

Prevalence, Patterns and Trend of Crime in Jos Metropolis, Plateau State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

High level of crime constitutes a serious threat to citizens' security in modern societies. Effective crime prevention and control requires evidence-based knowledge on its prevalence, patterns and trend. This paper analysed the prevalence, patterns and trend of crime in Jos metropolis between the year 2020 and 2021. Mixed research design that combined the use of quantitative secondary data with qualitative primary data was used. Secondary data was generated from official crime statistics recorded at the Police State Criminal Investigation Department (SCID) Jos, between 2020 and 2021 while the primary data was generated from key informant interviews (KIIs) with 23 critical stakeholders in crime prevention and control across communities of Jos. The study found that major crimes relating to property such as theft, house breaking, store breaking and receiving stolen property as well as crimes against person such as grievous hurt, assault, and rape were prevalent and had increased in Jos metropolis within the period covered. It recommends that law enforcement agencies especially the police should channel their efforts to the hot-spots of crime in the city and should target the period, place, season and time that these crimes occurred the most.

KEYWORDS:

Crime, Jos Metropolis, Prevalence, Patterns, Trend

Introduction

Crime constitutes a major source of insecurity to persons, communities and societies globally. In recent years especially, there is a growing concern and obsession over crime and criminals. Major crimes such as terrorism, banditry, transnational organized crime, cybercrime, money laundering, armed robbery, kidnapping for ransom, burglary, etc. have continue to make headlines across the traditional and new media thereby heightening insecurity for citizens across countries. Over the years, societies have grappled to contain the menace of crime and its ravaging impact without much success. An important first step in preventing and controlling crime rate however is generating reliable data on its prevalence, patterns and trends.

Nigeria particularly has experienced several types of crimes in recent years. These range from kidnapping for ransom, banditry, attacks on communities, armed robbery to cybercrime. Kidnapping for example has assumed diverse patterns. The pattern is unique in the number and scale of its mass abductions such as the kidnapping of the Chibok girls, but also the broader incidence of individual

kidnappings. Kidnapping has become associated with banditry, combined with attacks that include murder and rape as forms of political violence. Human trafficking is also a form of organized crime ;Nigerian women and children remain the principal victims of both domestic and international trafficking(UNODC& NISS, 2022). Most Nigerian victims are trafficked within Nigeria for sexual exploitation, forcedlabour, domestic servitude and forced begging; large proportion of these victims are children. The pattern is such that domestic trafficking of children and adults within Nigeria appears to be a first step before they are trafficked abroad.

Nigeria is currently caught in the web of crime dilemma, manifesting in the convulsive upsurge of both violent and nonviolent crimes spreading a climate of fear and anxieties about community safety. This upsurge of crime has been ongoing as Nigeria has been on the global crime map since the 1980s (Ihensekhien, 2023). Today, hardly will a day pass without reports of even more heinous crimes being perpetrated across various parts of the country. Not so much is reported about the prevalence, pattern and trend of these crimes. The Global Peace Index indicates that Nigeria is among the countries with least peace in the world, it is the 19th less peaceful state (Statista, 2024). In addition, the Global Terrorism Index indicates that Nigeria is the eight country most affected by terrorism and the fifth country in Africa with the highest risk of genocide and the twelfth worldwide. Political instability, citizen alienation, terrorism and violence define the Nigerian crime scene.

One further serious threat in Nigeria is the risk of mass killing or genocide and other crimes. In the year under review, Lagos state registered about 50 thousand crimes, by far the highest figure in the country followed by Abia state with 12 thousand cases. It reported that a large number of recorded crimes have also been committed by the Nigerian police and army in the recent years (Sasu 2024). In each of these states, the city or metropolitan areas tend to have higher prevalence of crime than in rural areas (Alemika, 2015).

However, in Plateau state particularly, this trend may be changing with increasing violent attacks on rural communities in the State in recent years. Urban crime and insecurity have since been the biggest challenge in Jos. (Rikko, Namo, Danlami, Ididiong, &Pwajok, 2021). Crime statistics shows that Plateau state was 10th with 2,607 cases out of 36 states including the federal capital territory, Abuja (Sasu, 2022). The heavy military, police and other security presence have yielded very little results as citizens continue to be victimized in repeated cycle of violence and crime.

