68	100.0		

Also considered as vital in the study, table 6.4.4.2 contains issue, which is concerned with the number of times (lambda) that the offenders have been involved in armed robbery prior to being arrested. Interestingly, the figure in this table is very consistence to the responses in the immediate preceding table (6.4.4.1). A total of 35.8% says it is only once. 3.8% says it is between 5-8 times. "Others" were explained to the respondents to mean multiple times beyond ten. And it is interesting to note that a remarkable number of respondents (32.1%) attest to this last option.

There is seemingly, a high figure of responses to this item. It may be read to mean that the large numbers of armed robbers who get arrested at their first time of robbery are as a result of insufficient previous armed robbery experiences. Findings also tend to suggest by the relatively high number of respondents who have committed more than once (74.2%) that majority are seemingly, career armed robbers. This latter finding, and suggestion is in line with the findings of Einstadter (1975 in Rushing 1975:449), Conklin (1972:72) that have alluded to career armed robbers.

Table 6.4.4.3 **Offenders' age at first armed robbery**

FISTROB9					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1-12 years	3	4.4	6.7	6.7
	13-21 years	24	35.3	53.3	60.0
	22-35 years	16	23.5	35.6	95.6
	36 and above	2	2.9	4.4	100.0
	Total	45	66.2	100.0	
Missing	System	23	33.8		
Total		68	100.0		

Table 6.4.4.3 is about the age variable of the offenders when the first armed robbery was committed. The question is important because it goes to point to the network of the crime, which shows that all categories of ages are involved. Adolescent known as “robbery entrées or recruits”, and adults, known as “robbery pimps or godfathers” are all involved in the robbery networks. These categories of individuals have at one time or the other been implicated in armed robbery cases in the contemporary Nigeria. 6.7% were of the age between 1-12 years when they committed their first armed robbery. A fairly above average (53.3%) were of the age between 13-21 years when they committed their

first crime. Two respondents (4.4%) were of the age between 36 and above when they committed their first robbery operation.

So, finding reveals that majority who are first time offenders are those who are within the active labour force of the country. This makes a total of 88.9% respondents if we combine the figures between 13-21 and 22-35 years. This finding is in concordance to other previous findings. These studies found a preponderance of late adolescents and an energetic active labour force youth in the criminal career of armed robbery (Nkpa 1994 in Otite (1994:270; Iwarimie-Jaja 1999a:144; Miller, Dinitz, and Conrad (1982); cf. Katz 1996 in Conklin 1996: 172).

More fundamentally, the findings further collaborate and highlight unemployment as the major reason for engaging in armed robbery (see Conklin 1972; Ekpeyong 1989; Box 1996). Another interesting reveals of the findings is that very young adolescent sometimes commits the crime. For instance, three offenders say they committed their first robbery at the age of 12 years. Such participation may essentially have been as an “accomplice”. This reveal may be interpreted within the context of the argument of differential association of Sutherland (1939), differential opportunity<sup>2</sup> of Cloward and Olhin (1960), previous criminal association of Iwarimie-Jaja (1999a, b). One of the respondents responded:

“I started with armed robbery after the war. My master is an ex-soldier. And at age 12 years, I had started moving with him”.

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<sup>2</sup> Differential opportunity theory proposes that availability of both legitimate and illegitimate opportunity structures or institutions promote deviance or conformity in line of the dominant one available.

Table 6.4.4.4                      **Sources of knowledge of armed robbery**

ROBBERY8					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Through Friends	22	32.4	36.7	36.7
	Family members	2	2.9	3.3	40.0
	Reading and TV	14	20.6	23.3	63.3
	My own idea	4	5.9	6.7	70.0
	Other	18	26.5	30.0	100.0
	Total	60	88.2	100.0	
Missing	System	8	11.8		
Total		68	100.0		

Given the aim of the study and the context as well, table 6.4.4.4 unarguably seems to contain the most important relevant datum for the study. For sure, the table contains variable that represents the central, and the ultimate point of departure of the study—the development of an encompassing alternative conceptual model, which was conceived at the outset of the study while identifying the problem, and then emerged as the end-point of the research. The variable is about how the offenders came to know and learn about armed robbery. In other words, what is the main source of information through contemporary armed robbers in Nigeria became entrapped to it?

A large number of respondents (88.2%) answered the question, perhaps rather enthusiastically. Friends' influence (peers) account for the highest. 36.7% are of the views that they came to know about armed robbery through their friends. This is closely followed by 23.3% respondents who say they came to know and get involved in the crime as a result of watching T.V, reading and listening to other media messages. Family

members introduced 3.3% of the respondents into the offence. 6.7% says nobody influenced them; rather it was out of their own idea.

The findings show the significant role of the social learning processes, and the specific idea of emulation as an advanced state of imitation as the sources and means by which current pattern and rate of armed robbery in modern Nigeria is being perpetuated. As a prelude to chapter Nine where the conceptual idea of emulation is discussed in details, it is important that irrespective of the argument of this emulation—its genesis and trajectory, the aims, *modus operandi* (MO) and the nature of this criminal behaviour have not be left as merely borrowed, imitated and learned. These have been perfected and improved on within the limits of other external factors of the Nigerian society. This is because this Nigerian version of armed robbers craves to be the quintessence of modern sophistry of the offenders far and above what obtains in the western advanced countries. It further posits that differential association to senior criminal friends, peers and relations are essential gateways to imbibing these western styles.

One respondent adds thus:

“Brother (referring to the researcher) I’ll tell you to tell my fellow brothers (referring to youths) that they should avoid bad friends and high taste”.

And another respondent quips

“In fact, I want you to know me as armed robber because of the taste I was taken to like having good times, bubbling with friends, flirting as well as clubbing etc”.

The combined influence of “friends” and “reading and watching T.V” as both important sources are obvious indication of the power of the argument of the theoretical idea of emulation. The basic premise of emulation as a theoretical idea-cum-framework is



that the current pattern of some criminal activities such as armed robbery in contemporary Nigeria is strange to the indigenous Nigerians. It is made possible and permissible through both the formal and informal communication agencies. Prominent in this regard are friends, family, acquaintances, senior criminal friends, TV, books, cinemas, comics and a host of others. Sometimes, the nonpurpose means of diffusing these ideas are often the most effective (see also Landis 1958:71). Examples include chats, the word-of-mouth gossip of young boys, men and women such as “Have you seen how big so and so person lives?”, “My friend, that guy has arrived”, “You can make money if you so wish”, “This Xmas, I must go home with such and such car” and so on.

#### **6.4.5 Substances and armed robbery**

This sub-section of data analysis focuses on the place and roles of substances such as charms (African magic) and psycho-narcotics in armed robbery operations. A number of writers have explained the link between substance usage and criminality such as armed robbery (see for examples, Conklin 1972; Olurode 1990; Katz 1996 in Conklin 1996:178). And also are women as strong emotional boost “substance” or objects, and they have been adequately linked to armed robbery profession. Indeed, analyses of most armed robbers’ profiles clearly suggest the lustfulness for women during the course of their robbery exploits.

What is being argued is that significant numbers of armed robbers are predisposed to the use of psychoactive substances from the high profile ones such as dagga, cocaine and heroin, to the mild ones such as tobacco and alcohol. They are also more likely predisposed or get addicted to women. Einstadter (1975 in Rushing 1975: 452) reports

that armed robbers are capable to brag about their dealings with numbers of women, and other things such as past exploits, prison experiences, other criminal activities, perhaps as the present researcher imagines, with exaggerated incredulity. And Iwarimie-Jaja (1999a: 138) notes that most Nigerian armed robbers in addition to using drugs (marijuana, LSD and alcohol), are also more likely to favour or belief in African insurance (charms).

Three items are reflected in this sub-section and are subsumed especially in drugs-related matter as they affect the offenders, and play a significant role in the commission of the offence. Basically the concerns of the items in the sub-section and subsequent tables are whether offenders do use mood altering substances especially drugs before going into an operation, the types and reasons.

Table 6.4.5.1 **Offenders' substances usage**

DRUGB413					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	17	25.0	33.3	33.3
	No	34	50.0	66.7	100.0
	Total	51	75.0	100.0	
Missing	System	17	25.0		
Total		68	100.0		

Table 6.4.5.1 of this sub-section seeks to find out if substances usage is a pre-requisite or is viewed crucial by the offenders prior to robbery operations. It thus, asked interviewees to indicate, “Yes” or “No”, whether they use drugs before going into armed robbery operation. Those who answered, “Yes” that they use drugs before operation are 33.3% of the total responses. A fairly large number of respondents (66.7%) say “No”, that they do not use drugs before an operation.

Findings thus, suggest that robberies are not motivated to supply their needs to drugs prior to robbery operation. One reason to suggest for this lack of motivation towards drugs may be because the culture of drug abuse as much as dealing on them is severely frowned at among the Nigerian communities, and so, is scarcely a noticeable phenomenon in many Nigerian city centres and communities when compared to the explosion of the culture in other counties of the world. Except with few relatively findings which tend to show direct link between drug use or deal and armed robbery (see for instances, Iwarimie-Jaja 1999a: 138, Cromwell et al. 1991 cf. Iwarimie-Jaja 1999a: 138, Conklin 1972), there is a sufficient ground to anticipate that drug use and armed robbery is not typical of the offence. This finding is further interpreted to mean that most contemporary armed robberies in Nigeria today are not simply ordinary street-gang crime. Rather they are a highly reasonable utilitarian and hedonistic calculus, well intended, and do act on a rationally cost-benefit analysis based course of action.

Table 6.4.5.2 **Types of substances used**

DRUGS14					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strong alcohol	2	2.9	7.4	7.4
	India hemp	6	8.8	22.2	29.6
	Cocaine	4	5.9	14.8	44.4
	Other	15	22.1	55.6	100.0
	Total	27	39.7	100.0	
Missing	System	41	60.3		
Total		68	100.0		

In table 6.4.5.2, the types of drugs that are often used are explored. What is observed in this table is that the figures (responses) are, however a bit above the number of offenders (33.3%) who admit in the preceding variable to using drugs before embarking on an

operation. The difference could possibly have been that a few of the respondents may not have thought that alcohol is included in the lists of these drugs before coming into contact with this item. By and large, only 7.4% says they take or took strong alcohol, while a fairly large number (5.6%) give “others” as the various types of drugs they do take before going to an operation. 22.2% and 14.8% respondents indicate India hemp (marijuana) and cocaine given respectively.

The implication of findings is that “Indian hemp”—a traditional form of drugs remains one of the most favoured drugs. Policy on drug control therefore, could direct energies at this drug. But there is the danger that other drugs would be turned into if Indian hemp were heavily repressed. “Others” as explained to the respondents include mainly the popular bottled alcohol known in Nigeria linguistic circle as “beers”, and “local gins”.

Table 6.4.5.3                      **Reasons for using substances**

YDRUGS15					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	To make you guiltless	5	7.4	14.3	14.3
	To make you insensitive to pain	3	4.4	8.6	22.9
	To make you tough and unsympathetic	9	13.2	25.7	48.6
	other	18	26.5	51.4	100.0
	Total	35	51.5	100.0	
Missing	System	33	48.5		
Total		68	100.0		

The last table 6.4.5.3 in this sub-section seeks to understand the immediate and remotes reasons why the offenders use substances before going into robbery operation. No doubt that the responses in this variable are still somewhat inconsistency to the responses

coming from the immediate two preceding items, and this can be for the same reason adduced above. Nevertheless, reasons given are interesting and worthy of notes. 14.3% use substances because it makes them guiltless. That is, they use drugs so as to appear subconscious and determined to handle what roles they are assigned to execute. 8.6% use drugs so as to feel insensitive to any likely encountered pains. 25.7% offenders say using drugs make them tough and unsympathetic. For “other” reasons, 51.4% subscribes to them. It is possible to suggest that the fairly high rate of non-response may be partly the consequent of the bio-psychological instability always presence in persistent armed robbers, and which tends to make them act in a very unpredictable manner like choosing to be shrewd in their interaction with outsiders.

By and large, there are different reasons for the use of drugs before an operation. Specific reactions and comments of some of the subjects during the in-dept interviews, which provide further illustrations of the intentions to drug use or not, are fairly diverse. As some of those drug users said and added:

“Yes, I used drugs to me make me bright;

“To be able to perform”;

“Because it makes me agile” etc.

One respondent who said he does not use drugs adds further:

“I don’t use drugs because it makes me go out of my normal senses”

#### **6.4.6 Planning processes of armed robbery**

This is concerned with the planning processes necessary for armed robbery operation. The interest in this subsection is to find out “why” and “how” planning processes. As

with other conventional human undertakings, planning is considered vital to any decision to go for robbery exploit. In the planning process, crucial decisions such as the appropriate time of operation, targets strategies, or “casing”, operational supports, and lots more are taken and mapped out for smooth and successful operation mission. Within the planning process, three variables are considered worthy of focus, namely weather planning itself is often muted or not, the duration if considered, and for what reason. Other related issues to planning process are represented in a separate sub-section for the purpose of giving them a sharp focus.

Table 6.4.6.1                      **The decision to plan or not**

PLANB416					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	33	48.5	66.0	66.0
	No	17	25.0	34.0	100.0
	Total	50	73.5	100.0	
Missing	System	18	26.5		
Total		68	100.0		

The table 6.4.6.1 consists of the central issue of the planning operation. It is concerned with finding out whether contemporary Nigerian armed robbery operations are planned or not. Near half of the respondents (66.0%) admits to the fact that operation is often planned. A fairly large number of respondents say that operations are not planned. This accounts for 34.0% of the valid responses. The fairly high rate of non-responses (26.5%) could be because as some of those subjects interviewed by in-depth put it:

“sometimes operation is planned, and at others, they are not. It all depends on the situation, urgency and people involved”.

What findings therefore, reveal at face level is that the decision to plan operation or not is at par. This is because 26.5% respondents were silent on the issue. Also, most of those interviewed by in-depth were not categorical about planning operation. With respect to planning, relatively numbers of authors have shown that panning is a typical characteristic of career or professional armed robber, or high-risk type of armed robbery such as bank robbery, high profile commercial businesses or corporations (see Conklin 1972; Einstadter 1975; Whitbank 1985 cf. Thio 1998: 329; Maree 1999).

Table 6.4.6.2 **Duration of planning**

		HOWLONG7			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Few minutes	2	2.9	5.3	5.3
	Few hours	4	5.9	10.5	15.8
	Few weeks	12	17.6	31.6	47.4
	Less than a week	3	4.4	7.9	55.3
	Few months	4	5.9	10.5	65.8
	No specific period	13	19.1	34.2	100.0
	Total	38	55.9	100.0	
Missing	System	30	44.1		
Total		68	100.0		

How long planning takes constitutes the variable in table 6.4.6.2. In a very close manner to the respondents who admitted that operations are planned, 38 respondents responded to the variable. 5.3% respondents say planning usually last for between one to two weeks. 34.2% gives no specific period as the period of planning. 10.5% each gives few and few months respectively as the duration of planning. 31.6% says it is for a period of few weeks prior to operation. Only 7.9% says it is less than a week.

What findings reveal is that a significant number of offenders gave both “few weeks” and “no specific” period as the duration of planning. The reveal is interesting

because it demonstrates the somewhat latent intelligence of the offenders who probably may reason that hasty planning would not produce a good result in the same manner that long planning is fraught with the risk of exposure. The famous 1950 Brink robbery operation in Boston, U.S.A is reported to have spanned for more that three years or so before the D-day. As one subject remarked: “delay is dangerous”. And the response of one of the burglar interviewees—similar in many respects with armed robbery by Padilla 1996 in Conklin (1996: 140) is inter alia: “I just think that people should know that we are a little smarter than what they think....”. So, the duration of planning may simply be a reflection of number of factors such as the target (victims), skills of members, aim of the robbery operation and other information available.

Table 6.4.6.3 **Reasons for planning**

YPLAN18					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	To take precautions	4	5.9	8.5	8.5
	To look serious	4	5.9	8.5	17.0
	To ensure full success	24	35.3	51.1	68.1
	Other	15	22.1	31.9	100.0
	Total	47	69.1	100.0	
Missing	System	21	30.9		
Total		68	100.0		

The last item in this sub-section focuses on the understanding of the reasons for planning. Both 8.5% respondents each planned because they wanted to look serious and as a precautionary measure. 51.1% planned to ensure success. “Others” as reasons for planning are given by 31.9%.

Findings show that most of those who plan their operations are imbued with a sense of purpose. The need for success, precautionary measure, and other reasons, which



were not determined prior to interviews, seem uppermost in their mind. Perhaps one the reasons among these “others” could probably be to ensure minimal injuries on the part of the victims, since some respondents were somewhat unanimous that they frown at actual use of violence during operation. Analysed further, it could be as Olurode (1990:20) notes, that armed robbery look too risky, and therefore, a somewhat conscious planning must precede any operation. In modern Nigeria, the offence as earlier mentioned carries death penalty or lengthy years of incarceration in the prison. Would-be offenders very well know this fact, and it goes to suggest that success interpreted as getting what is wanted, and with minimal chances of arrest is uppermost to offenders. The road to success is an understanding of the need to make the most effective and efficient planning and possibly, rehearsal.

However, planning may also be done to avoid unnecessary skirmishes amongst members, which may bring about schism, and prove risky to group cohesion, loyalty and security. As one respondent put it:

“We plan to reach compromise and to avoid likely dangerous disagreement”

#### **6.4.7 Operational supports of armed robbery**

Besides the planning process that are vital to armed robbery operation, there are apparently, quite a good number of appurtenances in the form of objects and devices that are instrumental in the commission of the act. They range from lethal weapons to disguise objects, and the means of transportation. All these are meant for defence, to provide protection against bodily harm or identification, and to facilitate operation. With respects to weapons, there are categories of them with various justifications thereto.

This section takes a look at some of these operational supports with a view to establishing their place in armed robbery operation in contemporary Nigeria. It contains about 10 tables (table 6.4.7.1-6.4.7.9), each with a specific item as a question for an exploration.

Table 6.4.7.1 **Offenders’ use of mask**

USEMASK9					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	16	23.5	34.8	34.8
	No	30	44.1	65.2	100.0
	Total	46	67.6	100.0	
Missing	System	22	32.4		
Total		68	100.0		

Table 6.4.7.1 is concerned with the use of mask during armed robbery operation. Mask is defined in terms of objects employed by an armed robber to veil him for several reasons. Respondents were asked whether they used or do often use masks during operation or not. 34.8% says, “Yes”, that they use mask. 65.25% says, “No” to the fact that they do not use masks or veils. One subject from the in-depth interviews adds that the use of mask is “circumstantial”—it depends on the prevailing target and victims.

Findings seem to suggest that many offenders in contemporary Nigeria unlike their western counterparts are not likely to subscribe to veiling themselves during operation. For instance, Maree (1999: 57) notes in her studies of bank robbery in South Africa that most of the subjects wore “balaclavas” or pulled stocking over their heads possibly to disguise themselves. Citing Honan (1995), the author reports that 72% of bank robbers in New Zealand use “balaclavas” or cash helmets to disguise themselves. With respect to contemporary Nigerian armed robbers and the use of masks or otherwise,

Iwarimie-Jaja 1999a: 139) reports that only barely 17.86% of the total 56 armed robbers that make up his subjects used masks, or are likely to use masks.

If the reason for veiling is reduced mainly to the need to protect oneself against identification, then it can conclusively be inferred that the non-use of mask by the majority of the respondents help to strengthen the assertion that contemporary armed robbers and armed robbery in Nigeria is unique by the fact that offenders feel emboldened to carry out their activities in a most ruthless and daring manner. The non-use of mask may, however, be because offenders do not perceive the risk of being likely identified. As one respondent intoned:

“I don’t use mask because I operate outside where I could be identified”

Table 6.4.7.2 **Reasons for the use of mask**

		YMASK20			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	To disguise and avoid identification	15	22.1	48.4	48.4
	To destroy any traces of detection	2	2.9	6.5	54.8
	To protect against any bodily harms	1	1.5	3.2	58.1
	Other	13	19.1	41.9	100.0
	Total	31	45.6	100.0	
Missing	System	37	54.4		
Total		68	100.0		

The second item as in table 6.4.7.2 is a dovetail to the first one, and it is concerned with the reasons for using mask. There is great inconsistency when the responses to the question are compared to those who answered “Yes” to the preceding item. 31 respondents in all responded against the 16 respondents who admitted to using mask. The researcher attributes this apparent inconsistency to the apparent psychological state of the

offenders, which can impact on them on the spur of the moment what to say or not to say. However, and interestingly, most (48.4%) say they use mask to disguise and avoid identification. If we take this 15 respondents as against the total number of 16 respondents who admitted to using mask, it is 99.5% of the total; meaning at face value and at the ordinary level of analysis that virtually all mask users do so for the simple reason to disguise and avoid identification. This finding finds concordance with most studies in research literature that have also focused on the variable of mask (see for instance, Honan 1989 cf. Maree 1999:57; Maree 1999; Iwarimie-Jaja 1999a:139). One respondent further stressed in the filled questionnaires:

“I use mask to prevent had I know”.

There are respondents who use mask to destroy any traces of detection. This reason, however, very similar to the first bears a mark of distinction. Offender may feel that once no traces of his mark is detected such as finger prints, it matters less to him whether his face and nose were seen since he can deny on the basis of lack of proven evidence. To protect against any bodily harm was given by 3.2% respondent.

Table 6.4.7.3 **Offenders’ use of weapons**

ARMED21					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	33	48.5	71.7	71.7
	No	13	19.1	28.3	100.0
	Total	46	67.6	100.0	
Missing	System	22	32.4		
Total		68	100.0		

This item and table 6.4.7.3 is very crucial because it focuses on whether offenders used or do use weapons during operation. The use of weapon and the subsequent violence is the

singular most important distinguishing characteristic of armed robbery from other related property criminal actions (see Beirne and Messerschmidt 2000: 281). In fact, armed robbery and armed robbers are so defined and described within the context of the use of weapons with the intent to cause bodily harm, or threat of it against a person while trying to dispossess him or her of a belonging. In a somewhat expected manner a paltry of (28.3%) says “No”, that they do not use weapon. 71.7% says “Yes” to the fact they do use or used one weapon or the other.

The seemingly unexpected high non-response may be as constantly conjectured in this chapter—the typical offenders’ psychological state of mind and personality, which momentarily affect what they say or refuse to say at any point in time. It could have be that most offenders were still sceptical as to whether admittance to using weapons will be to the consternation of the researcher, and so, used against them. This is notwithstanding the fact they were clearly notified and educated on the aim of the study. By and large, the smartness of armed robbers to manipulate and to pre-conceive can no longer be overemphasised. Although less than half percentage of the respondents use weapons as findings revealed, the figure (48.5%), however, is close to findings in previous studies which show that half of armed robbery involved the display of weapons (see Einstadter 1975 in Rushing 1975: 449; Adler et al 1991; Thio 1996: 329).

Table 6.4.7.4

**Types of weapons in use**

WEAPON22		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Short guns	3	4.4	9.4	9.4
	Double barrel	4	5.9	12.5	21.9
	Locally made guns	2	2.9	6.3	28.1
	AK47	6	8.8	18.8	46.9
	Berett	2	2.9	6.3	53.1
	Knives	4	5.9	12.5	65.6
	Other	11	16.2	34.4	100.0
	Total	32	47.1	100.0	
Missing	System	36	52.9		
Total		68	100.0		

The types of weapons often used during operation are represented in the item contained in the table 6.4.7.4. It is also important to note that the responses (47.1%) are consistence to the responses of the preceding item. 6.3% gives the locally made gun popularly known as “Oka” and Berett respectively. Ak 47 and “others” are indicated by 18.8% and 34.4% respectively. “Others”—include clubs, cutlasses, axes, and in extreme cases lethal chemicals such as acid. There are also an apparent high number of non-responses, and this could also be interpreted within the psychological state of the offenders—the feelings amongst some of them that abstinence may probably turn to their advantage.

What is striking in the data is the fact that many offenders indicated more than one type of weapons. In other words, weapons were mixed. What could be made out of this is that offenders’ weapons are in response to the crime target, the muted risk (crime

ecology), availability of weapons, and the professionalism of offenders. In the context of reported robbery incidence, there are sufficient grounds to anticipate, and to suggest that robbery which is targeted on a place describes as “big scores”, where victim resistance is envisaged, and or carried out by career and professional armed robbers would be characterised by sophisticated weaponries. Conversely, amateur armed robbers and robbery directed at a less obvious risk zone or target, and where “scores” are presumed to be small is more likely to be characterised by light weaponries.

Table 6.4.7.5 **Reasons for using weapons**

		YGUNS23			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	For defense	18	26.5	45.0	45.0
	To harm victims	1	1.5	2.5	47.5
	To threaten but not to harm	11	16.2	27.5	75.0
	Other	10	14.7	25.0	100.0
	Total	40	58.8	100.0	
Missing	System	28	41.2		
Total		68	100.0		

Table 6.4.7.5 contains the item, which is concerned with investigating the reasons for using weapons. The number of non-response (28) is still fairly high, and it represents 41.2% of the total. However, the number of respondents who answered it is viewed as significant. On overall, 40 interviewees responded and constitute 58.8% of the total 68 figures. Not too surprising, 45.0% who responded give “defence” as the main reason for their use of weapons. 27.5% says it is to threaten, and not to harm, and 25% says it for other purposes. Only 2.5% of the respondents say it is mainly to put the weapon (s) into use—that is, to “harm”.

These findings are important because they tend to show that although some people choose to commit armed robbery in all its western sophistry and brutality, they do however, still keep touch with the moral rectitude of their social context. This is well evidenced in the reasons provided for the use of weapons, and was in addition, strengthened when asked at a later stage how and what they perceive their victims to be. In fact, most of the respondents (87.2%) indicated that they do not use the weapon (s) with the intention to harm their victims. So, what is infer from these reasons is that the non-harmful-attitudes of most offenders could be because they do reasoned, and correctly too, that mere display of weapons is a potential danger enough to scare victims out of putting up resistance. Therefore, these offenders are able to be in a position of the “masters” of the situation (see also Einstadter 1975 in Rushing 1975:458; Wright and Decker, 1997; Iwarimie-Jaja 1999a:137).

Weapons used tend to serve four main purposes (Conklin 1972): to create buffer zone, to intimidates victims, to make good the threat, and to ensure escape after the completion of the crime. The only one respondent among those interviewed in this present study, and who used weapons for the purpose to harm was more succinct and lucid when he intones:

“Some people are hardened and are terror as well’.

This latter perception is supported by the finding of Wright and Decker (1997) who found that most offenders are likely to respond with severe, but nonlethal violence when faced with recalcitrant victim. Another who subscribes to other reasons sums it up thus;

“With Ak47 and knife, you can do anything”



Table 6.4.7.6

**Sources of weapons**

		GETGUN24			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Bought from the market	10	14.7	20.4	20.4
	Supplied by the armed forces	13	19.1	26.5	46.9
	Stolen from someone	4	5.9	8.2	55.1
	Hired from someone	4	5.9	8.2	63.3
	other	18	26.5	36.7	100.0
	Total	49	72.1	100.0	
Missing	System	19	27.9		
Total		68	100.0		

Table 6.4.7.6 focuses on the sources of these weapons. There is a little closeness to the responses in the immediate preceding item and table. Indeed, 72.1% of the analysable data answered the question. 26.5% were or are supplied their weapons by members of the armed forces (see table 6.4.7.7 below for the break downs). 36.7% got theirs from other sources not listed in the options—perhaps by stealing from parents or relations. Another important source as several arrest reports indicate is the police officers and victims whose weapons (guns) had previously been reported as lost to bandit of armed robbers. 8.2% either operate with weapons stolen from someone or simply hired from someone.

The significant number of weapons that are obtained from members of the armed forces is worrying, and this must be seen as sufficiently having serious policy implications. But this is also very instructive in line of the preponderate accusations against these armed forces—the police force in particular. The public generally describes this latter segment of the armed forces—police as collaborators to the spate of brutal armed robbery in modern Nigeria. The suspicion is rife among the general public that armed robbery in Nigeria has assumed its present intractable dimension due to the connivance of the police. An armed robber nicknamed “Machine”, who was arrested sometimes ago, confessed that while he led his gang of hoodlums, he had also acted as a police informant (see the *New African Magazine*, February 1986; and also the confession of Anini in “*The story of Anini*” Olurode 1990)

Another reveal of the findings is that although arms deal (market) is strictly being controlled in Nigeria, the growing trends of the illegal market of arms sale could no longer be overemphasised. In addition, an important finding in the item is the added source of obtaining weapons for use during robbery operation, which was never thought about in the study. This source is riot or crisis moments. In modern Nigeria, and in the past few years, the particular phenomenal religious crises—Christian vs. Muslims, often referred to as “Sharia” crisis on the one hand, and ubiquitous ethnic rivalries (crises) on the other hand, provide the illegitimate opportunities for access to weapons used in most contemporary armed robbery operations in the country. So, the finding tends to support the assertions by some writers on the wave of armed robbery in the post-colonial Nigeria as a direct consequence of the aftermath of the 1967 civil war.

Table 6.4.7.7 **Sources of weapons (guns) among armed forces**

FORCES25					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Police	10	14.7	58.8	58.8
	Customs	2	2.9	11.8	70.6
	The army	2	2.9	11.8	82.4
	Air Force	1	1.5	5.9	88.2
	Private security companies	2	2.9	11.8	100.0
	Total	17	25.0	100.0	
Missing	System	51	75.0		
Total		68	100.0		

The particular sources of these weapons among the armed forces are the concerns of the item in table 6.4.7.7 above. The percentage of respondents (25%) is slightly above the 19.1% respondents who attributed the sources of their weapons to the armed forces, but it is nevertheless, very close. Most (58.8%) say they obtained their weapons from the police force. Only 5.9% gives the air force as the sources of their supplies.

As pointed above, these findings further strengthen the allegation linking the police in particular and armed forces in general, as collaborators to armed robbery. The arrest and trial of Anini and his gang was a vivid pointer to the fact that the police force does have link with these armed robbers. Many officers were named as collaborators to

the Anini and his gang. And indeed, so much so that a senior police officer, DSP Iyamu was among those publicly executed along side Anini and his gang members because of the overwhelming evidence of his direct connection and dealings with the gang. (for details, see Olurode 1990:48-62). Many of the subjects interviewed were blunt in telling the researcher that their operations are aided by many serving cops in the states. Some of them were even threatening—to lead the researcher to where planning in collaboration with these cops takes place. As most of them summed up:

The police are the one who tell us who to rob or not. They give us also the weapons we need. If you don't mind, arrange to be taken to where they are planning operation with other gangs now. After assisting us, they turn around to arrest us and allow us to suffer it alone. Give us a pen and paper to write for you all about their activities.

These kinds of allegations are not uncommon amongst the Nigerian populace and investigatory journalists who have at different times boldly, or at pain established the subterfuge networks of operation between gangs of armed robbers and the Nigerian police, and in some cases, the military wing of the armed forces.

Table 6.4.7.8                      **Mode of transportation**

VEHICLE6					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Foot	10	14.7	27.0	27.0
	Automobile	21	30.9	56.8	83.8
	Motorcycles	2	2.9	5.4	89.2
	Bicycles	4	5.9	10.8	100.0
	Total	37	54.4	100.0	
Missing	System	31	45.6		
Total		68	100.0		

This item is concerned with finding out the most common means—modes or system of transport or movement for most contemporary armed robbery operations in Nigeria. In

the context of modern world, automobiles are significant means of transportation. Not surprising, it is thus, so extensively employed by armed robbers. Most respondents (56.8%) say they operate using this—automobiles. Motorcycles (bikes) as part of the automobiles are given preference by 5.4% respondents. 27% says they robbed by foot, and 10.8% indicates robbing by bicycles.

It is indeed, an incontrovertible fact that most armed robberies today are carried out by automobile, saved by strategic reasons to use foot, bikes and other means. But it must be emphasised that the means of transport are by no means limited to one particular modes of transportation. Sometimes, automobiles are combined with foot, and/ or bikes depending on what means are available, and the crime ecology. As one respondent indicated in response to the same question:

“All weather. Everything goes!”

Table 6.4.7.9 **Sources of transportation**

HIRED37					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Members own	6	8.8	22.2	22.2
	Hire	11	16.2	40.7	63.0
	From God father	7	10.3	25.9	88.9
	From a friend or relative	3	4.4	11.1	100.0
	Total	27	39.7	100.0	
Missing	System	41	60.3		
Total		68	100.0		

The need to unearth the prime sources of these means of transportation is the focus of the variable in table 6.4.7.9. There is consistence in the responses when viewed against the immediate preceding one. In fact, the 27 respondents who subscribed to the fact they robbed using one form of transportation other than foot responded to the variable. By and

large, 40.7% say they “hired” it, and often from an accomplice. According to one subject when it was further inquired during the in-depth interview, hiring is usually as he put it:

“From someone who is aware of our intention”

11.1% respondents indicated their sources as god-fathers, friends and relatives respectively. There were, however, some offenders who drew the attention of the researcher to “snatching”—as their source of the means of transport, which somewhat was missed out in the options. According to one of the subjects who indicated snatching:

“We snatch just for the purpose. We drop it back along the way for the owner’s reach”

Police reports on armed robbery cases point to increasing number of snatching at gunpoint, of cars and buses for use in robbery operations. Snatching of automobile for operation also represent a particular pattern of armed robbery. As for instance, victim’s car is snatched, as a mean to an end—use to carry out robbery and abandoned, or an end in itself—snatched as the target property.

#### **6.4.8 Membership and organizational structure of armed robbery**

Armed robbery is fundamentally, more of a group activity, though lone robbery also exists. They are composed of a handful of gang of individuals as the members, who share the same intent to rob, and to enjoy the accruing gains. Successful completion and rewarding robbery operation depends mainly on the co-ordination of the various tasks that need be completed. According to Einstadter (1975 in Rushing 1975:457) citing Paul Hare (1964:252), a well-operated armed robbery partnership may simply be obtained by dyad, but generally, a group of three men appears to be the most tactically effective unit.

Although memberships are mostly male, they are by no means limited to it. That is, contemporary armed robbery is no longer a gender issue—memberships also do invariably include females, but usually in an obscure manner. In addition, group robberies are generally, not simply amorphous. Besides the composition, the structure includes members with specialised roles—who take positions as leaders, informants, godfathers, wheelman, hitman, and officers-in-charge (OC). These members to an extent are people possessing different trade or professional skills.

The organisational outlook is a hierarchical one, but not didactic. So, to be a successful venture, memberships are organised and assigned with different or specialised roles. This subsection contains items that explore into these areas—a to reassess its utility and relevance to modern armed robbery in contemporary Nigeria. It is therefore, about membership composition of robbery gangs (e.g. the links between proximate members in the gang and their outsiders); embodying the gender, leadership and roles differentiation, and group participation. It contains seven items, which are reflected in the questions asked as depicted in the tables and figures 6.4.8.1--6.4.8.7.

Table 6.4.8.1 **Robbery as lone or group**

ROBALON8					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	6	8.8	13.6	13.6
	No	38	55.9	86.4	100.0
	Total	44	64.7	100.0	
Missing	System	24	35.3		
Total		68	100.0		

The table 6.4.8.1 contains the item that is concerned with finding whether respondents robbed alone or in-group. Put differently, the question attempts to tease out whether

contemporary armed robberies are more likely to be carried out singly or in GroupWise. Most (86.4%) say they rob in groups. Only a paltry of 13.6% says they rob alone.

However, findings strongly suggest that armed robbery is more of group behaviour and activities compared to other similar crimes such as burglary, murder and theft. These are likely to be carried out by a lone person. Previous researches show that career armed robbery is conducted more in and through partnership (see Conklin 1972; Zimring 1981; McLynn 1989; Katz 1996; Iwarimie-Jaja 1999a; Maree 1999).

Armed robbers work through a group of partners with whom they share equally in what risks there are, and invest their services to the total enterprise. This partnership provides the opportunity for differentiation of various tasks necessary to carry out the robbery, and to plan its strategy. For the lone systematic robber is rare. Even though a lone person may perform robbery, it is thought to be overwhelmingly fraught with risk. So, careerists felt that a profitable robbery is rarely completed successfully alone. There is a greater probability of accuracy in solving problems among groups since greater resources, ideas and capacity for dealing with errors are easily pooled together (see Barnlund 1959; Einstadter 1975).

Table 6.4.8.2 **Strengths of a group armed robbery**

GROUP29					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	3-5 members	28	41.2	60.9	60.9
	6-10 members	6	8.8	13.0	73.9
	11-14 members	3	4.4	6.5	80.4
	other	9	13.2	19.6	100.0
	Total	46	67.6	100.0	
Missing	System	22	32.4		
Total		68	100.0		



Table 6.4.8.2 is considered essential to the actual operation of robbery because it provides answers to the group's composition in terms of their numerical strength. From the table, it is found that the total number of respondents (46) who responded to the item is very close to those (38) respondents who say they operate in groups. Significant percentage number (60.9%) say membership is between 3-5. Between 11-14 groups memberships are given by 6.5% of the respondents. "Others" could be taken to consist dyad—armed robbers consisting of only two individuals, or combined groups numbering well over fourteen.

The findings of the item show that armed robbery, though a group enterprises, is nevertheless, not a mob action. Being conscious of the professionalism of their activity, and the need to maximize profit, the tendency among armed robbery gang members is to maintain manageable sizes. So, it seems apparent that what is considered when constituting memberships are the roles to be executed in any operation. As one subject during the in-depth interviews put it:

There is no rule. We just say hey, we've got to do this and that. How many do we need? And we decide and go on to organise ourselves. That is, it's the type of robbery that tells us how many we should be.

Referring to Einstadter (1975) citing Paul Hare, and appearing in the first paragraph of this subsection, it does seem reasonable, however, that between 3-5 are the most prevalence number of memberships, and invariably, the most significantly preferred; this is informed by role performances such as wheelman, commander, and executioners.

Implicit in the findings therefore, is the importance in understanding why Nigerian police do often find it justifiable to stop and interrogate occupants of a car consisting of between 3-5 men, and especially four men.

Eyewitness accounts on some robbery incidence report about armed bandits numbering up to twenty and above, and in some other instances, consisting of only two, but creating an impression that obscures their minuscule.

Table 6.4.8. 3 **Leadership requirement**

LEADER30					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	31	45.6	70.5	70.5
	No	13	19.1	29.5	100.0
	Total	44	64.7	100.0	
Missing	System	24	35.3		
Total		68	100.0		

If in groups, the quest to find if members do have a group leader is represented in the table above. A total of 44 respondents answered the question, showing a near consistence to the preceding items about membership composition. Most (70.5%) say, “Yes”, that they do have a group leader. And 29.5% say, “No”, that they do not have leaders.

Findings by and large, tend to suggest that there is a formal, however loose, structural organisation among contemporary Nigerian armed robbers. Organisation develops in the interaction amongst criminals. Such organisation is either a formal association with organised division of labour and role differentiations, and which has lines of commands (leadership). Or it may be informal with similarity and reciprocity of interest and attitudes (Sutherland 1939:227).

Therefore, the term godfather may no more or less be synonymous to a group leader in armed robbery gangs or groups. Police reports indicate that most robbery gangs

do have leaders, which may either be involved directly in robbery, or play the role of financier, protection, and/ or adviser. Although research on the area of leadership seems negligible in literature, Olurode (1990: 60) notes that Anini's greatest assets were his power of co-ordination as the leader of the gang; consistently being after result, and knows the right people who can deliver for contact. As he sums it up (1990: 60):

“...Anini was also not a greedy leader...” Virtually all the subjects during the in-depth interview attest to the fact that they do have gang leader but that the leaders are not supposed to be autocratic.

Table 6.4.8.4 **Leadership criteria**

CHOOSE31					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	By appointment	2	2.9	4.9	4.9
	By volunteer	1	1.5	2.4	7.3
	By experince	26	38.2	63.4	70.7
	other	12	17.6	29.3	100.0
	Total	41	60.3	100.0	
Missing	System	27	39.7		
Total		68	100.0		

This variable is about how these leaders are chosen, and the findings are provided in table 6.4.8.4. Again, a close consistence of responses to the preceding items is discernible. Most (63.4%) chose their leaders by experience, and 2.4% by volunteer. One respondent further adds in the question:

“It is the actor of the moment that is chosen as the leader”

It is important to note that findings show that the recruitment of leaders is mainly done in the tradition of experiences. Armed robbers therefore, do not operate completely outside the realm of conventional business ethics and standard. The belief in experience may be informed by the philosophy: “experience is the best teacher”. This finding

confirms the previous finding, which shows that there is little discernible evidence of the distinctive leadership roles, but that previous experiences of members are given due recognition (Einstadter 1975 in Rushing 1975: 455). However, in their unique ways, contemporary armed robbers in Nigeria have also intriguingly, devised other means to choose their leaders as 29.3% respondents indicated. These others may include such criteria as the victim-member proximity, age, academic qualifications, and temperament.

Table 6.4.8.5 **Females' membership**

FEMALE32					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	16	23.5	35.6	35.6
	No	29	42.6	64.4	100.0
	Total	45	66.2	100.0	
Missing	System	23	33.8		
Total		68	100.0		

The idea of female membership is raised as a specific item that is worthy of investigation. While 35.6% says, “Yes”, that they do have female in their groups, most—64.45% says, “No”. This is also close and near in consistence to the responses on group membership.

Whether or not the percentage of females in an armed robbery gang or profession is still relatively few in contemporary Nigeria, one obvious and incontrovertible thing is that female partnership in the crime has come to stay. And there is sufficient evidence to state definitively, that their participation in the crime would upsurge as they experience dramatic changes in the social, economic and political context in the legitimate world (see also Adler 1975:6-7; Simon 1975). It is less arguable that being part of the large contemporary Nigerian society, the temptations, the challenges, stresses, and strain; accentuated by decades of political instability, military dictatorship, economic

brigandage, and unrestrained lust of foreign social values, all these which Nigerian women have or are being increasingly subjected to, would cause them to be more vulnerable. So, they would react in the same manner in which their male counterparts have consistently and persistently acted or reacted to the same stimuli.

Table 6.4.8.6 **Reasons for non-females' membership**

NOLADY34					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Lack of secrecy	7	10.3	17.9	17.9
	Lack of will and strength	9	13.2	23.1	41.0
	Not just considered	12	17.6	30.8	71.8
	Other	11	16.2	28.2	100.0
	Total	39	57.4	100.0	
Missing	System	29	42.6		
Total		68	100.0		

In table 6.4.8.6, the reasons for not including females in the group are explored. This question was directed to those who do not have females in their gang. There is, however, inconsistency in the responses to the “No” in the preceding table. For instance, (57.4%), which represent a total of 39 responded in this table as against the previous 29 who said they do not have females in their groups. 17.9%, do, however give the “lack of secrecy” as the reason for their non-inclusion of female partners. 23.1% gives the “lack of will and strength” as the major reason for not co-opting females into their gang. A fairly large number (30.8%) says female partners were not just considered.

Whatever are the reasons for the non-inclusion of females, the fact is that armed robbery is a crime that demands the utmost precautions. And the assumption is that while women could provide the most vital information needed for successful gangs though, they can by nature, be more predisposed to divulge secret than their male counterparts.

Table 6.4.8.7

**Females' roles in group robbery****FROLES33**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	As informant	8	11.8	30.8	30.8
	As sexual satisfaction partners	2	2.9	7.7	38.5
	To participate in actual robbery	4	5.9	15.4	53.8
	Other	12	17.6	46.2	100.0
	Total	26	38.2	100.0	
Missing	System	42	61.8		
Total		68	100.0		

The reasons for female membership seem the last, but by no means the least in this subsection, and are represented as item seven in table 6.4.8.7. Data analysis shows a degree of inconsistency because a total of 26 respondents answered the question as against the 16 who admitted to have females in their groups. This inconsistency could either be because of misunderstanding, which occasionally was the case as revealed in the data. Or it could be because of the psychological nature (intuitive ability) of armed robbers to manoeuvre facts, sometimes, for the purpose of not letting their whole identities and activities known to a stranger.

However, analysis of the item reveals that 30.8% says female partners in the group perform the role of “informants. 7.7% of those who responded to the question say female members serve as “sexual satisfaction partners” (*gratis*). Data thus, reveals that

majority of females are confined to mere informants. Important in these findings is that 15.4% says that women do really participate in the actual robbery operation. 46.2% respondents give other reasons for including females in their gangs.

Generally, it seems no more an aberration to find that contemporary armed robbery have seen women actively involved in all its ramifications—sponsoring, actively participating in planning, and in the execution. Feminists such as Kathleen Daly (1994 cf. Brown et al. 1998: 476) notes that women were as likely as men, capable to brandish a gun or knife, and capable to take active participatory role in the execution of robbery. In the context of the available evidence—literature, police reports, and eye witness accounts, it seems there are sufficient grounds for anticipating that the roles of most females members of robbery gang are limited to those outside actively getting involved in the execution of robbery exploits. Besides being sentimental and male-oriented, armed robbery like most other forms of criminal activities demanding direct confrontation with the law enforcement agents seem obviously, to down play the roles of women. Whitaker (1987: 328), describing the role of females or women in the mafia world—a typical kind or robbery gangs, notes that they merely act as a decoy, housekeeper, or sexual object.

