

**Public Perceptions on Urbanization and Crime Commission in Onitsha Metropolis
Anambra State**

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Abstract

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This study examines how the residents of Onitsha Metropolitan, Anambra State, perceive urbanization and crime commission. Strain theory was used as the theoretical foundation for this study. Quantitative and qualitative approaches were used for both data collection and analysis in this investigation. For this investigation, probability sampling techniques were used. 204 people were included in the sample, and an in-depth interview was also conducted. The findings indicate that there are elements contributing to crime in the metropolis of Onitsha. These elements include a lack of good employment, being down on the social scale, having a dysfunctional family, not having a good education, and poverty and inequality. The findings indicate that trauma was determined to be the primary consequence of crime committed in the metropolis of Onitsha. In Onitsha, armed robberies, kidnappings, property crimes, theft, etc. are the crimes that occur most frequently. The study recommended, above all others, that parents and guardians should instill good norms and values in children at a young age to lessen the level of negative influence on them. It also suggested that jobs be created to ensure that people who find crime attractive due to unemployment find gainful employment and reduce their attraction to crime.

Introduction

When cities are well-managed, they provide significant opportunities for social and technological development as well as facilitate the diffusion of information through interaction between different cultures. Urban areas have been the focus of political activities, systems of law, good governments, and employment. Urbanization is a sign of how the economy is developing industrially. The fundamental pillars of urbanization include labor market integration, trade in commodities and services, knowledge diffusion, high levels of income, and economic ties. This kind of construction is beneficial for metropolitan areas planned local business development, poverty reduction, and employment generation (Brockerhoff, 2000). This is so that people can live more comfortably, given most services and employment routes are in metropolitan regions. Nigeria is situated at the top of the escalator of nations that are quickly urbanizing, therefore the majority of its cities are hubs of social, political, and economic power. Some of these cities become hotspots for crime and violence because of the attention they attract. The possibility of urban crime can increase because many Nigerian cities have uncontrolled rapid growth and deteriorating public infrastructure. In Nigerian urban areas, disorderly growth alters power dynamics. As a result, new social and economic paths are opened, potentially leading to conflict and crime (Ojo & Ojewale, 2018). The rapid movement from rural to urban centers and the ensuing immobilization of the existing social support networks are the main causes of the rise in criminality in Nigeria. Urban regions are notorious for their threat to crime commission. Overcrowding, poverty, poor parenting, low levels of education, unemployment, peer pressure, drug addiction, and cultism are just a few of the factors that control the Onitsha metropolis's crime commission. In their 1996 statement on the causes of crime, community safety and crime prevention (CSCPC) emphasized that many unfavorable social, economic, cultural, and family circumstances are the main causes of crime. The causes of crime must be understood in order to be prevented. These are intricate and connected, however, they can be categorized into three primary groups:

Since socioeconomic instability is a result of variables like unemployment, poverty, and other things that promote social unrest, it is also thought that socioeconomic factors in residential contexts are a major role in crime victimization. It is generally accepted that experiencing poverty and inequality are two factors that are connected to higher crime rates

in society. Our social environment and organizational structure reflect our values and priorities to the public and to our communities. Inequality, a failure to share power, a lack of support for families and communities, a real or perceived lack of access to services, a lack of community leadership, a lack of value placed on children and individual well-being, and excessive reliance on television as a form of recreation are some of the social root causes of crime. Lack of education: Getting an education might help people build enough social skills to keep them from committing crimes. Inequality in family structures and poverty can also be factors in the occurrence of crime. Onsando, Mwenje, & Githui, (2021) feel that changes in family structure over the past century have led to a rise in adolescent crime.

Numerous consequences of these crimes include the victims' psychological well-being as well as the bodily harm caused by violent crime. Crime victims may struggle with sleep, concentration, be easily frightened, stop engaging in activities they formerly loved, and feel less confident. Meanwhile, victims of property crimes continued to struggle four to ten weeks after the incident had taken place. Norris, Kaniasty & Thompson (1997) discovered that crime victims displayed "depression, anxiety, somatization, hostility, and fear" symptoms. Sadly, as noted by Watson & Agbola (2013), urban development in Africa is becoming more chaotic, ineffective, and unsustainable as a result of the fast growth and change of its cities. Unplanned neighborhoods and cities, with their socioeconomic expressions of poverty and suffering, might facilitate crime and the fear of crime, according to a commonly held belief in the criminology literature (Sampson, 2006; Lersch, 2007; Brunton-Smith & Jackson, 2012). Residents of Onitsha metropolis in Anambra State have cried out to the federal and state governments for immediate assistance to stop the ugly situation in order to protect the lives and property of the residents due to the high rate of crime in Nigeria in general and in Onitsha metropolis in particular.