The overarching question examined by this paper therefore is this: what types of crime are prevalent in Jos metropolis between 2020 and 2021? Answering this question is important for interrogating further, the patterns and trend of these crimeswithin the period of interest to the paper. Understanding the prevalence, patterns and trend of crime in Jos is important for effective prevention and control of crime within the metropolis. Against this backdrop, this paper examined and analysed theprevalence, patterns and trend of crime in Jos metropolis between 2020 and 2021. This focus is important not only because it

fills a major gap in the literature also because understanding the prevalence, pattern and trend of crime in Jos within this period will provide insights for law enforcement agencies especially the Nigeria Police Force in crime prevention and control in Nigerian cities more broadly.

Conceptualizing and Classifying Crime

There is no universally accepted definition of crime. This is because of variation and changes in the content of criminal law across different societies and historical periods. It is possible for an act to be a crime at a particular period or in one society, but not in another (Musa, Kalli, & Gana, 2023). Many scholars have defined Crime in different ways, mostly bordering on legal, sociological, ethical and ideological orientation. In a strict legal definition however, a crime is a violation of criminal law which in most societies can be defined broadly as any act or omission forbidden and defined by statutory or common law as deserving punishment or penalty (Musa, Kalli, & Gana 2023).

Crime is often thought of as a moral threat and injurious to the society. It afflicts the personality individuals and their property and lessens trust among members of the Society. Crime consists of two basic elements, the *actusreus* and *mensrea* (Musa, Kalli, & Gana, 2023). *Actusreus* is the physical element or the guilty act and it requires proof. The *mensrea* is the mental element or the guilty mind. It is basically the intention to do what is legally wrong. However, criminologists are more concerned with all potentially criminal behaviour, but not in a strict legal sense. The definition of crime among criminologists will therefore recognize factors such as value systems, norms and religious attitudes in given culture. While classical school dealt with the legal definition of crime, the positivist school sought the definition of crime in the criminal and not the criminal law.

From the sociological point of view, crime is defined within a social context. Crime is a social product, determined by social conditions, capable of being controlled only in social terms (Durkheim, 1933). Crime is therefore normal in all societies as Durkheim notes, a society exempt from crime would necessitate a standardization of moral concepts of all individuals which is neither possible nor desirable. Although there are many different criminal acts, too many to list in one blog, they can be divided or classified into categories such as crimes against person, crimes against property, crime against morality, statutory crimes, financial/white collar crimes and inchoate crimes (Thomas & Paulk, 2021).

Crimes against person are offences that cause bodily harm or mental anguish to other human beings. These include: assault and battery, robbery, child abuse, kidnapping, sexual assault, manslaughter and murder. On the other hand, crimes against property do not involve harming another person. They instead involve defacing, destroying, or stealing property. Crime against morality which is sometimes called victimless crimes are offences that are not committed against a person or property. Instead, they are committed against accepted social moral values. Some examples are prostitution, bigamy, illegal gambling, illegal drug

use and indecent exposure.

Statutory crimes focus on acts that are prohibited for the betterment of society; drug crimes and traffic offences fall under this category. Some of the examples include: driving under the influence of alcohol, drug possession, sale, distribution, cultivation and manufacturing of illegal drugs, public intoxication, selling of alcohol to minor, driving without license and hit and run. Financial and white collar crimes which are often financial in nature occur in the business and office world. They are nonviolent but are not necessarily victimless, as they can cause people and business to suffer significant financial losses. Some typical crimes under this category include embezzlement, forgery, investment fraud, tax invasion, money laundering and public corruption. Lastly, inchoate crimes are crimes that were initiated but not completed. It is an act undertaken in the commission of another crime. It goes further than mere intent. If a person intends to commit crime for instance, and he/she takes a step towards completing it, he or she may still be charged. This implies conspiring to commit a crime. Good examples of this category are: aiding and abetting, conspiracy and attempt to commit an offence. Some inchoate crimes, like attempt, merge into an intended crime may not be charged or penalized independently. Others like conspiracy are on their own separate crimes. For example, a person may not be charged with attempt and murder, but they could be charged with conspiracy and murder (Thomas & Paulk, 2021).