The involvement of the females in armed robbery in the contemporary societies such as in Nigeria is a direct function of the changing economic, political and social values of the “new”—so construed, Nigerian women. But more importantly, their increasing incorporation into the robbery gangs may no less be in recognition of the anatomy of their power in the contemporary Nigerian society. On the overall, the low involvement of women in the robbery operations is because of the age long tradition of downplaying the active involvement of women in the fields where men have established

dominance in African societies. So, majority of the female members of an armed robbery gang continually play the roles of informants, sexual gratis and housekeeper.

#### 6.4.9 Networking and roles performances

Researches on high profile criminal activities such as armed robbery reveal that it is a whole embodiment of networking and roles performance. As most armed robberies are carried out in groups and in syndicated manner, there are classes of people who are parts of the string of the network that pave ways for their successes. Highly placed people, marginal members of the society as well as disgruntled elements of the armed forces are unarguably, part of the broad network of robbery membership. This sub-section is concerned with the network of the offence and offenders, and the role performances of members of the robbery gang in the contemporary Nigerian society.

Table 6.4.9.1 **Roles performances of gang members**

UROLE35					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Commander (Leader)	5	7.4	10.9	10.9
	Wheelman (Driver)	5	7.4	10.9	21.7
	Hitman, Mopol (Watch-over)	15	22.1	32.6	54.3
	Inspector, O.C, Corporal (Actual robbing)	4	5.9	8.7	63.0
	Other	17	25.0	37.0	100.0
	Total	46	67.6	100.0	
Missing	System	22	32.4		
Total		68	100.0		

The table 6.4.9.1 focuses on the different roles performed by the offenders in an armed robbery GroupWise. These roles are not neatly specialised and confined ones, however.



There are roles overlapping—some offenders perform combined roles depending on the nature, scene of the crime, and availability of members. Einstadter (1975: 457) notes that at other times, a more flexible arrangement is used with assignments or roles shifting from one robbery to another, and the functional differentiation depending chiefly on what talents are available.

On the whole, 32.6% respondents perform the role of a “watch-over”—described as hitman or mopol (see section 1.7). The word “hitman” or “mopol” is derived from the conventional activities of the mobile police squad of the Nigerian police force. They are a very specialised branch of the police—anti riot, active, mean and swift, and are concerned with handling tough situations. 8.7% are involved in the “actual robbing”, and designated variously as “inspector”, “officer-in-charge” (OC), and “corporal”. 37.0% gives “others” as the roles they perform.

Implicit in the findings is that majority of armed robbers arrested are those whose duties involved “watch-over” and “others”. These people are mainly those described as hitmen and mopol. They are among the individuals whose roles it is to perform the actual robbery. But basically, they are considered as “backups”—to watch any one in the robbery scene, to take care of resistance or recalcitrant victims, and to monitor movements. One possible explanation for this trend—their high figure in arrest list could be because of the nature of their roles. It is probably because the prevailing rule and loyalty requires them to ensure that all members of the gang are guaranteed safety before they make their escapes.

It may also be inferred from the responses in table 6.4.11.1 below, which show that majority of them got arrested long after the offence that because of the nature of their

roles—violent-prone, they are more exposed to a higher risk of identifications than others. The low level of arrest of the leaders and wheelmen may be understood in the light of their wealth of experiences, and their advantageous positions as the wheelmen.

Table 6.4.9.2 **Godfathers and links with outsiders**

GODPA38					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	22	32.4	44.9	44.9
	No	27	39.7	55.1	100.0
	Total	49	72.1	100.0	
Missing	System	19	27.9		
Total		68	100.0		

The table 6.4.9.2 is an inquiry into whether offenders do have godfathers or not. 44.9% respondents answer in affirmative, to the fact that they have godfathers or area fathers. However, a fairly above average (55.1%) responded in normative—“No”, to the fact that they do not have godfathers or area fathers called sponsors. The implication of the findings is that armed robbers in contemporary Nigeria do have godfathers, but it may not be peculiar to all the offenders. Indeed, there are a marginally higher number of respondents who do not have area fathers than those who have. So, the issue of godfathers according to findings in this study seems to suggest that it is not so much an important issue since there is no apparent significance different between those who have and those who do not. Partly because once a particular armed robbery operation is discussed by a group who invest some degrees of commitments and seriousness, all participants becomes, and are automatically recognised as full partners to the robbery escapade, and all considered themselves as equally involved, and to have a stake in the success of the planned enterprise (see also Einstadter 1975: 450). It seems that offender

may considered only as important, their link and network with the law enforcement agents especially the police whom they have daily contacts with.

Yet, those who have these area fathers are fairly large enough, and this find support with the study of Iwarmie-Jaja (1999a: 143). This author notes that armed robbers do have godfathers or sponsors called “area fathers”, and they are recognised members of the society—as businessmen, artisans, and preachers. These godfathers are usually well connected with the police.

Table 6.4.9.3 **Reasons for godfather**

YGODPA39					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	For protection and covers	13	19.1	56.5	56.5
	To provide materials needed	10	14.7	43.5	100.0
	Total	23	33.8	100.0	
Missing	System	45	66.2		
Total		68	100.0		

Amongst those who have godfathers, the reasons for doing so were sought for, and they constitute the item (variable) represented in table 6.4.9.3. The responses in the item also demonstrate consistency with the immediate preceding responses in affirmative (22). 56.5% respondents say they have godfathers for “protection and cover-up”. To provide the “needed materials” are what informed 43.5% to have area fathers. These materials include weapons, information, transportation, and medical bills for an injured robber, and the sustenance of robbers’ family members when in custody.

Table 6.4.9.4

**Criteria for choice of godfathers**

**FAVORI40**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	From known retired armed robbers	8	11.8	20.5	20.5
	Any influential member of the society	2	2.9	5.1	25.6
	Those connected to law enforcement	12	17.6	30.8	56.4
	Other	17	25.0	43.6	100.0
	Total	39	57.4	100.0	
Missing	System	29	42.6		
Total		68	100.0		

The categories of the citizens from which these godfathers are drawn constitute item four in the sub-section, and is presented in table 6.4.9.4. Put differently, respondents were asked the particular groups or classes of individuals who are favourites in the choice of godfathers. Only an infinitesimal number of respondents (5.1%) say the favourites are the influential members of the society (community). Those members of the society connected to the law enforcement agencies are the prime favourites for the choice as godfathers to 30.8% respondents. 43.6% respondents say that other classes of members of the society are the favourites. It is presumed that these “others” may include individuals such as lawyers, politicians, and businessmen, who may not really be influential in terms of the material wealth, but are strong opinion shapers in the respective communities or areas of domicile—states, regions, and local government councils.

The findings are very crucial because they point out clearly to the fact that armed robbers do more or less have links with some respectable members of the society,

especially the law enforcement agents. Although only 12 respondents pointed out that they favour members of the law enforcement agents as godfathers, this figure becomes important when it is compared to other categories of individuals favoured in the society. In addition, this figure is significant when it is taken against the backdrops that most armed robbers are more likely to secure their weapons (guns) from the armed forces, and also against the perceptions of the general Nigerian public on the image of the contemporary Nigeria police.

As have severally noted, the general public perceptions in Nigeria today are that the police are, but an accomplice to the wave of armed robbery in the country today. This image has made reporting robbery incident to the police almost zero. The image of this perception informed Iwarimie-Jaja's (1999a: 157) view point when he states thus:

...Even where law enforcement agents possess adequate repressive instruments to contain and control the scourge of armed robbery, this same agents' collusion with armed robbers has rendered the use of these instruments inconsequential.

Modern law enforcement agents co-operate with criminal organisations because they are in control of politicians who are either criminals in the usual sense of the word—grafters and bribetakers (specialised forms of criminals) themselves, or because of common membership in the criminal underworld (Sutherland 1939: 228). Ekpeyong (1989: 21) is also vivid in asserting that armed robbery is characterised by extensive collusion, tactically or otherwise with the law enforcement agencies, the notorious which is mainly the police. Olurode (1990:55-60) underscores the length and strong relationship that existed between Anini and a group of policemen headed by Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP), Iyamu. Iwarimie-Jaja's (1999a: 139) study of 56 armed robbers shows

that most (66.7%) involved collusion, or rather conspiracy possibly between members of the gang and the outsiders, the most obvious being the police.

The lacklustre attitudes of the police to respond to alerted or reported armed robbery cases, and to prosecute arrested offenders, or even in some instances; hunts after the innocent (victims) do little to correct the public perceptions of their collusion with these criminals. In contemporary Nigeria, investigatory journalism is replete with scintillating reveal of the widespread of police connections in all manners of criminal activities-organised and unorganised.

One subject's viewpoint can be considered as a summary of their reactions and responses, and goes thus:

“Oga, I can give you the address where you can go and find the police planning operations with robbers. If you go there, you go find the police wey dey there, planning armed robbery with robbers. Na them dey supply us with information and weapons”<sup>3</sup>

#### **6.4.10 Choice of victims and afterthoughts of robbery operation (Mindsets)**

Choices of would-be victims are neither ordinarily, nor haphazardly made. They are often based on certain criteria; and evaluated on cost-benefit analysis basis. There is also an understanding that offenders do encounter a kind of schizophrenia—split personality, marked by crisis between thoughts, feelings and actions. Feelings of guilt, the indecision on whether to quit or not and so on are always bothering the offenders. So, apart from the choices of the victims, the psychological well beings of the offenders before and after robbery operations is also of significant for investigation. This sub-section therefore, examines the general mindset of the offenders as they are confronted with the decision on

their choice of victims, as they attempt to rationalise their actions, their feelings with regard to arrest, and what and how they perceive their victims as they carry out their robbery exploits.

Table 6.4.10.1 **Criteria for choice of victims**

INFOTIP1					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	By informant	20	29.4	41.7	41.7
	Any victim(s) nominated by member	7	10.3	14.6	56.3
	By consideration of security, risk and benefit	6	8.8	12.5	68.8
	other	15	22.1	31.3	100.0
	Total	48	70.6	100.0	
Missing	System	20	29.4		
Total		68	100.0		

Table 6.4.10.1 is about criteria used to choose targets (victims). 41.7% says the choice of targets or victims is by “informant”. Informants could either be the police, female members of individuals in group gang, relatives of gang members, an enemy, someone who jealous of the neighbour’s achievement, friends, business partners or opponents. 14.6% says it is by nomination from a member of the robbery gang. 12.5% and 31.3% say it is by consideration of the security, the risk and the benefits, and “other” criteria respectively.

The findings confirm the prevailing mindsets amongst most members of the general public about armed robbers in contemporary Nigeria. Going by the patterns of most armed robberies in the cities, towns and villages, and against the various victims, the prevailing knowledge among members of the public is that the choice of targets or

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<sup>3</sup> A combination of standard English with the pidgin so peculiar to West Africa including

victims is a rotational exercise whereby a member of an armed robbery gang is obliged to nominate a victim, and to play a crucial role in the planning of the operation. Although the research stopped short of exploring the relationship between the offenders and the victims, there is the likelihood that armed robbers would select a victim who is known either wholly or partially to them, and who is “productive”. Gang member who does the selection would in that circumstance play a passive role during the actual operation.

Whatever targets or victims are chosen, three factors are crucial to the gang of armed robbers or the lone-armed robber in making the selection. These are lucrative; establishment; and lower risk of arrest (Thio 1998:326). For instance, still focusing on the results in the table, about 6 respondents say the choice of targets is based on the consideration of security, risk and benefits. “Others” as criteria or factors likely to influence the choice of targets include paid or sponsored armed robbery in which case robbery becomes a mean of settling personal differences, what could be properly regarded as the “ill-luck” victim—whereby victims are randomly picked as precursors to “big robbery scores” or as a result of the frustration encountered by a robbery gang, publicity, and revenge as when police crime fighters or their relations are targeted.



Table 6.4.10.2

**Perception of victims****VICTIM42**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	A helpless human being	14	20.6	34.1	34.1
	A potential enemy	11	16.2	26.8	61.0
	A worth person to make friends with	7	10.3	17.1	78.0
	The cause of your problem	9	13.2	22.0	100.0
	Total	41	60.3	100.0	
Missing	System	27	39.7		
Total		68	100.0		

Table 6.10.42 relates to the perceptions of the offenders about their victims. Put differently, what do offenders think of their victims? Analysis of the responses in the table shows that both the respondents' positive and negative perceptions are almost at par. For instance, 34.1% says they perceive their victims as "helpless beings" (positive). 17.1% sees their victims as worthy persons to make "friend" with (positive). Conversely, 26.8% perceives their victims as "potential enemies". 22.0% respondents responded by saying they perceive their victims as the "cause of their problems or predicament". Both latter responses are interpreted as representative of the negative dimension of perceptions. The reason for those not who did not respond it may be read to suggest, is that it matters less to these non-respondents on what and how the victims are perceived as long as what they desire are achieved. Perceptions of armed robbers toward the victims may also be

dependent on a number of factors—relationships of robbers to victims, the mood of the robbers, and or victims, the prevailing situations at the robbery scene and so on.

Although, it does seem there is a somewhat strong negative perception about the victims—given the number of negative responses. However, it does on the other hand sound logical to argue that modern day armed robbers in Nigeria are averse to inflicting actual harm or violence on their victims. These feelings and perceptions may have accounted for the high rate of respondents who said they brandish weapons mainly as a means of threat.

Researches show that armed robbers tend to rely more on potential violence—the threat of force; this made to appear real and frightening to the victims by brandishing of weapons (Wright and Decker 1997; Thio 1998:327; Iwarimie-Jaja 1999a:137). And in a social setting like Nigeria where cultural ties, a sense of collectivism, and a strong aversion to violence still prevails, it may be right to conclude that actual violence by armed robbers on victims may be far than being proxy.

Table 6.4.10.3 **Feelings about injured victims**

HARMED43					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very bad	15	22.1	35.7	35.7
	Regretful	18	26.5	42.9	78.6
	Happy	1	1.5	2.4	81.0
	It doesn't really matter	8	11.8	19.0	100.0
	Total	42	61.8	100.0	
Missing	System	26	38.2		
Total		68	100.0		

This table (6.4.10.3) reveals how these offenders feel when they see their victims harmed or maimed in any manner. Regretful as a kind of psychological state of the mind is

referred to by 42.9% of the respondents. A fairly large number (35.7%) indicates that they do really feel very bad. While 19.0% says it does not really matter to them, only 2.4% respondent says he does feel happy. As this latter respondent stressed further:

“I feel happy because of people who choose to die rather than give me the money”.

One respondent among those who say it does not matter to them whether a victim is harmed or not has his remark particularly more satirical as he tones:

“Soldier go, soldier come. It doesn’t really matter”.

This latter reactions find support with the argument of Katz (1996 in Conklin 1996:176) that those who persist in robbery must either be especially skilful in dramatizing violent behaviour, or are unusually indifferent to the dictates of reason.

The reactions of some subjects also point to the fact that offenders resent employing actual violence on their victims, and do often express regret when it does occur. As one robber put it:

“We don’t always want to harm or kill anybody. That is, not the aim. All we’re often interested in is to get what we want and leave. Even when we harm or kill we often feel sorry for that”.

Other robbers (subjects) add:

We don’t like to kill. But sometimes you find out that the victims or the police want to play fast on us. Then we strike. But even after that, we do feel sorry for causing loss of lives or injuries.

“Armed robbers don’t kill just because they want to kill. It is when you prove unco-operative, maybe attacking or trying to find their faces”

What findings show therefore, and from which a wide scale of meaning could read from especially following the first two preceding responses, is an illustration to the

fact that archetype contemporary Nigerian armed robber is to a degree, very harmfully mindful to the surprise of ordinary members of the public. Threat remains essentially one of the major reasons for employing weapons, and is also mainly for defence purpose. Robbers do reasoned, and correctly too, that the presence of threat occasioned with the brandishing of weapons and verbal commands are “red alert” enough to scare victims to put up resistance. Indeed, as earlier on pointed, weapons used served four main purposes: to create buffer zone; to intimidate victims; to make good the threat, and to ensure escape after the completion of the crime (Conklin 1972:73; Wright and Decker, 1997).

Table 6.4.10.4 **Feelings of regret**

REGRET44					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	35	51.5	74.5	74.5
	No	12	17.6	25.5	100.0
	Total	47	69.1	100.0	
Missing	System	21	30.9		
Total		68	100.0		

Table 6.4.10.4 contains the question that inquired from the offenders whether they had at any point in time during their robbery career regretted it— either as a career, or pass time armed robber. Most (74.5%) say, “Yes”, that they have regretted their involvement. Only 25.5% says “No” to the fact that they have not regretted it.

The high rate of “Yes” responses may be interpreted in the light of the enduring pains and sufferings, which these offenders may have experienced in prison custody. It may also have been because most of them face possible death penalty or life imprisonment, or even the simple fact that most of them appeared to have being “born-again” (repentants) in the realm of the gospel of God. The various reasons offered for

regret include: imprisonment and the accompanying suffering; because and/ or when friends have been killed; the lack of proper utilisation of proceeds from an operation; retrospection, and finding that many have gone, and because of guilty conscience. With respect to the proceeds from robbery, some of the respondents and subjects put it quite lucid when they say:

“ when after operation, and I didn’t invest those things I got from the game very well, I always regret it”.

“There is no gain in armed robbery. You cannot even use the money for any good things”.

“In armed robbery, when you are succeeding, you will be happy, but when arrested, you need to repent and understand there is no gain in it”.

Among those respondents and subjects who said they have not regretted, some of them were blunt in their reactions, and explained inter alia:

“I have no regret because I have chosen it to be my hobby and occupation”;

“Action speaks more than words;

“Keep clear”.

“I am a robber and will not regret or leave it. Thank you!”

Table 6.4.10.5 **Thought of arrest**

ARREST26					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	23	33.8	47.9	47.9
	No	25	36.8	52.1	100.0
	Total	48	70.6	100.0	
Missing	System	20	29.4		
Total		68	100.0		

The table 6.4.10.5 is a continuation of the inquiry into the mindset of offenders before and during their periods of involvement in armed robbery activity. In other words, what was the frame of mind of the offenders with regard to the likelihood of being arrested and punished before they decided to get involved, and as they remained in the crime? So, it is inquired in this table if the offenders ever thought of a possible arrest during the course of their robbery career or exploits. Reactions to the questions are almost at par to the two options. 47.9% says, “Yes”, that they did think of a likely arrest; and a fairly above average (52.1%) says, “No”. That is, they never thought of the likelihood of arrest.

Findings therefore, it may be successfully argued, show no significant difference between “thought” and “no-thought” of the likelihood of being arrested by the offenders. Or rather still, that most contemporary armed robbers in Nigeria are less likely to get worried about their being arrested during their robbery career or exploits. Previous studies of armed robbers demonstrate that the offenders give little thought to being arrested while actively engaging in robbery even though such occurrence is dully recognised as capable to eventuate (see Einstadter 1975 in Rushing 1975: 451). Barry (1979:59 cf. Brown et al. 1998: 477) described burglars’ mindset (this display almost all characteristics of armed robbers), and he notes that these offenders rarely get worried of being caught. As one of her subjects illustratively put it:

I worried about a situation that might happen. You don’t really fear getting caught. It’s the fear of having to do something you don’t really want to do...that is what scares me; what I might do if the people or police come in.

Table 6.4.10.6. **Thought of penalty**

PENALTY7					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	25	36.8	47.2	47.2
	No	28	41.2	52.8	100.0
	Total	53	77.9	100.0	
Missing	System	15	22.1		
Total		68	100.0		

Table 6.4.10.6 contains the item that is very related to the immediate preceding one. It asked offenders whether they have at any time of their robbery career or exploits perceived the danger of imprisonment or death penalty as a likely punishment in the event of arrest. The responses are also consistence to the preceding one. 47.2% says, “Yes”, while 52.8% says, “No”.

So, what findings imply is that at the ordinary numerical figures, there is no significant difference between those who think about punishment, and those who do not. However, there is a bit higher number (52.8%) of respondents who do not perceived imprisonment and/ or death penalty as a likely consequent in the event of being caught.

Table 6.4.10.7. **Perceptions of armed robbery as a career**

**REGARD46**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	4	5.9	8.2	8.2
	No	45	66.2	91.8	100.0
	Total	49	72.1	100.0	
Missing	System	19	27.9		
Total		68	100.0		

The table 6.4.10.7 is concerned with inquiring whether the offenders perceive, or take armed robbery as the life long career or profession against which consideration for quitting may be possible or not. The responses are in consistence to the responses in table 6.4.10.4 of this sub-section, which deals with the issue of regret. While only 8.2% says, “Yes”, that they perceive armed robbery to be their life long career and only occupation, a large number of respondents (91.8%) say “No”. Some of the respondents who responded to yes put it differently:

“Armed robbery gives me easy money”.

“ Armed robbery is a game of chance. It is not a profession, but part time job”.

Another adds:

“Because I didn’t finish my education, I know I can not get employed”.

Most “No” responses are anchored on the perceived fears of the consequences on continuous stay in the profession, the negative stigma it has on their families, and the pains, suffering and general experiences in the prisons. As some of their remarks illustrate:

“I regret it, and do not consider it as my only occupation because it has brought shame to my family”

“It is a game of chance, and is not a profession”.



The overwhelming rejection of armed robbery as the only career may be read to be because it has brought untold hardships and sufferings while in custody. More importantly, it may be because in contemporary Nigeria, the offenders face the ultimate risk of death as some of them are in death rolls.

The findings by and large, may in the light of the statistical evidence be read, however, at face value to mean that participation in robbery is never viewed as a life-long activity. Again, part of what may have informed these viewpoints amongst these offenders could be an understanding that armed robbery, like other conventional crimes decreases with ones age.

There are several theoretical and empirical evidences that suggest that criminality tends to decrease with the ages of the offenders—a phenomenon known in criminological circle as **aging-out** (see Sutherland and Cressey 1960:220; Wilson and Herrnstein 1985; Gottfredson and Hirschi 1986; Inciardi 1987; Adler et al. 1991; Nkpa 1994 in Otite 1994: 274). The argument which is parallel among these authors is that offenders become less mobile, have less strength, and as the researcher adds, offenders seem to become less smart in thinking, become highly demotivated, less under peer pressure and so on. Adler et al. (1991:42) while making reference to Blummstein, Cohen and Farrington (1988) note that the totality of the frequency of criminal involvement depends on such social factors as the economic situation, the peer pressure, and the lifestyle, which in turn explains the aging-out phenomenon.

Olurode (1990:19-20) citing Peterson et al. (1980) also notes on this “maturing effect”, that this could be a as result of the reduction in the physical agility, simple fatigue, change in values or increasing legitimate social connection with age. In Nigeria

one begins to command a remarkable respect as one ages, and this plays a significant mitigating factor in continuity in the criminal exploits.

Table 6.4.10.8. **Possibility of quitting**

QUIT48					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	38	55.9	84.4	84.4
	No	7	10.3	15.6	100.0
	Total	45	66.2	100.0	
Missing	System	23	33.8		
Total		68	100.0		

The final item in this sub-section is concerned with whether offenders could quit armed robbery or not if given the option. The reason behind the question was to explore the possibility of the offenders abandoning armed robbery in the light of strict loyalty, strong bonding and attachment, which characterise robbery gang; the prevailing harsh prison experiences peculiar to Nigeria correctional services; and the horrible forms of punishment—both legal and jungles which is so banal in contemporary Nigeria justice system. Although fraught with suspicious, most (84.4%) say they would quit if given the opportunity. Only 15.6% says they would not, perhaps come rain or sun. The reasons for choosing to quit are similar to the reasons provided above for regretting armed robbery. But as one respondent somewhat intelligently added:

“Everything that has started has end”.

This therefore, shows that most offenders are aware that willy-nilly, they have the inevitable push factor to quit armed robbery during their career trajectories.

Findings seem, however, to support the finding of Einstadter (1975: 452), which describes quitting as voluntary, but a rare occurrence. And when it occurs, it is often temporary, and returning is a common thing and presents no problems.

#### **6.4.11 Arrest of member and rescue mission**

There are variations in the times, periods, and places at which armed robbers get arrested. In the view of the researcher, arrest of members of a robbery gang, or foiling of robbery depends on four principal factors. The first is the carelessness on the part of a robbery or gang members as for instance, when greediness or overzealousness characterises an operation. The second is the professionalism of the law enforcement agents such as when they are up-to-date in training, and are well equipped. The third good factor is the co-operation of the members of the public, as when vital information is given. The fourth is when victims are not caught unaware. That is, are not surprised, and they able to muster courage necessary to handle the situation.

Arrest of either member or few does not often mean an end to a robbery gang or group. Quite often, there is the tendency to either embark on a rescue mission of an arrested member (collective responsibility) subtly or in action, or to take cover (individual responsibility).

This sub-section takes a pinhole look at these two important aspects of armed robbery—arrest, and the complex decision making process for rescue. It thus, contains

two items or variables of measurement, and tables. The first item is about the period or time of arrest for the particular offence they are being incarcerated or get convicted. Two, on what happened when a member of a gang is arrested in terms of a rescue mission.

Table 6.4.11.1 **Period of Arrest**

ARREST51		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Before the criminal event	4	5.9	8.0	8.0
	During the criminal event	5	7.4	10.0	18.0
	Immediately after the criminal event	9	13.2	18.0	36.0
	Long after the criminal event	32	47.1	64.0	100.0
	Total	50	73.5	100.0	
Missing	System	18	26.5		
Total		68	100.0		

With regard to the item in table 6.4.11.1, respondents were to indicate from the options, the periodic time they were arrested for the current offence being held or convicted. 8.0% says they get arrested “before the execution” of the particular robbery operation. Most (64.0%) say they were arrested “long after the criminal event”.

The findings show consistence with the result of content analyses gathered across the diverse spectrums of contemporary Nigeria. This result reveals that most of the arrested armed robbers are more likely to be those who have committed the offence for which they are being charged, for a relatively period of time, but who remained, however,

on the look out for by the police. What this points out to is numerous. Firstly, it may be read and interpreted to mean that current armed robbers in Nigeria are simply skilful, talented, and evasive in their ingenious manner (see also Einstadter 1975:458). Secondly, that there is a higher degree of inefficiency among the police force as public opinions also hold. Thirdly, that an intricate social network between the offenders and some members of the society is deep rooted.

Sutherland and Cressey (1960:233) describes the professionalisation of criminals, and he argues that it goes beyond the execution of the crime, to the prior preparation for escaping punishment in case of detection and conviction. Arrangements seem to often be made in advance for hideouts, bail, legal service, and in fixing the case. However, the length to which armed robbers could evade arrest depends on the degree of network, which they maintain with either the members of the public, or the law enforcement agents, as the case of Anini vividly shows.

Table 6.4.11.2 **Thought on rescue mission**

RESCUE52					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	28	41.2	59.6	59.6
	No	19	27.9	40.4	100.0
	Total	47	69.1	100.0	
Missing	System	21	30.9		
Total		68	100.0		

Offenders were asked in table 6.4.10.2 whether they do consider, and/ or take actions to intervene to save a gang member (s) who is arrested. In other words, do offenders consider a rescue mission as a necessary part of the robbery culture? A fairly above average respondents (59.6%) say, “Yes”, to the fact that consideration, and indeed rescue

mission are considered worthy of embarking upon. 40.4%, however, said, “No”, to the fact that rescue missions are rarely part of the profession of armed robbery in contemporary Nigeria.

The findings here are read to suggest that commitments to members’ safety is crucial to robbery gang right from the planning phase, the execution, disposal, and to the dispatch stage. Sutherland (1939: 27-42) found similar commitment in his studies and description of the professional thieves. The prevalence of “mob action” tends to ensure that mobs help apprehended member, and in terms of sharing the expenses of court costs. In contrast, however, Einstadter (1975) study’s found reasons to disagree with the assertion of Sutherland. This author argued that there is no group cohesion, which tends to prevail among armed robbers during the period of difficulty or stress.

Even though armed robbers operate on the ethics and principle of individuality, what may be logical to argue is that above all other things, a sense of *esprit de corps* do prevails among gang members. It is this *esprit de corps*, which possibly binds and guides members at all times of their career trajectories. Besides the statistical data, which provides appreciable supports for the claim, most of the subjects emphasised on the prevalence of this spirit, and on the paramount place which gang members place on rescue missions for trouble member (s). As one of the subjects in the in-depth interview put it inter alia:

These are your brothers. And you don’t leave then when in trouble otherwise they may even expose you. However, if trying to intervene becomes dangerous, you leave the guy, and he can understand that you tried.

Other interesting reasons offered for consideration on rescue mission are: “to help trouble member out of prison or custody”; “because the role the member plays matters to

the gang”; “the member may be the boss”; because of “aversion to loose a member”, because of “fear of revealing other members” and so on.

One subject put it succinctly and poignantly:

“They can’t arrest any of my members, and I would be free”

For those who said there is no consideration for rescue mission, part of the argument is that they would not like to be arrested, and that the troubled guys may have goofed by not following instructions.

The assertion emerging from Einstadter’s (1975 in Rushing 1975: 451) study is that arrestee expects no assistance from his partners since there is no group cohesion. One of his interviewees responded:

“Hell, no, the guy went into this with his eyes wide open, oh, sure, we’d feel sorry for the guy, but hell, he’d be on his own. If he were arrested we’d split to save our own necks. He’d be expected to keep his mouth shut, but that can only last for a little while. Whatever dough there was would be split from amongst the guys out; if we get caught we’d come to an understanding later, but if ratted he’d have nothing coming”.

#### **6.4.12 Nature, sharing formula, and locations of offence and places of offenders.**

Earlier in chapter Three of this work, a good number of important issues about the offence and offenders were identified. It was noted that robbery and robbers are of various types. So, the nature, patterns and *modus operandi* of the offence were also identified.

This section provides an empirical validation to some of these important issues about the crime and the criminals. It is concerned with identifying the prevalence types of armed robbery and/ or armed robbers, how booties are shared, the criteria and modalities for sharing, the locations and places of the offence and the offenders, and the reasons

thereto. That is, in this sub-section attempt is made to ascertain where, and the nature of the offences for which the offenders are being held were committed; the residences of the offenders in terms of the vicinity to the crime scene; the reasons for living or not living within the crime environ; and how booties were shared and other related issues.

Table 6.4.12.1. **Types of armed robbery**

		NATURE55			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Bank Robbery	1	1.5	2.2	2.2
	Residential robbery	18	26.5	39.1	41.3
	High way robbery (Road robbery)	12	17.6	26.1	67.4
	Commercial robbery (companies, stores and shop)	15	22.1	32.6	100.0
	Total	46	67.6	100.0	
Missing	System	22	32.4		
Total		68	100.0		

The nature (types) of the robbery, which was committed and arrested for, is the focus of the item in table 6.4.12.1. 39.1% respondents say they committed “residential” robbery. Highways robbery accounts for 26.1%, and 32.6% respondents say they committed commercial robbery. Only 2.2% committed bank robbery.

The findings are very akin to some previous studies, which found that commercial robberies account for 11.9%, residences 10.5%, service stations 2.9% and bank 1.4%. (see Adler et al. 1991:243). Thio (1998:328) studies revealed that most robberies take place *outdoors*, on *streets* and *highways*. Iwarimie-Jaja (1999a:13) found the following: residential 35.71%, streets 21.43%, highways and banks 1.79%, each respectively.

What is striking in all these findings, and which is consistence, is the relatively low rate of bank robbery. Nevertheless, it is important to emphasise that bank robbery in



Nigeria, has in the recent past increased dramatically. A review of the secondary sources of data—a news report in the media in this study—a content analysis of reported cases of robberies shows a remarkable increase in bank robberies alongside residential robberies. Whatever may have accounted for the low rate of bank robbery statistics, it is not really suggestive that bank robberies are therefore, rare. Instead, it is argued that it may be because it is the focus of most professional armed robbery careerists, or what Katz (1996 in Conklin 1996: 171) called “hard-core robbers”. So, they are most adroit, efficient, and well connected, and thus, present a relatively low risk of being apprehended. Accordingly therefore, Iwarimie-Jaja (1999a: 136) explains that the low rate of bank robbery are due to the heavy security adopted by the banks, which make robbers to presume a high risk of apprehension

In the view of the researcher, and with regard to the high rate of residential robberies, there are many possible theoretical frameworks, which may be constructed to offer a better understanding of it. One possibility is that residential robbery interlocks with other forms of property crimes such as theft, burglary, and larceny, and in that process, blur neat categorisation. In the same manner, a series of colloquialisms—“stick up”, “wilding”, “mugging”, “yoking”, “purse snatching” have emerged to grasp the strict distinctions amongst behaviour that statutory laws may ordinarily have treated equally as “robbery” (Katz 1996 in Conklin 1996: 172). This is what the researcher calls a kind of “theory of definition”. The point being stressed here is that much criminal behaviour by strangers, which take place within the residential homes have either be included or excluded in the definition and taxonomy of armed robbery, so that statistics on residential robberies are muddled up, most times in an upward manner.

Another possible theoretical construct is to assume that residential robbery is more susceptible to be manipulated by the robbers. No one always thinks seriously that he or she would be the likely next victim. The seeming tendency amongst the public is to think that the chance of being attack is remote or not even in existence, notwithstanding the overwhelming perceptions on the fear and serious of the crime. Against this backdrop, armed robbers have often played on the psychology of the mass of the people in the residential settlements.

A further important finding is the relatively high rate of highways and commercial robberies. The readily available explanation for the phenomenon is that most businesses in modern Nigeria today are conducted on cash and carry (C and C) basis. Most businessmen especially the commercial traders still prefer to transact on cash and carry, necessitating the transportation of large sums of money along the highways. Clinard and Abbot (1973:39) argued that that the spread and growth of industrial and business enterprises require the transportation of large payrolls and other funds to Local Corporation whose security may be limited to a meagre force of unarmed guards. So, the reward more than compensates the muted risk of capture and imprisonment. The 22 non-responses may be offenders who fall into other categories of armed robbery such as gas stations, markets, police stations, hospitals, sacred places and so on, which, however, are infrequent.

Table 6.4.12.2

**Locales of offence**

		<b>CRIME54</b>			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Your compound	5	7.4	10.2	10.2
	Your Local government	10	14.7	20.4	30.6
	Your State	18	26.5	36.7	67.3
	Outside your state	16	23.5	32.7	100.0
	Total	49	72.1	100.0	
Missing	System	19	27.9		
Total		68	100.0		

This table 6.4.12.2 is about the particular location or the vicinity of the offence committed, and for which offenders are being held. 10.2% respondents say the crime was committed within their compounds (neighbourhoods). 36.7% says it was within their states of origin. According to 32.7%, the offence was committed outside their states or the one they live. 20.4% says it was within their Local Government Councils.

Findings do not show any paternalistic choice of targets in relation to offenders' places of residence. What the reading of the findings (implication) suggests, however, is that there is conscious efforts not to carry out operation at both the extreme—closest and farthest poles of the offenders' place of residences.

Previous studies about the place of the offence and the offender's residence are documented in the literature. Lind (1930a), one of the few early researchers in this area notes that the relationship between the crime's place and the offenders' residences

depends on the neighbourhood social control. Where neighbourhood has effective social control, crime and/ or delinquency is curbed in the area, and so, forces the offenders to go elsewhere to commit crimes. White (1932) contends that crimes against property are committed away from the offenders' residence because of the obvious desire to remain anonymous. Turner (1969: 25) using 1960 Philadelphia data finds and states thus: "delinquent or offender resides close to the location of his offences irrespective of the type of offence committed, or the presence or absence of accomplices...".

Subjects in this present study explained: "offenders need not, and often do not commit crimes where they live". So, robbery operations within the closest and far distance of the offenders' domicile are guardedly avoided. Little wonder therefore, that a significant number of the subjects indicated that operations were either within their neighbourhoods (compounds), local councils, states and non-states of origin, or outside these places.

About 32.7% respondents report having committed their offences in their non-states origins, albeit. However, a close analysis of these states (see 6.4.12.3) shows that they are those states that are geo-politically and linguist-ethnically close to one another, and which abounds in the core Southeastern part of contemporary Nigeria. This is the home-base region and states of the study, and where virtually all the offenders come from either by birth or otherwise, and where they also reside.

Several reasons may account for the seemingly evenness in the choice of the place of robbery by armed robbers. Chiefly, is the desire to operate within the ecological base, which they possess comparatively, a better knowledge and understanding of. It could also be part of the crime strategy to rob near the offender's place of domiciles, which will give

the false impression that offenders come from afar. When operation is carried outside the proximity of the offenders' place or domiciles, the guiding wisdom and philosophy could be the age long saying "a crocodile doesn't eat fish in the rivers which it co-habits". Thus, the decision for the choice of place—nearness or afar from the offenders' domicile is a product of much interplay of forces.

In modern Nigeria, the choice of where to rob is also dependent on the perceived general reactions of the inhabitants of the target areas, or the reaction of the victim (s) to the crime and criminals. It may not be a misnomer to presume that the fear of mob attacks—an "instance justice" in the case of apprehension, the perceived prevailing styles of life amongst the inhabitants, the perceived success of surprise attacks, and so on are some of the additional forces in play in the choice of either neighbourhoods, local councils, states, and or the victims to raid.

The envisaged potential gain, the capability of the security personnel, the possibility of intervention by bystanders, the presence of guards, cameras, and alarms are certainly additional factors that influence the choice of targets particularly on commercial robberies (Cook 1990). These factors are necessary, but not at all time sufficient.

Table 6.4.12.3            **States of domicile during operation**

FEDERA10

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	14	20.6	20.6	20.6
abia	6	8.8	8.8	29.4
delta	2	2.9	2.9	32.4
ebonyi	14	20.6	20.6	52.9
enugu	4	5.9	5.9	58.8
imo	1	1.5	1.5	60.3
lagos	4	5.9	5.9	66.2
rivers	23	33.8	33.8	100.0
Total	68	100.0	100.0	

The variable in table 6.4.12.3—viewed as very important towards an understanding of robbery distribution in contemporary Nigeria—the empirical premise to the theoretical idea of emulation, the respondents were asked to indicate the **states** they were living when the offence for which they are being held was committed. Rivers state has the highest with the tally of 42.1% respondents. Abia state has 10.5%, and Delta state has 3.5%). Enugu and Lagos states each has 7.0% respondents. Imo state has 1.8%, and finally Ebonyi state has 21.1%.

The states with the high numbers of domiciled interviewees are indeed understandably so. They represent the locations where the research was conducted. Imo, Enugu, and Delta states are indeed, very close to the states where the research was carried out. What is possibly inferred from these findings therefore, is that offenders may have been able to mix with one another with ease, given the proximity of these states to one another. Worthy of note too is that these states all have the history of being an armed robbery zones (see for instance, details in section 2.9.2.4). Since senior criminals are readily available in these states, it may have served as a magnet to the emerging armed robbery adolescents, to live around the (see also Arokoya and Obafemi 1999: 24-25).

Table 6.4.12.4. **Proximity to crime areas**

		AREA56			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	26	38.2	59.1	59.1
	No	18	26.5	40.9	100.0
	Total	44	64.7	100.0	
Missing	System	24	35.3		
Total		68	100.0		

Relatedly, table 6.4.12.4 contains item, which asked offenders whether they lived outside the immediate environment where offences were or are committed or not. Most (59.1%) respondents say, “Yes”, that they live [d] outside the crime scene. 40.9% says, “No”.

The findings like the findings in the table 6.4.12 in this sub-section is read to suggest that armed robbers have the tendency to blend the locals (inhabitants of crime areas) with foreigners (non-inhabitants) for several reasons. To rob successfully requires a good sense of the prevailing circumstances, and about the ecology of particular targets or and victims. Only local gang members can provide such vital information and description. Other non-locals are supposedly expected to play active roles in the execution of the robbery, and also to provide similar vital information when operations shift to their areas of domicile.

Table 6.4.12.5 **Reasons for living afar from crime vicinity**

YYES57

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	To avoid being easily detected	21	30.9	60.0	60.0
	To live in a better place	8	11.8	22.9	82.9
	To live near group members	3	4.4	8.6	91.4
	Because it is the rule of the game	3	4.4	8.6	100.0
	Total	35	51.5	100.0	
Missing	System	33	48.5		
Total		68	100.0		

Item in this table is a dovetail to the one in table 6.4.12.4. It consists of question, which seeks to understand why the crime scene and place of residence are different. It was directed to those who answered, “Yes” to the item in table 6.4.12.4. To “avoid being easily detected” is given by most respondents (60.0%). 8.6% each says, it is either to ‘live near the group members’, or because it is the “rule of the game”.

What findings therefore, indicate is that most armed robbers would prefer not to live close to where the crimes are being committed essentially for fear of being easily identified by the public, and possibly by the law enforcement agents within the locality. This however, may be most peculiar to hard-core robbers. But it also does find supports among the less professional armed robbers.

Table 6.4.12.6.

**Sharing formula of proceeds**



**SHARE50**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Equally	16	23.5	32.0	32.0
	According to length of membership or and experience	10	14.7	20.0	52.0
	According to roles performed	9	13.2	18.0	70.0
	Other	15	22.1	30.0	100.0
	Total	50	73.5	100.0	
Missing	System	18	26.5		
Total		68	100.0		

In the final item and table 6.4.12.6, and certainly a very important one, the sharing of the booties after the completion of operation is explored. In other words, what are the criteria in use when loots are shared amongst the offenders? “Equality” is the most favoured. 32.0%) says it is the basic guiding criterion. The “role” performed during the planning, execution and thereafter is given by 18.0% respondents. According to the “length of membership” and/ or “experience” is given by 20.0% respondents, and finally “others” not specified are what 30.0% of the respondents favour.

Although equality may have constituted the dominant criteria for the sharing of gains (see also the findings of Einstadter 1975:450), it is however, by no means the only rule of the game as the data show. Indeed, a significant number of the offenders who subscribe to the length of membership, role performances, and others are pointer to this fact. Group cohesion, sharing, commitment and motivation generally underlie gang (group) membership. These attitudes amongst members are undoubtedly, in line of the spirit of capitalism. That is, attitudes toward the sharing of proceeds are most consistent with the ethos of capitalist system—the measure of inputs determines the measure of outputs. As some of the subjects put it:

“We believe in high ranking”

“The rule is eat as you work”

“It is according to the activeness of our leaders and the guys”

#### **6.4.13 Offenders’ feelings, and perceptions vis-a` vis the government**

Armed robbers develop a certain degree of sense or perceptions towards the various actions and policies of the government as they impact on them and their activities respectively. Offenders are probably good analysts; they take great care and caution to analyse and dissect all lines of actions of the government so as to circumvent them. Perceptions of the offenders on the various policy actions and measures are therefore, viewed essential to merit investigation. This subsection does that. An inquiry into the feelings of the offenders with regards to whether government understands why there is much armed robbery in the country has an important empirical relationship with actions and policies of the government on the crime. This sub-section contains four items, which are represented in tables 6.4.13.1-6.4.13.4.

**Table 6.4.13.1. Perceptions of government’s knowledge about involvement in armed robbery**

**GOVERN58**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	18	26.5	39.1	39.1
	No	28	41.2	60.9	100.0
	Total	46	67.6	100.0	
Missing	System	22	32.4		
Total		68	100.0		

Item one in the subsection asked offenders whether they feel that government in its current position—as the social, political and economic guarantor, understands why increasing numbers of contemporary Nigerian youth are engaged in armed robbery in the manner that they are. 39.1% says, “Yes”, that it does understand. Most (60.9%) respondents however, say “No”, that they do not feel that government understands.

The findings tend to concur the views often share amongst many citizens of Nigeria. These views hold that government are unaware why many of her citizens engage in various crime of sorts especially armed robbery, and in the sophisticated manner they do. The usual argument is that most people in government live in affluence; so, often they loose touch with the sufferings of the ordinary citizens. Among the respondents who answered, “Yes”, are of the views that government does understand, but usually elects to remain insensitive and indifference. The same viewpoints are share by quite a remarkable number of ordinary Nigerians.

As a subject put it:

“The said armed robbers (referring to government officials) are there with you. They base on kill, and to divide with the top men”

**Table 6.4.13.2 Perceptions on the impacts of government actions on armed robbery**

**STRATS59**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	26	38.2	57.8	57.8
	No	19	27.9	42.2	100.0
	Total	45	66.2	100.0	
Missing	System	23	33.8		
Total		68	100.0		

Table 6.4.13.2 of this sub-section is about the feelings of the offenders on the various control measures, which are being adopted at the various levels of government with regard to their continuums in armed robbery. Put differently, how do offenders perceive the implications of the various steps of the various levels of government on their career (robbery)? Responses to this item show consistence with the preceding responses. 57.8% admits quite remarkably, that the various control strategies being adopted by the governments and the communities do have significant impacts on their involvement. 42.2% respondents are of the views that such policies and line of actions have had no meaningful impacts on their involvement. The large non-responses may be because of the complete lack of faith and confidence in the government.