Research Questions

1. What are the contributing elements to crime in the city of Onitsha?
2. What are the consequences of crime in the city of Onitsha?
3. What types of crimes are committed in the city of Onitsha?

Literature Review

Urbanization indicates a shift in the social, cultural, and economic facets of society. According to the United Nations (2014), the term "urbanization" refers to a population's transition from being dispersed across small rural settlements where agriculture is the primary economic activity to being concentrated in larger, denser urban settlements where industrial and service activities predominate. According to Hussain and Imtiyaz (2016), the process of becoming urban entails the relocation of people or processes to urban regions as well as an increase in the population or processes of urban areas. Urbanized cultures, where the majority of people live in close quarters in cities and towns, mark a fundamentally new stage in the social evolution of man. The vast and dense agglomerations that make up the urban population include levels of interpersonal interaction and social complexity that have never before been observed (Davis, 1995).

According to Marshall and Clark (1952), a crime is any act or omission that is illegal under public law for the benefit of the public and is penalized by the state in a court case brought under its own name. According to Tappan (1960), "A crime is an instrumental act or omission in violation of criminal law, committed without justification and sanctioned by the state as a felony or misdemeanor." Criminal activity is prohibited under the law.

According to research, crime tends to occur more frequently in areas with expanding populations than in areas with smaller populations. In contrast, crime tends to occur less frequently in areas with smaller populations. Economic opportunities are a pull element, causing people to migrate to metropolitan areas and a push factor. Urban population growth causes unemployment rates to rise, which in turn causes poverty and misery and their knock-on effects of increased crime.

Theoretical Framework

For this investigation, strain theory was used. American sociologist Robert K. Merton first proposed the strain theory in 1930; his work on the topic gained traction in the 1950s. American criminologist Albert Cohen, American sociologists Richard Cloward and Lloyd Ohlin, and other researchers have advanced concepts along similar lines. Strain theory put a lot of emphasis on the underprivileged group. But the study discovered that the strain theory was the most suitable and pertinent theory for the investigation of urbanization and

crime commission. This is supported by the central tenet of strain theory, which argues that people accept societal goals but create their own strategies for reaching them by employing socially unacceptable means to achieve culturally acceptable aims. Strain theory has been chosen as the theoretical framework to guide the entire work since it is the most appropriate, relevant, and applicable theory in light of this.

Materials and Methods

The mixed research methodology was employed as the study design in this case. A mixed approach comprises a researcher gathering data from a study population using both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. In a mixed method design, the quantitative techniques used to gather data include the use of an IDI and a well-structured questionnaire schedule that is in keeping with the study's objectives. There were 204 respondents total in the sample size for this study. Simple random sampling techniques were used to implement probability sampling algorithms.

Results and Discussion

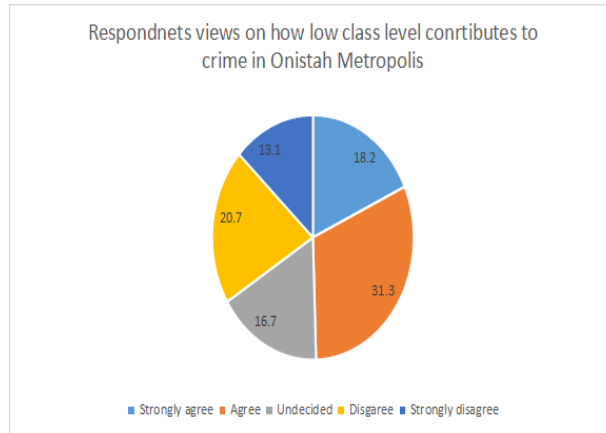
Research Question One: What factors are responsible for the engagement of crime in Onitsha Metropolis?



Field survey, 2021.

Figure 1: Respondent’s views on how the lack of jobs contributes to crime in the Onitsha metropolis.