Literature and Theory

Literature

The literature indicates that crime rate in recent years has been increasing. For example, statistics of shoplifting and data of retail theft by state in the United State of America (USA) by Capital One Shopping Team (2024) revealed that retailers lost greater share of potential revenue to retail theft in 2020 than in any other year. However, experts attribute some of the increased value of retail theft to currency inflation. Similarly, statistics available indicates that organized retail crime may be trending upward, with incidents having increased by as much as 26.5% between 2020 and 2021. It was reported that the average shoplifting incidents cost retailers \$461.86 in 2020 and 2022 and shoplifting losses grew by 19.4% year-over-year. Retailers lost \$112.1 billion in gross revenue and \$84.9 billion in fraudulent sales returns in 2022 while losses to theft also increased by 10.5%. Consequently, stores in the USA lost \$121.6 billion to retail theft in 2023 and it was projected that shoplifting could cost retailers over \$150 billion in 2026. The most stolen items (product category) includes; apparel, electronics, health and beauty products, accessories, home furnishing, food beverage, children's items. Goods are mostly stolen by customers on their way out of the store (Capital One Shopping, 2024).

Further, Alemika's (2015) study on the prevalence and effects of insecurity in eleven Nigerian cities, where he found that violent conflicts and crimes vary

across cities. The majority effects of insecurity in cities were homelessness (internal displacement), loss of employment, and destruction of educational institutions, increased criminal activities and high food prices. The study revealed that Nigerians were generally dissatisfied with the police, which they perceived as ineffective in preventing or curtailing violent conflict and crimes. Armed robbery and burglary were the most prevalent crimes and insecurity in the form of violent conflicts was wide spread in Nigerian cities.

Similarly, a study by the Nigeria Watch project (NWP) (2024) shows that Nigeria lost 11,794 individuals to violence in 2023. Rural banditry and kidnapping remained prevalent in many states (NWP, 2024). The report indicated that Borno state recorded the highest number of fatalities (2123), followed by Benue state (872), Niger state (831), Plateau state (708), Kaduna state (672), and Zangare state (573). On the other hand, Jigawa, Bayelsa, Gombe, and Adamawa state reported the lowest numbers of violence. Criminal incidents claimed 5356 lives especially in Niger, Kaduna, Zangare, Benue and Plateau state. The toll resulting from clashes involving farmers and herdsmen in Nigeria surged to 860, making an increase from the 579 recorded in the previous years. Benue, Plateau and Taraba state were the most affected. Kidnapping remained prevalent, leading to 536 deaths across 28 states and the Federal Capital Territory Abuja. This figure was a notable reduction from 1,145 reported in 2022 (NWP, 2024).

Lastly, a critical sociological analysis revealed that Advance Fee Fraud in Abuja involves the use of modern information and communication technology and confidence tricks to receive advance payments for scams. It is further manifested through funds for land purchase, employments, dating and love, spiritual and religious cleansing amongst others (Umaru, 2018). Major advance fee fraud scams identified to be more prevalent in Abuja are land purchase scams, employment scams, and love and dating scams.

Theoretical framework

One of the theories considered suitable for explaining the prevalence, patterns, and trend of crime in Jos metropolis is routine activity theory (RAT). RAT was first formulated by Lawrence E. Cohen and Markus Felson and later developed by Felson. The theory is adopted as a framework for this study because of its efficacy in explaining why crime happens at certain places and time and why certain persons tend to be victims of crime. It is based on the idea that offenders make rational choices about whether to commit a crime or not. The idea is that crime is the result of people's every day behaviour and also the way in which offenders and victims go about their daily lives.