Although a significant number of armed robbers (42.2%) do not think and feel that governments and communities' steps do have impacts on their continuum in robbery. Equally important, however is that a significant number—a statistically relevant, readily concede to the fact that the various measures do have remarkable impacts. This could be physical or psychological.

**Table 6.4.13.3 Perceptions on the best control measure**

**CONTRO60**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Death penalty	9	13.2	20.0	20.0
	Life imprisonment	5	7.4	11.1	31.1
	Forfeiture of assets	4	5.9	8.9	40.0
	Short term imprisonment	15	22.1	33.3	73.3
	Amputation	1	1.5	2.2	75.6
	None of the above	11	16.2	24.4	100.0
	Total	45	66.2	100.0	
Missing	System	23	33.8		
Total		68	100.0		

Table 6.4.13.3 contains the item that is considered very significant because it is concerned with the issue of how best to deal with the problems of armed robbery in contemporary Nigeria. It is especially crucial within the context of modern Nigeria—against the backdrop that the reactions to both the offence and offenders are a mixed one, but where most people seem often to be in favour of drastic measures. It revolves around the question that sought for the offenders’ perceptions on what should constitute the appropriate form of punishment. Opinions on this item show a remarkable degree of wit on the part of the offenders. 20.0% favours death penalty; 11.1% respondents are in favour of life imprisonment; 8.9% says it is the forfeiture of assets. While only 2.2% favours amputation. A fairly large number of the interviewees (33.3%) are of the opinions that short-term imprisonment should be opted for, and 24.4% says it is none of the above.

What is striking in the findings is that some of the offenders have reasons to favour death penalty. Emboldened reactions of two subjects in favour of death penalty as they put it are:

“We commit to face the consequences”

“Every body is afraid of death”

What, however, does not sound as surprise findings is that most armed robbers favour short time imprisonment. Since most offenders are likely to blame or shift their criminal responsibility to another party—friends, parents or family members, governments or even acquaintances, nothing short of this was expected of them in any significant way. In fact, only a few intrepidous ones favour the harsh penalty. Some of those who favour short time imprisonment said among other things, that death penalty and long-term imprisonment merely hardened the minds of the offenders more.

Among both respondents and subjects who said none of the above, punishment in whatever capacity makes no any difference. So, to them it has no deterrence. Some of their remarks, which are no less emphatic, are:

“No matter what happen to others, people coming up will still engage in armed robbery”

“Prison even spoils one”

“None of the above will work. The only way is to provide employment to people to have something to do. I believe a busy hand has no time for robbery”

The additional responses of some of the subjects are that armed robbery, which involves death or murder must be punished by death, if the offenders are young, should be punished by long-term imprisonment, and forfeiture of assets if an offender is found to be wealthy.

The low responses to amputation as optional form of punishment may be interpreted to mean that it is one of those most feared and loathed by armed robbers. It

may thus, be an area that merits further research to establish the degree of its deterrence amongst the offenders in the contemporary Nigerian society.

Table 6.4.13.4. **Perceptions on the best control measure**

STEPS61					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Banned some films, movies and books from the Western world	3	4.4	7.3	7.3
	Teaching young ones that money and wealth is not all that ma	6	8.8	14.6	22.0
	Making young ones to avoid bad friends	22	32.4	53.7	75.6
	Making laws on guns and weapons tougher	4	5.9	9.8	85.4
	Other	6	8.8	14.6	100.0
	Total	41	60.3	100.0	
Missing	System	27	39.7		
Total		68	100.0		

The final item, and table 6.4.13.4 in this sub-section is concerned with understanding what the offenders think should be done to curtail the spread of armed robbery in contemporary Nigeria. The essence of the question is to tease out some possible views of the offenders with regard to the preventive measures. 7.3% respondents support “banning some films, movies, books, and other entertainments documentary from the western world”. 14.6% “favour teaching young ones that money and wealth is not all that matters”. A fairly large number of respondents (53.7%) say, “making young ones to avoid bad friends” is the most appropriate. 9.8% suggests making laws on guns and weapons tougher and tighter. “Others” options are suggested by as little as 4.6% respondents.

The findings of this variable show that social interactions particularly those found among friends is viewed amongst the offenders themselves as playing a significant role in learning, imitating, and emulating the attitude that is congenial to armed robbery in the country.

According to some of the subjects, their friends who normally lavish money for them, and quite often, take care of them, and sponsor them to a party entrapped them into armed robbery. These criminal friends of theirs often tell them that they can make much money, and easily too. One subject adds that before going into operation, some weird films, which depict brazen accomplishment of some kinds of daring adventures are usually played as favourites for ego boosting.

## **6.5 CONTENT ANALYSIS (QUALITATIVELY GENERATED DATA)**

The last two questions in the questionnaire (62 and 63) are though part of the quantitative data; they contain responses that were gathered essentially in qualitative form. Respondents were invited to offer their advice, and to bear their minds on armed robbery as a career trajectory, and to tell more of what they think and feel is or are necessary and important for the researcher to know further, which may have not been captured within the scope and breadth of the questionnaire. In addition, are the findings of the in-depth interviews conducted among the few selected offenders in the prisons utilised. It is the emerged viewpoints that are analysed in content form since they are not quantitatively representable.

To all intents and purposes, offenders were asked to reflect their minds on what they probably will say if invited to offer advice on what they feel should be done to



curtail armed robbery outside the options provided. What motivated the invitation was not on the need to concede to their recommendations. But more so, it was in the understanding that though, these people may have been violators, they nevertheless may have some useful ideas to offer the general public through the researcher since it can be assumed that they are not pathologically sick.

Analysis of responses showed vagaries of advice. Preponderantly, is the need to provide job opportunities. Yet, they offered other advice, which include rural developments, stopping corruption, instituting of moral rectitude on the youth. There are also the calls to advise the youth to avoid bad friends, and to ban violent films and club membership.

Offenders also offered that government should endeavour to occupy youth through recreations. Less arguable is the suggestion for example, that delinquency could be the result of lack of leisure facilities for young people. Government should also provide social securities to the less privilege ones especially the orphans as one of the respondents put it; and should sound tougher on local gun manufacturers. The analyses of these advice show that they find support in the expressions, which are among many conventional writers on crime and delinquency (Whisenand 1977; O'Block 1981; Vignola 1982). There are increasing calls for effective policies on job creation. But what is found from these respondents and subjects, which is also common amongst many scholars is that effective approach to armed robbery is not reducible to a monolithic factor.

The information gathered when respondents were invited to tell more about what they feel the researcher should know about them and the offence are worthy of revealing.

The information was sought in order to establish consistency on previous responses, and to provide the opportunity for the offenders to express their viewpoints that may have not been covered by the questions. While many were still enmeshed in the denial tones or outright indignation, some of the reveals are chilling and bizarre. For instance, some offenders (respondents and subjects) remark:

“ I’m innocent before God. The police only want to know more about law”

“ I’m innocent before God. The police only acted based on hatred, and the lack of proper investigation”

“ Most people are victims of circumstances. Like in my case, I went to report to the police about this case I am facing”.

Another offender comments interjectorily:

“Robbery is a sweet game, but dangerous. Robbery is of many types. Even you (referring to the researcher) is a robber. My experience in robbery and crime in general, no book can contain it, and it is not a day story. Do them and be reasonable. Those in prisons are not armed robbers.

In what apparently looks like cautious tones, some of the respondents and subjects remark:

“The danger in the profession is that when hooked, it is difficult to drop”

“Armed robbery is not written in anyone’s face. Armed robbers may look innocent on face but are dangerous citizens”.

“We don’t regard other people. We simply take all other people as common”

Another respondent chip in:

“ I am D.J thug life. We are human beings, but because of one thing or the other especially friends do make us go astray at times. Before one comes to realisation, it is too late”.

And another subject remarks quite pathetically:

I am a WASC<sup>4</sup> holder, but I am not from a well-to-do family. When I passed out, I had all my papers (7 credits and 2 passes)<sup>5</sup>. But I did not secure any job in the government. Because of my jobless and helpless condition, a friend lured me into this mess, and I found myself here. I regret and belief that if I leave here, I'll quit from it.

## 6.6 CONCLUSION

The analyses have showed that both the offence and offenders have complex, and an extraordinary mixture of antithetical characteristics.

Generally, findings are characterised by bit of consistencies and inconsistencies with both previous studies and the preceding responses in the study. Several reasons have been noted to account for these shifts in consistencies. Part of it is the social context under which these studies were carried out, the perspectives and the guiding ideology of these studies, the manipulative tendencies common amongst the offenders, and the lack of adequate knowledge about research by the offenders. In any case, findings show some patterns peculiar to discourses within crime aetiologies.

Contemporary armed robbers in Nigeria are mostly, male, single, of the age between 16-35, fairly educated, and they seem to have had stable family backgrounds, including a well-practiced and active religious participation.

Watching T.V, attending cinemas, reading crime related books, novels and comics—peculiar to the western culture have significant influence in the way

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<sup>4</sup> It means the West Africa School Certificate. It is equivalent to the British General Certification of Education (ordinary level). And it represents the gateway to attain the university or other higher educational qualifications in and outside Nigeria.

<sup>5</sup> This is a very good result by standard and represents a good measure of the intelligent of the holder in any evaluative process.

contemporary Nigerian armed robbery offenders have learnt, borrowed and perfected the crime. Influence of friends including (senior) and acquaintant armed robbers—all these as the strong means of learning from the western culture are the major sources and influencers of the current pattern of armed robbery in contemporary Nigeria. When the two sources above are corroborated together as both the remote and immediate integrated approach towards a better understanding of offence and the offenders in the country, the strength of the idea behind emulation as an alternative paradigm to understanding contemporary armed robbery in Nigeria becomes less obscure.

Operational means of contemporary armed robbers in Nigeria include, the use of automobiles, foot, and or combination of them. There is also the use of various weapons, but essentially gun. Types of weapons and transportation depend on a number of factors, and are obtained from various sources. With respects to weapons, findings show that they are mostly from the illegal market, or from the police force and other armed forces. Using the weapons for real harm is however, not the primary motive amongst most offenders.

Most common types of robbery in today's Nigeria are the residential robbery, accounting for over 1/3 of the entire robbery incidences, the highways and bank robberies. Planning is also an important part of contemporary armed robbery, but it seems not to be the basic rule. Sharing of loots is dependent on a number of criteria, and membership composition cuts across all categories or classes of individuals. There are assigned roles, each carries certain individual and collective responsibilities. The need to have a leader among robbery gang, and godfather is also given a serious thought, and it is increasingly appearing a common phenomenon.

There is no much different between the offenders who perceive robbery as their life careers, and those who do not. And neither too is there any much difference between those who often think of arrest and punishment during their robbery careers, and those who do not. Contemporary armed robbers in Nigeria are to an extent, imbued with a sense of sympathy and empathy for their victims especially when hurt, maimed or killed. Regrets when a victim is harmed seem to be the prevailing mindset of archetype-armed robbers in Nigeria.

Majority or typical armed robber in the country is of the view that the provision of jobs, awareness of the influence of bad friends, provision of recreational facilities, banning of a host of the western ways of life are the effective methods to curtailing the trend of armed robbery in current Nigeria. Death penalty, lengthy imprisonment, life imprisonment and others are not so much effective in the fight against armed robbery. More youth and early adults would continue to be drawn into armed robbery; so long unemployment continues to increase, and police continues to remain corrupt.

There is no doubt that some innocence ones would at one time or the other be implicated into armed robbery. At least, some of the respondents and subjects made this claim. Many armed robbers in contemporary Nigeria are also more likely to lack a sense of remorsefulness (regret); they are emboldened and would readily warn or through words of caution about armed robbers and robbery and so on.

In the next chapter, the hypotheses-generating, or the exploratory issues that are raised in chapter One, are tested statistically. There are twelve of these hypotheses. The testing provides for empirically based results within the context of armed robbery and armed robbers, and fundamentally, from which a wide scale of meaning about some

variables on the crime and the criminals in contemporary Southeastern Nigeria in particular, and the country at large could be read from.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### TESTING THE HYPOTHESES

#### 7.1 INTRODUCTION

The preceding chapter Six merely explains—on the level of the non-probability samples, what the researcher refers to as the “profile analysis” about the offence and offenders. Certainly, these efforts convey some common sense viewpoints about the offence and offenders—drawing inferences, judgments, and importantly, from which attempts at reading a **wide scale meaning of the findings**—as opposed to generalising from the samples of the respondents to a larger population of armed robbers in the whole of Southeastern Nigeria is possible. So, the presentations, analyses and discussions in chapter Six have been with little or no consideration for what the researcher perceives as the formalised “rules of the thumb”. Establishing some degrees of relationships or associations through a systematic statistical testing is however, very important in much of the social sciences researches. This makes the interpretations and conclusions drawn specially with respect to some of the variables, less fraught with risk.

In chapter Seven, some of the observed profiles of the offence and the offenders—part and parcel of their complex characteristics, and the general inferences which are made about these respondents and the offence are subjected to a further probable statement by means of a statistical chi-square and cross tabulation. The essence of this is that it provides the basis for what is regarded as the “best thing to direct knowledge of populations” (see Kohout 1974: 250). Thus, all the ten hypotheses—also as

hypotheses-generating tests or exploratory issues, which are raised in chapter One, are subjected to a kind of cross-tabulation (tested). It enables the researcher to establish some predictable and probable statements—a **wider scale of meaning** about the relationships between some of these important variables. And most importantly, it allows for some inferences about the population of armed robbery respondents be drawn firstly, in the Southeastern states, and secondly, in the geo-political entity of contemporary Nigeria.

The approach is that each of these hypotheses is verified by cross-tabling the variables in one contingency table. By this process, the columns represent categories of one variable, and rows representing categories of the other variable. The frequencies for a given row-column category combination in the contingency table are entered in the cells (see tables below). The contingency tables are converted into percentage tables, with the percentages computed down the columns, and then compare across the same columns to find whether or that a certain percent more of the variable reflects or relates more to the other variable.

The hypothesis (Null or  $H_0$ ), or the exploratory issues for test is first stated as appeared in section 1.5. The alternative one— $H_1$  is also stated with its mathematical or statistical correspondence. The cross-table is made, and it has a sub-heading, which also reflects on the main variables designated for cross-tabbed. The questions in the questionnaire—section A and B (see *appendix A*) that bear these variables to be cross-tabbed, are written out so that readers could easily refer to it in the *appendix*.

This chapter also reviewed the typologies and characteristics of the offence and the offenders from the perspective of the researcher. They are based on the research findings—empirical and literature.



## 7.2 IMPORTANT TIPS ABOUT THE HYPOTHESES TESTING (CAVEAT)

The findings of this study were not from the outset aimed at “generalisation” *per se* and cannot therefore, be so now. Rather, it presents the findings from which first and foremost, a possible degree of relationship or association between key identifiable variables—dependent and independent about armed robbery and armed robbers in contemporary Nigeria can be inferred.

Secondly, it also presents the findings from which the testing and interpretations provide the **researcher with the opportunity to attempt at reading a wide scale meaning of these findings**. Therefore, making a probable statement—as opposed to generalising, from a sample of the respondents, to a larger population of armed robbers in the whole of Southeastern states Nigeria, and the larger contemporary Nigerian society is the informed goal of the testing in this chapter. This is the line within which the interpretations of the results of the tests are also carried out. The reasons for this wide scale of meaning as opposed to outright generalisation are because

- the sample was too small and therefore, in some tables the frequencies in some of the cells were too small
- it is a non-random (non-probability) sample
- It was not the aim of this study to generalise *per se*, the research findings
- Because the study deals with human beings, behaviour and activity that are highly subtle, generalising *per se* is therefore, fraught with risk and could produce conclusion that is foxy, fraudulent, suspicious, diversionary, and incomprehensive.

Indeed, no researcher dealing with statistics is able to answer and accurately, too, or “true answer”, the question raised about a population’s (for e.g. all armed robbers in Nigeria), attitude towards their victims (harms or no-harms), or between religious affiliation and inclination to robbery, or association with criminal friends (peers) and involvement in armed robbery, or the exposure to the western influence and participation in contemporary armed robbery (see also Kohout 1974; Lin 1976). Or the relations between some observed or conceived variables among these subjects in focus. Only a suggestion or presumption of the possibilities of the values of the parameters with a certain degree of risk of being either right or wrong is possible and desirable.

### **7.3 REJECTION OF HYPOTHESES**

In this study, the  $H_0$  will be rejected when  $p < 0.05$ . Interpretatively, it means if the observed frequencies are fairly close to the expected values, then there is no evidence to suggest that the null hypothesis is false. On the other hand, should the observed frequencies depart so markedly from the expected values, it can then be concluded that the observed table does not fit the “independence model”, and therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected (see Kohout 1974).

Describing chi-square and its application (Champion 1981: 224) explains and rightly, that as useful in a categorical data, the direction of the distribution of frequencies can be determined readily if a one-tailed hypothesis is made usually by the casual inspection of the arrangement of a table frequencies to see if they are consistent with the arrangement predicted under the Null ( $H_0$ ) hypothesis.

To draw some conclusions as to whether the research hypotheses are supported—given the direction and strength of the observed relationship, and from which a wide scale of meaning about the entire armed robbery population could be inferred, below are the hypotheses or exploratory issues (equally as generating), their statistical chi-square testing, and the results with interpretations.

## **7.4 HYPOTHESES OF THE RESEARCH**

### **7.4.1 Educational qualification of the respondents' parents**

The Null (Ho): That there is no relationship (association) between the educational qualification of the respondents' fathers and their mothers.

Ho:  $p \leq 0.05$

The alternative (Hi): There is a relationship or association (association) between the educational qualification of the respondents' fathers and their mothers.

Hi:  $P \geq 0.05$

Question of A15 by A16

**Table 7.1 Educational qualification of respondents' fathers and mothers**

			QUALIFICATION OF MOTHERS			
		Frequency	School	After school	No qualifications	Total
QUALIFICATION OF FATHERS	School	18	2	6	26	
	After school	9	12	1	22	
	No qualifications	8	0	9	17	
	Total	35	14	16	65	

p=0.0001

The expression is read: “The null hypothesis (Ho) is that the population contains a proportion of respondents whose mothers’ educational qualification is not associated to the educational qualification of their fathers, and so, is equal to, or less than 0.05. That is, both the offenders’ fathers and mothers’ educational qualifications—both independent and dependent variables, are not related. From the table above, most, (69.23%) e.g.  $\frac{18}{26}$  respondents have parents whose fathers and mothers both have school qualifications. About 7.69% ( $\frac{2}{26}$ ) respondents have parents that both possess corresponding “after school” qualifications.  $\frac{6}{26}$  (23.08%) respondents have both parents that have no educational qualifications.

What this implies is that it is more probable or likely that the educational qualifications of the respondents’ parents within the context of armed robbery in

contemporary Nigeria will be related in the same direction. In other words, using the first sub-variable for instance, a greater number of the offenders' fathers, who have school qualifications will invariably get married to women or mothers who have the same or facsimile school qualifications. The null hypothesis is therefore, rejected in favour of the alternative (set) of hypotheses. Consequently, there appears to be **an association between** father's qualifications and mother's qualifications; or to state differently, there **tends to be a relationship** between father's qualification and mother's qualification.

It is a common knowledge that as either of the respondents' parent get educated, or achieve a certain level of education, either is more likely to get on or engaged with a partner of the same academic qualification. Colloquially, the common arithmetical term is that "like terms get together".

#### **7.4.2 Number of wives and children to offenders' fathers**

The Null (Ho): That both the number of wives and the number of children, which the respondents' fathers have, are not related, or equivalently, they are independent.

Ho:  $p \leq 0.05$

The alternative (Hi): There is a relationship or association between the number of wives and the numbers of children, which the respondents' fathers have, or equivalently, they are dependent.

Hi:  $P > 0.05$

Question of A17 by A18

**Table 7.2 Number of wives and children to offenders' fathers**

NUMBER OF WIVES TO OFFENDERS' FATHER	Frequency	NUMBER OF CHILDREN TO OFFENDERS' FATHER				
		Two- Four	Five- Ten	Ten and above	Don't know	Total
	One	6	23	1	0	30
	Two	4	9	2	1	16
	Three	5	3	12	0	20
	Total	15	35	15	1	66

p=0.0001

The expression is read: “the null (Ho) is that the population of the respondents as (armed robbers) in modern Nigeria would more likely have fathers whose number of children is related to the number of wives at the level of **0.05** degree of confidence”. That is, there is a good degree of significance that an association between the number of wives and the number of children that the respondents' fathers have, exists; and this finding applies to

the population of contemporary armed robbers in the country. A fairly remarkable percentage (20%), that is,  $\frac{6}{30}$  of the respondents have fathers whose numbers of children seems obvious to correspond to the number of wives. Table 6.3.5-6 clearly shows that most offenders' fathers (53.8%) have more than one wives (polygyny), and 75.7% have well over five children. The null hypothesis of no relationship is therefore, rejected in favour of the alternative hypothesis that there is a probable association or relationship between the two variables.

It is also interpreted at the level of the unit of analysis to mean that the number of wives, which a respondent's father has, is a probable determinant of his number of children. And in reality and in most cases, fathers who have many wives invariably have a determinable larger numbers of children unless, check by death, war and diseases. This finding confirms some previous writings and reports. O'Donnell (1974:49) for instance, notes that in 1650 the city of Nuremburg decreed that every man could marry two women in order to have more children, and to increase the overall population which had been severely reduced by the Thirty Year's War. Shorter (1998:91) notes among other advantages, that classical polygamy (polygyny) ensures many children.

The implications of a large number of children on crime and delinquency have been stressed (see for instance, the argument of the traditional structuralists). According to Montgomery and Lloyd (2001) while they attempt to establish the modelling effect of excess fertility, unintended births (concomitantly taken by the researcher to mean large children) and children's schooling, there are sizeable negative impacts of excess fertility on children's schooling. This however, varies in strength, and is mediated by a country's socio-economic context. Parents' family size, which is described as excessive may

represent an obstacle to educational investment, and for developing countries, the gap between the desired and the actual fertility is surprisingly large with recent estimates suggesting that as many as one birth in five is unwanted or mistaken (see Bongaarts 1990).

#### **7.4.3 Leadership structure and robbery planned operation**

The Null ( $H_0$ ): Planning armed robbery operation by the respondents is not related to the organisational structure of the respondents' gang or group that is characterised by line of control.

$H_0: p \leq 0.05$

The alternative ( $H_1$ ): There is a relationship or association between the organisational structure of the respondents' gang or group that is characterised by line of control and planning armed robbery operation by the respondents.

$H_1: P > 0.05$



Question of B30 by B16

**Table 7.3 Leadership structure and robbery planned operation**

Frequency		LEARNING ROBBERY OPERATION		
		Yes	No	Total
LEADER OF ROBBERY GANG	Yes	26	4	30
	No	5	7	12
	Total	31	11	42

$$p=0.0027$$

The expression is read: “the null (Ho) is that the population of the respondents who are more likely to plan armed robbery operation, given a certain level of hierarchical leadership is less than or equal to **0.05**. In other words, there is a greater level of confidence to assume that a greater proportion of armed robbers (respondents), who operate in groups, and have line of leadership are more probable to embark on planning before going into operation.

A remarkable percentage (86.67%) or ( $\frac{26}{30}$ ) of the respondents who operate within a gang or group armed robbery, and have leadership and other role players are more likely to plan robbery operation before embarking on it. And by chi-square statistical interpretation, this is a probable characteristic—**wide scale of meaning** of the population. Since the sample in this study is unlikely to have come from a population with  $p < \underline{0.05}$ , the null hypothesis of non-association is therefore, rejected. That is, it is unlikely to be true. The alternative hypothesis is therefore, accepted. That is, there is a

probable association between planning the contemporary armed robbery operation in Nigeria, and/ or among the gangs or groups whose organisational structure is characterised by line of leadership and roles differentiation.

#### 7.4.4 Females' membership and role differentiation

The Null (Ho): There is no relationship between the female membership in the respondents' gang or group, and the role performed.

Ho:  $p \leq 0.05$

The alternative (Hi): There is a relationship or association between the female membership in respondents' gang or group and the role performed.

Hi:  $P > 0.05$

#### Question of B32 by B33

**Table 7.4 Females' Membership And Role Differentiation**

	Frequency	ROLE PERFORMANCE				
		Informant	Sexual satisfaction	Actual participant	Any other	Total
FEMALES' MEMBERSHIP	Yes	8	1	3	1	13
	No	0	1	1	4	6
	Total	8	2	4	5	19

$p=0.0232$

The above testing is about a probable relationship between the female members of the respondents, who operate in gang, and the role performance. This is the primary *and*

*prima facie* concern of the testing of these variables. However, at the wider level and interpretation, it tends to determine whether the sample was drawn from a population, which with a certain degrees of confidence, it could be said that the “column variable” is associated with the “row variable”. From the table, the result of the chi-square statistical test shows  $p$  to be smaller or equal to **0.05**. Indicative of this is that female members of an armed robbery group or gang is positively related or associated to the roles performed among these females’ armed robbery gang members. Indeed, most 61.54% ( $\frac{8}{13}$ ) respondents operate in a group or gang with female members whose roles are reflective of the composition.

Since the null hypothesis says that there is no association between the variables in the column and row, the null hypothesis is therefore, rejected. In its place the other set of alternative including the research hypothesis entirely known as the alternative hypothesis is therefore, accepted. Interpretably, and on a wider scale of meaning, it connotes that there is a good level of confidence that the sample is a reflection of the entire population whereby female members of a gang is associated with the different roles performed.

The roles of females in group criminal activity especially those, which demand energies and violence, seem merely limited to decoy, informants, and housekeeper (see also Whitaker 1987: 328). Several reasons account for this. Partly is the lack of secrecy among females or women; their emotional state, which makes them easily sympathetic; and their lack of sustainable wills. Most of the subjects affirmed that females are likely to be more vulnerable for apprehension when involved in the actual operation, and thus, expose the gang into trouble.

#### 7.4.5 Membership compositions and sharing of loots

The Null (Ho): Membership composition of respondents' gang or group is independent of the pattern of sharing loots.

Ho:  $p \leq 0.05$

The alternative (Hi): There is a relationship or association between the membership composition of the respondents' gang or group, and the pattern of sharing loots.

Hi:  $P > 0.05$

Question of B50 by B29

**Table 7.5 Membership Compositions And Sharing Of Loots**

	Frequency	MEMBERSHIP NUMBERS IN GANG ROBBERY			
		Three-Five members	Six-fourteen	Any other	Total
CRITERIA FOR SHARING LOOTS	Equally	13	2	0	15
	Membership length & experience	9	1	0	10
	Roles performed	3	5	0	8
	Any other	2	1	8	11
	Total	27	9	8	44

$p=0.0001$

The chi-test above is about whether the conditional distribution of both variables—column and row differs, or is the same. That is, is the number of the respondents in a

group or gang armed robbers a determinant of the criteria, or is associated with the pattern of distributing or sharing the loots or not? And the interpretation carried further and in a wider sense, it asks to “what extent could it be, or proven that the result from the sample is a probable parameter in the population”? The result from the test shows that  $p$  is less than or equivalently equal to **0.05**. Result shows that 86.7% ( $\frac{13}{15}$ ) of the respondents operate or carry out their robbery in groups, and are consequently, more probable to share their booties or loots by employing certain traditionally known criteria such as experience, equality, role performances and any other. That is, simplicly, the numerical strength of the respondents operating in group or gang determines the criteria to be employed in the sharing of the loots.

What this implies statistically—according to the logic of chi-square—cross tabulation is that the sample drawn is a likely reflection of the population of these respondents. This means the degree of confidence is significance enough to refute the null hypothesis of no association. The other set of alternatives is that there is a relationship between the variables. The competing hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is therefore, rejected and the alternative accepted.

Sharing of dividends amongst the stakeholders in formal or informal, legal or illegal businesses employing certain criteria, seems a common phenomenon, and it evokes a common sense. Table 6.4.12.6 shows the relative preference to the listed and widely recognised criteria. Interestingly, “equally” top the list with an approximate of 32% of the total respondents. Previous researches seem to confirm this finding. Sutherland (1939) description of the Professional Thief found that one highlight feature amongst them is that gains are equally shared, however, and a certain percentage is given

to outsiders who assist the mob (professional thieves). Einstadter (1975 in Rushing 1975: 450) also finds similar feature amongst members of armed robbery group he studied.

Among the subjects interviewed, sharing equally is in an increasing effort to make every member happy; other important factors (criteria) such as the experiences, seniority (age), and the contribution each made towards the execution of the crime are also considered. They also attest that certain amount are set out to settle the “backers” or sponsors, and/ or for protection. Clinard and Abbott’s (1973: 41) documentation of the dacoits in Uganda, make reference to a particular dacoit gang member whose information show that sharing of the loots seem to be determined by the role individual played—one of the gang who did not participate in an operation amongst these dacoits was given lesser amount of the loots.

#### **7.4.6 Sources and reasons for armed robbery**

The null (Ho): There is no relationship between the source (s) by which respondents learned about armed robbery, and the reason (s) for choosing to be involved in the offence.

Ho:  $p \leq 0.05$

The alternative (Hi): There is a relationship or association between the source (s) by which the respondents learned about armed robbery, and the reason (s) for choosing to be involved in the offence.

Hi:  $P > 0.05$

Question of B8 by B11

**Table 7.6 Sources and reasons for armed robbery**

	Frequency	REASONS FOR ARMED ROBBERY								
		Dislike of government	Easy money	Unemployment	Friends involvement	To help others	To imitate and act like others	Easy guns	Weak law and others	Total
SOURCES OF KNOWLEDGE	Through friends	0	0	9	1	2	1	0	5	18
	Through family members	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
	Reading & watching	3	1	4	1	1	0	1	2	13
	Owens' idea	0	0	1	0	2	1	0	0	4
	Any other	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	11	13
	Total	3	1	17	3	5	2	1	18	50

p=0.0051

The test here is very important in the light of the ultimate aim and the perspective of the study. These are concerned with the sources, and motives of getting involved in the contemporary armed robbery in Nigeria with a view to developing an alternative and far more credible conceptual idea of the offence and the offenders in Nigeria. The chi-

square result is **0.0051**, meaning that the level of confidence against which the two variables are cross-tabled is less or equal to **0.05**, and statistically, high.

A glean from both the tables 6.4.4.1 and 6.4.4.4 that bear the two important variables indicate less contestable, the verse (direct) relationship between the sources of learning the contemporary armed robbery behaviour, and the reasons for getting involved. Most (34.6%), that is,  $\frac{9}{18}$  gave the lack of employment as the main reason for their involvement. This is besides the other related reasons—political, and to get money easily, which are features of this contemporary society. The latter table (6.4.4.4) is concerned with the sources of knowledge of the offence. Findings indicate that both through friends and reading and watching TV account for 60%, that is, by the fraction above  $\frac{3}{13}$ . Certainly, as explained while discussing both these variables, they represent in no small measure, the consequence of contacts with the western world, which provide the opportunity to learn most of these foreign ideas, and the reasons to justify them.

Result of the test from the level of ordinary interpretation implies that there is an association between the sources of knowledge of armed robbery, and the motives behind it. Statistically, and on a wider and deeper meaning, however, it implies that the sample, which is drawn from the respondents' population, and which shows this probable association between the two independent variables is a representative of the entire population. Here the null ( $H_0$ ) hypothesis is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis which holds that there is a relationship accepted.

A close look at the frequencies in the cells clearly points to a close association with categories three in both the columns and the rows. These categories are that of “unemployment” and “reading and watching screens on armed robbery”. Both categories



are typically, characteristics of the western world. Less doubtful, unemployment has become a common social cankerworm in contemporary Nigeria like any other modern society. In the same vein, the electronic and other media, which are active in disseminating these western ideas, have since ruled the modern. And in all fairness, these media, while admittedly, has had the good sides of it, they have increasingly fostered a sense of disillusion to many individuals those who are most vulnerable to its antics and lies. These media particularly the modern T.V eulogises the achievers and besides, portray those who are not able to make it as “failures”. Concomitantly, the weird and violence ways of making it are also revealed through these media.

Subjects who were interviewed in the present study, in an apparent demonstration of the link between the sources of their knowledge of armed robbery to the reasons for their being involved, explained that youth should be discouraged from associating with suspicious peers, and getting entrapped to the western media and its idiosyncrasies such as films, going to the videos clubs, reading dangerous novels such as Hadley Chase, and the likes.

#### **7.4.7 Sources of learning and frequency of robbery**

The null (Ho): Both source (s) of learning about armed robbery, and the frequency of committing the offence by the respondents are independent.

Ho:  $p \leq 0.05$

The alternative (Hi): There is a relationship or association between both source (s) of learning about armed robbery, and the frequency of committing the offence by the respondents.

Hi:  $P > 0.05$

Question of B8 by B12

**Table 7.7 Sources Of Learning And Frequency Of Robbery**

	Frequency	FREQUENCY OF ARMED ROBBERY			
		Once	More than Once	Any other	Total
SOURCES OF KNOWLEDGE OF ROBBERY	Through friends	10	5	3	18
	Through family members	1	1	0	2
	Reading & watching	5	6	3	14
	Owens' idea	0	4	0	4
	Any other	2	0	11	13
	Total	18	16	17	51

$p=0.0002$

What the hypothesis is read to inquire is that given the row and column marginal, what frequencies are expected to be present in the cells if the sources of learning armed robbery, and the frequency of the crime were in fact, independent?

Findings from the chi-test show that the observed frequencies depart significantly from the expected values. So, it makes possible to conclude that the observed table does not fit the “independence model”. A fairly large number of respondents (55.56%), i.e.  $\frac{10}{18}$  are more likely to partake in a determinable number of robbery in relation to the sources of their knowledge of it. At the face value interpretation therefore, it means that

the null ( $H_0$ ), which says there is no association between these two variables is statistically insignificant, and therefore, rejected. Thus, it is argued that there is more likely to be an association between the source (s) of learning modern day armed robbery in Nigeria, and the frequency at which the respondents commit the offence. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis is accepted. .

Within this chi-square, the statistical significance of the finding is that the result above is read to suggest that it is likely that the sample drawn is from a population, which is split 50-50. That is, the sample is unlikely to have come from a population with  $p < 0.05$ . It is therefore, not likely to be a representative of the population; hence again the rejection of the null hypothesis, which implies that it is not representative of the population. So, the alternative ( $H_1$ ) that says the sample is a representative is accepted.

It seems obvious that the two major sources of learning are “friends” and “reading and watching screens on armed robbery”. What this implies is that these sources are more likely to have a closer association with the rate at which the respondents are tempted to commit the offence. Adler et al. (1991:42) note that the frequency of criminal involvement depends among others things on peer pressure and lifestyle. Besides the number of the respondents who committed more than one robbery prior to their arrests, most of the subjects say they have been involved in a series of robberies, and in a number of instances, which were unknown to public or officials.

#### **7.4.8 Sources of learning and robbery planning**

The Null ( $H_0$ ): Source (s) of learning armed robbery by the respondents have no association with the planning of the offence by these respondents.

Ho:  $p \leq 0.05$

The alternative (Hi): There is a relationship or association between the source (s) of learning armed robbery, and the planning of offence by the same respondents.

Hi:  $P > 0.05$

#### Question of B8 by B16

**Table 7.8 Sources Of Learning And Robbery Planning**

	Frequency	PLANNING OPERATION		
		Yes	No	Total
SOURCES OF KNOWLEDGE OF ROBBER	Through friends	17	3	20
	Through family members	1	1	2
	Reading & watching	8	4	12
	Owens' idea	3	1	4
	Any other	1	8	9
	Total	30	17	47

$p=0.0044$

Result above shows that there is a statistical level of significance, and this means it is unlikely to have been so, or occurred if the null (Ho) of no association were really true. Most (85%) of the respondents are those whose sources of knowledge of the contemporary armed robbery are more likely to have direct relationship to their planning of an operation in contemporary Nigeria. For example, from the figure above, the fraction of the respondents that are likely to plan robbery operation by learning from friends is

17/20. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative, which states there is an association accepted.

When interpreted at the level of ordinary meaning, it implies that the sources (s) by which respondents learned about the crime in contemporary Nigeria is likely to determine whether or not the planning of operation is to take place. In addition, and more statistically significance, the result of this chi-square test is read to further suggest that it is likely that the sample is drawn from a population that is split 50-50. That is, the sample is unlikely to have come from a population with  $p < \mathbf{0.05}$ ; hence the continuum rejection of the null hypothesis of no association.

Many researches have alluded to the implicit and explicit planning of robbery prior to actual operation (execution) as a typical feature that runs through most contemporary armed robberies (see Conklin 1972: 71; Einstadter 1975 in Rushing 1975: 458; Gibbons 1982: 251; Olurode 1990: 51; Adler et al. 1991: 243; Maree 1999: 54; Haran 1989 cf. Maree 1999: 54). Virtually all these authors note that planning—the *modus operandi*—execution, sharing, disposal and re-grouping are most peculiar to most contemporary armed robberies. So much so that some offenders interviewed by some of these authors attest that sometimes, rehearsals are carried out in the process of this planning.

Certainly, there is little doubt that planning is typical of most contemporary armed robberies in Nigeria, and that it is linked to the sources of knowledge of this crime. Contemporary Nigerian armed robbers wish to demonstrate to their countrymen and colleagues outside there that they are the quintessence of the contemporary sophisticated armed robbers. Besides these respondents who attest to the fact that they plan operation,

most of the subjects too maintain that planning is very essential. According to one of the subject as he put it:

Each of us brings owns' idea either from previous experience, or from what he has observed from others, or obtained from reading or watching. We then weigh these ideas and see which will fit in to the area we are going to rob. We plan how to take position, to escape, and to converge. In fact, we don't just do it anyhow.

#### **7.4.9 Sources of Knowledge and role performances**

The Null (Ho): The roles that the respondents play or perform in an armed robbery group or gang are not related to the source (s) of leaning about the crime.

Ho:  $p \leq 0.05$

The alternative (Hi): There is a relationship or association between the role that the respondents perform or play in an armed robbery group or gang, and the source (s) of learning about the crime.

Hi:  $P > 0.05$

**Table 7.9 Sources of Knowledge and role performances**

	Frequency	ROLE PERFORMANCES					
		Leader/ Commander	Wheelman/ Driver	Hitman/ Watchman	Actual robbing/Inspector/ O.C/Corporal	Any other	Total
SOURCES OF KNOWLEDGE OF ARMED ROBBERY	Through friends	0	2	6	4	4	16
	Through family members	1	0	0	0	0	1
	Reading & watching	1	2	6	0	3	12
	Owens' idea	1	1	1	0	0	3
	Any other	0	0	2	0	9	11
	Total	3	5	15	4	16	43

p=0.0018

The respondents' roles in an armed robbery group are cross-tabled against the source (s) of learning about modern day armed robbery in Nigeria. Findings by the chi-square show that the level of confidence at which the lack of association between the variables in the columns and rows could be accepted is significance enough at **0.05**. The null hypothesis, which states that both variables are independent—not related, is therefore, rejected, while the other set of hypotheses (the alternative) which states that there is a relationship accepted.

The frequencies in the cells seem to indicate for instance, that respondents who learned of the crime through “watching screens and reading”, are more probable to perform the role of “hit-man and mopol” (watchman). But on the overall interpretation, the results of the test tend to suggest or show that the sample drawn has a row and column variables that are interdependent, and which more probably, reflects the parameters of the population—respondents or armed robbers in the contemporary Nigeria. The null hypothesis is therefore, again rejected, and the alternative hypothesis again accepted.

The relationship between the sources of knowledge of a particular act, and role performances of the act is an age-long phenomenon, this is however, reinforced by the swath of contemporary mass media, opinion leaders and peer influence. These three institutions interlock at one point in the individual’s personality development to determine the role performance in a group activity. Opinion leaders as senior criminals are individuals who innovate new ideas, and fashions the soonest, and who have a formative influence on the other people’s decisions about adopting these innovations (see Howitt 1982:20).

Television—the most influential of the media in disseminating ideas has substantial effects particularly on the adolescents. It shapes the images of reality on which individuals base their actions (see Bandura 1979). And among adolescents, there is a great psychological investment in the self-notions as “tough”, “being a man”, “fearless”, “brave” and “fast learner”, which are attitudes imitated, learned, and borrowed from the role models who are mostly watched on the screens, senior colleagues and even peer groups. Reid (1997:196) documents as exhibit (exhibit 6.1) some violent crimes



committed by adolescents, which proved to be the consequence of their attempts to act out the roles they have watched in series of Television programmes.

Learning the contemporary principle that “business is business”, and the aggressive, violent and tricks, which the most successful ones in the so called legal business have acted, contemporary armed robbers in Nigeria thus, act on the same principle that “crime is business”, or that “crime is crime”, and chose to undertake a particular role that gives them not only success, but also the prestige and funs. So, like their counterparts, contemporary Nigerian armed robbers know readily well that like the dictum of Philosopher Honor`e de Balzac, that “behind every great fortune in Nigeria lies a crime”.

It is of little doubt to explain that the considerable display of bravado amongst many contemporary armed robbers in Nigeria, who engage in a daring daylight armed robbery and shootouts with armed policemen, are associated with the sources of learning about this armed robbery. As one of the subjects says:

To control this “big men” gives me a sense of fulfilment. You just say to yourself whao! So these criminals (big men) don’t have liver. And the whole things seem to you like you’re acting a film, and you are immediately remembering what you’ve watched and read about. But they are reality! You’re really the master and they are your captives.

And it seems clear to suggest that amongst other armed robbers especially the juveniles, engaging in robbery provides “thrills”, power, reality or illusion, and peer acceptance as much as more than real financial gain. This is in line with some previous arguments (see Matza 1964; McGhey 1986).

#### 7.4.10 Sources of knowledge and the use of weapons in robbery

The Null (Ho): There is no association between the source (s) of learning about armed robbery in contemporary Nigeria, and carrying weapons at the time of operation.

Ho:  $p \leq 0.05$

The alternative (Hi): There is a relationship or association between the source (s) of learning about armed robbery in contemporary Nigeria, and the carrying of weapons at the time of operation.

Hi:  $P > 0.05$

Question of B8 by B21

**Table 7.10 Sources Of Knowledge And The Use Of Weapons In Robbery**

	Frequency	ARMED (WEAPONS) DURING ROBBERY		
		Yes	No	Total
SOURCES OF KNOWLEDGE OF ARMED ROBBERY	Through friends	16	2	18
	Through family members	1	0	1
	Reading & watching	9	3	12
	Owens' idea	2	2	4
	Any other	3	6	9
	Total	31	13	44

$p=0.0366$

The findings show that the result of the computing measure of association between the rows and columns for the sample is significant, and thus, makes it possible to reject the null hypothesis. It is clear from the findings that most (88.89%) i.e.  $\frac{16}{18}$  are respondents whose sources of knowledge of armed robbery are more probable to determine whether or not they get armed during robbery a robbery operation. This represents the primary interpretation of the findings.

Statistically, and from a wider scale of meaning, findings imply that the association between the sources of learning about armed robbery, and getting armed during an operation, which is observed from the sample, is a probable reflection or representative of the entire population from which the sample is drawn. It is clear from the findings to suggest that since majority of the respondents learned about the crime from their friends, and reading and watching on the screens, and they also carry modern weapon, the likelihood of the relationship between these sources of learning and armed carrying in contemporary Nigeria can no longer be overemphasised. And what is more than to argue that carrying of weapons—which is common amongst female members of robbery gang, clearly suggest that a strong relationship between the sources of knowledge of this crime, and weapons carrying is inevitable.

Researches are inundated on contemporary armed robberies in both Nigeria and other societies, which are replete with arms and violence (see Mareni 1987; Iwarimie-Jaja 1987; Ekpeyong 1989; Katz 1996 in Conklin 1996:171-181; Thio 1998). Brands of weapons are displayed or vividly described in the media and by senior and peer armed robbers. It is by reading and watching screens and learning from friends that knowledge of the automatic weapons such as Ak 47, Berett, G.3 and SMG Magazines, battery for

detonation, dynamites and the likes, which are mainly carried by these robbers are learned from. Violent predators or delinquent-armed robbers typically reside or associate with other violent predators, delinquent armed robbers and senior criminals, in townships, villages, urban ghettos, and in state confinement. They also avail themselves of the opportunity of watching violent films.

Through these interactional forums they learned that their world and profession is a hostile one, and that they can only survive by getting armed. They thus, go armed to protect themselves from a hostile environment populated by others just like themselves, including their friends (see also Wright and Rossi 1986:139). So, armed robbers feel they must arm themselves because they believe their victims also have guns, or that they will confront opposition. And like other criminal gangs, they feel they need more of these guns, and more sophisticated ones, so that they will not be caught at disadvantage (see also Horowitz 1983).