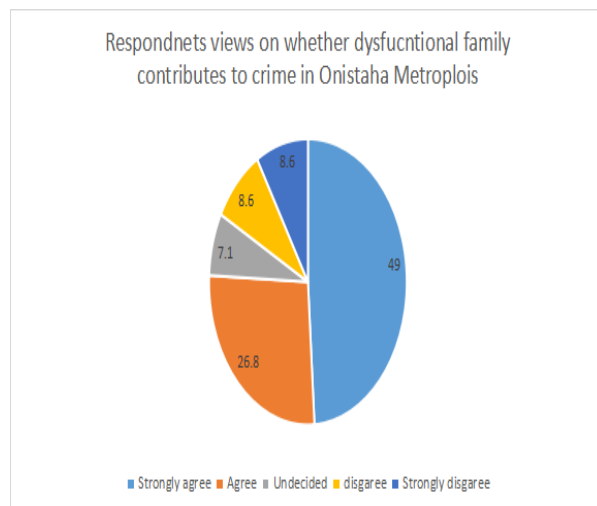
Figure 1 shows that the majority of the respondents (50%) agree that the lack of good jobs contributes to crime in the Onitsha metropolis.



Field survey, 2021.

Figure 2: Respondent’s views on how class level contributes to crime in Onitsha Metropolis

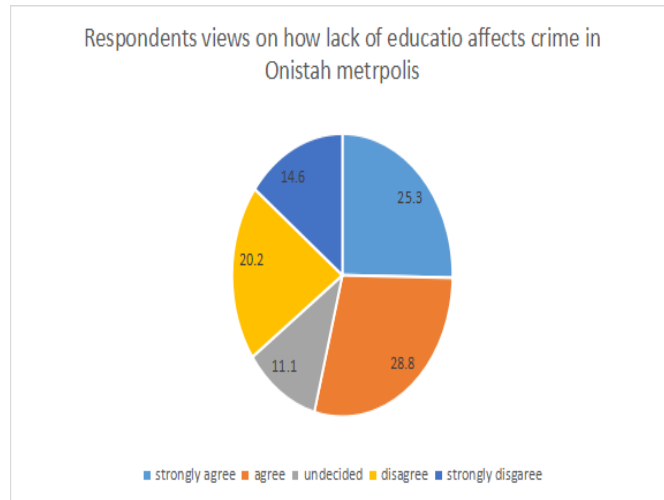
Figure 2 shows that the majority of the respondents agree that low-class level contributes to crime in Onitsha metropolis.



Field survey, 2021.

Figure 3: Respondent’s views on whether a dysfunctional family contributes to crime in the Onitsha metropolis.

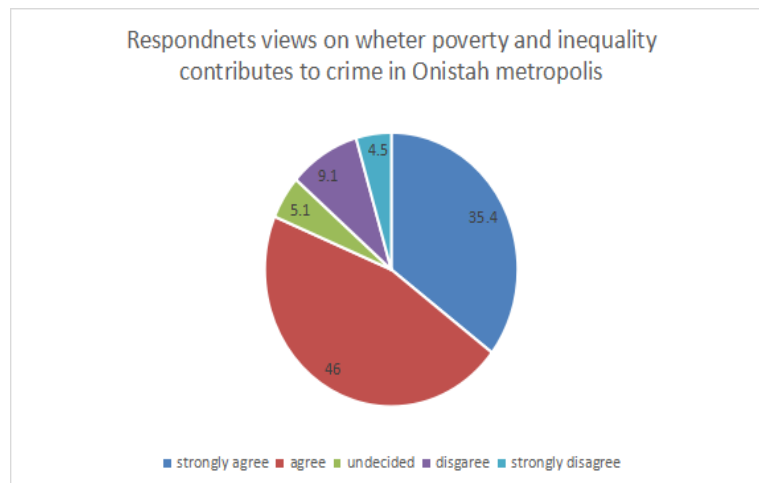
Figure 3 shows that the majority (49.0%) of the respondents strongly agree that a dysfunctional family contributes to crime in the Onitsha metropolis.



Field survey, 2021.

Figure 4: Respondent’s views on whether lack of education affects crime in Onitsha metropolis.

Figure 4 shows that the majority of the respondents agree that lack of education is one of the factors responsible for crime in the Onitsha metropolis.