RAT argues that crime is not something extraordinary that requires a deep psychological analysis. Instead, crime occurs when three elements are present: motivated offender, a suitable target and the absence of capable guardians. When these three elements come together at the same time in the same space, crime occurs. In short, the theory attempts to identify at macro-level criminal activities and their patterns through explanation of changes in crime rate and trends (Cohen & Felson, 1979). It is based on criminal events, on the distribution and grouping in space and time of minimal elements that make them up. Rather than the search for

offenders' motives, it thus offers a frame of reference for concrete and individualized crime analysis and facilitates the application of real policies and practices aimed at altering the necessary elements that make the existence of a crime possible and thereby preventing it. In contrast to theories of criminality, which are centered on the figure of the criminal and the psychological, biological and social factors that motivated the criminal act, the focus of routine activity theory is the study of crime as an events, highlighting its relation to space and time and emphasizing its ecological nature and the implication thereof. From the premises of the theory therefore, the prevalence, patterns and trend of crime in Jos metropolis may be understood as a function of the convergence of motivated offenders, suitable targets and absence of capable guidance in time and space across neighborhoods and communities of the metropolis.

Data and Method

Mixed research design that combined the use of quantitative secondary data with qualitative primary data was adopted for this study. The study was conducted in Jos metropolis – the Plateau state capital and a rapidly urbanizing city where crime rate was perceived to be rapidly increasing. Secondary data was generated from official crime data recorded at the Police State Criminal Investigation Department (SCID) Jos, from 2020 to 2021. This was completed by primary data generated from key informant interviews (KIIs) with 23 research participants. The participants were critical stakeholders in crime prevention and control in communities of Jos metropolis.

Purposive sampling was used to select the respondents from JentaAdamu, Gangare and Giring wards- three areas with perceived higher rates of crime. Specifically, the persons selected and interviewed included: 2 officers from SCID, 3 officers and men, 3 community leaders (*Maiangwas*), 3 youth leaders, 3 women leaders, 3 men group, 3 leaders of Neighborhood Watch (NHW), and 3 leader of Vigilante Group of Nigeria (VGN). These participants were selected as a result of their knowledge in crime prevention and control in order to gain insight from them about what is happening. The quantitative data generated were analyzed and presented simple frequency and percentage distribution tables for ease of description and interpretation of the results which was accomplished with the aid of the SPSS. The qualitative interviewson the other hand were transcribed and analyzedthematically along relevant themes as dictated by the specific objectives of the study.

Findings

This section presents the study's findings on prevalence, patterns and trend of crime in Jos metropolis between 2020 and 2021. The findings from the qualitative data analysis are synthesized into the results of the quantitative analysis and presented within the relevant themes of the study.

Prevalence of Crime in Jos Metropolis

In determining the prevalence and trend of crime in Jos metropolis, the study first examined official crime statistics in the state for the year 2020 and 2021.

This was complemented by insight gained from the in-depth interviews. The data from the official crime statistics are summarized and presented in tables as follow:

Table 1: Prevalence of Crimes against Persons by Type in Plateau State in 2020

Type of Crime	Frequency	Percentage
Culpable Homicide	62	4.7
Grievous hurt	418	31.5
Assault	277	20.9
Rape/Indecent Assault	144	10.9
Kidnapping	7	0.5
Others	417	31.5
Total	1,325	100%

Source: Annual Police Report for the Year 2020 and 2021, Plateau State Command

Table 1 indicates that majority (63.3%) of the cases of crimes against persons recorded in Plateau state in the year 2020 involved grievous hurt (31.5%), assault (20.9%) and rape/indecent assault (10.9%).