Wright and Decker (1997) reports of an interviewed armed robber who said he was fearful that someone would overpower him and which did happen in the night of the interview when he was overpowered while trying to rob with a knife. Among the respondents and subjects interviewed in this study, getting armed is necessary even though one may not use it. As one of the subjects put it:

It is part of the game. You also have to learn how to shoot. When we hear about a powerful gun, we try to obtain it because it gives more power.

## **7.5 AUTHOR'S CLASSIFICATION OF ARMED ROBBERS AND ARMED ROBBERY IN CONTEMPORARY NIGERIA ARISING FROM DATA**

From the analysis of the respondents and subjects interviewed, certain typologies and features of contemporary armed robbery and armed robbers emerged. They are discussed, however briefly, but richly in this chapter and section.

Both the classifications and the features are blurred, and they contain overlapping descriptions that either refers to the offence or offenders or both. This indeed, is not out of context since the typologies of the offence are invariably, the determinant of the typologies of the offenders, and vice visa.

As it is the claim of this study, the studies of armed robbery and armed robbers need to be contextualised to make some meanings to the audience, and if a better conceptual knowledge of it is to be grasped. That is, it is important that the study of the crime and the criminals are particularised as opposed to the current approaches, which applies uniform criteria in their classifications. In contemporary Nigeria, for instance, any classification can only make sense when the patterns, spatial (geography), *modus operandi* and the general characteristics of the contemporary offence and offenders are aggregately reviewed and brought to fore.

Generally, the taxonomy of armed robbers and robbery in contemporary Nigeria is reviewed as including the following:

i) **Career armed robbers and/ or robbery**: This category of robbers sees robbery as their occupation. They go into it with full commitment, astute planning, well connected god-fathers—especially with the policemen, and go for the big “scores”—banks, big time commercial stores and rich people (big men) in the society. Operations where targets are

business offices are usually in daytime, and in the night or early hours morning if targeted against private persons.

Offender can, and does travel thousands of kilometres to participate in a robbery. They are heavily armed with sophisticated and state of the art weapons. Occasionally, it has taken the form of hijacking of vans with money, but this is rare. This kind of robbers operates mainly in the big cities and towns where big cash flows. Apprehensions of suspects rarely happen, and if successful, usually long after operation. In some cases gang members have been found to involve cross borders; like involving the nationals of other neighbouring countries such as Niger, Benin, Chad and so on. Professional armed robbers are likely to maintain a family, but not necessarily a stable one. When they visit their respective villages or towns, they appear meek, honourable and unassuming. The use of weapons is highly guarded and only use when it becomes extremely of necessity.

ii) **Intermediate robbers and/ or robbery**: This is a semi-professional or career armed robbers or semi-professional robbery category. They do carry arms, but usually those of locally made because their network is crude to afford them the opportunity to the modern weaponries. There are other weapons such as cutlasses, axes and clubs. They go mainly for less security prone zone for robbery such as the residential areas of the middle class people. They also undertake highway robbery as a compliment, and are more ruthless than the career robbers—often at joy to play out violence. Planning is also common, but usually poorly co-ordinated. There is also more of individuality amongst the members. They are well represented in the prison population among other classes of armed robbers. Arrest is much easier, though not often immediate.

iii) **The predatory robbers and/ or robbery:** This category abounds in the various towns, cities, semi-urban and villages in Nigeria. They are drawn mainly from a group of criminal boys who live within the various towns and villages, within which territory they operate. They do carry guns sometimes. But their weapons lie mainly in tapping the perceptions of fear of robbery among the people to carry out operation. They also do employ light weapons like axes, cutlasses clubs and knockouts to blow and scare people away. Recent reports from arrestees indicate that they are now increasingly getting armed with short guns and locally fabricated ones. They are mainly dropouts from schools or apprenticeships, and represent more of gang of delinquents than real armed robbers. However, most of them do graduate into full-blown armed robbers and the robbery occasionally result into death or injury of victims as result of the carelessness or unprofessionalism of the gang members.

For emphasis, the classification in contemporary Nigeria may also be by the offence in which case they are classified according to the place of robbery, the time of robbery, the victims, whether violent or non violent and so forth. For instance, there are commercial, residential, highways, and street robberies; night, morning, and afternoon robberies; violent and non-violent robberies. The point being made here is that armed robbers and armed robbery categorisations are dependent on the perspective at which anyone researcher wishes to view it from.

On the overall, armed robbers in Nigeria may probably be amateur, nervous, intoxicated, high on drugs or hunting for a fix, as Simonsen (1998:279) describes some robbers of the 1990s. But armed robbers especially of the modern Nigeria type reflect the increasing sophistry of the complex western world.

## **7.6 FEATURES OF ARMED ROBBERY AND ARMED ROBBERS IN CONTEMPORARY NIGERIA**

The findings of this research show that majority of the offenders of contemporary armed robbery in Nigeria besides the sex (male) bias, are of age between (12-36 years). Development of criminal methods is in relation to a chronological age, however, it varies with different crimes (Sutherland and Cressey 1940, 1960). By the decreasing in the ages of the modern day armed robbers, the result is that lack of proper control of the situation has often led to the loss of life (see also Katz 1996 in Conklin 1996: 173).

Based on the research findings of this study there are other features which emerged, and need be evaluated as constituting additional characteristics of armed robbery and armed robbers as they apply especially to modern Nigeria. They include:

- Armed robbers are proportionally of the productive labour force (17–40years) of the population. So, they are the most active members of the population.
- They are characterised by good relationships with their family, peers, friends and social companions.
- They are mostly imbued with a sense of regret, and would likely prefer to quit if given the right opportunity.
- Though robbers are brave, they are scare and wary of the various punishments meted to them in the event of arrest.



- Robbers are distinctively ingenuous—they know how to choose their targets or victims, when to strike, and how.
- Robbers are trained in trades or do have formal education, but they are usually those unemployed at one time or the other, or dependents.
- They are characterised by a strong sense of *esprit de corps*. That is, a sense of collectivism.
- Robbers and robbery is essentially a group activity.
- Robbers do often have a leader.
- Sharing of booties is usually by a consideration of many factors, but most often, equally.
- The offence and offenders are more likely to be armed during operation.
- Robbery in contemporary Nigeria is though violence in manner; most are likely to end with mere potential harm as against actual harm.

## 7.7 CONCLUSION

A relatively number of questions as variables from both sections of the questionnaire (see *Appendix A*) are cross-tabled and tested by means of chi-square statistics. Each question as a representative of variable is entered in both the columns and rows in a contingency

table. Following the traditional method of testing that requires stating both the null and alternative hypotheses, it is found that the null hypotheses or the exploratory issues in each and all the hypotheses or exploratory issues, which was set out to investigate are summarily rejected.

The variables that cross-tabbed and tested by chi-square include association between the educational qualifications of the fathers and mothers of the respondents, association between the number of fathers' wives and children, the relationship between sources of learning about armed robbery and being armed; planning operation; frequencies of committing the crime; reasons for getting involved in armed robbery, relationship between having group leaders and planning operation, and group membership and criteria for sharing the loots. In particular, the fact that the sources of learning about armed robbery is compared against many other variables, and it shows a probable association is of significant in line of the ultimate aim and perspective of the study—the idea of emulation.

Typologies of both the offence and offenders in contemporary Nigeria also demonstrate some kinds of semblances to what obtain in other societies, however, with added uniqueness. There are for instances, the career or professional armed robbers and robbery, the intermediate robbers, and robbery and the predatory robbers and robbery. Each of these has specific *modus operandi* and operational appurtenances that distinguishes it from one another. There are also muted classifications based on the victims, the place of robbery, time of robbery, and the nature—armed or unarmed and lots more. The typical characteristics are also diverse; it is, however in concordance to most findings from other authors and societies. But predominantly, offenders are mainly

of the active labour force, male bias, group activity, involves ingenuity, mainly the unemployed, a violent offence, characterised by *esprit de corps*, and the offenders seems rather paradoxical, but plausibly, overwhelmingly pusillanimous with regard to facing the penalty.

In chapter Eight the theoretical foundations of the study are reviewed, discussed and logically dissected. These are carried out in the manner that indicates the relevance or otherwise of these theories towards the build up of an alternative, a credible conceptual or paradigmatic model of contemporary armed robbery and armed robbers in Nigeria.

## **PART IV: THEORETICAL FOUNDATION**

## **CHAPTER EIGHT**

### **THEORETICAL OVERVIEW**

#### **8.1 INTRODUCTION.**

In the last chapter of part IV, few pre-conceived relationships or associations between variables are tested by means of a statistical chi-square. There are found, the tendency for associations between all the variables that are cross-tabbed. The results are important particularly, as the sources of learning about the offence demonstrate likelihood of association with a remarkable number of other aspects of contemporary armed robbery and armed robbers in Nigeria. These results provide the fulcrum for serious hypotheses, which are more amenable to a further empirically, validated hypothetical studies within the context of a developing country—such as Nigeria, whose past is characterised by extensive culture contacts and assimilation, with a far reaching implications.

Part IV examines some theoretical paradigms to criminality, delinquency and general deviant behaviour. It examines how these theoretical paradigms join forces with the findings in this study, to offer an alternative and far-flung explanation of the contemporary armed robbery and armed robbers in Nigeria. That is, it reveals salient criminological aetiologies and with the research findings, develops an alternative conceptual framework against which the study is anchored.

This part contains two chapters. The first chapter focuses on the discussion of a theoretical overview— some aspects of the sociological criminology and psychological theories, and the contemporary integrated model of, which contribute towards the understanding of the causal processes and dynamics of this crime in the contemporary

Nigeria. The second chapter of the section is about theory construction. The aim is to develop and explain the conceptual framework of emulation as the basic historical, intuitive, structural and psycho-sociological imaginative for understanding the current forms and problems of contemporary armed robbery in Nigeria.

The search for the causes of criminality has preoccupied first, early philosophers, and later behavioural and social scientists—sociologists and criminologists alike. Like other crimes and deviant behaviour, the causes and discussions on armed robbery are subsumed in these multidimensional traditional theories. In the in sociology and criminology, such theories abound. They especially, the grand ones, serve as the guiding academic compass for any future theoretical formulation towards the jigsaw puzzle of crime causality, while it appreciates the differences in their social contexts.

Certainly, the review of the theoretical perspectives or paradigms to crime is relevant to understand the various crime aetiologies, and their importance to the social phenomenon under study. Their evaluation helps to determine the strengths and weaknesses of these theoretical paradigms towards the understanding of these crimes. So, it reveals how holistic these theories by taking cognisance of the different socio-cultural contexts under which these crimes are committed: the history, nature, extent, and the continuum or frequency of these crimes. This review and evaluation are the focus of chapter Eighth of part IV.

Generally, there are a remarkable number of these theories in the literature, which are relevance towards the explanation of the contemporary armed robbery and armed robbers in Nigeria. (Pyle et al. 1974: 9) explain that there are many different theories regarding criminal behaviour within the broad field of criminology alone, that it has

become widely accepted to view such behaviour as simply multidimensional. These authors warn that considerations, such as time and available resources, often preclude an investigation so comprehensive as may be desired. So, all up-coming researchers must just continue to contribute to the ever-growing body of literature by concentrating their efforts on manageable studies that hopefully, provide a part to the whole body of crime causality enterprise (1974: 9).

In this study, some few selected sociological criminology theories, which are very close and embracing towards an understanding of the path to armed robbery in contemporary Nigeria, are most favoured for reviews and discussions. In each of these theories, the basic assumptions, their exponents, and their praxis to criminal behaviours are discussed. A cursory evaluation of each of them—identifying their strengths and lack of resounding relevance (weaknesses) in furthering the understanding of the offence in the country are provided.

Those specifically reviewed, and are found to be more relevant towards the understanding of this crime in modern day Nigeria are the anomie-strain, differential opportunity, association previous criminal experience, some psychological theories and integrated model theories. However, there is an anecdotal view of the researcher about the state of the art in the field of sociological criminology theorising.

## **8.2 “FOOD FOR THOUGHT”**

It is certainly a truism, that behavioural scholars are, often times, perhaps oblivion, engage their efforts and resourceful times in an intellectual debacles in their quest to explicate, and offer solutions to the problems within their social circumstances. Most times, they, in an unending crave for intellectual liberation and independence reflect their arrogance, which quite often than

not, complicate these problems rather than solves them. They therefore, set off another chain of intellectual “show off”. This kind of “cramp” attitudes has not in anyway, heronised them in their true search for the solutions to the numerous social problems of their milieu. Rather, it has simply reinforces the perceptions of numerous onlookers, who see them as mere “theorists”, who bark, but cannot bite.

Be it known that the researcher is not unaware of the interesting intellectual stimulations, and the growth of knowledge that this unguarded indulgence has yielded to. And the researcher may also have inevitably, fallen into the same trap or sum game. After all, the focal concern and ultimate aim of this study is no less, an attempt to develop a brand of theory in the same conventional old fashion of “**theory show-off**”, and guarded authorship or ownership; but suffice to say that this is merely accidental.

It is the thinking of the researcher that what should pre-occupy the task and research efforts of all those concerned, is the empirical and realistic efforts geared toward tackling any of these social upheavals as they come. Demeaning emphasis on “theory upon theory”, to a smart, and an in-depth grasping of the existing problems within the contexts of their different social systems can honestly do this. By so doing, they can move straight to marshal out the solutions. This would have justified the position and status of these social scientists as modern “magicians”

### **8.3 THE PSYCHOLOGICAL THEORY**

The psychological theory constitutes a strand of the positivist model, which has remained prominent in the search for an explanation of crimes and delinquent behaviour. The theory sometimes, interlocks with the biogenetic and social variables—some of the underlying assumptions of the two paradigms, are invariably found in this theory.

It locates the causes of crime in the individual criminals, albeit, “innately”, unlike the outward manifestations of the biochemical theories. The idea of this theory is that



deviant's sickness and abnormality lie in the mind, rather than in the outward body (see Haralambos and Holborn 1991:583-85).

As with other crime aetiologies, different psychological approaches have developed in respect to the different aspect of abnormalities such as personality characteristics and psychological disturbances. The basic assumptions, however, have remained unique and include:

- That the causes of criminal behaviour are within the individual.
- Criminal behaviour was therefore the manifestation of internal disorder.
- Psychological problems began in childhood years; and
- Although, environmental factors could possibly have contributed to the problem of crime, the main reasons for the problems were to be found within the individual himself (Shoemaker 1984: 4).

Psychogenic theory as it is sometime referred to, is the result of the shift from the emphasis on the presumed physical (outward) manifestations, to the hidden psyche traits of deviants much in the search for the causes of crime by the beginning of 1900s. As Sykes (1978:241-42) notes, there was a shift of interest from defective intelligence, to a more conscious conflict. Crime was observed as a product of the bursting forth of "id" impulses, and the criminal was simply acting out what most civilised men and women had learned to restrain (see also Tarde 1890).

Specifically, there are certain bizarre forms of criminality and deviant behaviours, which researches validate along the line of psychogenic thought. Examples of such

crimes include matricide or infanticide, the act of schizophrenia such as a father impregnating his daughter, mass murder (religious and cultural attached), suicide, serial rape, and other kinds of horrific crimes, which sometimes attempt to transcend conventional criminological explanations. Horrible crimes such as these have popularised the psychogenic hypothesis (Iwarimie-Jaja 1999a: 64). Grossbard (1962) thus, proffers that criminality is a reflection of neurotic tendencies, or emotional disturbances. Abrahamson (1945) explains that criminality and delinquent behaviour is the outcome of mental disorder or impairment—symptom of serious psychosis.

The thrust of the psychological theory is to understand the defective behavioural result of a child, who was not properly socialised to moderate his or her egoistic attitude before becoming adult. Such personality traits as impulsivity, aggressiveness, psychoses, sadism, lack of compassion, emotional immaturity, insensitivity to others and hyperactivity have been most focused on.

On overall, Sigmund Freud [1856 –1939] is often times, identified with the psychogenic theory particularly with his psychoanalytic perspective. Freud identified the three components of personality as the ‘id’, which he described as the raw and untamed biological and psychological “drives”, that underlie all human behaviours including *libido*. The other components are the “ego” and “super ego”. In his analysis, the “id” represents the unconscious, and it is always in need of self-gratification. The “super-ego” represents the moral and ethical standards of the society, while the “ego” is the conscience component that mediates between the push-pull of “id” and “super-ego”. So, according to Freud, a force of balance is supposedly, maintained in all individuals, and at

all times of temptations. When the “id” overshadows the “super-ego”, or when “ego” is weak or falters to perform its arbitrate role, crime results.

John Bowlby (1946 cf. Haralambos and Holborn 1991:583-85) in his acclaimed popular book “Forty-four Juvenile Thieves,” explained criminal and deviance behaviour in terms of pure socialisation. His argument is that children need emotional security particularly during their first seven years of lives. This can only be effectively provided by a close, intimate and loving relationship with the child’s natural mother. When a child is deprived of this particularly during early years, a psychopathic personality could develop. The child tends to act impulsively with little regard for the consequences. Bowlby then claimed that delinquents who were chronic *recidivists* (constant breakers of law with little regard for the consequence) had suffered maternal deprivation during their early years.

Another perspective of the psychological theory explains that people tend to develop a psychological abhorrence of ideas which conflict with ones’ own cherished ideas and beliefs. Perhaps this idea is common with adolescents and adults. This argument is further strengthened, by the argument of a *cognitive dissonance theory*, which states that individuals like to keep their psychological world balance (Festinger 1957). Ideas that do not fit in with their belief system cause a psychologically unbalanced state, which motivates the individual to correlate imbalance by whatever means he/she can. This explanation is in consonance with the utilitarian who place responsibility of actions and decisions on the individual actors.

There is also the selective perception of the psychological theory, which compliments the former. It explains the fact that one chooses how to interpret what one

sees, read, watch, and the influence from the opinion leaders in a way, which support ones' viewpoint. The selective retention and recall is the tendency to recall things on a selective basis. So, argument or behaviour, which fit in with one's own point of view, is remembered. Chiricos, Padgett and Gertz (2000:756) note that what is imitated, learned and probably emulated (addition mine) is remembered, and reacted to only insofar as they have some bearing on the imitators, learners and emulator's lives; in addition, and often times, relate to their own personal experiences.

Glaser (1956) in a reaction to association and learning had, while in a critique to what he perceived to be a mechanistic image of Sutherland's theory of differential association, came up with a strand of the psychological explanation of criminal behaviour. His argument is that experience of associating with deviants is harmless unless individual identifies with them. This he calls *differential identification*. This strand of theory asserts, that a person pursues criminal behaviour to the extent that he identifies with real or imaginary persons from whose perspective his criminal behaviour seems acceptable.

Psychological theories flourished in their explanation of criminal behaviour that so many variants of it, as there are many writers on it, are legion. Such 'catch phrases' as 'intra psychic', 'inter psychic', 'inter personal', 'feeble mindedness', 'IQ', and 'neurotic' have found themselves within the psychogenic aetiology. Prominent among the contributors includes the British psychologist Eysenck (1964), McCord and McCord (1964), Vold and Bernard (1986), and among others.

### **8.3.1 Assessment of psychological theory**

Psychological theory presupposes that the causes of crime are in the mind of the individual. Indeed, it explains that deficiencies in the criminals are genetically inherited. At the heart of the psychological theory therefore, is the assumption that crime is the result of the personality crisis an individual experiences. This is a reflection of the pattern of socialisation processes the individual passed through. Nevertheless, it could also be genetically related such as the psychopath: an aggressive, asocial, and highly impulsive person, who feels little or no guilt and cannot form lasting relationships with others.

Quite a good number of studies have tried to identify personality traits common among criminals than non-criminals. A review of research on juvenile delinquency by Binder (1988) summarised the findings to include the following: emotional immaturity, sadism and a lack of compassion, insensitivity to others, and hyperactivity.

Other researchers such as Yochelsen (1976; Samenow 1977 cf. Brown et al. 1991:282) are psychologists that have identified what they call “thought patterns” common to criminals. These patterns include, among others: great energy, chronic lying, intense anger, unrelenting optimism, and an exceedingly positive self-image. No doubt these are to an extent, consistent with the findings from the 68 armed robbers studied in this research. The general public regards less arguably, certain types of crimes and criminals as “delvish” and “devils”. That is, person who acts in some abnormal way is generally viewed as being “possessed” by the devil, and is mentally disturbed.

The empirical concern of the relationship between personality trait and crime is however, critical to sociologists and even among psychologists alike. The measurement of these relationships lies the difficulty. This is about the methodology of the studies,

which Haralambos and Holborn (1991:584) argued, are viewed by many as suspect. Indeed, it is found that there is a little agreement among psychologists about what constitutes mental health, and how to measure personality characteristics. While it is true that some criminals may be psychopathic, so are many non-criminals. According to Brown et al. (1991:282), when some researchers control for age, sex, social class, and other life history factors, they found that criminals do not experience higher likelihood of mental illness than other persons.

Another difficulty inherent in the psychological theory is that the psychopathic deviate on the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI) has been identified. In these studies, there are quite a good number of criminals who admit they have never been in trouble with the law. It could be argued that even the California Personality Inventory (CPI), which scores the delinquents' responsibility socialisation scales, is not without opposite scores. This casts serious doubts on the results. Albeit, remarkable numbers of respondents and subjects in this study had been involved in one form of criminality or delinquent actions or the other, and at frequency described as "always" and "sometimes", and even get arrested. Yet the numbers of them who have not been involved in law violation, not arrested, and even "never" at all, are also remarkable in the statistics (see for instance section 6.4.2 and tables 6.4.2.1-3)

Haralambos and Holborn (1991: 584) have, while assessing psychological theory, summarised the criticisms levelled against it especially by sociologists. Firstly, the theory has been accused of neglecting the social and cultural factors in their explanation of crime and deviance. Rather than being genetically determined, or innately present in criminals, which is part of the central argument of the psychogenetic theorists, values are

learned. For instance, Andry (1962 cf. Iwarimie-Jaja 1999a: 65) suggests that boys who had hostile and unsatisfactory relationships with their fathers projected this hostility, and acted it out in their relationship with other boys and authority figures. That is, such behaviour is un-inherited.

Secondly, many sociologists reject the priority given to childhood experiences. They dismiss the view that an individual is the captive of his or her early experience or conditioning that is simply acted out in later life. This approach they argue ignores a vast number of social factors, which influence behaviour during the person's life.

With respect to armed robbery in contemporary Nigeria, psychological theory is relevance in trying to grasp how the decision to engage in the crime is reached. A *caveat*, however, which is an unfortunate aspect of the empiricism of this study, is that no mechanism or questionnaire, which addressed and measured directly, the subjective elements of the psyche of respondents and subjects exist. Assessment of offenders' seemingly personality development is based on questions on offenders'-family-peers relationships.

Decision to rob, or to refrains undoubtedly, is ultimately a mental. It usually, involves cost-benefit analysis and rationalisation. This is especially so, since most respondents have not suffered any form of mental derailment. However, scores of armed robbers interviewed did experience emotional problems during their early adolescence. Emotional dispositions especially the one acquired in ones' early part of life are crucial risk-predictive factors of adult's behaviour. In other words, whether one chooses the path to prosocial or anti-social behaviour depends, to a large extent, on the childhood

experience; that is, on the predominant behaviours, norms, and values held by those to whom the individual is bonded to (see Huang et al. 2001:78).

Fighting and aggression are common phenomena in childhood and adolescence. And among those who are psychopathic, and or who suffered socialisation problems, these behaviours tend to become more acute. Youth in this category are more likely to associate together (differential association), have a culture of neophyte crime (differential opportunity), and are able to acquire criminal experiences necessary for armed robbery (previous criminal association). This processes, and their linkages, form the bedrock of the integrated model approach, and the “social developmental model strand”<sup>1</sup>. This is also about the specific idea of emulation—as alternative framework proposed in this study, but which nevertheless, transcends beyond this mere relationship; inquiring into the origin of this behaviour.

People are not simply a slave to their childhood experience, however. In fact, experiences have shown that in some cases, children who passed through hardships, and experienced some sorts of emotional imbalances, have higher records of successful adulthood. Minds and mental reasoning changes as one grows, develops, and matures from one stage of life to other. People recounting and retrospecting their poor backgrounds are more likely to despise it, and would loathe experiencing it again. The

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<sup>1</sup>The social development model (SDM) integrates the key features of differential association, social learning, and social control theories, to a more embracing theory, which describes the causal and mediating processes that hypothesised to predict behaviour over the cause of development (see Hawkins & Weis 1985; Catalano & Hawkins 1996). It incorporates a growing body of knowledge regarding the effects of empirical factors, or “risk-predictive factors”, in the development of antisocial behaviour (Huang et al. 2001). It is clear empirically, that multiple biological, psychological, and social factors at multiple levels in different social domains (i.e. within the individual and



tendency is to work harder through the legitimate means that could improve their standards. Psychological theory therefore, lacks substantiative evidence to explain armed robbery in the modern day Nigeria. A child that was under a constant threat of being beating by the father, mother and/ or custodian, is no guarantee that such a child will take to robbery.

Profiles of most arrested notorious armed robbers including those interviewed in Nigeria, shows that they had a good childhood experience—perhaps good enough, and nice parents’ backgrounds, only to turn into *monsters* in their adolescence. This perhaps, is the result of their exposure to the “heat and vagaries of the society”. (See Olurode 1990:19-18; Lagos News, 13<sup>th</sup> Jan. 1987 on Anini ).

#### **8.4 GENERAL OUTLINES OF SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY**

Generally, sociologists envision crime, delinquent and general deviant behaviour as the product of the social forces, rather than the individual differences. Sociological criminology theorists are positivists because of their contention that these social forces—both observable and testable, influence people to commit crime. The general assumption of the sociological criminology theory, is that the poor socio-economic conditions—poor educational and career training, poor housing, over-population, slum condition, poverty, unemployment and functionally inadequate families, can lead to deficient socialization, poor inter-personal relationships and inadequate internalisation of social norms and

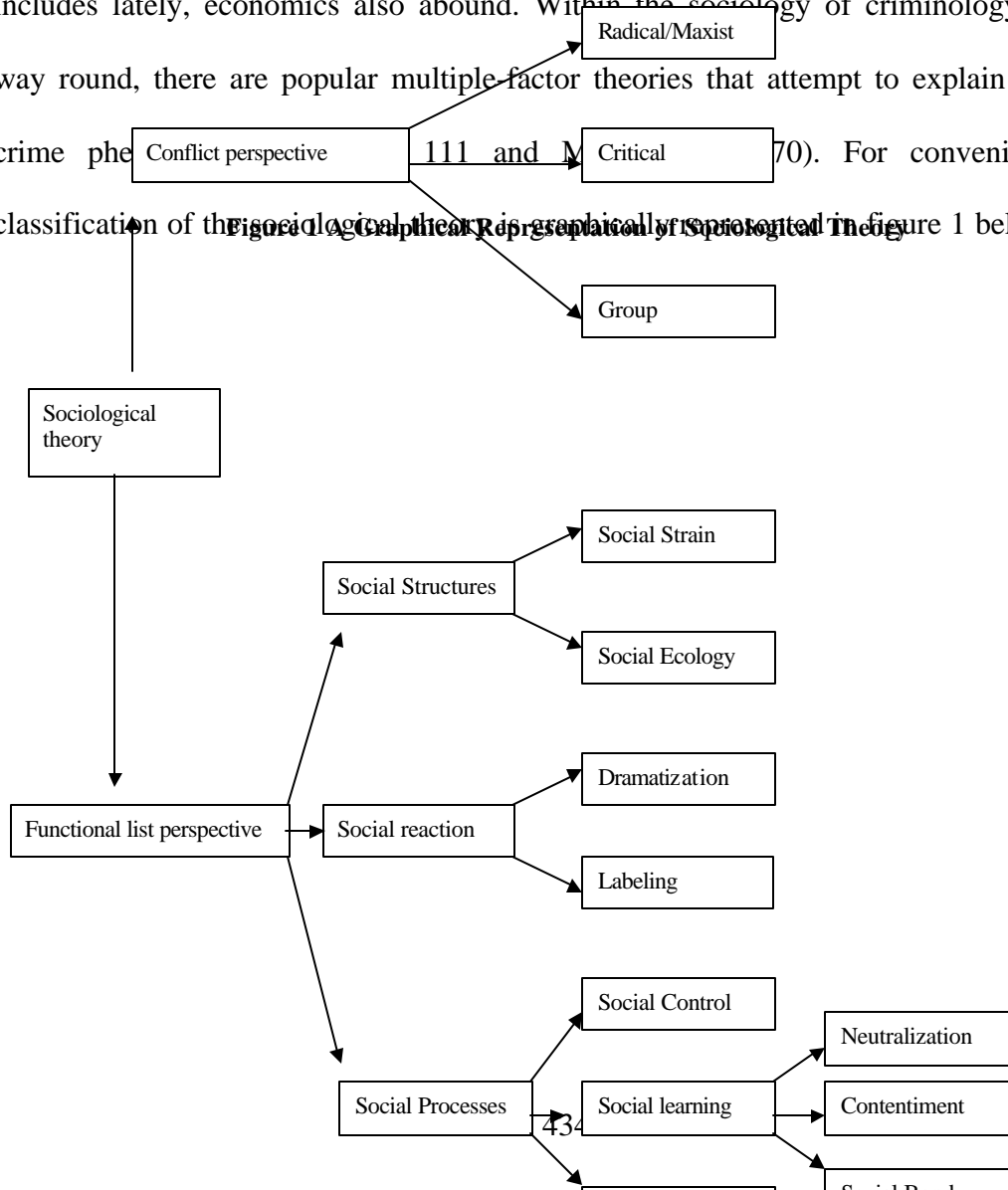
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in family, school, peer group, and community) all contribute in some degree to the problems of crime.

values. These in turn contribute to criminal behaviour (Naude 1988 cf. Naude and Stevens 1988: 18).

For all intents and purposes, the classifications of the social (sociological) theory at whatever level and manner are not pure and sacrosanct (Brown et al. 1991:296; Otu 1995:14). Indeed, sociological theory; its interdisciplinary and holistic outlook includes some elements of biological and psychological theories to account for crime. So, they sometimes, go by such sobriquets as “socio-biology” and “psycho-sociology”.

The dominance of sociology in the field of theory on crime and delinquency is discernible. This is notwithstanding that cross-disciplines and hybrid of theories, which includes lately, economics also abound. Within the sociology of criminology or other way round, there are popular multiple-factor theories that attempt to explain particular crime phenomena (Hirschi and Gottman 1994:111 and Merton 1936:70). For convenience, the classification of the sociological theory is graphically represented in figure 1 below.



### **8.4.1 Strain theory**

Strain theory represents the very big heart of the sociological bid to account for crime. The thrust of the theoretical agenda of strain, averts that stress, frustration, strain (hence the name) are engendered by failed aspirations; so, it increases the prospect of norm violation. Accordingly, norms the theory maintains, are violated or rather, crimes are committed as a means of easing off the strains or stress caused by frustration and failure. The blockage in the attainment of set goals makes it inevitable that an alternative route have to be sought out.

According to Brown et al. (1991:298), strain is associated with distorted aspirations, unrealistic desires for attachment, and crass materialism. Most strain theories reason that the structure of the modern society, and in particular, the American's society, creates the greatest pressure within the lower-class echelon. Consequently, the macro theory focuses on explaining lower-class crime.

Two strands of the strain theory, which bear relevance to the idea of emulation as offering alternative, and a better knowledge of the contemporary armed robbery and armed robbers in Nigeria, are discussed. They are the anomie theory and the differential opportunity. The point of departure like any other sociological theory is the economic situation of the people in the social structure.

#### **a) Anomie theory**

Emile Durkheim [1858-1917] described as the father of modern sociology pioneered the strain theory with his evaluated description of the traditional and industrialised societies.

These societies are characterised by different social solidarity (described as co-operation of social groups in working actions towards goal) call mechanical and organic solidarity. There is the *re-birth* of Anomie—*state of lawlessness or normlessness as a society moves toward organic state of solidarity with increasing division of Labour and Specialization*. (see Durkheim, *The Division of Labour*. 1893 and translated by Halls, 1984). This anomic situation leads to a disjunction, or contraction between people's aspirations; it affects all classes of people. The weight is preponderate on the upper and middle classes, whose expectations and aspirations expand to an insatiable level, but the irresistible pressure to live and survive is much evidence on the lower class.

Overwhelmed by his accidental discovery in suicide, Durkheim theorises that people with higher aspirations are more susceptible to anomic condition (see Durkheim, 1897 *Suicide: A Study in Sociology*, and translated by Spaulding, 1951). This author explains that aspirations are class related, and the upper classes have higher goals than the lower classes. Successful social structure defines limit on desire. When social organisation falters, for whatever reason, insatiable desires are unleashed. Unlimited aspirations create pressure for crime as the alternative solution. In other words, there is an unequal access to opportunity towards the realisation of the expressed aspiration and value. Durkheim posits that the high rate of deviant and criminal behaviour is the price paid for the emergence of modern society<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> Durkheim identified two societies: primitive and modern societies with corresponding solidarity. Although, he argued that crime and deviant behaviours are inevitable and integral part of social life, but maintained that it is higher in the modern (more advanced and industrialised) societies. Crime in his words implies not only that there is vacancy for necessary changes but also that in most cases it directly prepares these changes. Where crime exists, collective sentiments and value system are sufficiently unrigid to take new form, and crimes sometimes, help to determine the form these changes will take. In other

Merton 1938, an avowed supporter of Durkheim's postulation modified, and expounded the theory of anomie that Clinard (1964:10) was unhesitant to eulogised as the "single most influential formulation in the sociology of deviance and...", possibly the most frequently quoted paper in modern criminology and sociology. Merton, however, by exemplary confrontations with his American society differed intellectually, from his progenitor. He attributed the strain to the inherent difficulties on the means of achieving the commonly held success goal, rather than the abrupt social change that kindles the insatiable desires that Durkheim had considered as inherent in human nature.

In his analysis, Merton begins with the understanding that all societies have a cultural system; this embodies the socially approved values and goals, and the acceptable norms or institutionalised means for achieving these goals. Unfortunately, the prescribed goals and means do not permit members to pursue only the success in appropriate ways. So, the institutionalised means are not overtly available to all members of the society, and both the goals and means therefore, exert pressure on some segments of the society in non-conforming behaviour, while they struggle to achieve these success goals and values. In Merton's view, this happen when the goal of success is emphasised more than the acceptable ways of seeking success.

Virtually in every society, members of the lower class have *lesser* access to education and important inter-personal contacts, and which can enhance their opportunities and access to socialisation. This access to opportunities prepares people for

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words, crimes are indications that all is not well with a particular social system. It is only an "anticipation of the morality of the future-a step towards what will be". The illustration Durkheim gives is Socrate's civil disobedience that paved way for the independence of thought, and academic freedom proper. (See more of the Durkheim's

competition in the struggle to achieve success, wealth and status. They thus experience greater stress or strain in an attempt to achieve this success legitimately. On this account, Merton argues that it is this blocked opportunities that explain the disproportionate number of the lower class members in criminal and delinquent acts. Therefore, an inequitable social structure evaluating success similarly at all social levels produces the lower class strain and ultimately leads to crime and delinquency (see Merton 1938).

Merton like his progenitor Durkheim, set forth to explain the origin of deviant behaviour, including crime and delinquency, not in terms of biological traits or personality drives, but in terms of social organisation. His interest was focused not on the behaviour of a particular individual, but on the “rate” at which certain types of behaviour occurred for the system as a whole, or in parts of the system such as the different social classes (see Sykes 1978:265). His eulogised theoretical postulation has been described as the “Means/Ends Paradigm” or the “Opportunity Structure Paradigm” to which other theories later sprang from (see Pyle et al 1974:12). And in simple terms, it is argued that the discrepancy posited between the “ends” and “means” gives rise to Durkheim’s state of “anomie” or “normlessness”, hence criminal behaviour.

Merton identified five possible ways people respond to the structural stress since not all the people are deviant. This can be referred to as Merton’s plus-minus paradigm.

i) CONFORMITY: The individual accepts the culturally defined goals and adhere to the institutionalised means to achieving them, irrespective of his or her success or failure.

ii) INNOVATION: This is probably in the view of the researcher, the most common form of adaptation to the structural stress by which the illegal means to success is

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theory in *The Rules of Sociological Method*, 1894 and translated by Halls, 1982 and

adopted to achieve the conventionally held goals. It is these groups of people that form the focus of criminologists and of course, the central issue in this study.

iii) RITUALISTS: The opposite of the above, and consisting of people who abide by the rules (means) but lack the commitments to the goals. For examples, civil servants and teachers. This seems also most common since there are majority of the disadvantaged—at the margin of the society, who nevertheless, do not subscribe to criminality/delinquency.

iv) RETREATISTS: They are the societal dropouts. That is, those that abandon both the cultural goals as well as the institutionalised means. For examples, drug addicts, homeless and truants. These categories of people are increasing dramatically in virtually all contemporary societies including Nigeria.

v) REBELLION: Those that reject the goals and means of the society and substitute them with new sets of values and norms for the discarded ones. For examples, political revolutionaries and religion fundamentalists. No doubt that these categories are also on rise across all spectrum of contemporary societies.

#### **8.4.1.1 Assessing anomie-strain theory**

At the heart of the anomie-strain theory, lies the assumption that the culture and structure of the society generates deviance. At the centre of this assumption is the overemphasis on the cultural goals of most contemporary societies, at the expense of the institutionalised means, which creates the tendency towards a state of normlessness. The resultant *anomic* situation brings pressure on the people, which then vary according to a person's class position in the social structure.

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*Suicide: A Study in Sociology, and* translated by Spaulding, 1951).

*Anomie* is a true depiction of most contemporary societies, including present Nigeria. Success and achievements are more measured primarily in materialistic terms. There are rules guiding the game of success, but they seem to be of little relevance than success itself. In fact, the end is what obviously justifies the means in most of the contemporary societies.

In contemporary Nigeria, it is whom one is that matters, and not how one becomes what one is. More emphases on the status and income of achievers—measured in monetary terms, are prevalent in immeasurable terms among contemporary Nigerians.

As applied to an understanding of armed robbery in Nigeria today, the means available to the overwhelming members of the lower classes are clearly, frustrating for the goals (material acquisition) which is a feature that run through all segments of the country. This puts pressure on the members of the lower classes in the country to aspire for these goals. The manner of resources distribution in Nigeria certainly, handicaps people; it drives them into poverty, slums, and other disadvantaged situations. These generate discontentment and pressures on them to engage in armed robbery.

The high rate of robbery incidence in the Southern part of the country; and especially in the Southeastern region may no less be the consequent of certain socio-political and economic backlogs in the country's social structure, which block people especially from this region against effectively competing for the common symbols of success. This became more evidenced after their loss in the civil war—1967-1970. Overemphasis on material success, and the denial of opportunities are therefore, what generate strain in the lives of those especially located in the lower strata of the social structure from this particular region of the country.



Despite continuous findings and the empirical observations, which tend to support the notion that most criminals are those mainly from the lower class in the social structure, the theory of strain (*anomie*) is impotent on its own to account adequately for high profile crime like armed robbery in a developing country like Nigeria. The traditional cultural values of Nigeria have been torpedoed. Yet much of the societal negative reactions to the illegitimate means such as armed robbery still abounds.

It is argued that the advent of self-report measure has brought the whole idea of strain into doubt. The justice system creates a lower class crime problem through a class-biased enforcement response. In other words, the notion of armed robbery being reduced to class question is fraught with suspicious. If it is indeed, true that contemporary armed robbery is a lower class problem, then one is constraint to ask why is the nature and *modus operandi* so remarkably different from what was, or is known of armed robbery in the traditional Nigeria society? And also to an extent, exhibits a degree of uniqueness from what obtains in the western countries where current armed robbery is learned from? That is, how come that that contemporary armed robbers in Nigeria differ in a somewhat unique way from their counterparts? How was this behaviour learned by the way? And what are the means for spreading and contracting this behaviour? Answers lie in what is somewhere else, and in this case no less in the proposed theoretical idea of emulation as an alternative perspective or paradigm.

#### a) **Differential opportunity theory**

Richard Cloward and Lloyd Ohlin (1960) proposed the differential opportunity model, which represents an expanded version of Merton's theory on delinquency and criminality.

The duo agreed with Merton in large measures, but contend that he had failed to acknowledge the role of the illegitimate opportunities structure that gives rise to the deviant adaptations to the anomic conditions. It is this differential illegitimate opportunity that invariably accounts for the different forms that deviant and criminal behaviour take (Cloward and Ohlin 1960).

Cloward and Ohlin theorise that just as the availability of the legitimate means vary across social groups, so does the access to the illegitimate opportunity structures. For example, in a particular area there may be a thriving adult criminal subculture, which may provide access to the adolescents, and in another area, this subculture may not exist. So, in the first area the adolescent has more opportunity to become a successful criminal. By examining access and opportunity for entering into the illegitimate opportunity structures, Cloward and Ohlin (1960) provide an explanation for the different forms of crime and delinquency.

Illegitimate opportunity structure like the legitimate one pre-supposes social organisations or integration in order to offer illegal opportunity. Person seeking innovative solution to his strained circumstances must equally learn the necessary values and skills to take the full advantage of the opportunity such structure offers within the society. Those that lack these proper skills and potential they argued will again confront failure in their efforts to become criminal, say for example, armed robbers. It goes without saying therefore, that Shaw and Mckay's analyses of the organisation and disorganisations, with its link to Sutherland and Cressey's (1974) postulation of "selection and tutelage", are necessary elements in the illegitimate opportunity structures.

In other words, success within a particular criminal subculture requires access to learning the existing structures in such subculture, which includes mastering the pertinent skills.

Arising from this knowledge, Cloward and Olhin identified three possible responses under such situation.

i) CRIMINAL SUBCULTURE: This subculture tends to emerge in an area where there is an established pattern of organised adult crime. Blocked against the legitimate means, there is an illegitimate opportunity in the form of community organisation for crime. This permits the gangs to success through the illegal and conventional means. In such area, learning environment is provided for the young ones. These young ones are therefore, exposed to the criminal skills and deviant values, and are presented with criminal “models”. Those who perform successfully in terms of these values have the opportunity to rise in the professional hierarchy.

ii) CONFLICT SUBCULTURE: This tends to develop in an area where adolescents have little opportunity for access to illegitimate opportunity structure. There is little organised adult criminal culture to provide apprenticeship for young criminals, and little opportunity for them to climb the illegitimate ladder to success. These areas have been found to have high turnover of residents, which are characterised by the lack of unity and closeness. These prevent stable criminal subculture from developing. Access to both the legitimate and the illegitimate opportunity is blocked. The response is often gang violence which serves as a release for anger and frustration, and as well as the means for obtaining prestige in terms of the values of the subculture.

iii) RETREATIST SUBCULTURE: This is the last response identified and according to them, it tends to emerge because they have failed to succeed in both the legitimate and

illegitimate structures. They are simply “double failure”; composed mainly of the social dropouts. For example, the drug addicts, drunkards, womanisers and religion fanatics that are likely found in these unorganised communities. Without the illegitimate means, a criminal subculture cannot persist. In an organised community, the destructive and malicious behaviour associated with conflict gangs will not be tolerated. As failed criminals or failed gang members, they retreat, tails between their legs into retreatist subculture.

The discussions on the theory of differential opportunity also seem more interesting and commonsensical when it is argued that the individual crime victim creates the environment conducive for most of the crimes. It is no farther from the truth that individual or groups that carry large sums of money create the needed opportunity for armed robbers often acting on “tip-off” to strike suicidedly and cart away such money.

Cohen and Cantor (1981:113-127) have expounded the theory further. They provide elaborate details on how opportunities can simply be provided for a crime, or a particular crime can summarily occur. According to these authors, the changes in the pattern of routine activities with more people away from home for greater length of time have resulted in an increased criminal accessibility to these targets. They explained that the changing economic status of women that brings them into the labour market and the fact that more families leave home for vacations led each family in control over his own children reduced. Control over neighbourhood children is also reduced when women are not at home during the day. The net effect of these is an increased opportunity to commit crime, as empty homes are targets for crimes. They also argued that since after the World War II, there has been an increase in the production of lightweight goods. This

development has effectively increased the number of suitable targets for crime; making them more susceptible to robbery, burglary, hijacking, and all forms of criminal devices.

Finally, Bales (1962) cited in Chaiken and Chaiken (1983 in Wilson 1983: 21-22) argued that societies have failed to develop methods of channelling adolescent behaviour (period between physical maturity of puberty and social maturity), and the age of assuming adult roles and responsibility thus, providing greater chances for criminality. In traditional and industrial societies, the arduous rituals, communal labour and ceremonies that young stars must fulfil have accomplished these functions. And the rigour of training on the athletic fields of schools and colleges which, all functions as for socially occupying potential trouble makers until the demand for marriage and family are been systematically abandoned with impunity and utter disregards.