Field survey, 2021.

Figure 5: Respondent's views on whether poverty and inequality contribute to crime in Onitsha Metropolis.

Figure 5 shows that the majority of the respondents (46.0) agree that poverty and inequality contribute to crime in Onitsha metropolis.

The above figures indicate the views of the respondents on the factors responsible for crime in the Onitsha metropolis. These views are in line with data gotten from the interviews conducted in the study.

One of the interviewees stated:

Yes, there are a lot of factors responsible for crime in this Onitsha. One of those factors for me is unemployment. A lot of people don't have anything to do. And as we know, an idle mind is the workshop of the devil. Unemployment drives people into engaging in different criminal activities to survive. Also, there is the issue of poverty and inequality. Yes, they contribute significantly to these criminal activities we are seeing in the state (Male, 45, trader, married)

Another interviewee stated:

I think poverty and inequality are some of the reasons that drive crime here. The poverty rate is so high and we have few very rich people and so many poor people. This breeds inequality and disaffection amongst the people, leading some into criminal activities to get back at society and also to survive (Male, 35, civil servant, married)

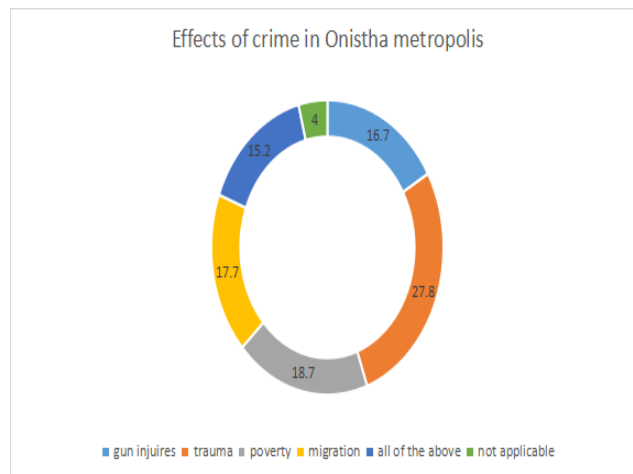
Research Question Two: What are the effects of crime in Onitsha metropolis?

Table 2: Respondent's views on whether there are effects of crime on individuals in Onitsha metropolis.

<i>Responses</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	190	96.0
No	8	4.0
Total	198	100

Field survey, 2021

Table 2 shows that the majority of the respondents are of the opinion that there are effects associated with crime in Onitsha Metropolis.



Field survey, 2021.

Figure 6: Respondent's views on the effects of crime in the Onitsha metropolis

Figure 6 shows that the majority of the respondents (27.8%) are of the opinion that trauma is the effect of crime on individuals in the Onitsha metropolis. This aligns with data from the interviews conducted.

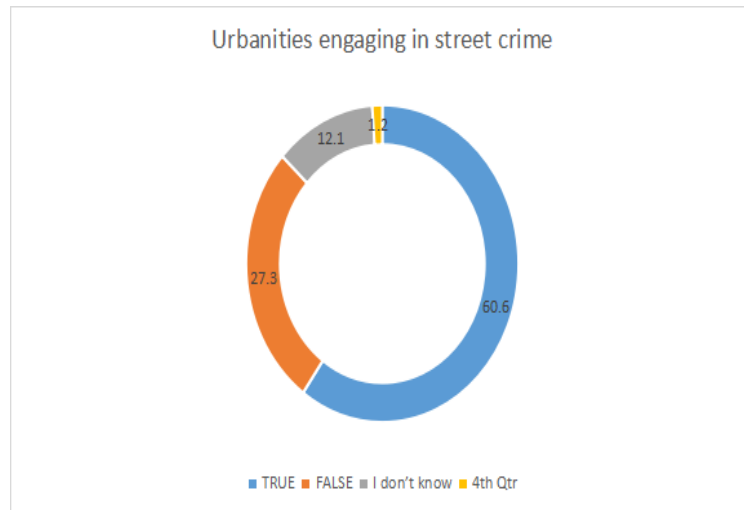
An interviewee stated:

Absolutely crime has effects on the individuals in this Onitsha. These effects are so many including trauma and even death. People can die as a result of criminal activities. There is also the exposure to gun injuries, especially for citizens who are caught in-between crossfires. Talking about trauma, I have been involved in a deadly armed robbery before. I still carry the trauma around today. It's a big issue and the effects are difficult to come off (Female, 33, married, trader)