Table 2: Prevalence of Crimes against Persons by Type in Plateau State in 2021

Type of Crime	Frequency	Percentage
Culpable Homicide	51	4.5
Grievous hurt	472	41.8
Assault	238	21.1
Rape/Indecent Assault	89	7.9
Child Stealing	3	0.3
Kidnapping	4	0.4
Others	273	24.2
Total	1,130	100%

Source: Annual Police Report for the Year 2020 and 2021, Plateau State Command

Furthermore, Table 2 indicates that the state recorded an increase in incidents of grievous hurt and assault which respectively moved up from 31.5% to 41.8% and from 20.9% to 21.1% in 2021. However, cases of rape slightly declined from 10.9% to 7.9% in 2021. Other forms of crimes against persons that did not fit into various types highlighted in the tables were equally substantial in both 2020 (31.5%) and 2021 (24.2%). Lastly, culpable homicide slightly declined from 4.7% to 4.5% between 2020 and 2021 which is quite small. Overall, the results of the analysis indicate a slight decrease in recorded crimes against the person in Plateau State from a total of 1,325 cases in 2020 to a total of 1130 in 2021 (See Tables 1 & 2).

This result may suggest that the police were more effective in the prevention and control of crimes against persons in the state or conversely, may mean a decline in the quality of policing and citizens' willingness to report incidents of such crimes to the police. Furthermore, the problems associated with official statistics including the issue of grey and dark figures of crime which are linked with non-detection, non-reporting and non-recording of reported crimes, might also have accounted for the decline.

Interview with a police man sheds more light on the official declined of crime:

Majority of our superiors depend largely on official report to ascertain the prevalent of crime over a period of time but it is we the subordinates who really witness the daily occurrence of crime which I know that crime against person is increasing whether official report said otherwise (Interview with a policeman, 26th August, 2022 Jos).

Table 3: Prevalence of Property Crimes by Type in Plateau State in 2020

Type of Crime	Frequency	Percentage
Theft/stealing	324	24.9
Housebreaking	165	12.7
Storebreaking	243	18.7
Armed robbery	38	2.9
False pretense/cheating	106	8.2
Received stolen property	299	23.0
Bribery and Corruption	1	0.1
Others	124	9.5
Total	1,300	100

Source: Annual Police Report for the Year 2020 and 2021, Plateau State Command

Table 3 indicates that majority (79.3%) of the cases of crimes against property recorded in Plateau state including Jos metropolis in the year 2020 involved theft/stealing (24.9%) House breaking (12.7%) Store breaking (18.7%) and received stolen property (23.0%). This can be compared to what was recorded in 2021 as summarized and presented in table 4.

Table4: Prevalence of Property Crimes by Type in Plateau State in2021

Typeof Crime	Frequency	Percentage
Theft/Stealing	387	31.9
HouseBreaking	217	17.9
StoreBreaking	197	16.2
Armedrobbery	45	3.7
Falsepretence/Cheating	108	8.9
Receivedstolenproperty	88	7.2
Others	173	14.2
Total	1,215	100

Source: Annual Police Report for the Year 2020 and 2021, Plateau State Command

Table 4 indicates that the state recorded an increase in theft/stealing, House breaking, armed robbery and false pretense and cheating which moved up 31.9%, 17.9%, 3.7%and8.9%respectively.However,casesof store breaking and receiving stolen property declined from 18.7% to 16. % and from 23.0 % to 7.2 %.

From the data gotten from the police, it is expected that cases of received stolen property ought to have increased but instead it declined by 7.2% even when cases of theft/stealing and house breaking increased substantially. This implies that most of the property stolen in the year 2021 in Plateau state were either not arrested or recovered by the police or could have been used by the perpetrators of such crime themselves. Other forms of crimes against property that did not fit into various types highlighted in the table were equally substantial in 2021 (9.5%). Lastly, bribery and corruption was not recorded in 2021 which could be attributed to the secretive nature of such crimes. Overall, the result of the analysis indicates a slight decrease in recorded property crimes in Plateau state from a total of 1300 in 2020 to 1215 cases in 2021 (See table 3and 4).This result may suggest that the Police and other none formal policing outfit like the neighborhood watch, vigilante group or other community self-help groups were more effective in prevention and control of property crimes in the state.

An interview with a community leader contradicts the police official report:

The rate of property crime in our community has assumed a worrisome dimension, asyou can see (making reference to some

properties and locally made gun), this just happened this morning and we are waiting for the police to come so that we handover the people and the items to them. This is just one among many other cases that have occurred in the community (interview with a community leader in AngwanRukuba, 7th August, 2022, Jos).