Other authors continued to widen the scope of delinquency and criminality as the function of the illegitimate or legitimate opportunities of contemporary society, however in different colourful perspectives. Clinard and Abbott (1973: 39) for instance, would argue that rapid industrialisation and urbanisation has necessitated the transportation of large sum of monies with meagre security thus making the target more vulnerable for attack. And Hirsch (1983 in Wilson 1983: 53-68) has provided a seminal account of how contemporary family structures and accompanying roles have provided increasing opportunities that less doubted, lead to delinquency and or criminality.

#### **b) Assessing differential opportunity theory**

Critical to the differential opportunity theory is that criminal behaviour and delinquent activities in which one becomes immersed are a direct function of the delinquent

opportunities available. In other words, what differential opportunity theory is saying is that to become a criminal and delinquent, there must be an organised structure, which provides the illegitimate opportunity structures that could facilitate the development of criminal and delinquent adaptations to anomic conditions.

What is found in analysis of this theory is that differential opportunity has provided the answer to the problem of the key foundation of contemporary strain theory, which is often criticised for limiting its focus on the property crime (see Brown et al 1991: 320). In fact, opportunity theory acts as intervening variable that explains why people pursue one wayward path and another.

With respect to armed robbery in contemporary Nigeria, the theory also acts as a precursor to the theoretical postulation and/ or idea of emulation. The theory permits the researcher to look at armed robbery not simply in relation to one or the other means, but in relation to both the legitimate and illegitimate systems. Armed robbers undoubtedly, are exposed to both the western culture, part of which is the sophistry of criminality and the older (senior) criminals—who have learned and emulated this western behaviour, and are operating as robbery network. The upcoming youth therefore, learn the appropriate behaviour and justifications from the western world through the influence of the mass media and the senior criminal relations and friends. They are also better placed to perceive, and to appreciate the so called “success goals,” which are eulogised in all manners in the contemporary societies such as Nigerian. As a consequence, the youth join the gang, acquiring predatory criminal experiences, and ultimately, they move up to the high profile crime such as armed robbery.

In practical terms, in modern day Nigeria, the theory shows relevance in understanding the trends and patterns of the crime among the different ethnics and corresponding states in the country. Indices of armed robbery in Nigeria provided by the Federal Office of the Statistics and police reports, especially from the periods 1980s to the present, show the high rates of the offence. These figures are recorded among those ethnics and states that have long been identified with the criminal subculture (illegitimate structures). For examples, such states as old Bendel, Anambra and Lagos are discernible in terms of their high robbery rate (see section 2.9.2.4).

But again, the question is asked thus: why is it that Nigerians, who are tutored and socialised in the most Christian and traditionally dominated part of the country, and which places much emphasis on morality, virtues, and traditional values seem most to commit armed robbery in the modern day Nigeria? Ordinarily, one would have expected the crime to be negligible in these areas. Paradoxically, it is these areas that account for the highest number of armed robbery in the country. The only explanation therefore, is that these groups and areas are much more *exposed* and *receptive* to the western values and culture, and thus, imitate and emulate them in their ramifications.

Differential opportunity theory has been criticised, however rightly or wrongly, by some scholars as having operational deficiency. Reid (1982 cf. Iwarimie-Jaja 1999a:74) notes that the theory is weak in defining concepts such as “double failures”, “perception of opportunity”, denial of legitimacy”, differential opportunity” and “elimination of guilt”. Also citing Schrag (1972:176-175), Iwarimie-Jaja (1999a: 74) notes that it is wrong to say that neighbourhoods with high delinquency rates are characterised by one type of subculture

The theory therefore, when applied wholeheartedly into contemporary Nigeria, fails to capture in an appreciable degree, the present *form* of armed robbery in the country. Armed robbery in its present form is a professional career; it is perpetuated in a very hi-tech and sophisticated manner.

#### **8.4.2 The social process theory**

Generally, the social process theory rejects the notion of strain theories—that the social structure generates disproportionate pressure upon members of the lower classes to commit crimes. The implication of this assertion by the strain theorists is that individual subjected to economic disadvantage, will resorts to criminal or delinquent solutions, while the well- to-do would refrain because presumed structural strains are absent or are absorbed. Indeed, this idea is misleading as researches have shown that most lower classes people do not become criminals, whilst the “well-offs” are regular offenders (Sutherland and Cressey 1974; Marení 1987; Olurode 1990).

The greatest asset of the social process theory lies in the fact that its explanatory power cuts across all the social classes and economic strata of every society (Brown et al. 1991:339). The theorists assert that the social structure rather than generate strains that cause individuals to commit crime, may expose members of the lower classes to adverse social processes, which in turn, could translate into higher rates of deviance and crime. It is therefore, argued that *the interactions experienced in the reference groups* (emphasis mine) are the key to explaining behaviour. Some of the theorists aver that the social processes one experiences may provide or fail to provide restraints against norm violation.



For the purpose and perspective of this study, the social learning—the differential association, imitation, and the previous criminal experiences are discussed, and also in much details. These bear remarkable significance in the build up towards the conceptual model of emulation proposed in this study.

#### a) **Imitation theory**

The imitation theory of Gabriel Tarde (1890a) is a psychosocial theory. Imitation is a mental process, and Tarde defines it as “the powerful, generally unconscious, always partly mysterious, action by mean of which we account for all the phenomenon of society (Tarde 1890b and translated by Howell 1912:232).

Tarde reasoned as his first law, that the processes of imitation influenced crime—like all other social phenomena. People imitate one another in proportion to how much close contact they have with one another. The process of imitation Tarde explained operates in a social context, and socially and historically, it is present in the growth of cities and national institutions, and even in international warfare. Being most frequent in the cities or urban areas, imitation changes rapidly as opposed to the gradual changes in the rural areas. So, in the cities it is “fashion”, while in the rural areas, it is “custom”. Tarde agued that crime begins as a fashion and later becomes a custom, much like any other social phenomenon.

Imitation infiltrates all aspects of social life, producing both good and evil. It cuts across all social, racial, and religious boundaries. As a mental processes, imitation flows from the superior to the inferior. That is, as (Beirne and Messerschmidt 2000:90) put it

“the masses are typically tied through imitative bondage to the ideas and fancies of their superiors”. Drunkenness, smoking, moral offences, political assassination, arson and even vagabondage are, according to Tarde, some criminal behaviours that originated from the feudal nobility and were transmitted, through imitation, to the masses. Thus, criminal propensities typically travel downward and outward—from the powerful to the powerless, from urban centres to rural areas. As imitation takes place, the newer fashions displace the older ones (e.g. Tarde argues that murder by knifings had decreased while murder by shooting increased).

Important in Tarde’s thesis, while trying to explain why some people despite exposure to the same imitative processes do not commit crimes, is the recognition that some people are born with certain psychological qualities that predispose them to crime. Example of such qualities are “violent behaviour”, and as he added later, “fever”—fermentation, an agitation, and disturbance. Tarde’s imitation theory remains at the heart of emulation; it bears the most significant close range in the explanation of contemporary armed robbery and armed robbery in Nigeria.

#### **b) Differential association**

Edwin Southerland [1883-1950] broad theory of learning and specifically, the theory of differential association are described as the first truly sociological criminology efforts to explain crime (Brown et al. 1991:340). The independence of the merit of his differential association—as an explanation to crime and delinquency behaviour, and his role in bringing the field of criminology under the sociological umbrella has been formally eulogised (see Brown et al.: 341). This theory, like its parent one—imitation, is also

crucial towards the understanding of armed robbery in contemporary Nigeria. It thus commands a significant position in developing the idea behind emulation as the theoretical frame of construct in this study as it does in Iwarimie-Jaja's previous criminal association.

Being greatly influenced by Gabriel Tarde's (1843-1904) "law of imitation" (1890 and interpreted Parsons, 1903), and other theories such as symbolic interactionism, culture transmission, and culture conflicts; Sutherland argues that persons socialised in socially disorganised neighbourhood, are likely to have an association that will increase criminal adaptations. In contrast, those individuals from socially organised neighbourhood are more likely to experience non-criminal association. Robbing mind with the Chicago school of thought, he notes that crime is socially distributed, and is indeed a *learned* behaviour in the social environment. According to (William 111 and Mcshane 1994:70), Sutherland notes that all behaviour is learned, in much the same way. The major difference between conforming and criminal behaviour is *what* is learned, rather than *how* (another way the theory is different from the proposed emulation) it is learned. His concern therefore, was to study and understand the learning processes.

Sutherland was greatly influenced by quite a number of both theoretical and empirical factors. However, many of the insights that shaped his theory were social, and came from the events of the 1920s and 1930s (see Williams 111 and Mcshane 1994:71). These events are those of the great depression, which called to attention serious sociological observations. During the same period, the Federal Bureau of Investigation had begun to document yearly crime reports known to the police, and the Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) with evidence showing that certain people are more likely to be criminals

than other were beginning to appear. Since these categories of people seemed to match the Chicago school ecological data, official statistics seemed to collaborate the assertion that crime is more a sociological harbinger than biological and psychological disciplines.

Having also been privileged to work with a government agency during this period, Sutherland also observed how people who had not been previously criminal, or ever been in contact with criminals, committed criminal acts as a result of their improvised situation during the depression. Others, comparatively well off, then took advantage of the economic situation and manipulated banks and stocks. This appears to be the genesis of Sutherland's thesis on the "white collar crime". With this knowledge, Sutherland it seems, conclude that criminality was the product of situation, opportunity and values.

In addition, the prohibition and criminalisation of drug use at the same time is viewed to have also influenced Sutherland's intellectual theory (see Williams 111 and Mcshane 1994:71). The "new" form of crime lectured Sutherland that criminality, is in part governed by the legal environment. While researching on the "Professional Thief" (1973) for example, he identified the tutelage necessary for both admittance and practice of the trade. In his best known work: "The White Collar Crime"(1949), he demands that crime should be defined to include offences of person in the upper socio-economic class. This according to him will explain the diverse range of factors such as age, gender, race, socio-economic status, associated with crime, however, not casually.

The term differential association as used by Sutherland will be loose if it is explained outside the contents of the patterns presented in association, and this would differ from individual to individual (William 111 and Mcshane 1994:74). By the term, it

is of germane to emphasise that Sutherland never meant that mere association would simply leads to adoption of criminal behaviour. Instead, it is the “contents” of communication learned from others are what were given primary focus.

Of significant to sociologists and criminologists as seen in his works are the nine principles of the differential association he postulated in 1947, and subsequently appearing in all his edited criminological texts. These principles specify the process by which, a particular person comes to engage in criminal behaviour (see Sutherland and Cressey 1940:75. The principles expressly rule out hereditary, human nature, meta-physical or myth, and *innovation*<sup>3</sup> as causes of aberrant behaviour. Persons are not born with criminogenic tendencies, but rather develop criminaloid, he had maintained. The principles as contained in most of the texts are summarised below:

- 1) Criminal behaviour is learned and not inherited.
- 2) Criminal behaviour is learned in interaction with other persons in a process of communication.
- 3) That the principal part of the learning of criminal behaviour occurs within intimate personal groups (negatively meaning that impersonal agencies of communication such as movies, newspaper play a relatively unimportant part in the genesis of criminal behaviour).
- 4) That learning includes (i) Techniques of committing the crime, which sometimes is very complicated, and at other times very simple. (ii) The specific direction of motives, drives rationalization and attitudes.
- 5) The specific direction of motives is learned from the definitions of the legal code as favourable or unfavourable. In some societies, an individual is either surrounded by persons who invariably

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<sup>3</sup> Innovation, which Sutherland discountenanced and discounted, is of very significant in the conceptual framework of emulation theory as it relates to all learn contemporary criminal behaviour. Alongside with the role of the media, the two concepts constitute a major point of departure of the argument of emulation as a theoretical exposition to understanding current patterns and incidence of armed robbery in modern Nigeria.

define the legal codes as rule to be observed or by person whose definitions are favourable to the violation of the legal codes. The modern societies are characterised by both mixtures

6) A person becomes criminal because of an excess of definitions favourable to law violation over definitions unfavourable to law violation. This is certainly the crux of differential association theory. When persons become criminal, they do so because of contacts with criminal patterns and also because of isolation from anti-criminal patterns.

7) Differential association may vary in frequency, duration, priority and intensity. Priority is assumed here to be important in the sense that the lawful behaviour developed in early childhood may persist throughout life while delinquent behaviour developed in the same vein may persist.

8) The process of learning criminal behaviour by association with criminal and anti-criminal patterns involves all the **mechanisms**<sup>4</sup> that are involved in any other learning. This negatively implies that learning of criminal behaviour is not restricted to the process of imitation.

9) While criminal behaviour is an expression of general needs and values, these general needs and values do not explain it since non-criminal behaviour is an expression of the same needs and values. Thieves generally steal to obtain money and likewise honest labourers who work in order to secure money.

(Sutherland and Cressey, 1974:75-76)

In specific terms, Sutherland is saying that persons will engage in criminal behaviour only when they have acquired sentiments in favour of law violation that outstrip conformity. In other words, there is an equal chances of a person being exposed to both pro and anti-law violating modalities, thus, becoming either a criminal or not. A person comes to adapt criminal as non-criminal behaviour patterns when he or she learns

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<sup>4</sup> The underlined and bold words above are to emphasise on the important of the premises against which Sutherland's theory of association and consequently other learning theories including emulation being proposed are based.

how to violate laws, and when the values to putting that knowledge into practice are stronger than the persons' anti-criminal sentiments (see also Iwarimie-Jaja 1999a:71-72; 1999b:57-58).

**c) Previous criminal association**

Iwarimie-Jaja (1994: 80-85) in an attempt to explain contemporary armed robbery in Nigeria in general, and Port Harcourt in specific terms, supports and borrows extensively from Sutherland's differential association theory. He, however, in no less romanticised manner coined the phrase "previous criminal association" to determine, whether previous criminal association provides strong motivation for the unemployed to commit armed robbery. His conceptual framework of "previous criminal association" is predicated on unemployment as he claims that it is an antecedent or intervening variable, which effectively links unemployment and armed robbery.

Drawing substantially from Sutherland's principles, differential association according to Iwarimie-Jaja (1999b:57) is the parent theory of his previous criminal association. Accordingly, he asserts that the previous criminal association is a "spin-off" of Sutherland's differential association; it possesses all its properties, but explains such high level crimes such as armed robbery, terrorism and organised crimes like drug trafficking (see Iwarimie-Jaja 1999b:56). The basic tenets of the "previous criminal association" is that person who commits high level crimes such as armed robbery must have had criminal experiences, learned in an intra group context.

As he put it (Iwarimie-Jaja 1999a:72; 1999b:56):

No individual gets up one day and decide to rob a bank, or a residence, armed with a gun. This is because armed robbery is a high level criminal act which criminals must graduate in to commit either individually or in gang context.

Analysing and describing previous criminal association, Iwarimie-Jaja (1999b:57) opined that factors such as poverty, frustration, unemployment, and disorganised families are not the only reasons for committing crimes (e.g. murder, theft, and armed robbery). While all these factors contribute, the major cause is the association of the adolescent, or adult with persons who have a need that is not different from those of his peers. The desire to gratify this need does not, however account for why he/she should engage in delinquent act, or while at an adult age, he may commit crime. An Individual commit delinquent and criminal acts because of his previous criminal experiences (Iwarimie-Jaja 1999b:57-58).

Association with criminal peers, and the commission of an offence, Iwarimi-Jaja notes in his expatiation, leads to the juvenile been remanded in a remand home, or get arrested, tried and incarcerated in the prisons. He associates with hardened criminals and learn the techniques of how to avoid detection, apprehension, and commit more serious crimes. At the same time, he acquires enormous wealth of criminal experiences, which may propel him into criminal acts, even when he becomes an adult (Iwarimie-Jaja 1999b:58). Iwarimie-Jaja thus, while holding close to his chest, Sutherland's assumptions and principles, goes on to tinker on them, and thus postulates the following as the principles or assumptions underlying the specific previous criminal association theory:

1) No individual gets up one day and decide to rob a bank, or residence, armed with a gun. This is because armed robbery is a high level criminal act which criminals must graduate in to commit either individually or in gang context.



- 2) Delinquency and criminal behaviour are learned from past and criminal experiences, respectively. This delinquent and criminal experiences are acquired over time and it involves learning the techniques of committing the act, avoiding detection, using intimidation, psychological projections, and the proper instruments to be applied to achieve success.
- 3) Delinquent and criminal patterns of life styles are not individualistic. They do not pertain to the individual. They are based on collective delinquent and criminal experiences, which form subcultures of the delinquent and criminal gangs. Thus delinquency and crime are functions of the goals associated with a group situation or place in human social life cycle.
- 4) Therefore, the individual who wants to become a delinquent or a criminal must learn the subculture of the delinquent or criminal gangs, and must be ready to perpetuate those acts when he has sufficiently learn those definitions of the legal codes that must be subverted/circumvented in committing them.
- 5) Delinquent and criminal associates involve interaction with delinquent and criminal play-mates, contact with recidivists when arrested and processed by law enforcement agents, during which there is the formation of delinquent and criminal values.
- 6) Delinquent and criminal behaviours are reflection of an individual's or groups need and values. An individual may use delinquent and criminal ways to obtain those things that are of value and which meet his desired needs just as another individual or group may adopt legitimate means to acquire things of value which are so desirable to him or any one else, but these general needs and values do not explain anti-social behaviour.
- 7) Factors such as poverty, frustration, unemployment, and disorganised families, are not the only reasons why people commit crimes, e.g. theft, burglary, fraud, murder, or armed robbery. In fact, though these hold, the major cause of criminal act is the association of adolescent, or adult, with persons who have a need that is not different from those of his peers, but the desire to satisfy this need does not explain why he should engage in delinquent act, or why, at an adult age, he may

commit crime. An individual commits delinquent and criminals acts because of his previous criminal experiences.

8) Thus, as a juvenile continues to associate himself with criminal peers and commit an offence, he may be remanded in remand homes, or get arrested, tried and sentenced to prison, where he would associate with hardened criminals and then learn techniques of how to manipulate defection and apprehension, and commit more serious crimes.

9) At the same time, he acquires enormous wealth of criminal experiences, which may propel him into criminal acts, even when he becomes an adult. Therefore persons with previous criminal experiences are likely to turn to criminality when they are frustrated, unemployed or even when they cannot afford to make their needs. Especially when they have a low self-esteem or self-image of them selves (see Iwarmie-Jaja 1999a: 46-48).

The theory of previous criminal association must be seen as a scholarly seminal contribution to Sutherland theory and crime aetiologies.

#### **8.4.2.1 Assessing differential association and previous criminal association theories**

Fundamental to differential association and previous criminal association is that criminal behaviour is learned in an interaction with other persons in a process of communication especially within intimate personal groups. Both suggest that a person socialised in a socially disorganised or delinquent or criminal social system will more likely develop an association that encourages criminal adaptations. Patterns of relationship dictate the pattern of behaviour as indeed, the saying often goes “tell me with whom you go out with, and I will tell what you are”.

To Sutherland, all criminal behaviour—minor or major is learned in the ordinary manner that prosocial behaviour are learned. So, all criminal behaviours are learned as a

one way-flow-no-gap. But to Iwarimie-Jaja, certain criminal behaviours entail stages, perhaps stop-gaps, during which enormous wealth of experiences are acquired and acted out in adulthood when confronted with structural strain, frustration, and unemployment.

When applied to armed robbery in contemporary Nigeria, differential association alongside previous criminal association possess the theoretical armoury relevant to its explication. Their fundamental significant lies in the fact that they express the obvious truth that it is a “learned” criminal behaviour. And more than that, the theories recognise that the learning includes the dexterity, rationalisation, techniques and motives necessary to commit the crime. Fundamentally, as a learned behaviour, they underlie the obvious fact that it is “borrowed and/or imitated”, following closely to Tardes’ imitation thesis. In the view of the researcher these learned behaviour, are by no means closed against innovation and perfection within the limits imposed by the societies under which it thrives. This is a point so dear to the idea of emulation being proposed in this study.

Modern day armed robbery in Nigeria going by its outlook and paraphernalia clearly point to a behaviour associated with the western world and their early receptors. No doubt that the western world conveys behaviour and values system that have positive bearing, but paradoxically, these behaviour and values were themselves in favours of various law violations. They and the few educated elites were law-abiding people, but they showed the ways of criminality by engaging in the art of thievery. They looted the nation’s treasury; displaying the accumulated wealth with flagrant and candour. The younger generations in the contemporary Nigeria therefore, seems only to do the same, however, by different methods and with degree of perfections as they learn these behaviour. As the late Nigerian music maestro-cum-political activist Fela Anikulapo-Kuti

notes, while describing thievery amongst political office holders “stealing by government officials and armed robbery is the same; the former only by pens and more dangerous, and the latter by guns and even less severe”.

Despite the wide spread appeal of Sutherland’s formulation which Iwarimie-Jaja paid obeisance to, and the researcher also acknowledges, various writers (this researcher inclusive) have nevertheless, found the theory less than illuminating. Sykes (1978:270-71) has provided a summary of the critical criticisms against the theory.

Firstly, it is argued that the theory has failed to account for why crucial issues as cultural definitions favourable to the violation of law exist in the first place. As the researcher of this study notes, people no doubt, learn criminal behaviour just like they learn other forms of social behaviour, but how this pattern of criminal behaviour became available to be learned is the greatest challenge of the theory. The theory thus, does not provide clues as to why some persons are more exposed than others to the patterns of criminal behaviour, or less exposed to it. Or simply, these theories it seems, are averse to recognising and appreciating the obvious age-long philosophical assertions that crime and its causality is related to the social and spatial contexts in which it arises, the structure of social relations, the culture of the perpetrators and victims, and that the learning from the direction of osmotic process.

Secondly, Sutherland’s theory of differential association is critiqued as being ambiguously worded, making it difficult to develop and assess the theory subject to empirical verifications. A number of loaded concepts are described as appearing a little expression of hope for the precision of quantification, rather than refer to a clear-cut variable, rooted in either psychology or sociology. In other words, the necessary scales of

measurement do not exist, even if there were agreement on the meaning of the terms. There is a strong challenge on the social meaning of the terms employed, which unfortunately remained unanalysed (for details, see Sykes 1978).

Thirdly, and perhaps most important is that Sutherland's theory comes dangerously close to being a tautology, mechanical argument so to speak. If criminal behaviour is motivated, and not simply a compulsive act, it is then difficult to imagine a crime as *not* being based on "definitions favourable to the violation of law". In other words, to say that such behaviour is motivated by motives, drives and attitudes favourable to such behaviour is not helpful. Glaser (1956) criticisms of Sutherland theory (calls differential identification) have been described earlier on while providing elaborate discussions on the psychological theory in section 8.3 (kindly refer back for a glimpse of what he says).

A further criticism of the theory, which the researcher proposes and indeed feels, is its greatest undoing, is its failure woefully, to recognise the roles of the impersonal agencies of communication such as movies, newspaper, and books. The failure to appreciate the "how" issue in this learning, is to suggest, amounts to demeaning the fact that knowledge of western culture. Contemporary armed robbery—its sophisticated form in Nigeria, with no previous archetype contemporary armed robbers and robbery, cannot be better explained outside the impacts of the western osmotic culture; and it is far more transmitted through those means such as movies, newspapers, senior criminals and the likes.

With respect to Iwarmie-Jaja's expostulation, the theory fails to answer the question: "Where does the first knowledge of the crime comes from"? To learn means

itself, previous knowledge, and this also means previous imitation from mentors. In other words, Iwarimie-Jaja, by emphasising on association with criminal adults seems ahistorical and uncritical.

A major source of worrying in Iwarimie-jaja's thesis is the vagueness that shrouds his concept of subculture. It is not clear what he really mean by importing the whole concept as given, and juxtaposing it wholeheartedly into contemporary Nigeria social engineering. Does he mean subculture as a distinct pattern and way of life within the mainstream culture? Or does he simply use it loosely—as a simplicit pastime of gangs' set of focal concern?<sup>5</sup> If Iwarimie-Jaja meant the former idea, then it is disturbing because there seems not to have developed, a clear-cut armed robbery subculture in modern Nigeria as peculiar to many industrialised and racially racked societies, even though some ethnic/tribal /states and regions may be more robbery prone than others as statistics show. But if he meant the latter, then he can be exonerated from immediate academic reprimand.

In summary, both the differential association and the previous association theories, in conjunction with the imitation theory of Tarde, are critical towards an understanding of contemporary armed robbery in Nigeria. But these are, it may be argued, not absolutely convincing enough, and radically retrospective in manner. Emulation idea in the context it is proposed attempts to fill the lacuna.

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<sup>5</sup> Focal concerns simply distinguish behaviours from the mainstream value of a particular society. In other words, they denote the mere observable behaviour of subjects, which are seen as ego boosting towards choosing outlaw behaviours. (See Lower-Class Focal Concerns, Miller 1958 cf. Brown et al. 1991:356-361).

#### **8.4.3 The political economy perspective**

The political economy perspective approach to crime aetiology is not quite different from its grand conflict theory. Its main emphasis, however, is that the history of every society, and its understanding is basically a historical materialism. It explains that the economic mode of production is intricately linked with the political system of the society. Thus decision on what to produce, how to produce, distributes and for who, are determined by the political class structure of all historical society. The privileged members of the upper class have time often, made the laws affecting the issue of economics and politics in the manner that it favours them. Their access to economic power also guarantees access to the political power and vice-versa (see also Bonger 1916; Dahrendorf 1959; Chambliss and Seidman 1971).

The political economy model like its broad Marxian or conflict approach essentially explains the class character of the society, where the structure of the power relations influences the distribution of scarce resources and the socio-economic opportunities in the society. It gives primacy to the material conditions. In its modern usage, the approach emphasises heavily on the economic system that a particular nation or society operates, and the emerging social relations (political) thereof. As Eteng (1987:5-9 cf. Iwarimie-Jaja 1999a: 90) notes, the approach expounds that economic relations determine the struggle for power and conflict over societal rewards, for examples, privilege, wealth and other scarce opportunities.

Both Odekunle and Gana (1978 and 1985 cf. Iwarimie-Jaja 1999a: 90) had noted that capitalist economy, which the contemporary Nigeria is predicated and operates, is a crime producing one. This is not really because it produces economic man that

accumulates property, but because it fosters unemployment, marginal and meaningless employment, and obvious relative and unaccented poverty.

Various terms of the conflict and political approach have been adopted and described by both the proponents as well as the critics of the theory. The New Criminology [Taylor et al. 1973], Marxist Criminology [Greeberg 1981], Realist Criminology [Matthews 1987], Radical criminology [Young 1988], and the Critical Criminology [Pelfrey 1980] are few notable examples (see Brown et al. 1991:398).

It has been argued that the different range of terms within the perspective is an indication that there are important philosophical, theoretical and empirical differences between these unique formulations that are often ignored (see Bohm 1982).

#### **8.4.3.1 Assessing conflict and political economy theories**

Conflict and political economy theories are structural theory—emphasis on the structural arrangement of a social system. They, however, show a departure by their emphasis on the pattern of social relationship within these structural arrangements, and the resultant effects of this relationship.

Given as it may, that preponderate of reported and recorded crimes and delinquency are committed by people in the lower class strata, it becomes more or less the consequent of structural imbalances, which enthroned a system of inequalities, beginning from the economics to the political and social aspects of the society. But beyond these imbalances, is that the few privileged ones in position of power have often, stamped their dominance and subjugation over and above those in the lower echelon of class arrangements. They have therefore, consistently applied the law, and its



interpretation to attenuate the resultant conflict. This is the grand thesis of the conflict and political approach, and has an imprint in trying to understand contemporary crimes and delinquency in contemporary Nigeria as much as in all other societies.

When applied to an understanding of armed robbery in contemporary Nigeria, both approaches afford the opportunity to flash back memory to the pre-colonial Nigeria, and also draw attention to the complex nature and value pluralism of modern Nigeria. It unmasks the prevailing alienation of individuals from one another and the produce (commodity), the cut-throat competitive struggles, the concomitant absence of human interest and feelings, the antagonism, discontentment, inequality, coercion, persuasion, subjugation, irreconcilable interests, hatred, angers, all which, seem to be the order of the day in Nigeria today.

By their focus on the specific social and historical context producing specific crimes, the conflict theory and its allied political economy approach are of significant in strengthening the theoretical idea of emulation. After all, emulation as would be showing in details in chapter Nine holds strongly that contemporary armed robbery in Nigeria is historically generated (learned and imitated), but nevertheless, strongly conditioned or strengthened by the uniqueness of the prevailing economics, political, socio-cultural circumstances as well as legal frameworks, hence emulation as the end point. In other words, the contact with the western world brought about significant changes such as industrialisation, urbanisation, bureaucratisation, and democratisation. These spawned a range of new criminal behaviour, and in dimensions and sophistry previously unknown such as current pattern of armed robbery in contemporary Nigeria. What is more than to

note that laws and sanctions on armed robbery have often been heavily invoked and applied when an elite member of the Nigerian society is a victim or is involved.

On the micro level of analysis, conflict and political economy, at least, throw weight to the skewed structure of modern Nigeria society that is characterised by class conflicts, ethnic and tribal tensions, religious polarisation, general alienation, marginalisation, exploitation, deprivation, estrangement and frustration. It also points to the truths behind the lies, or the hidden factor behind the application of these laws and legislation, and the administration of criminal justice system within the capitalist structure of modern Nigeria.

The conflict and political economy approach has been widely criticised. Iwarimie-Jaja (1999a: 85) is of the view that the theory, to all intents and purposes, underestimates the importance of delinquent and criminal friends, while overestimating the significance of involvement in the conventional activities. It also ignores the relationship, which exists between delinquent activities and an individual's self-concepts, or self esteem.

Conflict theory and political economy approach has some fundamental assumptions that are suspicious and indeed, cannot just be accepted as the theoretical perspective by which current form of armed robbery in modern Nigeria could be adequately understood. The theories assume implicitly, that cultural transmission involving formal communications, do have direct or indirect influence on individual's thinking, reasoning, and actions may have been fostered by this contact, but the theories do not express or emphasise explicitly, on this cultural diffusion and transmission on the receptor. The theories also seem not to appreciate the importance of the internal dynamism of this

cultural transmission. That is, they do not recognise the significant role of the processes and mechanisms by which ideas are transmitted within particular society.

## **8.5 CONCLUSION**

Theoretical and conceptual models to crime causation are ubiquitous in literature and present a knotty exercise in their choices to criminologist neophytes. It is asserted that the plethora of theories has obscured the real issue—dealing with crime to chasing shadow instead. Criminologists including the researcher, are now at the crossroads, and may soon realise that crime problem is the problem of theories. Most of these theories however, persuasive they are, obscure criminologists and allied scholars away from the need to appreciate the peculiar social contexts, and circumstances against which the typologies of crime and delinquent have emerged. There have been too much cross-country theories, and their unfortunate application have resulted in policy “gluts and dumping”.

Yet these theories have their individual and collective relevance. The general psychogenic and sociogenic theories anchor their arguments on both the criminals and their environments. The psychogenic locates the causes of crime on the criminal, specifically, it emphasises on the mind and the mental composition of the criminal. They are concerned with the socialisation processes the child passed through. The sociogenic with its multi-dimensional perspectives focuses on the structure of the society as generating crime and criminals. It specifically sees crime as the product of the strain, stress, anomic, frustration, alienation, isolation, definition and labelling, and class conflict etceteras that the society consciously or subconsciously have brought about.

Regrettably, none of the theory, including many of the sociological paradigms is embracing enough to explain the archetype armed robbery in the modern day Nigeria. It is just the case of where the weakness of one ends, the power of the other begins, and *vice versa*. Thus, an integrated model approach that seeks to extract the relevance of each theory, the resultant, which is described as “emulation” is advocated and thus, discussed in the next chapter. This chapter is titled “The theoretical framework: explaining emulation and armed robbery and armed robbers”.

## **CHAPTER NINE**

### **THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK: EXPLAINING “EMULATION” AND ARMED ROBBERY AND ARMED ROBBERS**

The white man may come, and the white man may go, but  
his cultural legacy goes on forever, and the increasing sophistry  
in this cultural legacy remains a worrisome.

=The researcher=

#### **9.1 INTRODUCTION**

Theoretical perspectives or paradigms, which bear some relevance towards constructing a more integrated, and enhancing conceptual framework for contemporary armed robbery in Nigeria are reviewed, discussed, dissected and assessed in chapter Eight. At the centre of these analyses, discussions and evaluations are the social learning process, and with bias to Tarde's, Sutherland and Iwarimie-Jaja's theories.

This chapter therefore, focuses on the development and advancement of this integrated theoretical framework—emulation. It is based on the literature and empirical findings of the study. Emulation is borne out of the social learning process, which seeks to offer a stronger explanation of contemporary armed robbery in developing countries such as Nigeria. As a theoretical framework being advocated for, it is described as an advanced theoretical postulation from the point of view of its distinctive power of argument namely, that it embodies many strands and assumptions of the grand theories in

literature So, in its integrated form, it takes these theories further, and offers a more striking account of modern day armed robbery in Nigeria. The idea of emulation as an alternative framework to the contemporary armed robbery in modern Nigeria is thus, described as a reflexive, while at the same time, it taps the peculiar social complexities of modern Nigeria. These include the high rate of corruption, the traditional belief in charms and strong family-community-tribal social bonding. These features run through contemporary Nigeria.

Modern day Nigeria is characterised with many past and present contradictions. These have repercussions not only for its stability, but also in the way its citizens struggle for survival within the inescapable context of the world capitalist economy. The struggle therefore, is informed by the need to remain afloat in the prevailing world economy system. The institutionalised means to achieve these bequeathed new values and goals are imitated and learned from the western countries. The means are inevitably being violated by great number of people in different ways, in their desperate search for routes to unease the frustration and stress, which ironically, the new wealth of the nation has instituted. Armed robbery becomes one of these escaping routes. The resulting pattern, incidence, *modus operandi* and general characteristics of its' Nigerian counterparts suggest, that there is a strong emulation instincts amongst Nigerians class of armed robbers.

The informed reason for advancing the idea of emulation is, that most theories postulated in literature are either consensus overloaded, or enmeshed in issues, facts and ideologies that have little bearing on the historical antecedent and reality of today's Nigeria, and their consequences on the contemporary swath of criminal behaviour like armed robbery.

The strategic approach of the chapter is that firstly, the background of the idea of the conceptual model is provided. It also highlights how the theory differs from other related theories of importance. The various theories or perspectives in the literature of crime aetiology, which bear remarkable influence in the build up of this conceptual model are revisited again. Later, emulation is explained, reflecting the impacts of these various theories—how they relate and integrate to form a composite emulation model. It involved tinkering and manipulation them in a way that they capture the current pattern of armed robbery in Nigeria. In simple terms, the process or strategy involved exploring the sources, nature, issues, working mechanism, and the impacts of emulation as an ideal alternative theoretical framework to armed robbery in contemporary Nigeria.

So, with anecdote (see section 9.6 below), the context of the conceptual idea is laid. The theoretical postulation is then built, embodying all the agents and causal processes, which helped in crystallising the idea into a more cohesive, and a comprehensible knowledge about contemporary armed robbery in Nigeria. The general line of argument of emulation: the thrust of the theoretical assertion and its principles are also outlined. Since the theoretical idea is viewed as an integrated model, the general overview of integrated model and emulation as a special kind of it is provided in an overview. Finally, there is, and indeed, very important an application of the theory in an attempt to explain current armed robbery in contemporary Nigeria.

## **9.2 THE IDEA OF EMULATION AND BACKGROUND FACTORS**

Emulation as a theoretical exposition is by no means a virgin theory. It is not an autarchy theory either, as indeed, it does not claim independence of the other theories especially the learning theory, and knowledge of notable scholars on crime and delinquency. Of

course, it is an interdependent or a hybrid theory. As it is conceived and explained in this present study, the idea of emulation—as a theory, may no more or less represent an ordinary slip back to the existing theories such as the imitation of (Tarde, 1903); differential association (Sutherland 1949); differential illegitimate opportunity (Cloward and Ohlin 1960); the theoretical exposition of previous criminal association (Iwarimie-Jaja 1993 and 1999), as well as other related socio-psychological theories. In fact, the concept of emulation, with its own premises and techniques, has fed on the great ideas, which have been prepared by others in the field of sociology, criminology, psychology and their associate sub-fields. Therefore, it is a reconstructed idea; picked up in the existing literature, which lends special form and focus to familiar ubiquitous arguments, and somewhat validated by a less rigorously empirical test at the ordinary level of descriptive analyses; and statistically (chi-square), based on the results generated from distributed questionnaires and in-depth interviews.

Apart from these specific theoretical influence mentioned above, there are quite a good number of other intellectuals' writings and experiences, which apparently have influenced the researcher to think along the line of emulation. Firstly, Young (1996 in Gaffrey and Mundy 1996:437) in his logical analysis asserted, that aetiology of crime should be faithful to the nature of the crime. That is, theory should acknowledge the form of crime, the social context of the crime, the shape of the crime, its trajectory through time, and enactment in space. He also argued that criminological theory has a habit of repeating itself, noting, however, that there is no mono-causal explanation of crime and criminal behaviour (Young 1996:436-7).



This view finds support with the earlier assertion by the researcher, wherein in section 8.2, he had underscored the “glut” of the theoretical era in the field of sociology and criminology theorising of criminal and delinquency behaviour. The researcher had thus argued, that the best theory to understand a crime and delinquent behaviour is any one of these theories that is more particularistic in manner, and which incorporates the specific realities of the social structure under which a particular crime or deviance occur: in patterns, trends, incidence, *modus operandi* and so on. Downes and Rock (1988) probably in this sense, had also argued that among other things that ... no theory could be assessed intelligently until it can be regarded with sympathy. These arguments remain consistence to (Clifford 1965; Clinard and Abbott 1973; Bennett 1980).

Secondly, emulation as a theoretical paradigm is further influenced by the cognitive dissonance theory. This theory suggests that individuals like to keep their psychological world balance (Festinger 1957). Ideas that do not fit in with their belief system cause a psychological imbalance state, and motivate the individual to correct the imbalance by whatever means he/she can.

Thirdly, the theoretical or paradigmatic idea of emulation is influenced by the reading and teasing out of both the implicit and explicit messages of cultural<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Culture here embraces the peoples’ way of life: the value system, norms, means, goals and the less often emphasised ‘civilisation’. The symbolic interactionism is significant to armed robbery explanation in Nigeria in that it leads to an understanding of how values favourable or unfavourable to criminal behaviour are imitated, learned and given interpretation in an interaction with others. And also, how officials are able to appropriate this criminal aspect of individuals and properly label it as criminal in the day-to-day interaction with them.

Culture transmission is not used in the traditional manner it is employed and interpreted by the ecological “determinists”. Rather, the concept is operationised to mean the overwhelming transmission of the western culture, subsumed in the modern way of life over and above the traditional cultural values of the people of Nigeria.

transmission theory, culture conflict, especially as illustrated by Landis (1958), symbolic interactionism, catharsis theory, policy actions of local communities in modern Nigeria as exemplified in Afikpo—the researcher’s home town. Statements and commentaries of various religious leaders, scholars, and commentators on ethical and moral issues in today Nigeria also influence the line of thought towards a bias for emulation.

**Fourthly, and very essential,** the intellectual advise of Clinard and Abbott (1973) and Heidensohn (1989:191), also stimulates and encourages the path and vision of the theoretical idea of emulation. Heidensohn in particular provides and advises that much work has been done in the field of sociology-cum-criminology, and that emerging scholars should simply read and digest each of them, to see whether it aids the explanation and understanding of the issues; and importantly, *to go beyond it*. Downes and Rock (1988:329) note that there is more praiseworthy for criminologists-cum-sociologists whose theories are from informed, pragmatic, and intelligent selection from the range of interpretations. That is, scholars should adapt explanation at will, blending their own and others’ thoughts to advance the resolution of specific problems.

Fifth, Gidden’s (1987: 43) suggestion and advice that future sociologists should favour a more conceptual innovation instead of revolving around the old conceptual frameworks is also a source of encouragement into advancing the theory of emulation. According to Gidden, it is not only incumbent on the sociologists to ground their sociological concepts on empirically (statistically) validated data. The author rather seems to suggest, that efforts should be devoted towards a more theoretically imaginative

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Culture conflict is premise on the argument that there is a contradiction; hence conflict between the western culture and the indigenous culture as they struggle for supremacy in the ensuing cultural shock brought about by the contact.

and creativity. And Heidensohn (1989:191) supports the argument when he favours what he terms “sofa or seminar sociology”. This is by no means to suggest that the idea of emulation as a theoretical exposition is a mere *armchair theory*<sup>2</sup>. Such an idea as common amongst most researchers venturing into an exploratory and explanation studies was, however conceived before empirical data gathering of this research.

Indeed, there is enough proof from literature and empirical findings which by continually comparing specific incidents and experiences in the data as recommended by Glaser and Strauss (1967), enabled the researcher to refine the emerged concepts, identify their properties, explore their relationships to one another, phrase or rephrase, and synthesised them in a manner that these authors described as a “more esteemed grounded theory” approach to developing sociological, and invariably criminological theories (see also Downes and Rock 1988:11). So, the need to add to the jigsaw puzzle of crime causality in a somewhat “unique” way—in developing country that is dissimilar, but sharing similar things with the more developed countries, about an offence and offenders, which also displays some remarkable dissimilarities and similarities is important. In addition, this contribution, focusing on well manageable small section studies that is not only limited to empirical validation, but which also by observation, creative and imagination, constitute part of the motivations that continually animated the researcher towards the idea of emulation (see also Cinard and Abbott 1973: 5-7; Pyle et al 1974: 9-10).

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<sup>2</sup> Theory developed while sitting on an “armchairs” in the office and going contrary to an empirical scientific validated based theory. This kind of theory was used to refer mainly to colonial anthropologists studies’ of the Third World countries.

By and large, the theoretical idea of emulation—both in contents and context, is viewed as a social learning process. It is more closely associated with “differential association” of Sutherland; “law of imitation” of Gabriel Tarde, culture transmission and conflicts, attenuated with “previous criminal association” (experience) of Iwarimie-Jaja, and is presented as the consequence of the prevailing political economy nature of contemporary Nigeria as it indeed, explains that no such thinking about social problems can be insulated against what has gone before.

### **9.3 DIFFERENTIATING EMULATION FROM OTHER RELATED THEORETICAL EXPOSITIONS**

To begin with, it is germane to point out the line of differences, between emulation as a theoretical proposition and its other three close theories: the “law of imitation”, “differential association”, “and previous criminal association”. Other theories worthy of differentiating emulation from include the political economy and conflict theory, the differential opportunity theory and the psychological theory as they all have little or more relevance to the development of the alternative framework.

This attempt at differentiating the idea of emulation from other related theoretical strands is necessary because, it provides a sharp focus to the readers about what constitute the point of departure of emulation as a causal explanatory theory armed robbery and armed robbers in contemporary Nigeria within the broad context of other traditional general aetiological postulations and social learning process proper. The differences raised are by no means immune to critical criticisms. They, however, reflect the sociological-cum-criminological imaginative of the researcher, playing and tinkering with other writings as he wades into developing this alternative synthesised-conceptual-

model deems unique and capable to explain the issue under focus, and in its unique social context.

First, the difference that exists between the “law of imitation” and “emulation” lies in the literal meanings of the concepts themselves. To imitate according to the Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary is to copy a particular behaviour, or to behave likewise as the person so imitated. That is, to imitate, is to emulate less “purpose”, “commitment” and “attachment” to the act so imitated. Imitation is a loose learned social behaviour, not backed by firm “will” to perform per excellence. A person who imitates may simply do so for the fun of it, and usually may not mature in the process.

Conversely, to emulate according to the same source is to try to do as well or better than the other. That is, it connotes the idea to imitate, and to be committed and dedicated to the act so imitated. Finally, the theory differs from Gabriel Tarde’s (1843-1940) “Laws of Imitation” (1903, 1912) in that it goes beyond an attempt to understand and explain current armed robbery in contemporary Nigeria as a mere “copy craft” behaviour. Instead, emulation presupposes that criminal behaviour, and with a focus on the contemporary armed robbery in Nigeria is besides, being imbued with further socio-cultural peculiarities of the socio milieu of the imitator, also characterised by strong hedonistic calculus on the part of the imitators, hence furthering the performance per excellence of the behaviour so imitated.

Two, emulation and differential association, however, commonalities they share also show some differences. It differs from Sutherland’s association in that it gives primacy to the external factors, in place of the internal in reinforcing imitated and learned behaviour. Sutherland in contrast as shown in his nine principles, argues that external

influence such as informal contacts has little or no relevance to behaviour learned from the differential association. In fact, he never dared mention any importance of the external contact, which is as much powerful in learning behaviour, as the personal day-to-day contact. While differential association theory appears to have completely undermined the important role of the mass media in the learning process, emulation places a greater emphasis on the media—in all its ramifications as an indispensable role player in the learning process.