Another interviewee stated:

I don't think this question is difficult to answer. Crime is very bad for any society and the effects are always negative. People die because of criminal activities in Onitsha every day. People suffer losses in money and personal belongings, even properties. I have been affected before and I know how much I lost (Male, 45, married, trader)

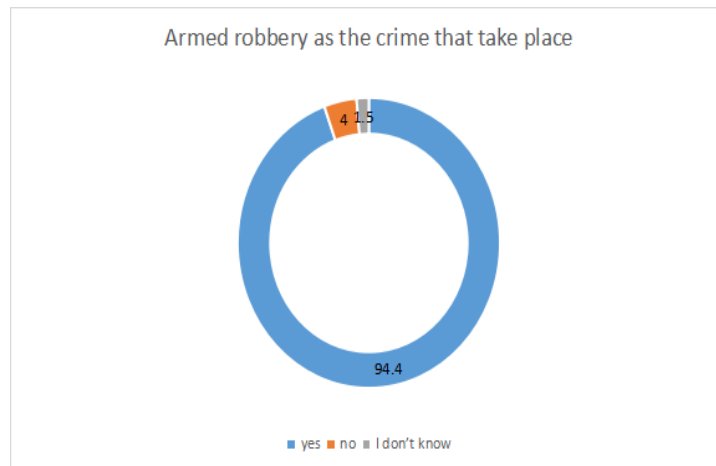
Research Question Three: What are the natures of crime perpetrated by criminals in the Onitsha metropolis?



Field survey, 2021.

Figure 7: Respondent’s views on whether urbanities engage in street crime in Onitsha.

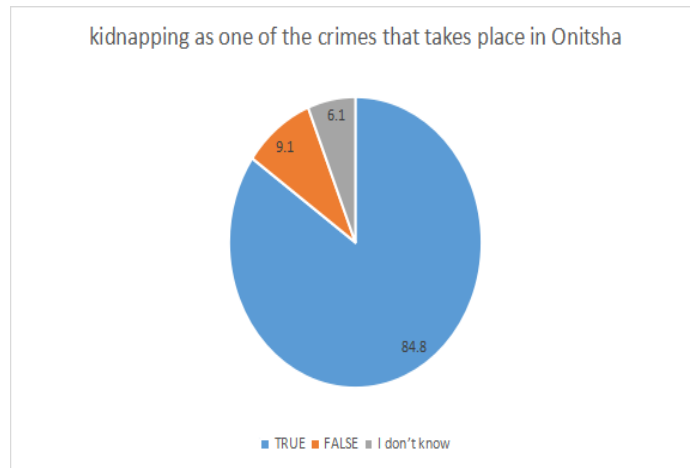
Figure 7 shows that the majority of the respondents are of the opinion that most urbanities engage in street crime in the Onitsha metropolis.



Field survey, 2021.

Figure 8: Respondent’s views on whether armed robbery is among the most crimes that take place in Onitsha metropolis.

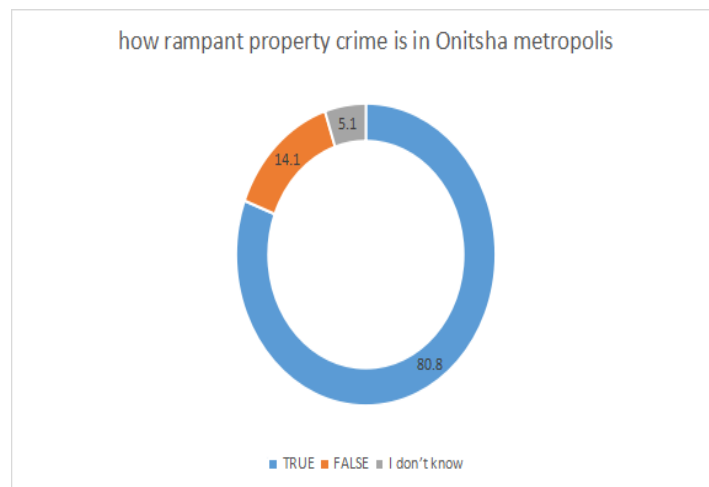
Figure 8 shows that the majority of the respondents (94.4%) are of the opinion that armed robbery is among the most crimes that take place in Onitsha metropolis.