As hinted earlier, the problems associated with official statistics including the issue of grey and dark figures of crime which are linked to non-reporting, non-recording and non-detection of crimes might also have accounted for the decline (Dambazau, 2011). The contradiction between the police official report and the in depth interview suggest the existence of anomaly. This anomaly relates to what Yar (2011) described as failure in network governance.

According to Yar (2011, p.10):

Problems of conflicting ends...equally and chronically appear on an intra-systemic level within governance network and between different actors...actors from the same system will always have opposing interests such that the aims of all actors cannot be simultaneously realized via coordinated action.

Table5:Prevalenceof CrimesagainsttheStatebyTypeinPlateauStatein2020

Type of Crime	Frequency	Percentage
Unlawful possession/Firearms offences	106	84.8
Breach of public peace	6	4.8
Forgery	4	3.2
Arson	5	4.0
Unnatural offences	4	3.4
Total	125	100

Source: Annual Police Report for the Year 2020 and 2021, Plateau State Command

Table 5 indicates that majority (84.8%) of cases of crimes against the state by type in Plateau including Jos metropolis in the year 2020 involved unlawful possession/firearms offences. This may not be unconnected with the persistence of violent conflicts especially farmer-herder conflict and gunmen attacks on communities in the state.

Table 6: Prevalence of Crimes against the State by Type in Plateau State in 2021

Type of Crime	Frequency	Percentage
Unlawfulpossession/Firearmsoffences	144	69.9
Escapefromunlawful custody	1	0.9
Breachofpublicpeace	30	14.6
Forgery	20	9.7
Arson	5	2.4
Unnaturaloffences	6	2.9
Total	206	100

Source: AnnualPoliceReportfortheYear2020and2021,PlateauState Command

Table 6 indicates that the state recorded an increase in breach of public peace and forgery which moved up to 14.6% and 9.7% respectively. Cases of unlawful possession/firearms offences, arson, and unnatural offences declined from 4.0% to 2.4% and unnatural offences from 3.4% to 2.9% respectively. This data shows that there were more illegal firearms and ammunitions in the hands of the public in plateau state including Jos metropolis in 2020 (84.8%) than it is in 2021 (69.9%). Furthermore, the data from the police records shows that there was no incidence of escaped from unlawful custody in 2020 but a record of 0, 9% occurred in 2021. This corroborates the incidence of jail break in Jos correctional service where an undisclosed numbers of inmates escaped on the 28th November, 2021. This could have been the reason why there was a noticeable increase of about 14.6% cases of breach of peace in Jos metropolis and Plateau state at large.

As for the unlawful possession and fire arm offences, an interview with a senior police officer revealed that:

Before the Jos crises, guns were not in the hand of the people, but now there are many arms in the hand of many people, particularly the youth which could also affect public peace in plateau state. (Interview with an assistance commissioner of police, SCID 2nd August, 2022, Jos).

This suggests that the conflict experience of Jos in recent years is an important explanatory variable for understanding the prevalence of violent crimes and crimes against the state in Jos metropolis.

Patterns of Crime in Jos Metropolis

In examining the patterns of crime in Jos metropolis, participants were asked about the time and season of the year in which common crimes in Jos such as

kidnapping, killing, armed robbery, rape, burglary, house breaking, car theft, and others often occur as well as the emerging forms of crime and the ways such crimes are committed in Jos metropolis. The responses yielded useful findings on the patterns of these crimes as deducible from the following quotation:

Kidnapping in Jos metropolis for instance usually occurs in the early evening between 7 pm and 10pm. The kidnappers often attack their victims very early in the evening so that they can travel far with the victim before the day breaks. In most cases, they trek with their victims or use Bajaj motor cycle to whizz the victim away (KII with DPO Anglo-Jos Division, Jos, 7th August, 2022).

Armed robbery is not too common like before but that does not mean they [armed robbers] are not attacking. In the past, armed robbers used to operate in the night but today these boys operate both in the day and at the night as you can hardly guess when they will strike (Interview with Men group leader Tudun Wada Jos, 4th August, 2022).