In another sense, some of the issues raised under the nine principles of Sutherland's differential association do not find concordance with some of the principles and tenets of emulation as a theoretical exposition. It goes without saying that while some of the principles were overemphasised, some of them were under-emphasised. Where emulation theoretical idea subscribes to any or some of the principles, it tends to tread on them with flair of scepticism and caution.

Third, emulation differs from the “previous criminal association” in that it does not see the term and its’ position as an intervening variable as mere given, constant and inevitable. Emulation is different subtly, from Iwarimie-Jaja's previous criminal association in that, it contends that the previous criminal experience congenial for learning armed robbery in modern Nigeria could no more or less have been learned from the external contacts, however rudimentary the form of the learning were. The previous criminal association as a spin-off of the differential association presupposes that it is an inevitable pathway of the learning process into becoming an armed robber. Emulation takes particular exception to this assertion. In a commonsensical manner, it asks: where does this previous criminal experience come from? And how did it come to be

transmitted? How can the sophistry, the *modus operandi* and the somewhat unique nature of current armed robbery in Nigeria be understood?

There is the general, albeit scientifically untested belief among Nigerian themselves and their observers that the former, either by virtue or vice, are full and imbued with the spirits to excel in all their endeavours, as certainly, the ultimate of the virtues or vice is human's excellence. The dexterity and par excellence in all their non-criminal and criminal activities may therefore, be an attestation Nigerians are enliven with the spirits to emulate<sup>3</sup>.

Emulation also differs from the political-economy theory by presupposing that even when armed robbery is due to the prevailing mode of production and the emerging social relationship characterised by conflicts, they nevertheless, do not account for how knowledge of it became known to the offenders, and is that they are carried out in the sophisticated manner that they are. The same goes to the other theories: differential opportunity, culture transmissions, ecological and psychological.

Emulation also as a psychosocial behaviour is sophisticated; predicated, however and essentially, on an economic factor. It is based on a highly rational, and calculative motives and drives. Individual psychological dispositions play a critical role in the choice of particular line of behaviour. And with respect to armed robbery, the ultimate decision

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<sup>3</sup> With all modesty, the characteristics of Nigerians in all endeavours are phenomenal and intriguing. In teaching, studying, money making (capitalist spirits), sports, politics, cheating, corruption, fraud, illegal businesses etc., there is a display of high degree of awesome excellence with candour. This is by no means to suggest that this peculiar characteristic is only unique to Nigerians, or that there are no mediocre and foolish Nigerians. There is no doubt that all societies have its' own geniuses and fools. But Nigerians may seem to be unique among many developing countries in the manner they embrace the vices of the western world, its ruthless capitalist tendencies, and idiosyncrasies with impunity and guts.

to go by it lies with individuals, but people are not just a prisoner to their childhood or even adulthood psychology. So, a dominant psychology is also a function of the opportunity and association with certain category of people.

#### **9.4 THEORIES REVISITED: RELEVANCE TO THE THEORETICAL EXPOSITION OF EMULATION**

The basic thrust of a sociological theory on crime rest on the argument that crime is societally induced. In other words, crime is a direct function of the social structure of the society. Social forces rather than individual differences are what cause people to commit crime. In specific term, poor socio-economic conditions, and politically turmoil state provide the enabling conditions under which crime occurs. This structural arrangement generates the social forces, which impact on the inter-personal relationship, and lead to poor internalisation of the prized norms and values of the society.

Beyond this central assumption, the various theories veered with specific focus on aspects of these social forces.

##### **a) Anomie-strain theory**

Anomie-strain theory as postulated by Durkheim and later expanded by Merton holds individuals in the society face variations in their immediate physical environment, hereditary antecedents, [and] social influences; so, these make crime possible and perhaps inevitable. According to Durkheim (1894 and translated by Halls 1982), crime is closely tied to the facts of the collective life. Its volume tends to increase as societies evolve from a lower to a higher phase.

Merton's strain theory (1938) inspired by Durkheim's anomie theory is based on the same organisation of the society, which creates a gap between its emphasis on the



cultural goals and the means of achieving these goals. The cultural goal of success of virtually all contemporary societies is so pervasive that individuals of all classes are expected to be ambitious, to entertain certain high aspirations; everyone is expected to have the desire to be a winner, achiever, arrival, and indeed somebody. In contrast, however, the institutionalised—legitimate means of achieving these high successes, such as getting a good job are not available to all classes of people. To get themselves out of the entrapped difficult situation—high ambition and lower legitimate means, many lower-class people thus, resort to the illegitimate means, such as stealing, robbing, selling drugs, fee scams, and other similar criminal activities. Engaging in crimes such as armed robbery is therefore, simply an innovation. It is the consequence of the pressure that is created and enforced on the mass of its citizens, who are only responding to what the society holds (success) dearly. However, there are different ways by which people caught under the same entrapment will respond.

#### **9.4.1 The social learning process theory**

##### **9.4.1.1 The Imitation and differential association**

Social learning theory especially Tardes' imitation and Sutherland differential association contend that behaviour are imitated, and are learned in a process of interaction. The behaviour learned supplants and become dominant over the learners' or imitators' initial behaviour, and it subsequently either reinforces or discourages previous customs.

Imitation or learning occurs within certain psycho-social factors or circumstances (Tarde 1890a and interpreted by Parsons 1903, and Sutherland 1939). And the most important ones being:

- mostly in urban centres and cities than in rural areas.
- frequency, duration, priority and intensity.
- learning behaviour occur within intimate personal groups.
- learning behaviour spread from the top down (i.e. from superiors to inferiors).
- learning occurs with other persons within the process of communication.
- the learning whether criminal or not involve all mechanisms that are involved in other learning. And so on.

#### **9.4.1.2 Previous criminal experience**

The previous criminal experience or association revolves around the premise that criminal behaviour especially the high profile ones such as armed robbery, is as a result of the adult or adolescent's association with persons who have a need that is not different from those of his peers. Association with delinquent or criminal peers leads to commission of an offence. Arrest is made, and delinquent is reprimanded in the reprimand home. In most countries today and in particular in Nigeria, such delinquents and criminal offenders are tried and sentenced to prisons where association with hardened criminals becomes possible.

In the prisons, most criminal techniques are imitated or learned. They are the techniques to avoid detection, apprehension, and to commit more serious crimes. Even

when released, enormous criminal experiences had been acquired, and everything is done to perfect them. One such mechanism is to identify and get associated with other senior high profile criminals and to consciously identify with sources that could reinforces such imitated behaviour.

Learning and imitating behaviour the theory notes, involves inter personal interaction either with criminal playmates or recidivists. This consequently leads to the formation of delinquent or criminal values, which are further transmitted in the form of diffusion to other up coming young criminals.

#### **9.4.2 The differential opportunity theory**

The basic premise of the theory of differential opportunity is that access to the illegitimate opportunity structure varies in the same manner that access to the legitimate structures varies. So, people chose to criminality not so much on their personal volition, but because there exists in the neighbourhood or community, the structure of criminal attitude, which favour the learning of the illegitimate means, and thus, presents with the environment congenial for success in criminal activities.

Within this differential opportunity theory, is the argument that this illegitimate opportunity structure is imbued with the appurtenances, which are necessary for easy learning of the criminal means to success. These are the skills, values, wills, mechanisms, rewards and so on that need be learned and internalised, otherwise such a person or criminal would still confront failure in an effort to become a successful criminal (e.g. armed robber). By its basic assumption, the theory incorporates the analyses of organisation or disorganisation of the ecological school, and the selection and tutelage of

the differential association theories as necessary elements in the illegitimate opportunity structure.

In a more ordinary sense of it, differential opportunity presupposes that individual victims create the atmosphere that is conducive for most these crimes to occur. With the display of wealth by those who managed to get them, the changes in the routine activities, which draw people including women away from home, the opportunity to criminality has increased markedly. Contemporary societies have fallen short of developing methods of channelling youthful behaviour and the age of assuming adult responsibility, thereby leading to more crime (prominent being property crime such as armed robbery).

#### **9.4.3 The Political economy/conflict theory**

This theory is included in the build up of emulation theory as it reflects and presents vividly the nature of the prevailing mode of production, and its emerged class character. The specific economic and political motive of contemporary armed robbers is better appreciated within the framework of the political economy—including the nature of its class conflict in modern Nigeria.

The premise of the theory or approach is that the prevailing mode of production and the resultant class struggles push and pull some people either towards or away from the path to criminality. In other words, the structural arrangement of contemporary Nigeria creates imbalances that motivate its citizenries to think of engaging in property crimes such as armed robbery. In contemporary Nigeria, the prevailing structural arrangement is basically a borrowed one. It arises from the same culture contacts with the

western world, but which, nevertheless, is not fully developed and independent as would be expected.

#### **9.4.4 The psychological theory**

The assertion of the psychological theory is that crime is a defective behaviour arising from a person who was somewhat, improperly socialised to moderate his/her egoistic attitudes before becoming adult. According to the premise of the theory, every one has three basic components of personality namely: “id”, “ego”, and “super ego”. In these components are such traits as impulsivity, psychoses, aggressiveness, compassion or the lack of it, sensitivity or lack of it, emotional maturity or immaturity, sadism, greediness and so on.

In all individuals there is the raw, untamed biological and psychological “drives”, which underlie all individuals’ behaviour. So, there is an unconscious trait in human being, and is always in search for pleasures gratifications. However, an individual is also both sandwiched, and expected to conform to the ethical need and moral standard of a society. How an individual maintains the balance between these drives and ethical moral standard becomes the function of his/her conscience. In the light of the above, crime is therefore, an individual responsibility, more probably a manifestation of the internal disorder and the psychological problem, which began in childhood years.

The above theories have been specifically mentioned as bearing some degrees of relevance to the construction of emulation theory, which offers the distinctive recipes for appropriate step towards an understanding of armed robbery in contemporary Nigeria. These theories as have noted in chapter Eight, section 8.1 and early part of this chapter,

section 9.1, are by no means the only ones bearing relevance to the idea of emulation. Indeed, there are quite a good number of other theories, perspectives or paradigms whose reading and analyses reveal one importance or the other. After all and with due respect, only few theories, ideas or perspectives could be so much a barren that nothing can be borrowed from them. However, the above theories in addition to other strands of the broad paradigms have simply been re-referred to as capable of being logically synthesised—in an integrated manner, towards the build up of an emulated theoretical exposition. As the idea of emulation is presented, the basic assumptions of each of these theories, and their relevance to its understanding becomes illuminating, and can be easily teased out by readers.

Since the idea of emulation is certainly an integrated approach, it becomes worthwhile to give a preview, or the overview of the general integrated model approach to crime theorising—its mechanisms, strengths and outlook to an understanding of criminal behaviour especially high profile one such as armed robbery.

## **9.5 THE INTERGATED MODEL APPROACH**

The integrated model approach is not new in criminology and sociology literature. Richard Cloward and Lioyd Ohlin (Delinquency and opportunity 1960) represent a good attempt in combining traditional strain theory and social learning theory. They explained that the blockage of the legitimate means, and the availability of the illegitimate means to goal attainment—a classical focus of strain theory, is inherent in making people to become a delinquent or criminal. So, by alluding that crime and delinquency is a group behaviour, which requires social support and rewards (a kind of social learning), makes

them integrationists. To Shaw and McKay (1942), the organisation and physical structures of the community is important in influencing behaviour and interaction patterns. This is an integration of social disorganisation (structural) and social learning theories.

The foregoing examples and analysis notwithstanding, the fundamental question often asked is: Can theories be combined, and by what approach? According to Thio (1998: 14), the answer is yes; theories or paradigms can be integrated into a larger perspective, or paradigm. This author explains that the integrated theory sees deviant behaviour as an act located at some point on a continuum from maximal to minimal public consensus regarding the deviant or criminal nature of the act. Theories, paradigms and perspectives, oppose one another, but they also complement one another with their differences being largely only in emphasis. Brown et al. (1991:468) thus, assert that at the root of the on-going debate on the appropriate and utility of integrated approach is the question of whether the assumptions of these theories are compatible. This is where the crux of the matter lies, and where opinions vary.

A classical identification and description of the underlying assumptions of three major theoretical models by Korhauser (1978:23-25), has led some theorists like Hirschi (1979:34-38) to argue that due to the inherent contradictions in the underlying assumptions, it is impossible to integrate theories into one model. Hirschi maintained that *separable is better* (italic mine) and wrote to confirm Korhauser that the assumption of most the theories are just fundamentally incompatible. Elliot (1985:132) on the other hand represents the integrationists; the author claims that there is really no inherent form of approach to integration that precludes the reconciliation of the different assumptions and that the effect of variable or theories are primarily independence.

The researcher of this work shares the same view with Elliot, Thio and other integrationists that the different assumptions could be reconciled with one another to provide with, a holistic knowledge about a particular crime and delinquency as they vary in patterns and place to place. It is even worth arguing that since no one theory has been successful to encapsulates the complex characteristics of criminals in general and in specific, armed robbery in modern day Nigeria, an integration approach becomes inevitable. And Downes and Rock (1988: 23) are right when they argue that only rarely will a single study as much as *theory* (inclusion by the researcher) exhausts all interesting possibilities of a problem. Self-report studies show that criminals of all typologies and especially armed robbers possess criminogenic tendencies that cut across a good number of the theories postulated (see for instances, the works of Conklin 1972; Einstadter 1975; Olurode 1990; Iwarimie-Jaja 1999a).

Taking armed robbers as the point of departure, quite a good number of them lay claim to the pressure especially the economic disadvantages, and the political marginalisation (for instance, Anini, a notorious “dodger of genius” armed robber between 1985-1986, and the legend Robin Hoods of medieval England). They also lay claim on the influence of their peer groups, apprenticeship and long term planning like the famous Brink’s robbery in Boston, US, 1950 (learning process); family influence (psychogenic), sense of guilt and sorry (neutralization), and imitation from the external societies (emulation). The point being made therefore, is that integration such as current “emulation” assumes is simply inevitable, and looks more holistic and far reaching in explicating the various crime and delinquent acts as they vary from one society to the other and over times.



Furthermore, it is asserts by the same researcher that the question of the compatibility of assumptions could be taken for granted. One is inclined to argue that the macro assumption, which characterises all the theories such as that seeking to find solution to a particular social problem, should be the guiding one. Indeed, praxis should represent their ideal unity.

It has been argued that irrespective of the theories included in the integration model, the best of such approach, and an important thing to bear in mind, is the sequence. By this, one theoretical perspective winds up being temporary more proximate to the actual behaviour than do the theories or perspectives included in the model, or more emphasis is placed on one, relative to the other (s) (see also Brown et al. 1991:471; Thio 1998: 11). This approach has been widely referred to as *end-to-end model* and it suggests that one of the theories is more proximate to actual precipitating factors in the on set of criminal activity. Elliot, Ageton and Canter (1979:3) are a representative of this approach. Their analyses are that while social control helps to explain the individual level of attachment, involvement, commitment to conventional activities and the general belief in the validity of moral order, the strain theory interacts with this early control factors to either strengthens or weakens the initial bond. Finally, association with criminal or conventional peers will in turn affect the probability of involvement in the criminal behaviour.

Graphically thus:

social control\_\_\_\_strain theories [variable]\_\_\_\_social learning [variables]\_\_\_\_criminal behaviour .

Such an approach in the view of the researcher is in order and the emerging name inconsequential.

The role of the integrated approach in filling the gap in crime explanation is further appreciated by the fact that the arrival of sophisticated statistical tool in the field of social sciences has made the approach an indispensable one (see Brown et al 1991:474-8). Unlike the other theories, the integrated approach is able to determine both the quantitative and qualitative amount of variation in the dependent variables that is explained by the independent variable. This is important when some degrees of relationship or association are what are desired. By this approach, a third or controlling variable is introduced to see if there were different patterns of association in criminal commission<sup>4</sup>. So, the approach goes beyond investigating the correlates into the vital causes or precursors of a particular crime. In a related manner the power of the integrated model to explain persuasively the variation in crime rates represents their superiority over and above other theories (see also Howell 1997d).

The integrated model approach therefore, is a better path and end-point of integrating the theoretical ideas that culminate into emulation as a paradigm or perspective. Put differently, emulation as a theoretical idea or perspective is an integrated model approach towards an understanding of armed robbery in contemporary Nigeria. Its belief is anchored on the non-monolithic approach towards a better, defensible and convincing understanding of the crime in present day Nigeria. The proximate, strong theories or ideas, and the sequence of its integrated approach are the theory or idea of culture contact, diffusion and infusion, learning process—the particular differential

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<sup>4</sup> A number of this approach has been adopted in the study of criminal behaviour. Iwarimie-Jaja (1999a) employed the intervening variable of “previous criminal association” to determine its significance role in the commission of armed robbery. Lizotte et al. (2000) employed drugs to determine the role they play in gun carrying among the urban males youth and the subsequent crimes being committed.

association theory, previous criminal experiences, the differential opportunity, previous criminal experiences, psychological theory and the political economy/conflict perspective.

## **9.6 ANECDOTE TO THE THEORY OF EMULATION**

*One of the contributors (authors) of the book “criminology” by Sykes (1978) was at one time a director at the United Nations Asia and Far East Institute for the Prevention of crime and treatment of Offenders in Tokyo. In that Position, he was occasionally questioned by trainees from rather backward Asian countries with low delinquency rates, who seeing signs of increasing delinquency rates in their countries, wished his advice on how this trend might be inhibited. He (the author) found the answer not difficult. He urged them to ensure their people remain ignorant, bigoted, ill-educated; that on no account should they develop substantial industries; that communication systems should be primitive (emphasis mine); and that their transportation systems should be such as to ensure that most of the citizens lived within their own small, isolated villages for their entire lives. He stressed the importance of making sure that their educational systems did not promise a potential level of achievement for a child beyond that which his father had already achieved. If it were once suggested that a child should be able to grow to the limit of his capacity rather than to the ceiling of his father’s achievement, he pointed out, the seeds of the gravest disorder would be laid. He stressed the universal human experience that village societies are entirely capable of maintaining any discordance or human nonconformity within their own social frameworks and never need to call on centralised authority to solve their problems. He would take time to sketch, with a wealth*

*of details the horrors of increased delinquency and crime that would flow from any serious attempt to industrialised, urbanised, or educates their communities. He would conclude with a peroration against the establishment of an international airline.*

Source: Morris and Hawkings (1970: 49 cf. Sykes 1978: 260).

In another related remarks, which serve as advice, it is further argued that the revolution in transport, especially the air travel has made the diffusion, borrowing, and infusion of culture on world wide scale, and borrowing between people in opposite sides of the earth enormously possible (Landis 1958). Thus, philosopher Arnod J Toynbee writing in 1947, and reproduced by the same Landis (1958: 65) tries to look back on 1947 from 100 years in the future, and then from 2,100 years. He comments as follows:

Future historians (which the researcher is by no means a member) will say, I think, that the great event of the twentieth century was the impact of the western civilisation upon all other living societies of the world of that day. They will say of this impact that it was so powerful and so pervasive that it turned the lives of all its victims upside down and inside out—affecting the behaviour, outlook, feelings, and beliefs of individual men, women, and children in an intimate way, touching chords in human souls that are not touched by mere external materials forces ([however) ponderous and terrifying. This will be said, I feel sure, by historians looking back on our times even from as short a time hence A.D 2047...

“...The historians of A.D 4047 will say that the importance of the western civilisation on its contemporaries, in the second half of the second millennium of the Christian era, was the epoch-making event of that age,

because it was the first step toward the unification of mankind into one single society. By their time, the unity of mankind will perhaps have come to seem one of the fundamental conditions of human life—just part of the order of the nature—and it may need quite an effort of imagination on their part to recall the parochial outlook of pioneers of Civilisation during the first six thousand years or so of its experience...

The above remarks provide a sure guide towards the point of emphasis of emulation as a theoretical exposition. For within it, are found, most of the issues and facts which it to in its capacity as a new breed idea or theory on crime, and on its emphasis the behaviour is exogenous—coming mainly from the western world, and fostered by means of their formal and informal system of communication.

## **9.7 EMULATION AS A THEORETICAL EXPOSITION: AN EXPLICATION**

Theories are nets cast to catch what we call the world:  
to rationalise, to explain, and to master it. We endeavour  
to make the mesh ever finer and finer.

Karl, R. Popper, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*

The first above account (Para-phrase) shows that the exchange of culture has been a major process of history (Landis 1958:66). Yet one observes what seems a somewhat paradox—a world of vastly different patterns, and many different worlds in one society, the cultural exchanges and contacts notwithstanding. Landis is of the view that this paradoxical difference is the result of a deliberate relative isolation of peoples from one another (66). But the researcher adds that the difference is because of the disarticulation arising from culture contacts and the peculiar differences in the physical surroundings of the people. These place pressures on the indigenous of the different societies to either

resist some of what is imitated and learned, invent new things, or fine tune what is learned in the most subtle ways.

In an apparent support for the warning and satirical remark credited to one of the contributors to Sykes: *criminology*, Landis (1958:66) intones that the entire remarks (paraphrase) above, written in 1947 (long time before contemporary Nigeria became independence) is a clear picture of tomorrow. The picture foresaw a cultural uniformity throughout the world as these cultures meet and blend, in the age of easy mobility and globe-girdling travel. Landis then makes a sociological imagination or conjecture that “if diffusion has been a major process of human history, how much more is it going to be in this day of Olympic games, international student exchange, international “atoms for peace”, conferences, world trade fairs, and inter continental airlines” (see Landis, 1958: 67).

The idea of emulation draws its strength from the above hypothetical remarks. Its basic argument is that criminal behaviour in their variations: patterns, and nature are attitudes just like any other normal behaviour, socially learned in the manner of social network, either within a socio-culturally bounded entity or society, or that which involves culture contacts, but are by no means only limited to the formal means of learning and communication.

Emulation as a theoretical idea-cum-postulation is much concerned with the origin, the nature (uniqueness), the motives and drives of a particular learned behaviour. In this regard, its context is both the macro and micro levels of contacts (associations) as the effective apertures by which a particular behaviour could be made known, imitated, learned and acted out with purpose and dexterity. In specific terms, emulation derives and

has as its essential property in the argument that quite a remarkable behaviour is, or may be alien to the learners. It however, further recognises that these imitated, learned and borrowed behaviour or attitudes are not automatic and static. They are in most cases, embellished, fine-tuned, and made malleable in line of the motivation for acquiring them and the constraints imposed by the socio-milieu of the imitators, learners and borrowers; hence the term and stage known as “emulation”. Emulation is thus the last stage of the effects of contact or association with other superior culture or fashion, which results in the development of a new behaviour and the complexity of its nature (see Tarde 1903 for similar argument).

The most important source and origin of the current emulating tendency is the culture contact. Culture contact emulation argues, leads to the inevitable culture diffusion and borrowing, with the ultimate and eventual consequences of culture miscegenation and culture conflict. Applied in the context of the study, the conceptual idea is concerned with an appropriate understanding of contemporary armed robbery behaviour in Nigeria as in other developing countries in general. Contacts with the western European powers, beginning in the fifteenth century, and the consequences thereof become the centripetal and centrifugal point of analysis of emulation.

Many of the problems and changes of the contemporary developing societies—social problems, economic woes, political upheavals, and religious bigotries are to an extent, the consequences of the impacts of the western powers on the rest of the globe, which continued to remained very strong today (see also O'Donnell 1987:182). The profound intensification and consequences during the nineteenth century—a period described as the enlightenment and industrial revolution period, bore a remarkable impact

in the life of the people of the less developed continents, or less enlightened and less industrialised people of the world. Indeed, the cultural impact of Europe on the rest of the world defies summary (O'Donnell 1987). The domination of the entertainment media of the west, and later by the U.S. raises profound issues of value, and of cultural independence, creativity, quality and taste (see also Falola and Ihonbvere 1986; O'Donnell, 1987:184, Eteng 1994 in Otite 1994: 196).

The argument is that contact with western world provided the opportunity for borrowing, as indeed borrowing becomes more probable and inevitable, and culture transmission, diffusion, and infusion became overtly permissible. Resisting the new way of life, which showed some degrees of superiority proved difficult for the indigenous moreso when its' promises became glaring. At the same time, it is a chagrin that the new culture failed to fully incorporate these indigenous in an embracing manner. This was worse with the British colonial administration whose conservative policy of association distanced the indigenous away from their colonial masters, and deepened the conflicts in the new values and means of attaining them when compared to the French policy of assimilation. Consequently, there arose not only a "culture shock", but also a plausible "culture comfort". Individuals' receptors of this cultural inflow became not only endeared to what it promises to offer, but also found themselves in conflict resolution between this new culture and their indigenous ones.

Borrowing under certain circumstances is associated with a major competitive process and attendant consequences. The English anthropologist Pitt-Rivers (1927:2-7) has indicated the outcomes of culture contact depending on the culture of the people in



contact. This he called the “native problem”. He outlined eight possible outcomes, and two of which are particularly relevant to the ideal of emulation are that:

- “Immigrant culture-bearer may succeed in extinguishing an aboriginal culture, but yet fail either to extinguish or assimilate its bearers, who appear to survive the condition of cultural equilibrium”. Notable here are some African examples. Landis (1958:79) specifically instanced the Basuto or Bantu tribes of the Southern African region.

- “Indigenous elements may eventually absorb the immigrants and assimilate them with or without taking over much of the culture of the latter”. These two experiences are no doubt the cultural scenario and way of life that became the characterisations most African modern nation-states in general, and Nigerian in specific. And as recently pointed out above the cultural outcomes<sup>5</sup> were particularly accentuated by the colonial policy of the British government that was premised essentially on “association” as opposed to “assimilation”<sup>6</sup>.

Landis (1958:67) whose analysis with regards to this culture contact and their multi-faceted impacts is rich and detail, explains that in the borrowing of culture or way of life, people in close contact often take over a whole complex, rather than an isolated

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<sup>5</sup> The cultural outcome affected the language, belief system, dress, habit, and drastically altered the value perceptions of the indigenous Nigerians. For while, it sought to bring the Nigerians into the path of the western civilisation, it also isolated them since they were caught up in the empty promises the new culture promises to offer (see for example more in Chinua Achebe, “No Longer at Ease”).

<sup>6</sup> Association as a policy was adopted as a loose cultural contact, which places no moral obligation on the colonisers to fully transform the colonised groups into similar potentialities of the colonisers’ way of life. Assimilation on the other aimed to make the colonised look more like their colonisers in all respects. This was so common among the French colonisers.

trait. The various law violators—armed robbers as products of contemporary Nigeria therefore, not only took the western European’s pattern of it: its complexities, and in all its ramifications, but they also added some **pluses**—embellishing and fine-tuning. With respect to armed robbery, they rob victims in daylight as the western Europeans do. They rob with sophisticated weapons, and even often dare the Police in a show of superiority as peculiar to armed robbery in the western world. They learned to rob, dressed and kitted in an outfit capable of concealing their incognito, and also capable of offering flexibility while operating.

For instance, according to the Vanguard newspaper (12 June 2003) 8 armed robbers dressed in suits with bags that appear to be filled with money—an undisputable unique characteristics of contemporary Nigeria socio-economic scene stormed a bank while posing as tycoon customers only to open their briefcases and drew guns. They carted away an undisclosed large sum of monies. Contemporary Nigeria armed robbers, however, add indigenous flair to it by equipping themselves with “local charms (African insurance), and seek spiritual invocation or protection from the spiritualists”.

So, emulation as a theoretical idea or model presupposes that certain learned and imitated behaviours go beyond ordinary imitation and learning. It connotes the instinct of *innovativeness* and *distinctiveness*, or the *spirits to excel* in the behaviour so imitated, and or so learned. This is the major principle, the turning point, and of course, the distinguished point of departure of the theoretical proposal from other related theories.

The somewhat paradox in the idea of emulation is that it though, appears to demean the place of hereditary and human nature, it does not, however, exclude innovativeness or the “drive” and “urge” to perform per excellence, which are strong

components of biogenic theories. This urge and drive to perform per excellence are also what contribute to shape the modern day armed robbery in Nigeria.

As both an explanatory and exploratory theory, emulation therefore, is reflexive in explanation. By this, it sees current armed robbers in developing countries such as Nigeria as profoundly shaped by their contact with the western world, senior armed robbers, and the consequent evolving culture and ways of life. Yet it does not see current offenders as helpless agents of some inexorable social forces of the past, which they must kowtow for, or as the omnipresent overlords of an historical process that they can neatly engineer. A reflexive emulation believes that there is both an ineluctable “slippage” between armed robbers and western contact, and the internal societal factors, which act on them, thus, making them unique in a way.

Emulation is a product of learning, repetition and perfection, but in some cases, it can simply take the pattern of learning without repetition. That is, “instant learning” as Howitt (1982:87)<sup>7</sup> describes social learning processes. Some emulators are able to learn at a glance, beating off many steps. But irrespective of the manner of learning, the emulator in the making usually adds some steps further because s/he does not only rest on carrying out such behaviour in its traditional form. Such acts or behaviour are complimented with some sorts of dexterity, usually in line with certain unique features of the social system under which such behaviour or act is to be committed. For instance, in

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<sup>7</sup> The traditional learning as demonstrated by the study of cats, rats, and mice, concentrates on the gradual building up of complex behavior from simpler ones through the process of “trials and errors”, “rewards and punishment”, repeated “training”, trials and so forth. This process explains armed robbery recidivists since every act of robbery commission or omission, may lead to arrest or lack thereof, and in the case of arrest, what follows are detention, prosecution, conviction, imprisonment and release. And conscious

modern Nigeria, such unique features are conceived to include the socio-economic and political system; the belief system such as in charms; the prevailing cultural and value system; specific social ills and so on.

Emulation subscribes to the widely hold view among Sociologists and Anthropologists' scholars which claim that cultural traits or complexes once borrowed, are modified by borrowers to fit into the trend of their culture. Its logical argument is that many of the criminal behaviour in the less developed countries; and in their current pattern, alarming, and sophistry are the consequences of the direct and indirect contacts with the western world. Moreso, it is the result of the intensity, frequency, aggressive, and duration of this contact, fostered by formal education and the informal means such as the various media and the indigenous who seemingly, were" half baked" and released to the communities as western quintessence, exemplars or models.

The theoretical process of emulation and its approach and outcome is no doubt realisable by a dialectical dissection of some key conceptual frameworks in literature. Put differently, it approaches the understanding of contemporary armed robbery in Nigeria by a process of critically analysing certain criminology-sociological paradigms and psychological theories. It does this by a kind of logical disputation of some of the paradigms and theories while recognising their imbued potency in an integrated manner.

As already noted in sections 8.1 and 9.3, the process to be specific, involves aligning closely to Tarde' imitation theory, Sutherland's theory of differential association—more or less following the principles of his theory, however, with modifications. It also embraces the theoretical commentary of Iwarimie-Jaja's idea of

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of this, the tendency to perfect and improves on ones strategy, to escape punishment

“previous criminal association” as an important intervening variable to understanding of armed robbery. It recognises that criminals are disproportionately placed in the lower social structure (anomie), have a touch with criminal opportunity (differential opportunity). It also conceives that criminality and criminals have been largely shaped by the prevailing economic and political outlook of the social system (political/conflict) and ultimately, in all senses do have the choice to make (psychological). Although, specifically an integral part of the broad social learning theory, emulation may not necessarily fit in into the traditional learning theory *in toto*. It does, however unarguably, follow most of its assumptions, premises, principles and mechanisms.

## **9.8 PRINCIPLES OF EMULATION**

Arising from the preceding discussion, a synopsis of the building blocks of the idea of emulation is outlined. These constitute the principles, the premises, and the presuppositions of emulation as they specifically affect armed robbery behaviour in modern Nigeria. In a short term, the principles upon which emulation theory or idea is based are also those upon which the dialectic dissection (analysis) of armed robbery in Nigeria today is premised.

Although these principles are directed at the specific idea of emulating contemporary armed robbery in Nigeria, they are by no means limited to the crime modern Nigeria alone. In the view of the researcher, it is possible that other types of crime as specific alien behaviour to country and similar nation-states can also be

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becomes part of the processes leading to emulation as the final stage.

explained by applying these principles and subsequent theory. These principles and assumptions are conceived as the following:

- 1) Current pattern of armed robbery in modern Nigeria is not just an-natural outgrowth or outburst behaviour. It is an attitude, which is imitated and learned through both formal and informal mechanisms, and passes from one individual, persons or groups (peers, friends, relations, acquaintances and criminal well wishers) through the process of socialisation or learning.
- 2) As an alien behaviour, it is however, by no means limited to imitation and learning. It is also perfected with the intention to excel and to appear unique (emulate).
- 3) The pattern and steps of the imitation, learning and perfection is usually in association with first, armed robbery behaviour of the western world, and later, it passes down the line to the adolescent armed robbers, who are in close contact with this western world. This pattern of learning is in a process of communication.
- 4) It involves the inferior and younger ones imitating the superior behaviour and the old imitators.
- 5) There is an insertion or infusion of ideas when different of it (as the coming into contacts of the western and indigenous) comes together. In all common senses, there is a decline in the older method of behaviour, and an increase in the newer idea.
- 6) **The main part of the learning occurs through the impersonal agencies such as television, newspapers, videos, reading of novels, attending clubs and so on (e.g. Hadley Chase and so on).** This is bold to highlight its importance within theoretical household of emulation.

7) The imitation, learning and perfection includes the techniques of committing the crime which criminals (armed robbers) attach much importance to. This is the specific rationalisation, desires, and drives, courage and other attitudinal disposition.

8) The degree to which a person becomes modern criminal, say armed robber in Nigeria, is measured by the extent of his/her affiliation or association with the particular group/people with much earlier contact with the western world, and which is deeply enmeshed in its teaching and value system. This is to suggest, however arguably, that armed robbery depends and varies from one region of modern Nigeria to the order in relation to the extent these regions identify more closely with the western life styles. This is a kind of illegitimate opportunity of Cloward and Ohlin.

9) Armed robbery also depends on the extent to which the group and individual offenders associate with regions, ethnic or community, which continued to embrace this western ideas and idiosyncrasies in wholesome.

10) Emulation is instinctive and purposeful, and is complemented by ingenuity, innovativeness, and do varies from one individual armed robber to the other. It also depends on maturity, temperament, motive, educational attainment, religiosity, family background, accessibility to objects, and opportunity to commit the crime.

11) The process usually begins with the instinct (decision) to imitate, to learn what is imitated, and to emulate what has been imitated and learned, first with the less dangerous crime for the purpose of acquiring the needed “previous criminal knowledge”, and to having a good criminal networking. It involves steps of ladder, but it does not necessarily follow all the ladders pr steps.

12) The necessary apparatuses, and the opportunity congenial for the imitation, learning, emulating, and carrying out the criminal behaviour, (armed robbery) must be available.

13) Armed robbery as an emulated behaviour is not only one-moment “stopgap” behaviour. The emulated behaviour is constantly rehearsed and updated with information on the emerging techniques, technologies, and the changes in the legal matters relating to armed robbery. These are often well abreast with.

14) The first stage towards imitation, leaning and emulation does not necessarily entail careful analysis of the cost-benefit of engaging in adolescent or unprofessional armed robbery. However, at a later stage, and on graduating into a full time armed robber, a more careful thought of the cost-benefit, and how to produce and reproduce the culture of armed robbery is viewed as important aspect of the career.

Important points of emphasis about the theoretical idea of emulation postulation are therefore, summarised as follows:

- that specific criminal behaviour is a learned behaviour, and or imitated.
- that the informal agencies such as the various conventional media and non-conventional ones play significant roles in fostering and reinforcing these behaviours in a hyper manner just like the formal means could have done.
- these behaviours are acted with adaptation to other unique features of the society under which they are carried out.



- the direction of culture flow, which determines the pattern and direction of emulation, has been mainly from the more fluid and dynamic culture to the more static, closed and less dynamic ones.
- that ultimate acting out of these behaviours is a function of the individual's socio-psychological disposition.

## 9.9 THE STAGES AND PROCESSES OF EMULATION

Emulation is conceived as the epical point of behaviour learning. It is polymorphous. It is the endpoint of leaps over processes and times. It thus, involves stages in a progression manner.

The stages in emulation involve first, the **decision** (instinct)-consciously, subconsciously or even sometimes, unconsciously, to imitate, and to learn. Second, to **identify the source (s) to learn and imitate** the behaviour, and usually through peer groups, friends and in most cases, it is preceded or accompanied by being exposed to the modern media such as T.V, cinemas, and exposure to senior criminals. Third, imitating, learning and imbibing of the previous criminal experiences through involvement in predatory criminal actions or delinquency—building up the courage and **rationalisation of the decision**, which involves determining the cost-benefit analysis. Fourth, the **taking of actual steps** to imitate, and to learn the techniques of committing or performing the act or action, this including the full rationalisation, the motives, the drives, the courage and the attitudinal dispositions favourable. Fifth and finally, to **strive to act out the behaviour with dexterity**—polishing the act or action so learned, and introducing owns' ingenuity within the context of owns' social context (emulation).

The drives and motives are not the consequent of cultural rejection of legal norms, as indeed, there is no cultural group in most indigenous societies and developing nations such as Nigeria—that more or less tolerates armed robbery. It is more the consequent of reconciling with the conflict arising from this culture contact.

The degree to which an individual becomes a successful emulator in a particular behaviour is dependent on the extent of his/her affiliation with the group or region of the country and individuals that had earlier and much closer contacts with the western world. It also depends on the extent to which the group or region the emulator comes from has continued to be more vulnerable and endearing to the vagaries of the western idiosyncrasies.

The idea to emulate usually begins with the less dangerous crimes that are very similar and necessary for committing armed robbery. Such criminal behaviours include stealing within the family, outside the family, joining gang of burglars, moving on to join with gangs of adolescent high profile criminals such as armed robbers, obsessive penchant for western idiosyncrasies such as going to party and clubs, watching of films and videos, and the final graduating into full fledge sophisticated criminals. In fact, it depends on the extent of one's urbanised status.

The argument of emulation is consistent with the commonsensical notion that minor predatory crime is a precursor to serious predatory crime. Experience in armed robbery for instance, begins in the preteen and teenage years (see table 6.2.1) and the responses of some subjects who admit to have been involved in elementary robbery by the age of twelve years. These years are few in the total life cycle, but critical in the maturation process (Johanson 1986:9). Accordingly, Johanson (1986) explains that

during these years adolescents face the difficult tasks of discovering their identity, clarifying their sexual roles, asserting their independence, learning to cope with authority and searching for goals that will give their lives meaning (see also Hirschi's 1983 seminal argument in Wilson 1983:53-68).

During this intense period of growth, conflict is inevitable and there is greater temptation to act irrationally, most often in criminal and/or delinquency. Maturity into high profile crime such as armed robbery thus, becomes the consequence of the frequency, priority, duration, the intensity of associating with both the "Senior Criminals", and the degree of identifying closely with the western life styles through the agency of impersonal agencies (see Sutherland 1949, Iwarimie-Jaja 1993, 1999a and 1999b for similar arguments).

## **9.10 FLOW OF CULTURE CONTACT AND DIRECTION OF EMULATION**

Throughout history, apart from the short periods that culture (civilisation) flowed from the direction of the less enlightened and the less industrialised (South) to the more enlightened and industrialised (North) pole, the pattern of this cultural revolution—waves, flow and diffusion has preponderantly, reflected the North-to-South direction. The colonial conquests, and its concomitant technological revolution accentuated and accomplished the direction of this cultural flow and transmission.

The idea of emulation therefore, is *osmotic*. It follows the direction of this diffusion from the more sophisticated ideas to the less sophisticated ones. Those who are advanced in a particular behaviour, pass on the same to the less advanced ones when a contact is fostered. Just as emulation noted in section 9.8 above is said to be progressive,

so also is the flow of this culture. Receptors of this culture usually begin from the less complex ones, and progress to the more subtle and sophisticated ones. It is in this same vein that the imitators of the criminal actions normally begin with the less profile ones (criminal behaviour), and to the high profile ones (see Tarde 1903, 1912).

By this process of cultural out-inflow, the vast majority of contemporary Nigerians including their criminal compatriots came into the inescapable realities of accepting the western way of life (culture) as the dominant, most fancied and favoured. So, accepting this culture also means that they have to grip with its realities—part of which includes weird criminal behaviour. Thus, imitating, learning and emulating the good sides of these cultural values within the context of an intense competition has led to the bad sides of it to be also imitated, learned and emulated concurrently. This is made possible since not everyone subscribes to the new value consensus that the new culture imposes.

In sum, the new western culture is also full of intriguing predatory criminalities. So, adolescents are able to learn most of these intrigues sometimes for the fun of it, but only to find out that there is an immediate gain they offer—status, power, and prestige within their peer groups. Within these intriguing predatory criminalities, these adolescent emulators are able to acquire previous criminal experiences, which are more likely to have reciprocal effects in the later life-course of the person. This can consequently leads either towards or away from the more high profile crimes such as armed robbery.

## **9.11 THE ROLE OF THE MASS MEDIA IN ACCENTUATING THE IDEA OF EMULATION: AN OVERVIEW**

A significant point of departure of emulation as a theoretical idea or framework from the other theories—most especially the differential association and previous criminal association, is its emphasis on the important role of the impersonal agencies. This is clearly emphasised in the 13 principles. So, in this theoretical argument, the role and function of the impersonal agencies—media, friends and peers, is illuminating.

Sutherland and Iwarimie-Jaja had demeaned the place of the impersonal agencies in the process of learning a criminal behaviour. Therefore, Brown et al. (1991:340) explain that the role and the nature of the mass media have changed dramatically since the formulation of differential association theory. These authors thus, argued that the role of these media—interpersonal agencies in the present time must necessarily be recognised and appreciated. Television for instance, they note was not introduced until after the advent of the theory. So, Brown et al. (1991:341) make no pretence in asserting that it may not be out of spirit with the original formulation to incorporate media influences into the third principle of Sutherland's theory.

The specific informal agencies (media) which are important in the understanding and explanation of emulation and the learning theory in general includes the cinema, television, radio, book, moving picture, comic and other periodicals. Together, they represent the broad network that has been referred to as the media, and what Landis (1958:155) refers to them as the *indirect communication*. However, the informal agencies in the view of the researcher is conceptualised to include other informal means of socialisation processes such as the informally learning from friends, peers, family

members, and other institutional mechanisms—imitating and learning in a non-formal setting.

The mass media in specific terms represent the agents upon which emulation as a theoretical idea is hinged, however. These media represent the lens through which the swath of the illegal and criminal behaviour in the society with a historical pedigree such as in the contemporary Nigeria have been learned, borrowed and imitated from (see Ake 1981).

Certainly, all over the world, behaviour is observed, which would appear to have been learned from the media particularly from the cinema or television. But, more worrisome is the fact that the mass media tend to create misunderstanding and ill-will, rather than improving the good-will and relationship as often sought for. According to a number of researches (Landis 1958: 157; Fiske 1986; Snyder 1991; Reuters 1993:17; Siegel 1998:147) available evidence abound which show that many of the communication activities exhibited through the media particularly T.V may now be destructive of the good will that promotes violence and aggression. Particular reference is made of the media in the United States. It may be that this is probably common in most of the more industrialised western countries. For instance, among other devil tendencies of the communicative devices, is how the romantic pattern of lovemaking is being imitated with dexterity among the Japanese youth (see Landis 1958:158).

Debate on the positive–cum-negative impacts of the media especially the cinema and television is a long topic of discussions among scholars of the mass media, social scientists, and moralists (Wertham 1954; Taft 1956; Landis 1958; O'Donnell 1974). And this seems an unending one. Siegel (1998: 147) thus, asserts that while a remarkable

number of psychologists note that media violence does not itself cause violent behaviour *per se*, most would agree that it contributes to aggression. Jarvie (1970) who devoted his entire academic work to counter the direct positive impacts of films—cinema and television on highly impressionable children and young people even admit, however reluctantly, that behaviour is indeed, imitative.

Yet, there are certain limits to the influence which communication especially T.V as a medium can have on the individual's attitudes to violence or aggressive behaviour. The argument is that individual's exposure to violent T.V shows may or is only weakly related to a subsequent violent and aggressive behaviour, or it may be that watching violence on T.V and listening to heavy metal music has only a short term impact on the viewer's behaviour (see also Kruttschnitt, Heath, and Ward 1986; Singer 1993). But their potential power as stimulators and strengtheners of pre-conceived attitudes and opinions should not be underestimated, and it need a close watch (see also O' Donnell 1974:179).

Some writers have asserted that the media especially the T.V. reaches into every home in a way that individual could not, and obviously, they have the greater potential for influencing peoples' opinions and behaviour; yet, the degree to which they influence people is still very far from certain, and do vary from one person to person and society to society (see for instance, Gitlin 1979; Bagdikian 1990; Sparks 1992). As Peil (1977:49) rightly notes, the effect of socialisation, which includes these informal agencies, on the individuals varies according to some factors—family, friends, neighbour, workmates and so on. Dahlgren (1988:289-90) thus, argues that the studies of T.V—as a powerful medium of modern communication and its putative “effects”, should recognise that

“viewers” actively produce meaning from the transmissions within the context of their every day life experiences.