Field survey, 2021.

Figure 9: Respondent's views on whether kidnapping is among the crimes that take place in the Onitsha metropolis

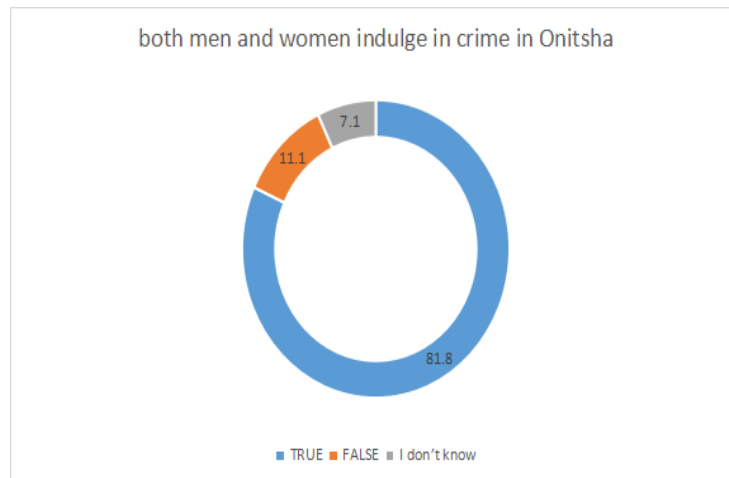
Figure 9 shows that the majority of the respondents are of the opinion that kidnapping is one of the crimes that take place in the Onitsha metropolis.



Filed survey, 2021.

Figure 9: Respondent's views on how rampant property crime is in the Onitsha metropolis

Figure 9 shows that the majority of the respondents are of the opinion that property crime such as car theft is rampant in the Onitsha metropolis.



Field survey, 2021.

Figure 10: Responses to the question of whether men and women commit crimes in the city of Onitsha

Figure 10 demonstrates that the majority of respondents (81.8%) believe that both men and women commit crimes in the city of Onitsha.

According to the data above, the respondents are aware of the type of crime that occurs in the Onitsha metropolis. The results are consistent with the information gleaned from the study's interviews as well.

An interviewee said

Robbery is a frequent occurrence in Onitsha due to the nature of the city's criminality. From what I have observed, I believe that men commit crimes at a higher rate than women. Men are motivated because they likely have more expenses or duties to handle than women.

A different interviewee said:

Property crime is extremely prevalent in Onitsha. In Onitsha, people lose their vehicles and other possessions at a startling rate. In fact, the level of crime in the area caused me to lose a car once. On my drive home, I was approached by young boys who brandished firearms at

me and took control of the vehicle. I last saw it there at that point (female, 33, married, merchant).

Conclusion

Urban Onitsha is experiencing an increase in crime. This sparked the researchers' curiosity in determining the causes of crime committed in the city of Onitsha. According to the report, there are several variables that contribute to the crime committed in the Onitsha metropolitan, including poverty, inequality, a lack of suitable jobs, poor class status, and dysfunctional families.

According to the study, if the necessary actions, such as taking seriously security personnel's responsibility for crime prevention, the rate of crime committed in the area can be reduced. In order to prevent occasional security breakdowns that would allow criminal elements to continue committing crimes and getting away with it, security officials in the Onitsha metropolis must be careful to take their work seriously.

Recommendations

On the basis of the study's findings, the following suggestions are offered. Onitsha's parents and guardians will see to it that they instill good morals and values in their kids to lessen the level of crime, violence, and immoral behavior displayed by the city's residents. To ensure that security officers in the Onitsha metropolis are fully focused on their work of protecting lives and property without being distracted, it is important to give their well-being a top priority.

Jobs should be found to ensure that those who find crime appealing owing to unemployment become gainfully engaged. This will reduce the appeal of crime to these individuals. The level of poverty should be monitored by the government. It is important to address the inequality in the neighborhood since doing so will deter people from engaging in criminal activity. To properly carry out their tasks, security agencies should be well-equipped with security vehicles, uniforms, and weapons, among other things. In order to combat criminal activity, security agencies should be more proactive, responsive, and active. Security personnel should arrive at the crime scene quickly.

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