Therefore, it is argued in this present study that the impacts of these media on the junior and senior armed robbers within the context of emulation depend on the already imbibed behaviour, which the individual criminals had acquired as part of a personality development through the primary source of socialisation. So, this is a somewhat psychological variant to emulation. Peil (1977:51) further argues that these agents—the media, peers, teachers, employers’ and in the case of the study here, the senior and peer armed robbers must compete for attention and build on the already established personality framework—the previous teen criminal experiences. Whatever may be the argument, O’Donnell (1974:170) explains that many people recognise and condemn television in particular as they found it to cause crime, immorality, violence and escapism.

A more appropriate way to appreciate the impacts of the mass media on the behaviour—imitation, learning and emulation, would be to set aside the issue of whether “the mass media is no flimsy excuse”, while the issue of causation or accentuation—why and how should informal agencies or the mass media leads to more crimes or armed robbery is considered. This approach constitutes a good trip through the tangle forest of sociological-cum criminological theorising on the mass media as strong and influential agents in modelling behaviour. It is in the context and process of this “how” and “why” that the bewildering array of evidence, which are relevant to assessing whether the informal agencies is linked to armed robbery in modern Nigeria will be confronted with.



### **9.11.1 Why and how the mass media influence the idea of Emulation**

The media are critical for the idea of emulation. In the word of Landis (1958:155) they have advantages, which are far beyond the appreciation of peoples who live in a world that is so filled with all forms of indirect communications that it seems almost a nuisance. Ogburn and Nimkoff (1955) summarised 150 broad social effects of the radio as an invention in American culture. Part of their findings is that it has been a major factor in the spread of culture traits in the modern world. They argue that through it habits, religion, business and so on were altered among its' receptors.

Taft (1956:258-71) provides a descriptive account on how the media of communication and the entertainment induces or influences behaviour. This author explains while he focused on television, newspaper, and comic, that the influence of these is apparently ambivalent—towards and away from crime. But the influence of these media is, however, limited and it combines with the effects of many other past and current experiences of those exposed to them. Taft sums up the functional role of the newspaper, television and comic books in influencing criminal behaviour (emulating) as: making crimes seem common; attractive and exciting; unduly profitable; giving prestige to the criminal; attracting sympathy or hero worship for criminals (1956: 268). Other effects which he notes while at the same time, quoting Thatcher (1936) are: crime-producing in contemporary culture; reducing the machinery of justice, or through what he called “trial by newspaper”, and advocating the types of treatment for criminals, which all increase the crime rate.

Taft (1956) made references to early researches and suggested some other probable influence or impacts of the “silver screen” (television) on behaviour patterns.

He explains that comic books influence the development of children's mentality and attitudes towards life value system. This indeed, varies with the type of listener or reader, at different period of time, and in the different settings<sup>8</sup>. Several teenagers act out the stereotypes of "tearaways", "hooligans", or "victims" which have been pinned on them by the media (see also Whitaker 1987:207).

Siegel (1998:147) making reference to the assertions of many psychologists on the effects of T.V and film violence on behaviour, identifies the following as possible explanations:

- media violence can provide aggressive "scripts" that children and adolescents store in their memory, which repeated exposure could only increase their retention, and subsequent changes in attitudes;

- observation learning occurs when the child viewer copies the violence seen in the T.V—children learn to be violent in the same manner that they learn cognitive and social skills from their parents and friends;

- T.V violence increases the arousal levels of viewers and makes them more prone to act aggressively;

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<sup>8</sup> The media Taft writes are surely, the channels through which deeper forces in a society operate, and these are themselves products of those forces. No type of "horror" comic, "shocking" entertainment or irresponsible sensational newspaper could exist for long if it did not attract an audience, which supported it.

- T.V violence promotes attitude changes, which can then result in behaviour changes, and that such changes in the view o the researcher, are usually in the direction of negatives fantasies;
- T.V violence assists already aggressive youth to justify their behaviour. That is, it provides the opportunity for violent youth to rationalise their behaviour as socially acceptable and to see it as capable to attract honour, power, and status;
- T.V violence may disinhibit aggressive behaviour, which is normally controlled by other learning process. Disinhibition occurs when adults are viewed as being rewarded for violence, and this is then interpreted as socially acceptable.

Wilson (1961 cf. O' Donnell 1974:171) supports the above argument when he argues that the mass media exaggerate the amount of crime, provides ideas and the technical knowledge of criminal activity of those criminally disposed, *transmit criminal ideas from one society to another* (italics and emphasis mine), have created a greater tolerance of deviant behaviour, and created a delinquent "hero-type". By these ways the author argues, while they do not actually cause crime, the mass media create confusion particularly amongst the young people about standard behaviour, and in a subtle and general way, they alter peoples' attitude to crime.

In 1962, the Pilkington Committee in UK reported on the effect of broadcasting. They quoted Dr. Hilde Himmelweit as saying that all evidence so far provided by detail researches suggested that values are acquired; that children watching television picked up a view of life. Professor Eysenck was also quoted by the same Committee as having

suggested that there were a number of theoretical grounds, which support the view that television could affect moral standards. This was largely supported by experimental and clinical evidence (see O'Donnell 1974:170). Yet, this source—Professor Eysenck, however notes, that heavy exposure to television may not be the main, and perhaps the only factor which causes delinquent acts. Indeed, there appears to be strong evidence that a heavy dosage of violence in the media heightens the probability that a viewer, perhaps with a predisposition towards violent conduct will behave aggressively in later situation. In addition, this author observes a further suggestion which is that isolated programmes do not make the major impact—it is the “drip effect” of constant repetition that influence the child to a view that violence is necessary and normal.

The effects of the media are by no means only limited to the youth or children. This idea is common amongst many scholars or writers on the topic. Although this may probably be so with this particular group, they also both affect and have the same effects on the middle-aged and adolescents, who are also vulnerable to crimes and armed robbery in particular. The reason for this is that socialisation is a life-long process, and it is within this adolescent and middle age group that the temptation to imitate, learn and emulate are most profound.

Flint (1925 cf. Taft 1956:260) has also contributed on the role of the media in influencing behaviour. This author was more blunt when he asserted that the media especially the newspaper teaches the technique of crime. That is, newspaper teaches the clever method of committing crimes. For example, he pointed out how the automobile thieves pick out the car to be stolen, prevent identification, secure their registration in other states, and dispose them off based on accounts of armed robbery operation in the

newspaper and other media reports that may have indicated just how and what error in the method led to their discovery. So, they admonished those not yet arrested (see also Turvey 1999). Wertham (1954:10, 36 and 307) opines that the vast majority of books (probably novels), but most especially comics, feature crime, violence, horror, and sadism. The youth and adolescents no doubt read these books. Its idea and techniques are mastered by those predisposed to committing armed robbery and other criminal activities.

In what appears to be a seminal work on the impact of these informal agencies—mass media on violence, and as behaviour influencers generally—this in all respects captures vividly the theoretical argument of emulation, Belson (1977) has documented a less arguable account of how the mass media especially television could correlate to serious violent behaviour that includes armed robbery. In a press release issued at the time of his study, he alluded to the fact that serious violence is increased by the long-term exposure to

- “Plays or films in which close relationships are a major theme, and which feature verbal or physical violence;
- “Programmes in which the violence seems just thrown in for its own sake, or is not necessarily to the plot;
- “ Programmes in which the violence is seen as being in a good course.

In this so-called modern world, filmmakers and entertainment industry has continued to act, to document and to offer for the public consummation, an array of bewildering armed robbery and other aberrant violent behaviour films with impunity and

candour. These are done all in pursuit of the *spirit of laissez-fair, capitalism and democracy*. Films and books like “Costa del Crime”; “Buster”; “The Italian Job”; “The Mafia”; “Snatch”; “Gangster Chic”; “The Heat”, “The Rhambo”, and the assorted books like “Hadley Chase”; “The Sleeper” and so on are few among the thousands that are read in a large scale by those groups most vulnerable to violent criminal behaviour. A remarkable number of respondents admit that their knowledge of a contemporary armed robbery, and their subsequent *modus operandi*—group operation, planning, manner of sharing, the use of weapons, female memberships, and role performances (see section 7.4) are informed by what they watch, observed and read about on the T.V. and books. Besides this category of respondents, the accounts by most of the subjects, and the terminologies that they used to describe their robbery escapades, clearly suggest a link with the media especially T.V and the metal music.

Instances of the link between these weird films and high crimes such as armed robbery abound, and few worthy of mention are, “The Italian Job”, depicting a daring raid in the city of Turin, and in which the gang escaped across rooftops and down step in a trio of minicab. “The Heat”, portrayed how daring and violently a gang of armed robbers drove into a cash conveying van on the high way and in the ensuing mayhem carted away the proceed of the van in a jiffy. It is reported that every year, hundred of mini enthusiasts drive their cars to relive the film of “The Italian Job” (see Guardian 11 November 2000: 6).

Ronnie Biggs; one of the thieves that hijacked the London-to-Glasgow mail train and made off with a 2.6 million pound in 1970 is unfortunately being used as a television advert for an Australian Hair Restoration Company. These films and books—in posters

and other lithographic designs make their ways into the so-called urbanising countries of the world. Contemporary developing countries such as Nigeria—given its historical experience, and the realities of the emerging new world has been, and is still a good receptor of these western ideas and ways of life. Where a film is showed which depicts a successful robbery or criminal activities, youth, adolescents or criminal adults develop the unalloyed urge and motivation to attempt the techniques in a prototype manner on their locals, both for the economic gain of it, or for the fun of it.

Beginning with the earlier cinema that was brought by the western colonisers, other mass media—television, radio and hard-core criminal novels, came later and curiously enough, in a different direction from the cinema. Ake (1981: 21-48) as earlier indicated in section 4.3.1, rightly notes that part of the colonisers' trick was the introduction of cinema amongst other media of entertainment, which further distorted and disarticulated the values of the indigenous Africans.

#### **9.11.2 The role of opinion leaders**

Albeit the media play a significant role in the explanation and understanding of the theoretical idea of emulation, it is nevertheless the only forum by which this—as the end point of learning and imitating comes about. So, in explaining emulation and the role of the media in the processes, the importance of other means of communication agencies such as the individual role makers, his or her characteristics and prevailing factors are also recognised. Imbibing the impacts of the images of the media depends significantly, on the degree of association with what is regarded as “opinion leaders”.

Opinion leaders are individuals who latch into new ideas, products, and fashions the soonest, and who have a formative influence on the other people's decisions about adopting these innovations (Howitt 1982:20). According to Katz and Lazarsfeld (1964), research shows that for these innovations, certain people are more likely to be early adopters, and to influence others to make similar decisions.

As it applies to emulation, the concept of opinion leaders denotes that it is a two-step flow of communication<sup>9</sup>. There is an insert of the opinion leader as a sort of intermediary step, or a link between the mass media and the person influenced. So, the process depicts one in which the mass media influence the opinion leader, who then influences a second party. The concept of the two-step flow of communication has led to the idea of a specialisation in the social sciences—the diffusion of innovation. Therefore, since there is emphasis on the importance of innovation, there has been a focus on the concept of modernising Third World countries. But is by no means confined to the idea (see Rogers 1962).

A reflection to the explanation of the psychological theory reminds of the argument that people do not just simply get influenced, watch, view, listen, or read every single item of the vast output of the mass media. The degree of influence from the opinion leaders, and or listening, reading, viewing, and hearing, generally depends on two interrelated, but contradistinction concepts—*selective exposure*, and *selective perception*. It also depends on the little, but relatively known ones such as the *selective selection and recall* (Howitt 1982:22-23).

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<sup>9</sup> A one-step flow of communications exists when the influence of the mass media is directly on the individual.



The main argument of the selective exposure is simple. It explains that people tend to expose themselves to opinion leaders and the mass media, which present the point of views that, are most like their own. Put differently, people tend to develop a psychological abhorrence of ideas which conflict with ones' own cherished ideas and beliefs. The explanation of the selective exposure is further strengthened by the argument of a *cognitive dissonance theory*. The latter states that individuals like to keep their psychological world balance (Festinger 1957). Ideas that do not fit in with their belief system cause a psychological imbalanced state, which motivates the individual to correlate imbalance by whatever means s/he can. This argument is in consonance with the utilitarians, who undoubtedly, place responsibility of actions and decisions on the individual actors.

The selective perception also compliments the former—selective exposure. It explains that one chooses how to interpret what one sees, reads, watches, and the influence from the opinion leaders in a way, which support his/her viewpoint. Both the selective retention and recall is the tendency to recall things on a selective basis. So, behaviour, which fits in with one's own point of view, is remembered. Chriscos et al (2000:756) note that what is imitated, learned and probably emulated (the last addition mine) is remembered and re-acted to only insofar as they have some bearing on the imitators, learners and emulator's lives; and these often times, relate to their own personal experiences.

Glaser (1956 cf. Thio 1994:24)) in a reaction to association and learning argues that the experience of associating with deviants is harmless unless individual identifies with them. This he calls the differential identification. That is, identifying with real or

imaginary persons from whose perspective criminal behaviour is appreciated and accepted is what influences the choice to the path to criminality. In the ordinary terms, Glaser may be taken to suggest that it is all right for one to associate with deviants in a real life, or in books and movies. But as long as one does not take them so seriously that s/he identifies with them—treating them as heroes, it is somewhat meaningless. If one does identify with them, one is likely to become a deviant him or herself.

Burgess and Akers (1966a) make reference to the power of the opinion leaders, and this is reflected in their theory of differential reinforcement. According to these authors, one is motivated to continue to behave in certain way if he or she is rewarded for doing so, or to discontinue the behaviour if he or she has been punished for it. This represents a kind of reinforcing the theory of differential opportunity. Thio (1998:25) illustrated this in a technical language when he argued that the theory goes to suggest that: given a number of available operants, all of which produce the same reinforcer, that the operant which produces the reinforcer in greatest amount, frequency and probability will have the higher probability of occurrence.

The proximity and accessibility of the opinion leaders—those who have possessed model behaviour is therefore, of significant in predicting the line of behaviour likely to be taken by their followers. The likelihood increases when these opinion leaders are extolled and revered as is in the contemporary Nigeria. This is the sense in which senior armed robbers and corruptly enriched individuals—described variously as—“having made it”, “arrivals”, “achievers” “on-the-high-seas” in the country have continued to have a spill effect on the younger ones. A repentant armed robber, Clement (see “Nigerian Tribune daily news *On Line*”) intones that there is a high probability that anyone who keeps

company; is covetous, envies other people, and who wants to be like these “arrivals or “high-sea-killers” by all means will go into stealing and armed robbery. And he seems to describe it more knowledgeably, when he explains that the environment one grows can influence one especially where the few rich ones surround one.

### **9.11.3 The role of groups**

A further important agent of emulation particularly as it relates to its understanding and application in developing countries such as contemporary Nigeria is found in the context of what Peil (1977:52) calls “reference group”. Groups’ role or what the researcher here refers to, as “regional” or “racial” roles are important influencers, and they predict a particular line of behaviour in many societies.

Peil does not only limit the meaning of this reference group to a group in the corporate sense. She advances and operationalises it to mean a category to which one compares (refers) oneself to rather than a set of people who interact frequently and pursue common goals. Two types of this reference group such as the normative and comparative exist.

The normative reference group refers to those groups to which an individual looks up to as his or her guiding norm and means in a particular society. It is the kind that is provided by the community and family to which this individual belongs to. The comparative reference group is that to which an individual looks up to as his/her comparative basis—to assessing his or her standard. So, the comparative reference group is the person’s role model.

The comparative reference group is of particular relevance to emulation. It provides the basis and the opportunity upon which some of the current criminals in developing countries such as contemporary armed robbers in Nigeria looked up to their counterparts in the western world, and also within their immediate surroundings, and consciously imitate them not only for success, but to demonstrate that they are also competent in these crimes. Yet, some of these alien criminal attitudes are not simply learned as an end in itself. They are imbued, perhaps more than their original forms with a sense of purpose, commitment and daring these learners capitalise on few unique features inherent in the social structure of their countries as in contemporary Nigeria in focus.

So, using this latter country and armed robbery as the point of departure, contemporary Nigerian criminals as earlier argued in footnote 3 section 9.3, exhibit the tendency and the spirits to excel in all their chosen endeavours including crimes. They are audacious, and they display brutality and bravados. Yet, according to research and literature findings they are able too, to tap on the advantages of the prevailing unique circumstances which are the characterisations of the country—charms, strong link with the law enforcement agents (police), hyper corruption, spatial pattern of the settlement, and a sense of familial social bonding (see for instance, Iwarimie-Jaja 1999a: 138 on the use of charms; table 6.4.7.4 on the use of locally made guns such as “Oka-gun”, axes, knock-out; table 6.4.7.6 on the sources of weapons which include riot; table 6.4.7.7 on the link between these weapons and the serving law enforcement officers in the country). Therefore, an implicit sense of feelings amongst the contemporary criminals in the developing world, and the specific contemporary armed robbers in Nigeria is that “we

can do it better or at par excellence while we tap on the paraphernalia of our environment”.

Within this context and mindsets, the upcoming youth who are vulnerable to armed robbery look up to their senior criminals—armed robbers as their reference group. So, they borrow, imitate and emulate them with dexterity. These junior, predatory or neophytes armed robbers as the researcher chooses to classify them, become committed and they strive by all means to demonstrate their competence and par excellence before their senior colleagues in crime (armed robbers). They thus, become even more skilful, brutal, brave, persistence, consistence, and subscribing to more and more godly or ungodly protections.

The theoretical idea of emulation is also strongly influenced by another kind of group reference. This is what has been rightly described as the development of the need for achievement, and represented as nAchievement (see Peil 1977). McClelland (1961, 1963) and his students developed the idea that some people who feel a strong need to compete against a standard of excellence, and in the societies where this need is widespread will be more prosperous than in other societies where people are content with mere ordinary performance, or emphasised either ties with others (need for affiliation), or sub-ordination or super-ordination (need for power). McClelland suggested that “nAchievement” as he referred to it is an important factor in economic growth because it is closely tied to entrepreneurial success. This implies that the strong feeling to compete against a standard of excellence also means the imitation and development of the unconventional means into achieving this per excellence.

Le Vine (1966) interestingly, applied these ideas to contemporary Nigeria and explains the personality differences between the Hausa, Ibo and the Yoruba as due to their socialisation. These are the three major ethnic groups that make up of what is known as modern Nigeria. They represent the units within which the overbearing politics, economics and the social discourses of contemporary Nigeria are often discussed, analysed and predicated. Le Vine shows that there is an emphasis on the patron-client relation in Hausa society, and an emphasis on the individual achievement into the Ibo society.

Incidentally too, the Ibo society which are profoundly inhabitants or residents of the Southeastern part of modern Nigeria, and whose populace are generally regarded as “easterners” are overwhelmingly represented amongst the respondents and subjects in the study. They are far more found living according to the western culture and style of life especially economically and socially. The Yoruba according to Le vine (1966) lives in between a society, which rewards both independent achievement, and has a loyal clientage. Therefore, the differential socialisation patterns are what accounts for the seemingly high rate of armed robbery among the Ibo society, and the little more or less among the Yorubas which includes the Midwest part of the country that now constitute Delta and Edo state.

## **9.12 EMULATION AND ARMED ROBBERY IN CONTEMPORARY NIGERIA: THEORY APPLIED**

In the literature on crimes in contemporary Nigeria, the description of the varieties of crimes amongst the powerful and powerless is legion. From embezzlement, grafting, bribery, political assassination, general corruption, to theft, armed robbery, burglary and

so on, the temptation to commit crime is on the rise as the struggle for the resources intensifies, and the group or class tension mounts. This is what Bonger 1916 (cf. Box 1996:269) describes as “promoting egotism”. Capitalism this author further avers, perpetuates this egotism, brutalises the poor, and demoralises all those caught up in the struggle and competition to survive or succeed. It also makes those exploiting others to be insensitive to the misery it produces. So, most of these crimes are aNigerian—borrowed and learned.

The personal contact with the western type of civilisation signalled the real beginning of the knowledge and learning of most of these crimes in their most rapacious forms such as they exist today. This contact was predicated and anchored on the principle and ethos of the same western capitalist system of production—the emerged and prevailing mode and social relation of production in the western world. The greatest and immediate consequence is that it revolutionised the material value of all societies including Nigeria. It monetised the traditional economy, and brought in its wake arrays of good lives that it nevertheless could not conventionally provide for the populace. Put more succinctly, the contact with the western world beginning from the fifteenth century brought a compelling ethic of success and the strive for status and honour, but undoubtedly, which it can ill-afford to sustain (see also Nisbet 1971).

From the researcher’s point of view there was also an apparent democratisation of financial power in many hands, which became alluring to the little criminal elements (see also Bromberg 1965:2). Indeed, when the variable of the source (s) of learning about armed robbery was cross-tabbed with other important aspects of the offence in its contemporary pattern (see table 7.4.6-10), it is found that there tends to be associations or

relationships between them. For instance, there tends to be associations between source (s) of learning and planning of operation, motives of choosing armed robbery, frequency of robbery, getting armed during operation, role performance among members in armed robbery group. And interestingly too, majority of the respondents learned about the current pattern of the offence by means of watching it on the screens—T.V and cinemas, reading related books, and through friends meeting in the schools, clubs and social gatherings. In addition, unemployment—a feature inherited from the western contact, the urge to play roles watched and read about, and because of the availability of guns are some of the reasons favoured for taking to armed robbery.

Contemporary Nigerians have been socialised in this direction of material value, craves for status and honours recognition, and the general comfort of life, which this new culture brought about. But like most societies who were willy-nilly co-opted into the system, these people were not backed by commensurate empowerment or provided with the opportunity to realise the promises of the new system—economic, political and social. Therefore, there arose the pressure to seek for the alternative routes to meet these new demands.

With this contacts, came the media of communication—most profoundly, cinema, television, moving pictures, radio, newspapers and so forth. All this certainly provided with the opportunity by which the images of this new form of culture were disseminated, learned, and assimilated. As Olurode (1990:65) earlier on noted rightly observed, the changing view of the world seemed to be reinforced by the different T.V programmes, which often eulogise men and women of violence, but who are rich. So, the media represent the looking glass mirror by which the picture of luxury and power are



disseminated. They also concomitantly, provide with the means of observing and learning the alternative routes—the circumventing of the conventional means of meeting these new demands.

Having provided the idea of emulation in a proper context, and cleared the path towards the roles of the media in influencing the imitation, learning, hence emulation, the challenge becomes how, and to what extent can the idea of emulation as a theoretical exposition provides a credible alternative explanation to contemporary armed robbery behaviour in Nigeria?

When applied to an analysis and interpretation of armed robbery in contemporary Nigeria, the idea of emulation shows that armed robbers generally are both external thinkers and tinkers. Findings show that there tends to be a positive relationship between the sources of leaning this crime and the motive, which is predicated on the material gain and despise for the system of governance (see table 7.4.6). Taken at face value, many respondents who are in armed robbery are so for economic reason—the need to secure the means of sustenance since most lack the legitimate means of doing so. Table 6.4.4.1 shows that a total of 18 respondents of the total responses to the question gave the reason of unemployment. Relatedly, about 6 say they get involved in other to secure money and assist relations and others. And when this variable was cross-tabbed with the source (s) of learning about the offence, it was found to correlate significantly. Implicit therefore, is that since majority of them learned the behaviour through the media and friends; it is not only that there is relationship. But moreso, that the sample seems more to be a representative of armed robbers in contemporary Nigeria.

Most interviewees are those whose parents' educational qualifications tend to interface—that is, shares commonalities—an idea derivable from the western culture. More importantly, they are mostly those who have had a taste of this western education. Majority are high school leavers, or still in schools where there is a strong reinforcement of this culture of taste, status, rave, and freedom. In addition, and very interestingly, there is the involvement of females in robbery gangs. There are also roles differentiation amongst robbery gangs, and the planning of robbery operations, which are all found in the testing to correlate with the source (s) of learning the behaviours. Females' involvement in violent crime like armed robbery is less arguable, a consequent of the revolution in feminism, which have swept across national barriers and have become a scourge in the socio-culture life of most non-western states. And one sure best way of imbibing this idea is through the media and association with friends.

Like their counterparts in all other societies, contemporary Nigerian armed robbers are never quite content to leave things as they found them. They invent, they innovate, and they perfect. These characteristics extend to include the new techniques, the language, a new system of etiquette, a new belief and superstition, and new neutralisation techniques that are all considered relevant to the commission of the crime and to avoid detection.

As with contemporary Nigerian armed robbers, these peculiar characteristics—innovativeness, inventiveness, and the perfection are bore out of necessity. Need enters into the inventive process especially in terms of crisis when men are made aware of the impending danger that some new approaches to situations must be found (Landis 1958:59). Thus, being fully aware of the risk and dangers associated with their profession

or activity, which include official strict punishment (execution) and unofficial sanctions such as mob attack and lynching, modern Nigerian armed robbers appreciate the necessity to complement the traditional approach to armed robbery with a more intriguing and vicious approach.

In addition, because modern day Nigeria is highly corrupt, so, a seemingly equivalent of Durkheim's state of normlessness or *anomic* has emerged. Corruption breeds mistrust, extreme individualism, extra-ordinary sense of ingenuity, innovativeness, craftiness, greed, and ostentatious way of living, and above all an undue avarice for material wealth. All these have important implications in the manner that the crime is being committed in the country today. In particular, the hyper corruption in the country, though, by no means peculiar to it, makes the country a unique society in terms of how extent the economic or property criminal behaviour are perpetuated, and how the system of criminal justice responds to them. The corruption in contemporary Nigeria (Odey 2000)<sup>10</sup> explains is so rampant that it makes every occurrences and behaviour complex and difficult to account for. In most successful robberies, police officers or insiders of robbery targets are likely to be implicated, and usually truth to the allegation when thoroughly investigated.

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<sup>10</sup> Odey provides a graphic description of the state of corruption in contemporary Nigeria by explaining that: today in Nigeria, corruption has become a structural sin so contagious that it hardly leaves anybody without a smear. And since the country was justifiably stigmatised as a den of corruption, all Nigerians, both the guilty and the innocent, having been paying very costly for it. And Chinua Achebe (1983) had earlier on, perspicaciously, intoned that it is totally false to suggest, as Nigerians are apt to do, that they are fundamentally different from any other people in the world. Nigerians are corrupt because the system under which they live today makes corruption easy and profitable; they will cease to be corrupt when corruption is made difficult and inconvenient.

The manner at which armed robbery is being perpetuated shows that there is a touch of expertise far above what is banally known of the crime. All manner of people, and all tricks—imaginable and unimaginable have been brought to bear in the commission of the crime. In modern Nigeria, the police, military personnel, students, women, old, young, and civil servants, and all kinds of *modus operandi* depicting intriguing scenarios and patterns as research and literature findings show are brought to bear directly or indirectly in executing robbery operation (see tables 6.2.1, 3; 6.4.7-8; 6.4.9.4 and section 3.3). Eke Emma writing in the Sunday Guardian Newspaper 16 October 2000, reports that the people of Nnewi in their unflinching understanding of the menace of armed robbery which are carried out on large scale, in broad daylight and with dexterity attribute it to the incursion of western civilisation.

In what also appears to be a support for the argument that contemporary armed robbery in Nigeria is an emulated idea, and is inextricably linked to the western ideas, Aina and Usonegbu reporting in the Daily Times of 20 March, 1999 adds that robbers in Nigeria have gone *scientific* (italics mine for emphasis). According to these two writers armed robbers now seem to be operating in all kinds of weird and sophisticated manners or in their word “theories”: on Okada (motorcycles), on jeep Pajeros and with cell phones. Axes and cutlasses (traditional to the Nigeria society) and automatic guns and dynamite have been noted to be common amongst contemporary armed robbers.

As reported in section 9.7 above, robbers now dress in suits with bags that appear to be filled with money—an undisputable unique characteristics of contemporary Nigeria socio-economic scene, stormed a bank while posing as tycoon customers only to open their briefcases and drew guns. They open fire on moving vehicles like those in the

theatre of Hollywood acting out imaginary episodes. They speak rave culture languages. And they also throw money to the public like the legendary Robin Hoods, and they do all sort of things that demonstrate the mark of the western idiosyncrasies.

They are now masters of disguise or ingenuity, and above all, have learnt from their western counterparts while maximizing the inherent peculiarities of contemporary Nigerian society. Indeed they are no less than what McLynn (1989:27) describes as “escapologists of genius”. They are experts at demobilising guard dogs with western concocted types of chemicals (anaesthesia). They learned how to use adhesive to tape their victims, they learn to possess skeleton or master keys that can unlock any unlockable, they learned, borrow, and imbibe the idea of “shoot first, the dead is the looser”, they learned to wear bullet-proof vests, to kidnap, to torture, and to act out all the gory scenes of the western archetype anti-social behaviour.

So, the argument in this research and by means of the conceptual framework of emulation remains that contemporary armed robbery— its alarming rate, the sophistry of its nature, the *modus operandi*, and the utilisation of local appurtenances such as charms and local connivances among its other characteristics are indicative that the behaviour goes beyond ordinary imitation, borrowing and learning, which are traditional to other learning theoretical expositions. It depicts and explains this behaviour as a reaction to or a rejection of the economic deprivation, the political discontentment and the social discountenance, which characterise modern Nigeria. Yet, when it learned, it is perfected within the social circumstances prevailing in the country, hence the their being described as emulators.

Emulation idea therefore, proposes and argues that armed robbery in contemporary Nigeria—its current form is not an ordinarily learned thing, psychopathically induced, nor invented from nowhere by the individual armed robbers. Rather it is a behaviour that is imitated, learned from their western countries counterparts through the informal means of the media, and later from senior criminal colleagues, but nevertheless perfected. The processes occur not mainly within the intimate social groups. So, Sutherland's failure to account for the impersonal agencies of communication such as the mass media can no readily be accepted.

Learning, imbibing and tinkering (emulation) of armed robbery behaviour depend on the extent and intensity of interaction over time, and spent with these classes of the secondary agents. This is parallel to the argument of Sutherland when he alluded to intensity, duration and frequency as the measure of the extent of learning the antisocial behaviour.

Since the samples of ecological studies of armed robbery in contemporary Nigeria have important bearing in the explanation and understanding along the postulation of emulation and general learning theory, the degree to which an individual becomes emulator in armed robbery in Nigeria is therefore, dependent on the extent of his or her affiliation with the group or region of the country and individuals that had earlier and much closer contacts with the western world. It also depends on the extent to which the group or region where the particular armed robber comes from continues to be vulnerable and endearing to the vagaries of the western idiosyncrasies—life styles that are predicated on material acquisition, status and power seeking. This probably accounts for the higher incidence of this crime in the Southern part of the contemporary (the whole of

East and West) than their Northern counterpart. It is also against this backdrop that the offence records a higher rate in Bauchi states and Kaduna than other states in the North (see table 6, section 2.9.2.4).

The idea of emulation emphasised on the importance of informal agencies. But it stops short of suggesting or attributing every armed robbers in modern Nigeria to simply the consequence of the over bearing influence of these informal agencies. Instead its theoretical thrust is that the pattern and incidence of present armed robbery in the country is traceable to the western value system and ways of life, and are being accentuated and perpetuated as it was from the beginning of this contact by such informal agencies as books, comics, cinemas, television, radio, the opinion leaders as intermediary and so on.

There is the role of the formal agencies, however insignificant they appear be in impacting and teaching this criminal behaviour. Attending formal schools and meeting with peers of similar attitudinal dispositions may no more or less be any [in] significant means by which contemporary armed robbers in Nigeria acquire their experiences. And it is quite shocking the revealing by Clement Eze—the repentant armed robber that contemporary Nigerian armed robbery is taught, learned, imitated and emulated under a formal institution of learning with all characteristics of same degree. Hear the comment of Clement Eze (2001:5-6) inter alia:

...When I refused to yield to the boss demand to kill a pregnant woman for a Jazz (African insurance), I was taken from there (beer parlour) to the school of armed robbery. It is not in the city. It is in the forest. If you go there you will be afraid... After my graduations, they did graduation for me. Other armed robbers were invited; burglars, pickpocketers, car-snatchers, car thieves, 419ers (advanced fee fraudsters), money doublers etc., and those who steal people's houses were all invited... A date was fixed or the freedom and called a "graduation ceremony". In fact, it was a big celebration that musicians even came there to play it was a big party, people only saw a party,

but the reason for was not known to the invitees, after the party, I was blessed with prayers.

The story from the prison and inmates from the researchers previous encounters, suggest that there is the inevitable needs amongst contemporary armed robbers to strive to carry out their activities in a per excellence manner. Every arrested armed robber is bound to recount before his or her inmates (colleagues) how he operated. Where he or she is deemed to have performed badly, sanctioned is imposed, and praised he or she if found to have excelled. It is in the prisons that knowledge on the choice of target for big scores, to evade detection, connive with the police and other gangs and the neutralization techniques—what to say in the event of arrest, and so on is shared, learned and further emulated. On released, these experiences are put into test, and are pass on to the younger and up coming armed robbers who then enter into the race of competition. They in turn strive to perfect what they have learned from both the western media and senior armed robbers, and to do so by tapping on the factors within the complex contemporary Nigeria society.

### **9.13 CONCLUSION**

Emulation is a specific strand of the general social learning theory. It is integrated in approach and dialectically dissectional in strategy—examining the logic, coherence, methodology, translatability and applicability of colleagues works in the field of sociology of deviance and criminology. Indeed, it as an experience on the sociology of deviance and/or criminology, and is shaped by a somewhat contingency, knowledge of choice, fashion, ideology and practical objectives (see also Downes and Rock 1988: 13). However, it is a theoretical expostulation more closely associated with Gabriel Tarde's



imitation theory, Sutherland theory of differential association, Iwarimie-Jaja's previous criminal association, and a fair number of psychological and socio-psychological theories such as the cognitive dissonance theory, differential identification, differential reinforcement, and so on. Yet, it is predicated and reflects on, the existing political economy context of contemporary Nigeria.

The theory thrust is the origin and the unique nature of current armed robbery in Nigeria today. It makes no pretence by locating the origin of contemporary pattern of the offence in the contact with the western culture, and explains the apparent uniqueness of the offence and offenders in terms of other peculiarities within the Nigeria socio-cultural, political and economic milieu. Hence, the idea of emulation is viewed by and large, as simply reflexive. The significant role of the informal agencies such as the various forms of the media, peers, criminal relatives, opinion leaders and senior armed robber friends is far reaching to the idea of emulation.

Because it is an integrated model approach and dialectically dissectional, emulation somewhat appears complex. As a dialectic dissection, it disputes with some of the logical arguments of the associate theories, while agreeing in quite a remarkable numbers of areas with them. The synthesis of these theories—social learning, variants of the macro political economy, and micro socio-psychology while it takes a comparative-historical analysis of the contemporary armed robbery vis-à-vis the traditionally known form of robbery and the resultant embellishment of the learned behaviour within the prevailing circumstances, is the departing point of emulation.

So, emulation it is argued is the consequence of culture contact and the subsequent culture in-flow. When the more powerful culture like the western culture at

any point in time conflicts with the less powerful ones like those of the developing world such as Nigeria, one naturally superimposed over the other. In all historical encounters apart from the short period of culture flow from the developing world to the more developed ones, the pattern has always been the other way round—from the North Pole to the South Pole. That is, a kind of cultural osmosis.

Emulation is not a one-way gap. It involves stages, following the same processes of learning normal behaviour. It depends on a number of factors, partly on the individuals (psychological disposition) and on frequency, duration, intensity and so on. Some individual emulate faster, depending on the extent of their selective exposure, perception and recall, while others are much slower.

As applied to an understanding of modern armed robbery, the idea of emulation suggests that the Southern (West and East) part of contemporary Nigeria with statistical higher rates of reported armed robbery incident were more, and have remained more susceptible to the western idiosyncrasies—styles of life premised on materialism. Corruption and the belief in African insurance (charms) also seem undoubtedly, common in contemporary Nigeria and in this Southern part than its Northern counterpart. These provide added opportunity towards the current unique nature of the offence. The idea of emulation is substantiated by the analysis of data collected in chapters Six and Seven as well as the literature findings based on armed robbery in Nigeria.

The last Part V and chapter Ten is about the conclusion and recommendations. In this chapter recapitulation of what was set to do, how it has been done, and what has been achieved and finally, the way forwards are summarily discussed



## **PART V: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

## **CHAPTER TEN**

### **SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **10.1 INTRODUCTION**

Structurally, the report of this study was divided into five parts. Part I dealt with the overview for the study—it provides the background, the aims, definition and operationalising of key words, and the approach and the strategy of the study. Part II reflected on a literature overview on the crime—armed robbery and the criminal—armed robber with selected anecdotal statistics on the crime. Part III dealt with the empirical findings obtained from the questionnaire and interviews—analyses and interpretations, and drawing a wide scale of meaning from them. Part IV, reviewed and discussed the salient theories as precursors to the theoretical construction of an alternative framework to explaining armed robbery based on the literature findings and empirical findings of this study. Part V dealt with drawing conclusions and recommendations, which arise from both the empirical and literature findings.

The last four chapters—presentation, analysis, interpretation of findings; testing of the hypotheses and hypothesis-generating testing; review, discussion, and analysis of theoretical overview; and the build-up of the theoretical framework of emulation are the levers of the present study. What is found is that armed robbery as currently exists in contemporary Nigeria is motivated by complex factors, but however, more likely to be by both unemployment factor and the sources of knowledge about the crime. Western media—Television, cinema, reading of books and friends are the major motivational

sources, which animate contemporary armed robbers in Nigeria to remain persistent and sophisticated while displaying some form of uniqueness that calls for further exploration. The results of the hypothesis testing provide illumination to some important variables of the offence and the offenders in contemporary Nigeria.

Reviews and discussions on the theories in literature show that a remarkable number of these theories have one or fewer explanatory properties that bear relevance to a good understanding of contemporary armed robbery in Nigeria, or in the build-up of “emulation” as a credible alternative theoretical expostulation. The explanation and discussion provided on the theoretical idea of emulation—with a substantial sociological imagination supports the results of the testing.

In this chapter Ten, which bears the close age of the study, the aim and objectives that was set out to accomplish, how far it has been accomplished and what points of warning that need be kept in mind are reflected. So, a re-emphasis on the nature, the goal, the methodological design, and results applicability of the study are provided as the study draws to a close. The essence is to continue to bring to focus the point of departure of the study.

The strategic approach in this chapter therefore, involves reflection on the goals of the study, a summary of what was achieved from the empirical analysis, to proffer recommendations, and draw a conclusion. Within the conclusion, are provided the premises of the argument, and the broad strategy of the argument. In both these areas, are provided the key points of notes as they affect the study vis-à-vis other similar studies.

## 10.2 RE-ECHOING THE NEED FOR THE STUDY

There were few reasons (motivations) that animated the researcher, and which coalesced into the **immediate** and **ultimate** aims of the study. Firstly, is the reading of the literature, and the coming into contact with is perceived as the “clarion calls” for a cross-cultural (comparative) criminological approach to the study of crimes amongst different societies, as they evolved and transit from stage of development to the other (see for instance, Clifford 1965:14; Clinard and Abbott 1973:5; Blumer 1983:3). And indeed, there is the realisation on the part of the researcher that a single “global” explanation of crimes—armed robbery particularly across all the different societies, and in the context of the nature and the *modus operandi* of some of these criminal actions, through the application of one or a combination of sociological variables, coined and developed in the western more developed countries, is both unrealistic and misleading.

Secondly, contemporary armed robbery and armed robbers in Nigeria is of serious concerns to the authorities and general public. So much so that a lot of the citizenries and visitors alike have either been killed, maimed or rendered useless. There are also the incalculable human, financial and material resources, which are being diverted to fight it at the expense of the socio-economic pressing needs of the country.

Thirdly, and very important is the fact that contemporary Nigerian armed robbery and armed robbers are unique so that they present a kind of an extraordinary mixture of antithetical subtle characteristics—being sophisticated, brutish, daring, and alarming at most part of it. The offenders operate beyond the traditional armed robbery boundaries—in churches, sacred places, schools highways, and take advantages of other features of the Nigerian society such as charms, familial bonding and wide scale corruption.

Fourthly, despite the seriousness of the crime, most scholars in Nigeria saved by a handful still treat both the object and subjects as an issue of academic part time—articulating the newspapers and magazines opinions than venturing into empirical some investigations, which require an interaction with the subjects.

An important and immediate aim of the study is to provide analytical descriptions of both the offence and the offenders in contemporary Nigeria, so that a summarised handout of both the offence and offenders can be provided for easy reference. Other subsequent aims include, to determine in an average weighted manner, the major predisposing factor for most individuals who are involved in the crime in contemporary Nigeria; the major sources of knowledge of this crime, and finally, whether contemporary armed robbery in Nigeria necessarily necessitates “previous criminal experiences”.

The **ultimate goal** of this research is certainly, to advance, or tease out an alternative and credible distinctive model for understanding the contemporary nature of the offence and the offenders from the crucibles of the research—empirical and literature findings, in Nigeria as a developing country, and from the specific theoretical paradigms or expositions. Although this is the ultimate aim, it is by no means taken as an aetiological mantra, which explains most criminal actions in Nigeria, or all armed robberies in all societies—more developed and the less developed. Surely, the aim is not to provide an unfaultable and universal theory against which criminal and delinquent behaviour, or the particular armed robbery in all societies can, and must be interpreted.

At the same time, it does not aim in its empirical characteristics, to provide what appears as a “universal uniform description” of the offence and offenders since as indicated in section 1.2, chapter One, there are differences among the societies *per se*. To



aim otherwise no doubt, amounts to an ideal. In the view of the researcher, this is an over ambitious, and insensitive to the variations in the social context under which a particular behaviour emerged. It even negates the logical argument offered in this study, and vividly expressed in section 1.2, Chapter One.

Marxians and relatively non-Marxians faithfully subscribe to the economic factor as the determinant of other forms of human behaviour: prosocial and antisocial. This is apparently understandable, and the researcher to a great extent, subscribes to the notion. However, human behaviour as product of this economic determinism is never a foreclosed one. They are further occasioned or shaped to a large extent, by the social-history encountered, and the prevailing circumstances.

There is an apparent pretence particularly amongst most western behavioural sciences scholars and their likes in other places that all societies—less developed and more developed, and their attendants' behaviour must be studied, understood, and interpreted within the conventional theoretical constructionism. Little or no attention is paid to the fact that some or most of this behaviour—in the current form they exist, are non-indigenous. And that some unique features such as the creativity, the ingenuity, the cleverness or dullness, the institutional frames of the different societies, and the different social settings, which are apparent amongst some of these behaviour are essential in the differences in the manner they are explained. These peculiar features no doubt, are significant to how the individuals live their lives, learn what they observe from others, and modify what is learned to suit their existing environment. The lack of a clear appreciation of these differences is fraught with risky in any meaningful attempt to

explain a particular behaviour, and this has led to the series of suspicion that shroud these theories.

There are several suggestions as to “how” to overcome or mitigate the suspicion in which most sociology and criminology models or theories on crime explanation are entrapped. In the view of the researcher the deconstruction and/ or reconstruction of these theories by means of what is referred in this study as a “dialectic dissection”—logical disputation, is certainly one of them. The subsequent interaction with the various categories of these law violators and deviants to provide validation, or to substantiate the line of argument taken is another one. This interaction led to the collection of data by both the techniques of questionnaire and in-depth interviews as both the process and tools to empirically validate the study—claim and thrust of the study that was conceived at the outset.

### **10.3 SYNOPSIS OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS**

The dialectic integration solutions to few of the dilemmas in the sociology and criminology theorising on crime and delinquency have been combined together. This effort is not new in the literature on crime theorising, albeit (see Elliot et al. 1985; Hawkins and Weis 1985; Catalano and Hawkins 1996; Thornberry 1997; Huang et al. 2001). It is however, strengthened by focusing on fastly developing countries such as Nigeria; on high criminal profiles such as contemporary armed robbery, and by incorporating other important unique features that are essential, and which sought for while developing an integrated dialectic model. So, a coherent, portent and logical system of assumptions, which deals with the less developed country, and the sophisticated

criminal behaviour such as Nigeria and armed robbery—its pattern, incidence, *modus operandi*, perceptions, uniqueness and so on, appears.

Within the emerged dialectic integrated exposition—in this present study known as emulation, the current pattern of armed robbery in modern Nigeria is conceived as a consequent of many factors—sociological and psychological as well as some elements of biosocial variables. Armed robbery in its current pattern and form is a product of developmental phases or stages. In this sense, it is principally a product of imitation, learning, and emulating. It begins first, from contacts with the western culture, and following the general rules of the social learning processes, developed to its current form of sophistry. But within these rules, it varies according to the degree, intensity and frequency of contacts with the western media and association with senior criminals, friends and peers of hard-core robbers.

Because armed robbery is a high profile criminal behaviour, it usually necessitates predatory criminal knowledge (previous criminal experiences), which serves to provide the preconditions congenial for acquiring the status of a robbery neophyte—amateur, and subsequent graduation into professional robber—career armed robber (see for instance, the revealing of Clement Eze—the repentant armed robbers in the *Nigerian Tribune*, On line, August, 18, 2002, and the profile of Anini in “*The story of Anini*”, Olurode (1991).

Current patterns and incidence of armed robbery in contemporary Nigeria is seen realistically, in this study as alien in the sense of assuming a foreign (western) character. These are in the areas of being violent—characterised by the use of sophisticated weapons (social dimension), being motivated more by material needs—a unemployment (economic), being sometimes rebellious and revolutionary in character—politically

motivated, female inclusive, planned, related to acquisition of modern form of education, inclined to acquainting themselves with knowledge of the law as a mean of rationalising their actions amongst other western characteristics. But besides all these, modern day armed robbery in Nigeria is further characterised by some degree of uniqueness for instance, a deepened, sensual psychopathic indifference to the brutality of their own narcissist activities in some instances; the embracing of local appurtenances such as a corrupted system; the reliance on “African insurance” (jazz or charms); creativity such as devising all forms of imaginable and unimaginable tricks; and a high degree of temerity such as raiding police and military establishments, hence emulation so constructed.

Significant in acquiring the contemporary armed robbery attitude in all its current ramifications, and as logically argued and supported by the research findings is the unique role of the western media—TV, radio, comets, books, novels, magazines, and secondary “senior criminals’ friends, and peers.

This study no doubt is limited in scope—analysis of few selected armed robbers in few selected prisons in the Southeastern part of modern Nigeria. But key findings are consistence with the aims set out at the outset of the study. In particular, these findings are still parallel to previous researches on the roles of the agents of socialisation particularly the TV, peer groups (friends) and other related media in influencing the development of criminal, delinquent and non-criminal behaviour (Pilkington cf. O’Donnell 1974; Margaret 1977; Gitlin 1979; Agnew 1991; Sparks 1992; Thornberry et al. 1994; Brenda and Whiteside 1995 Chriscos et al. 2000).

An interesting and important findings in this study therefore, is that the source (s) of the knowledge and the learning of armed robbery amongst most respondents and

subjects seem to be by the informal means of communication—by T.V, readings, association with peer and senior criminals. These sources (s) have significant degree of association or relationship with quite a remarkable numbers of other variables. For instance, there tends to be associations between the source (s) of armed robbery and the carrying of weapons, roles played by members in an armed robbery group, the planning of operation, the frequency of robbery, and the reason (s) for going into robbery. These findings are important for decision making especially given the fact that they are the results of the application of chi-square tests. Implicit therefore, is that the findings indicate that samples are more probable, a representative of the population.

Other significant findings at the level of the chi-square test are the fact that the female members in armed robbery group or gang perform duties that are viewed as more of female oriented, that a robbery group or gang with hierarchical line of authority is likely to plan robbery operation, and also assigns roles, that the respondents' fathers are more likely to have the number of children that correspond to the number of wives, and finally, both the offenders parents' educational qualifications are more likely to co-vary in an verse relationships.

Offenders' status as characteristics particularly those acquired in preteens are statistically significant in influencing the line of behaviour at adult age, but comparatively in small effects (see Engen and Gainey, 2001:1220). Against this backdrop, what further findings at the level of the descriptive, theoretical analysis and interpretation show are that the offenders do have a greater degree of good relationship either with their parents, relations, guardians and peers, only later to falter, and take the path to armed robbery as they pass through their adolescence stages, and accelerate their

contacts with the prevailing western cultures and other agents of learning processes. But the same findings at the level of descriptive analysis show that a remarkable numbers of the offenders are likely to be involved in the previous actions, which they perceived as anti-social or delinquent behaviour. And most are likely to have contact with law enforcement agent—the police as part of the broad criminal justice system (see table 6.4.2.1-3). The contacts is important because is police are seemingly the most powerful of the criminal justice funnel in the country. For instance, they throw individuals indiscriminately into their cells, most times on flimsy misdemeanours.

It is also found that a high number of the offenders do feel the need to carry out their operation with degree of ingenuity, sense of purpose and with compassion saved when under the influence of a psychotic agents, or when situationally constraint to employ force. So, there is the tendency amongst most contemporary armed robbers in Nigeria to minimise harms on their victims, notwithstanding that they carry arms.

In addition, a high probable relationship between the arrest of members and the drive to embark on rescue mission, between the police and armed robbers and between economically active age and armed robbery are observable at least, at face value and the ordinary level of analysis. Findings also indicate that armed robbers are more likely to go or remain unarrested for a relatively long period of times. Robbery takes place in all places and locations, but residential robbery remains the most banal and frequent one.

On the over all, findings are critical and have a number of important social implications. Firstly, is the prominence given to material constraint—unemployment as the bane of the spate of armed robbery currently in place in contemporary Nigeria. So, as one of the aims of the study, findings show that unemployment is the most important unit

factor that motivates archetype armed robbers in Nigeria to remain persistent. However, other factors—to act out what was viewed from T.V and read from books; to rebel against a particular authority (governments); because of the need to rob and help others are revealed (see table 6.4.4.1).

The factor of unemployment, which is the most unit weighted push-pull factor given for involvement in armed robbery by both the respondents and subjects is not surprising. Conventionally, the lack of meaningful job opportunities predisposes one into engaging in a variety of criminal activities as indeed it is said colloquially that, “An idle mind is the devil’s workshop”. In this context, unemployment is overwhelmingly determined by the inability to find an employable job, and to have access to support services for gainful self-employment. Enmeshed in material gains and socio-political crisis, and with the increasing rate of unemployment situation as contemporary Nigeria currently experiences, the wave of armed robbery in the country therefore, shows the tendency to be on the upsurge (disjointism).

Secondly, there are some social forces that facilitate the increasing seriousness of armed robbery in contemporary Nigeria, which also to an extent, determine the degree of its’ uniqueness. This is the collusion between the armed robbers and some members of the public. This includes members of the law enforcement agents—police and high profile individuals of dubious characters. One fact which is a feature that runs through all offenders’ responses, and which has never escaped the feelings and beliefs amongst the Nigerian general public is that armed robbery in the country is a direct reflection of the complete break down of the moral rectitude and social decays at all levels of the society. Corruption in the government circle has had the effect of spilling down or over to all

levels of the society. So, various crimes in which armed robbery is just but one of them have emerged.

Thirdly, offenders overwhelmingly accept that the many control measures and the steps being taken by successive governments and the various communities have significant impacts on their involvement in armed robbery. This is also one of the aims that were set to accomplish in this study. And it seems tempting to argue that from the perspective of the offenders, the drastic measures, which include execution by firing squad being adopted by the government, are result oriented.

Fourthly and fundamentally, a good number of the offenders attest to the influence of the western media and the informal relationship with peers and friends as the sources of their knowledge, and the reason to be involved in armed robbery. They emphasised that youth should be restraint from developing avarice attitude, high taste life, and associating with bad friends (opportunism and cooptionsm).

Fifthly, findings show that the use of weapons especially guns is an essential part of the game, and is usually obtained from the police, the illegal firearms manufacturers, riot and other means. With respect to the means of transportation, automobiles seem to be the most widely used. However, motor cycles popularly known as “okada” are on the increase and the reasons are that it facilitates an easy-get-away, and can be easily disposed off or hidden. Little wonders therefore, that in most cities, the authorities have imposed a blanket ban on “okada” operators between some hours.

Sixthly, many offenders it seems have the tendency to regret their involvement in robbery. There are comments during the in-depth interviews that reflect on such regrets in addition, to the responses to the question. Several reasons are provided that account for



this state of mind. It was also found that that the choice of the victims is mainly by informants.

Seventhly, most respondents are male, single and of the economically active age bracket. Importantly, they are those who have achieved the necessary level of academic qualifications—secondary or high schools, which are deemed enough to expose them to the promises of the western way of life, as well as the legitimate and illegitimate means of acquiring these goodies. Robberies are mostly group efforts with roles and responsibilities, which are both individually and collectively responsive. There is little involvement of females as most of them could not be trusted. When included, their roles remain merely providing information, sexual gratification, and shielding the offenders.

Eighthly, many robbers are able to rob within the areas that are neither too far, nor near from their place of domicile. Indeed, most robberies were carried out in the states offender resides and knows very well. Arrests are made long after the offences are committed, and individuals most likely to be arrested are those whose duties in a robbery gang or group is to inflict harms and keep victims in check (mopol, hitman). When arrests are made, there is always the tendency to go on rescue missions, or to effect the release of members through whatever subterranean means available. This, however, usually depends on the prevailing situation.

Findings also show that some people are likely to be wrongly processed or detained as armed robbers. There was an evidence of this in Abakaliki prison where there was a compelling reason to suggest that one of the respondents was roped into the crime as a result of family feud. These findings are indicative of the kind of perverse justice,

which a remarkable of Nigerians may be undergoing in robbery and other criminal offences.

Finally the critical sociology-criminology descriptive analysis of both the crime and criminals reveal a complex mix of antithetical analysis, which bequeaths on both the object and subjects a certain degree of uniqueness that cannot be explained within the didactics of conventional models. An integration of the crucibles of the research—empirical and literature findings provides an alternative distinctive model that seems more embracing and reflexive in explaining the overall repositories of contemporary armed robbery and armed robbers in Nigeria. This model is known as the emulation model, and it remains the ultimate aim of the study.

The findings and the model that is advanced in this present study has led the researcher to question whether the findings of these data analyses, and the accompanying theory that is premised on the emulation of the western styles of life—as a better alternative explanation of current pattern of contemporary armed robbery in Nigeria, may not be bias and defective when wholesomely applied to other societies, especially the less developed ones. No doubt that criminal behaviour of the same kind, and amongst the different societies may converge at one point of commonality if such societies share many things in common (see Clinard and Abbot 1973:3). However, there is a greater advantage in most of these ubiquitous theoretical expositions when their different proponents become more specific, more analytical, and more holistic in approach so that a “gat-game” kind of solution within the context and nature of these criminal actions would emerge. This is the clarion call of the researcher in support of other researchers who directly or indirectly, had also made similar call. Less arguable, this will help to

reduce the bias and the defective inherent in applying wholesomely, all the theories to all the different societies. This will hopefully, as noted in section 1.2 contribute a small section to the overall jigsaw puzzle of crime causality. This can no longer be overemphasised especially now that the international criminal justice as a discipline has risen to appreciate the beauty of what sociologists refer to as “the sociology of law” in the law making process, execution and adjudication.

#### **10.4 RECOMMENDATIONS EMERGING FROM THE STUDY**

In the context of the discussions above, and the research findings—empirical and literature, the emerged demonstrable solutions to the problem of attempts to understand the current pattern of armed robbery in modern Nigeria on the one hand, is a rather more subtle, but holistic in approach. This approach entails an anatomical dissect of the criminal behaviour both in its historicity and current patterns within a specific context. It also entails a cursory comparative analysis of the patterns of the offence and the offenders’ characteristics to identify, and to spot out what appears to be the unique characteristics amongst the Nigeria category of the offenders. These had earlier on been done in the preceding chapters, and the most singular emerged solution remains an integrated model approach described—as and through the process “emulation”, which is perceived by the researcher and the progenitor of this process as encompassing.

Other demonstrable solutions that emerged on the other hand from the analysable data are many and diverse. They are in micro forms, and are summarily explained as concerned with the following:

- That unemployment must be vigorously tackled, and be seen as indeed, a most threatening factor, which motivates the drive for armed robbery Nigeria today. In other words, attempt should be made to refrain from interpreting unemployment as mere spurious, and an excusable factor amongst the offenders. Officials with right wing ideology and orientation and liberal sociology-criminologists have often found it expedient to debunk the unemployment-crime interconnectedness. So, the issue of unemployment is a pawn used by sociology-criminology critics or leftists to critique uncritically, and to torpedo government and its macro economic policies, which they not only loathe, but also want to subvert. While unemployment is, and should not be condonable as an excuse for committing armed robbery in particular, it must at the same time not be dismissed as mere excusable. Against this backdrop, the nation's educational policy should be re-oriented to provide empowered skills to the youth. Majority of them who are disproportionately in armed robbery are have had a taste of the formal western education system, and have come into reality with the many goodies it promises. Lack of employment causes a traumatic depression to many individuals and groups, and this acute amongst these active young ones. It breeds instant hatred, jealousy, and inferiority complex as it leads to the disruption of relationships—within the family and at peer level. In contemporary Nigeria, many families' responsibilities are almost invariably vested on these youth who play many roles—sons, uncles, cousins, family prides and representatives at community level and so on.

- Additional manpower, transportation, up-to-date equipment and offices must be provided for the police, courts, and the prisons. It is pathetic to note the complete sorry

state of current Nigerian police force— inadequate, demotivated, ill-equipped, ill-trained, and ill-oriented. The situation whereby only about 120000 policemen and women take charge of the security of a nation with an estimated 120,000000 populations is grossly worrisome. Routine training especially amongst the police and court officials must complement continuum recruitment. This is very important when it is realised that there is a limit to the number of police officers the national *fiscus* can afford. Consequently, there is the need to train personnel who are able to meet the standards required in a criminal justice system based on the rule of law. Nigerian police are notorious for their excessive violation of the constitutional rights of both the suspects and the innocent citizens, and it is suggestive that those who are identified as diabolic, remain chronically demotivated, and are not trainable need to be flushed out of the system. The police should be made to pay dearly for any reported complaint against them, either for corruption, violation of rights, or not responding to armed robbery alerts and reports. However, to hold them accountable, efforts should be made first and foremost, to kit properly, and to remunerate them reasonably well. The present efforts of the government seem to be in order and need be stepped up.

- Significant measures must be taken to discourage the overbearing influence of the western values and general ways of life on the youth in particular. The media—TV, radio, clubs, comets, magazines, journals, and books that promote the behaviour of violence—including armed robbery and petty criminal attitudes, and the idea of good taste and high life should be particularly targeted and discouraged to the barest minimum especially among the adolescents who are most vulnerable to their influences. “Seeing is believing” so goes the saying. Corruption of the mind starts with what the eyes see and transmit to

the brain for interpretation. Children have the amazing power of imitating, learning and even emulating what they observe, and to cognitively store such in memory. In most cases the actors and actresses observed through the media and read about are momentarily imbibed as “role models”.

- Adolescents should be guarded at all times against bad friends, peer groups, close associates, and relations whose behaviour are questionable, and or criminally or delinquently prone. Gangs and other criminal groups furnish alternative sources of support in place of family units (Clinard and Abbott, 1973:259). The common saying is that “you tell me your friend and I would tell you whom you are” is instructive and should continue to be the guiding philosophy.

- It is strongly suggested that the whole processes of punishment on the offenders be reviewed. Like the offenders suggested, robbery-involving death should critically reviewed to see if it merits punishment by death penalty. Forfeiture of assets should be encouraged in all cases of armed robbery especially where offender’s material possessions can be traced to his robbery connection. There should also be the need to encourage relatively short-term imprisonment to give the offenders the opportunity to reform. However, what is found paradoxical, but intriguing worthy of consideration is the idea of amputation. Offenders who inflict bodily harms on their victims should be considered for amputation, or to be meted out with the same type of harm. This suggestion certainly sounds repugnant, retributive and crude. But any sanction that would serve as a serious deterrent to would-be-offenders while care is taken to correct the anomalies that push and pull people into the crime is worthy of experimenting. While this

is the least favoured option by the offenders, it does look like it may be the most feared and deterrence. It is not just a mere favour of punitive measures. But it is conceived that offenders may come to appreciate the deterrence potential of this measure than anything else. Whatever punishments are meted to the offenders, it should be swift, certain and proportionate.

- Efforts should be intensified to lower corruption especially at the level of government institutions. This recommendation most addresses fundamentally, the people in position of powers. The swath of armed robbers and even members of the public interpret the looting and thievery that goes on in government circles as concomitant to armed robbery. The consequences of corruption are pervasive and numerous. One devastating effects of these is that it destroys confidence, erodes faith, breeds hatred and wilful condemnation of the system of governance. Seeing ostentatious display of riches garnered from corrupt practices by people in positions of trust, and their being eulogised as “arrivals”, “achievers”, “have made[s]”, “fast ones”, and a host of other encomiums is no less a tonic to most youth taking to dare-daring robbery as currently is the case. With this attitude in mind, the tendency amongst most youth to take up arms directed at economic motives and the prevailing political system. This results in a complex, antithetical feature of armed robbery as the form currently experiencing in contemporary Nigeria.

- Government should begin to think seriously about embarking on the introduction of social securities for the unemployed and the less privilege ones. Often, the unsubstantiated argument that this will encourage laziness and lower productivity should be rethought instead of mere taken for granted. To this end, government should embark

on a tour study of other advanced countries where such programmes and policy are in place. However, there is the fear that this will increase the already overfilled corrupt practices amongst Nigeria officials. But a serious government or authority can, if it desires, put down this fear by coming hard on corrupt officials. Social security programme erases from the minds of the unemployed that they are forgotten class of human being and give them the hope that they are really being cared for.

- There are little or no recreational facilities where youth could patronise—to relax or release tensions, and feel a sense of new life. This is inspite of the abundant of strategic natural tourist centres across the spectrum of the Nigerian ecosystem. The point being made is that government in its efforts to reduce crime generally, and armed robbery in particular, should start to develop recreational or youth centres across all the local councils with their beautiful bio and ecosystem. Not only would it provide more employments, but idle youth would also find such centres as a place to release social pressure. This may provide opportunity for further robbery and or other predatory crimes, however.

- Rural development should be intensified. In fact, one major push-pull factors to the upsurge of armed robbery in contemporary Nigeria is the bias development in favour of urban centres at the expense of rural settlements. The vast of this crime are committed in the urban centres. The urban centres offer fuller life and promises to its dwellers. All cities in contemporary are seemingly congested—stretching facilities and infrastructures beyond elastic limit. Overcrowding and mobility within these settlements in the cities are predisposing factors to the numerous criminal actions that are the characterisation of



these cities especially in these clustered settlements. It makes policing even difficult as movements are obstructed and criminals simply mix up with the mass of crowds on the roads and streets. Bringing development to the rural areas would reduce the temptation to stream down to these urban centres only to be exposed to its illusions or disillusion.

- Because of the differences in the social environment between the western countries and contemporary Nigeria, it may be unwise to advise for such control measures such as alarm systems, electronic detentions, and watchtowers. Firstly, while electricity power could not be relied on, criminals in general and robbers are particularly known to be ingenuous. To offer such advice would even amount to being selective and elitists in approach since only significantly few of the privileged could afford the measures. Instead, outer boundary obstacles such as fences, walls, guards, and patrols; external obstacles such as barricades and locks on windows, doors, strong roofs and ceilings are encouraged. But these measures are still to an extent, selective and may not be affordable by the vast majority of Nigerians. However, since they are capable to thwart certain robbery exploits especially the predatory ones, efforts should be made to encourage and persuade residents to provide them.

- Although contemporary Nigeria is alive to its responsibility in instilling moral values, fear of God and regeneration of the peoples' customs at all levels, notwithstanding the overbearing influence of the western idiosyncrasies. However, efforts should be stepped up in this direction. What the nation's national and local Broadcasting Corporations air and display should be well scrutinised especially those that would likely capture the audience of the adolescents. Clubs and videos centres where these western life styles are

displayed with impunity and candour should be discouraged. In Afikpo—the hometown of the researcher, such step has been taken to forestall the setting up of clubs and movies centres. Although while it might amount to an infringement on the right of an individual—with respect to freedom to choose one’s kind of business interest and feed ones’ appetite, suffice to say that rights can no longer be afforded or trade off at the peril of the more fundamental ones such as for e.g. the right to security and to live freely. The impact of this remains, however, a matter of conjecture and somewhat debatable. But it seems that such action has reduced the rate of predatory crimes, which were found to be rampant amongst the adolescents addicted to patronising these centres—watching and imbibing the aggressiveness and weird ingenuity being displayed, and using these centres too as the meeting point for robbery planning.

- All those connected with armed robbery should be identified and subjected to the same form of punishment. So, the large invisible number of influential people in the society who serves as “area fathers” to the offenders should at all times be identified and punished accordingly. However, this needs careful investigation and verification to guard against the costly mistake of implicating innocent ones and witch-hunting which Nigerian society is notorious with. This is more so when it is understandable that criminals, and in contemporary Nigeria in particular have a greater tendency to implicate innocent ones in connive or collusion with the police always interested in extorting money from those perceived as capable to pay with the threat of arrest, and detention.

- Community policing or neighbourhood watch is an on-going in most Nigerian cities, towns and villages directed at checking the menace of criminal activities especially

armed robbery. Emphasis on these collaborative efforts is focused on patrolling the length and breadth of the geographical neighbourhood and community in question, usually at night. It looks almost similar in most communities and neighbourhoods where it is undertaken. But the organisational structure, *modus operandi* and means of financing seem to vary from one community or neighbourhood to the other. In some instances, there are leaders while in others; it is a loose confederate of ages of people who take turns after turns in conducting the patrol. Amongst some neighbourhoods or communities, a degree of weapons are carried—guns, cutlasses, clubs, and patrolling takes between 10. P.M-6.A.M. Although neighbourhood or community-watch may not provide a bullet proof against armed robbery particularly the daring gang ones, the fact that these have deterred potential criminals preying and terrorising in the nights, organised movements functioning on regular basis in these areas cannot be wished away. Unfortunately, in most instances, there is no love lust between these organised neighbourhood or community-watches and the police. Not oblivious of the excesses of some of these bodies as witnessed in the researcher's hometown where some of them have resorted to extorting money from the innocent ones with threat and torture, the argument still remains that much success remains to be achieved if a working relations is forged between them and the police. While these bodies should appreciate their limited functions—as merely apprehending and handing over to the police for prosecution, the police on the other hand should equally recognise these bodies as their “eyes” and “ears”, and an extension of the arm of the law. It is therefore, necessary that the law should be explicit on the role boundaries between the police force and these neighbourhood or community watches, and the co-operation thereto. The police should therefore, encourage neighbourhoods and

communities to embrace “watching” and “patrolling” as complements to robbery prevention. This it can do by providing logistics and operational supports such as radio messages, walkie-talkies, motorcycles, light weapons and trained and experienced lawyers and criminal justice experts to speed up the trials of arrested less dangerous armed robbers.

There are numerous armed robbery control and preventive measures. But whether the enforcement of any one of the selected approaches is successful remains a matter of conjecture. Armed robbery in contemporary Nigeria is a polymorphous—a product of processes and stages in a mature progression. It is therefore, not a one way consequent of a monolithic factor. The application of one control measure or the other may likely not bring about the expected result. Multiple and holistic interventions are thus, required because multiple direct and indirect paths to it exist, and pull together into the idea and ideal of emulation (see also Howell 1997d: 168).

Findings show that armed robbers have relatively stable family backgrounds. Nevertheless, careful analysis of the theory of emulation put forward in this study shows that the direct and indirect influence of prior behaviour on future behaviour always exist, and it suggests the importance of intervening early in the development to reduce risk-predictive factors to early armed robbery behaviour (Hawkins and Catalano 1992; Brewer, Hawkins, Catalano and Neckerman 1995; Catalano and Hawkins 1996. Many got involved in armed robbery apart from watching western media—T.V, reading books, comic, and visiting clubs and cinemas from friends, which is also related to the western process of social interaction. Therefore, whatever strategy that are adopted, disrupting influences of anti social socialisation or teaching skills to resist these influences of

antisocial socialisation amongst the youth who manifest symptoms of armed robbery behaviour in childhood or early adolescent should be emphasised (see Huang et al. 200: 75-107).

- Then and finally, something unusual in Nigeria context should be attempted or rather experimented with. It is the attempt to incorporate former convicts as spies to special crack police unit; or be given the independent responsibility to organise some kinds of brigade team with the responsibility to detect criminal activities especially armed robbery and assassination, which often overlap with the offence. These teams should be remunerated in accordance with the criminals arrested. They should also be under close supervisions through infiltrations of the group by transparent and tested individuals or police officers, or be under the control of the special crack team of dedicated police and armed forces members. A working document between these teams and the police should be drafted, and effort should be made to organise workshops to foster continuum understanding between the police and these bodies, and to be grounded on the nitty-gritty of the criminal justice system by experts in the field. No doubt that this approach represents a heuristic approach to the problems of armed robbery in contemporary Nigeria, and it may have been parallel to the various uncoordinated and unsupervised ethnic-tribal-militant vigilant groups that sprout out from all corners of contemporary Nigeria as responses to the insecurity posed by armed robbers. But above all other things, authorities should be honest to themselves and refrain from using these teams as personal coercive forces of repression and intimidation, and to undermine them in instances, where someone connected to them is apprehended. Or this will end as one author once said, “when a criminal has an influential backer, the law goes into abeyance”.

On the whole, other micro solutions, which may decrease the vulnerability of falling a victim to armed robbery whether at homes, banks, highways, commercial centres, and all other prone targets in Nigeria context are proffered. After all part of the aims and significances of the study is to provide the law enforcement agents and the general public with what is construed as a “companion reference text” or “first aid” information on how they can be more conscious about the offence, and by so doing take some proactive prevention measures or ensure minimal risk. (see 1.5.3 section) They include the following precautionary measures:

- It is important that every one perceives or typifies him or herself as a potential or possible armed robbery victim in any spectrum s/he finds him or herself—at homes, work places, and on various highways. This makes everyone mentally alert and to be on guard. One condition under which robbery and robbers succeed is on the element of “surprise”—getting victims unsuspecting (see Wright and Decker 1997; Beirne and Messerschmidt 2000);
- Before returning and retiring at homes after the days’ activities take precaution to ensure that you’re not ambushed around your gate. You may park some metres away and make foot survey before driving off;
- Ensure that your maiguard (security guard) or what he is being called is a trustworthy person, and that he does not know the architectural details of your apartment;
- Ensure that strong iron bar of heavy diameters is used to secure the front entrance of your apartment and those of your and families’ bedrooms;

- Before retiring to take rest with your family or to bed, ensure that all doors and windows are securely locked and lights around compound switched on;
- Since most transactions amongst the large populace in the informal sector are carried out on cash and carry basis in contemporary Nigeria, care should taken to ensure that one guides jealously his transaction movements involving the carrying of cash;
- When you carry large sums of monies, ensure that you do not create an atmosphere of suspicion such as panicking and arrogantly intends to make people know what you're carrying;
- Ensure that you travel in a bus or taxi or cap with negotiated escort (s) from the police stations, and care should be taken to know the calibre of policemen negotiated with;
- Ensure that employed security staff guards your commercial stores, and that he is a trustworthy person. With respect to many commercial stores who are clustered neck by neck in most cities and towns, joint communal guarding should be employed to patrol and keep watch on suspicious group or gang loitering;
- Bank should ensure that besides employing modern techniques of surveillance such as cameras and alarm systems, the security forces are arranged in a manner that can provide immediate and supporting reinforcement in the vent of attack. So, security forces should not be over concentrated at the bank premises, but should spread within the vicinity, and

some in plain clothes so that they can effectively counter or demobilised robbery operation;

- Bank should undertake a consultancy studies of most banks' robberies to determine the peculiarities that run through most of these robberies in terms of months, days, times, and to be on the look out for these periodic times;

- Bank should ensure that on-the-spot cash or monies are fragmented, that is, not kept in the same safe;

- While travelling, ensure that you keep track of few numbers of vehicles that have been following you from a distance that you're coming from, and in the event of suspicion, drive to the nearby police station and lodge a report;

- When you hear about a particular armed robbery get conscientised about it; think and make plan as if you were the victim or that the next victim will be you or your premises;

- When your neighbour knocks on your door in the dead hour or uncomfortable hour to you, be suspicious and make detail inquiry while paying instinctive attention to his or her voice before opening the door;

- On festive periods such as Christmas, Eld-kibir or other traditionally observed festivals, endeavour to be more watchful and to monitor movements around your compounds. Spot hot drinking areas in the towns or villages, and monitor the assemblage of youth of gangs around the area who are more likely to use the spot as the meeting and



planning point. Take all precautionary measures because local based armed robbers especially prey on “arrivals” or holidaymakers, and are usually deadly on them.

- And finally and very essential, when armed robbers get to you (and of course, by one way or the other—force or diplomacy they will) ensure that you play cool before them. Try to obey as much as you can. Don’t panic. Assure them of your co-operation and indulge them to act professionally—to refrain from violence and get what they want that are available. Engage them in highly co-operative, but courageous talk because armed robbers fancy and have respect for victims with such attitudinal disposition. Except when the intention is assassination and where robbers are mainly youth, harm is not a likely feature.

## **10.5 CONCLUSION**

One assumption inherent in efforts to theorise criminal behaviour and delinquency is the presumption that theory has a universal applicability. Hardly is any conscious reference made with respect to the differences that exist amongst the different societies on the one hand, and the criminals themselves within particular society on the other. The general tendency is either to apply a model of a particular criminal mob as replicable to other forms of criminal mobs, or to export crime theories to all other societies irrespective of the differences in the socio-economic and political settings. Where attempts at reference are made to the specificity of the offenders’ types, or the different social settings, it is either less consciously made, or that attentions are merely focused on the general variations amongst the lawbreakers. And there is apparently little or none at all on variations amongst the societies (see Sutherland and Cressey 1960 Bloch and Geis 1962;

Cavan, 1962; Clinard 1963 cf. Gibbons 1965). Differently stated, sensitivity to the variations amongst the deviants and criminals has only been mainly on those of the western ideal types.

As a consequent, little optimism in the conscious attempts to dissect these theories and models, and to apply them in the most intelligent sociological-cum criminological imagination, and to see how they offer strong understanding of the criminal patterns in the former colonised nations have been the characterisation among the “czar” theorists.

That most studies and theories save by a few (for instance, Abbot and Clinard 1973) to date have not consciously to blend some obvious unique features of other non-western societies, or even see some of the criminal behaviour in the light of this culture contacts with the western world—as an alternative to understanding current forms of criminal behaviours (e.g. armed robbery) in developing countries (e.g. Nigeria and Kenya) have also made these theories more suspicious and undermine their universal application.

In this study, the researcher visited the most salient of these theories and models, dissected them, and evaluated them within the context of the current form of armed robbery in modern Nigeria. The point of departure of these theories is the broad social learning process theory, and the specific paradigms of the differential association (Sutherland), imitation (Tarde), previous criminal association (Iwarimie-Jaja), culture conflicts, culture diffusion and infusion, and a few of the psychological and socio-psychological theoretical variations, and predicated on the prevailing political economy system. So, this blended theories represent the perspective or rather, the paradigm that is the corner stone of what is termed in this study as a “dialectic integrationism” and

perceived in conjunction with research findings as an epistemology to emulation postulation.

By emulation as the research findings—literature and empirical show, what is argued is that inter and intra contacts, formal and informal has fostered the enabling environment by which the western culture and values have been amenable to emulation as the highest stage of learning, imitating, and perfection by certain individuals, while taking cognisance of the uniqueness of their society. Without these contacts, current armed robbery and armed robbers as in Nigeria and as the consequent of the idea of emulation, which is developed and explained would have been significantly different from what it is currently.

It may be that this research like most other research tasks does not end with a research report. It may, even be as Lin (1976) maintains that in most cases the research report signals the beginning of more exciting research activities. Since many issues have been raised by the wide sociology-criminology panorama of the study, it is only hoped that findings should lead to more questions—theoretical and empirical being asked, and new research problems and hypotheses formulated or generated. This is how scientific knowledge and researcher grow (see Hommans 1967; Lin 1976:12). This study at its logical, theoretical and empirical argument offers insight into how better certain criminal behaviour such as armed robbery—its current pattern, characterisation, *modus operandi*, and incidence could be better studied, understood and appreciated in a country different from the western countries, but which shares similar characteristics.

Conclusively, it is important that there are certain facts and issues, which need be restated even at the risk of repetition or redundancy towards the end of this study.

Therefore, the facts and issues being restated are summary of the researcher's initial premises; the logic of his argument; and what is perceived as a *caveat* on emulation as a proffered conceptual model or theory. This is redone not in the spirit to be immune from criticisms, but not to be misunderstood. As Sztompka (1979:327) rightly notes, the worst possible faith of an author is to be misunderstood, or to be accused of something he does not hold.

### **10.5.1 The premises of the argument**

First and foremost, it is the researcher's conviction that sociology as well as criminology theories on crime and deviance are in a state of crisis. The symptoms of this are the multiplicity, unhealthy competitions, muddle ideas, and the unguarded universality or applicability that have characterised these theories.

Secondly, the researcher's belief that this crisis is much pronounced at the level of the fundamental assumptions—epistemology, methodology, universality, and imbued ideologue, which shaped the current empirical research and theory construction.

Thirdly, that the crisis deepened and becomes more problematic as conscious attempts are made to discuss, analyse, and to explain all criminal and deviant behaviour within the theoretical and empirical realms of these pre-eminence or dominating postulations, the diversity of societies and history notwithstanding.

Fourthly, that one-escape route of this crisis is to attempt to understand the diverse forms of criminal and delinquent behaviour amongst the different social settings. This requires utilising any methodology and research design that is inward looking as well as empirically validating, as opposed to the application of a global explanatory

theory or paradigm particularly those that are extrapolated from different society with differing history and socio-milieu.

Fifthly, any emerging new paradigm or theoretical exposition the researcher strongly believes, cannot be built simply by what Sztompka (1979:328) called *exnihilo*—the abject rejection of the traditional theories. Rather, it must at all times, and if necessary as often inevitable, be shown to be the consequent of the dialectic dissection, that is, the critical and logical disputation, reasoning, tinkering, and modification of these traditional theoretical—the grand macro and micro aetiologies. So, the emerged paradigm must necessarily safeguard all the valuable components of earlier theoretical attempts; eliminates their misleading or mistaken claims, or strengthen them by incorporating the missing links. This is the subject matter of a theoretically oriented research, which as Brewer and Hunter (1989:34) rightly note, has two different, but closely related aspects—theory building and testing. The former consists either constructing new theories or adopting older theories to explain known, but previously unexplained empirical generalisations. The latter consists of logically deducing predictions from existing theories and stating these predictions as new hypotheses.

Finally, the researcher beliefs that no one of the arrays of theoretical traditions or the future ones would adequately account for the many criminal and delinquency behaviour that abound within a particular society, and much more amongst the different societies. And no one observable fact about criminals is conclusive because new factors, issues and social forces are constantly impacting on criminals to change their forms, techniques, incidence, and paraphernalia.

### 10.5.2 The strategy of the argument

The method proposed for reaching a new understanding of current armed robbery in contemporary Nigeria is viewed as a method of **dialectic integration**. It is called dialectic integration because the researcher have offered some arts of logical disputation—a little less of critical criticisms and/ or praises, on some of the conventional theories. With the research findings—empirical and literature, and with a degree of sociological imagination, some of these theories are cross-fertilized to arrive at a level of conceptual explanation of western archetype but somewhat unique form of armed robbery and armed robbers in Nigeria. The synthesised process represents the viewpoint that is refers to as “emulation”.

So, this advanced framework is patterned on the approach adopted by many of the integrationists, but who are unable to come out with a somewhat designated new paradigm. The framework proposed in this research shares common things with the general developmental model proposed by Hawkins and Weis (1985), Huizinga, Esbensen, and Elliott (1988), Catalano and Hawkins (1996). The theory of emulation therefore, is an integrated model approach, a perspective, a developmental, and a polymorphous model paradigm.

The dialectical integration adopted helps to preserve the significant elements of these traditional theories. It also helps to overcome the their inadequacy—the attempt to explain all or similar criminal and delinquent behaviour in all societies, and at all times within the context of these grand theories.

The method or strategy—dialectic integration is directed to few selected dilemmas within the sociology and criminology discourses on crime and deviance. One

of the crises earlier mentioned is on epistemology (see section 10.5.1), and it revolves around theory vs. empiricism. The vigorous debates are whether or not greater attention should be paid to empirical scientism, or to humanistic approach—known as the criminological imagination.

The other crisis is ideology by which academic criminologists and sociology of deviant experts are subjected to ideological biases. This has dramatic implications for the way they respond to, define, and explain crime. The next two of the dilemmas are the multiplicity and universality of these theories.

In each of these dilemma, the position on each of the continuum are either overdramatised like in the debate on the theory vs. empirical; or extreme like the position of the functionalists and the conflict theorists; or arrogant as the behaviour of some grand theorists. On the whole, the researcher's reaction as a possible solution is constructed as an exploration, descriptive, balance, and tinkering of these theories regarded as "ideal" types in the developing countries such as Nigeria. And then the dialectic integration is proffered as an alternative. This requires the analytical and logical cross combination of some of these traditional theories in the fields of sociology, criminology and psychology. For instance, the researcher believes in what Williams (1984) sees as criminological imagination and in the claim of Kelman that no methods can substitute for intelligence and imagination. Yet, he has also adopted as part of the strategy, the need to interview some selected numbers of these armed robbers to provide the empirical ground from which a credible explanatory model can be built, while he collaborates these primary (raw) data with certain extractions of the previous studies, and unreservedly, engaged with the notion of "theoretical imagination".

### **10.5.3 A caveat on emulation as a paradigm/theory**

It re-emphasised that while analytically different from the prevailing theories—social learning especially, the new paradigm—dialectic integration as an approach, and the emulation model as the specific emerged postulation, are not chronologically new. It already existed in the integrationists' approaches to crime and deviance, and to be precise, in the general developmental model discussed by David Huizinga, Fin Esbensen, and Delbert Elliot (1988) and Huang Bu et al. (2001). So, the intention was not primarily to evolve a completely new theory *per se*, but using the results of the research findings to analyse, modify and synthesise the most closely related ideas bearing on the current pattern of armed robbery in contemporary Nigeria as a learning process.

A careful scrutiny of other traditional theories—general learning processes, and in particular the integrated developmental model, and a reflection to the principles of emulation outlined in chapter Nine show their corroboration. The difference is the disputations with some of the traditional premises or principles of these traditional social learning theorists. In addition, contemporary armed robbery in Nigeria, besides being alien, is also adaptive, creative, and it has profited from other societal paraphernalia such as charms, poverty, corruption, the culture of hospitality, urban and rural layout, hatred, annoyance and so on. All these give the crime and the offenders their present sophistry.

None of these theories which the researcher has not discussed or brought to bear in the build up of the theoretical idea of emulation is so insubstantial that it can be dismissed in such a peremptory manner. Instead the researcher has only found it uneconomical and unwise to remain attached to the ubiquitous mass of conflicting ideas in the literature and which seem to bear negligible relevance to the current nature and rate



of armed robbery in contemporary developing countries such as Nigeria. So, he has simply played to the “law of parsimony”, which allows one to discriminate and to choose, albeit intelligently and persuasively.

“Dissectual-dilectical integrationism” as the strategy, and emulation as the resultant theoretical strand is a heuristic, analytic, and descriptive point of arrival, rather than as merely taken for granted—dogmatic point of departure. Put differently, both of them are logical outcomes or deductions of or from the research findings within the context of analytical, critical reappraisal, dissection and modification of the main theories of learning, and the micro and macro socio-psychological variables in the literature of crime aetiology. In fact, only later does a close actual approximation to the general developmental model is discovered, and in the integrated model tradition.

This is not surprising. If the strategy of dialectic integration as adopted in this study is informed by the general integrated paradigm, then it must have led to substantive results that are partly convergent or in concordance with those of integrated model. And if the emerged emulation theory or paradigm is the consequent of the empirical findings, which reveal the power of the culture contact, then it must have also led to a substantial agreement with the social learning process theories, saved by some disputations, but mediated by some other intervening factors.

Another important point to underscore is that the empirical approach, and the specific hypotheses conducted in the study was not aimed either to test the theory or paradigm *per se*, or to accept or reject categorically, the causal relationships between some of the observable independent variables. It rather attempts to provide the results from which **a wide scale of meaning** firstly, between these dependent and independent

variables, and secondly, about the population of armed robbers in contemporary Nigeria could be made. It also aims to corroborate the logical argument of emulation, and to provide the basis for future serious hypothetical statements about the offence and offenders firstly, in contemporary southeastern states and secondly, across the country. So, it aims to provide the basis from which predictions can be deduced from the emerged theory— emulation, and then states these predictions as new hypotheses. And if the techniques of data collection and the data itself is found wanting, they have nevertheless performed the function it was intended to do—to provide an empirical data for analytical sociology-criminology descriptiveness of both the offence and offenders, and to tease out an indigenous alternative framework that helps to understand and explain both armed robbery and armed robbers in contemporary Nigeria.

This researcher may have been committed to a scientific criminology by his approach because he believes that it broadens and makes valid the epistemology base of the discipline. However, he does not subscribe to its methodological dogmatism because it may lead to the demise of criminological intuitiveness and imagination. Of course, empirical scientism in criminology should only be advanced insofar it can power researchers and intellectuals' "social-policy-making-knowledge" into a greater level of accuracy. Kelman (1968) reminded us: *that in the final analysis no method can substitute for mental knowledge*. And Enrico Ferri cited in Sellin (1968:17-18) also noted when responding to Lombroso's remarks that he Ferri isn't positivist enough "What? Does Lombroso suggest that I, a lawyer, should go and measure the heads of criminals in order to be positivist enough".

In addition, a *caveat* here is that it amounts to *faux pas* to assume that all the aims set out for the study have been achieved with certainty. The researcher makes no pretence that he may still be wanting in this regard especially his resultant theoretical postulation. He may have provoked critical questions on his method, styles and even the degree of his scientism. This is not unusual, after all social sciences are notorious for disputes over methods, styles, approaches, and researches. It may be argued with modesty that if the issues raised, the methods, styles and the conceptual model advanced provokes intense discussions, controversies and indeed critical criticisms, then the goal of the study may at least, have been momentarily attained. Indeed, the success of the study in terms of achieving the rationale for the study can be measured by the intensity and array of critical criticisms that trail it. Again, this is also the dialectical way by which science—so called, defined and applied develops. And the researcher is no less willing to embrace these criticisms as tools to refine the styles, methods and theoretical perspectives of the study.

By and large, the arguable theory of emulation postulated in this present study is also not conceived as an extraordinary, a breakthrough and in finality to the knowledge of armed robbery in contemporary Nigeria. Although it looks like a common-sense explanation of general deviance and or crime, it no doubts has a substantial modified sociology-criminology expression. By crediting other theories and their proponents with degree of intelligence and sensibility, it is hoped that the problem of parochialism of one's own understanding and superfluous guard of authorship might have been overcome. Downes and Rock (1988: 24) further warn that sociology, (and extendedly by the researcher theoretical idea), may not always be novel and surprising, but should be able to expose ideas that are only dimly reviewed elsewhere. As a vision theory, the idea

of emulation provide stimulus for further development of social learning and integration models themselves as they particularly affect developing countries like modern Nigeria—historically, economically and socio-politically re-oriented through the experiences of colonisation.

So, emulation may be viewed as what Dahrendorf (1959) regards as a contingent “middle-range” model. And with armed robbery and armed robbers in contemporary Nigeria, it may be regarded as the contingent “middle-range” of a criminological exploration into the general patterns and processes. Middle-range according to this author is the generalisation that is inspired by, or oriented towards concrete observation. In the view of the researcher, the only difference as applied to emulation and the methodological approach is that the middle range may offer the opportunity from which a wider scale of meaning could be read from the research findings. It may be assumed that the idea of emulation satisfies the remarks of Reinhard Bendix and Philip Selznick and quoted by Stinchcombe (1968:v) that “you know, a little bit of theory goes a long way... One ought to decide what phenomena one wishes to explain”; and “one felt satisfied that he understood something when he could summarise in a sentence the guts of a phenomenon”.

What is view significant throughout the course of the research is the understanding that there are social, mentors, economic, political and ideological factors, which shape theorists markedly, including of course, this researcher. Certainly there is little doubt that circumstances colour the theoretical idea of emulation as indeed, theory also has the potential to colour circumstances (see also Downes and Rock 1988:296). These factors evoke the need for constant evaluation of these theories within the context

of the emerging complex societies and the accompanying changes in the pattern of social interactions. And in the researcher's view, it must be a continued endeavour and carried out in a dialectic-integrated paradigm manner. This will assist for a sound knowledge on these crimes, guide their policy implication is to remain to their bidding—the reservoir of solutions that confront man in its present globalised, but localised world. When this is done, the pitfalls of extrapolating theories into societies without adequate dissection of these theories—to determine specific risk-predictive or precursory factors in the different societies are overcome. Reinhard Bendix (1963) again explains in his comparative study of sociology (and indeed, criminology) that the goal should be to develop concepts and generalisation at a level that distinguishes between their universal applicability to all societies, but the unique characteristics that are representative of one or small set of these societies.

And Durkeim in Catlin 1938 and (cf. Clinard and Abbott 1973:2) explains:

“One cannot explain a social fact of any complexity except by following its complete development through all social species”.

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