Rape in my area usually occurred between 6 am and 10 am when people have gone to work and sometimes it happens in the night. Most of our women have been raped when they were returning from market or work in the evening (Interview with village head of Giring, Jos, 3rd August, 2022).

Theft in Jos metropolis take different forms, car theft is rampant in Jos. Cases of car theft are mostly reported between 3 pm and 10 pm. It occurs mostly in beer parlours, joints, relaxation areas, churches and event centres (Interview with DPO "A" Division Jos, 7th August, 2022).

House breaking in Jos metropolis are mostly reported to have occurred between 6 am and 8 am and mostly when people have gone out. In most cases, burglary take place between 4 pm and 5 am with most perpetrators armed with weapons and tools for breaking (Interview with DCO "C" division Jos, 7th August, 2022).

The foregoing quotations are insightful on the patterns of crime in Jos metropolis. Among others, they reveal that even property crimes as burglary tend to involve the use of arms which may result in some harm where the victims are present during the incident. Except where such house breaking pertains specifically to shops located at commercial areas such as Ahmadu Bello Way where shop owners hardly reside within their shop premises, any incident of house breaking between the hours of 4pm and 5am is likely to encounter the house owner which may result in physical confrontation between the attackers and the victims and likely injury or death. On the other hand, car theft which is reported to be rampant in Jos appear to be the function of opportunity. The criminals usually take advantage of absence of adequate target hardening in most vehicles and absence of security guards at designated car parks especially during large gatherings such

as wedding receptions to victimize unsuspecting car owners. Further, the pattern of rape discernable from the quote suggests that absence of capable guidance, availability of suitable targets and presence of motivated offenders such as drug addicts and youth gangs are important factors in rape. Similarly, the prevalence of broad day light robbery may mean increased vulnerability of communities due to weakened or absence of security forces to prevent or counter the operations of armed robbers. Lastly, it is instructive to note that kidnappers trek a long distance with their victims through communities to the outskirts and caves and yet escape without apprehension or arrest. This is indicative of weakness in community defense

Trend of Crime in Jos Metropolis

Table7: Trend of Recorded Crimes by the Police in Plateau State, 2020 to 2021

Category of Crime	Type of Crime Recorded	Number/Percentage of Crimes Recorded by Year		
		2020	2021	Total
Crimes against Persons	Culpable Homicide	62 (55%)	51 (45%)	113
	Grievoushurt	418 (47%)	472 (53%)	890
	Assault	277 (54%)	238 (46%)	515
	Rape/Indecent Assault	144 (62%)	89 (38%)	233
	Child Stealing	0 (0%)	3 (100%)	3
	Kidnapping	7 (64%)	4 (36%)	11
	Others	417 (60%)	273 (40%)	690
	Total Cases Recorded	1,325 (54%)	1,130 (46%)	2,455
Crimes against Property	Theft/Stealing	324 (46%)	387 (54%)	711
	House Breaking	165 (46%)	217 (57%)	382
	Store Breaking	243 (55%)	197 (45%)	440
	Armed robbery	38 (46%)	45 (54%)	83
	False pretence/Cheating	106 (49%)	108 (51%)	214
	Received stolen property	299 (77%)	88 (23%)	387
	Bribery and Corruption	1(100%)	0 (0%)	1
	Others	124 (42%)	173 (58%)	297
	Total Cases Recorded	1,300 (52%)	1,215 (48%)	2,515
Crimes against the State	Unlawful possession/Firearms Offences	106 (42%)	144 (58%)	250
	Unlawful escape from custody	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	1
	Breach of public peace	6 (17%)	30 (83%)	36
	Forgery	4 (17%)	20 (83%)	24
	Arson	5 (50%)	5 (50%)	10
	Unnatural offences	4 (40%)	6 (60%)	10
	Total	125 (38%)	206 (62%)	331
Overall Total Crimes Recorded		2,750	2,551	5,301

Source: Annual Police Report for the Year 2020 and 2021, Plateau State Police Command

Table 7 indicates that crimes against persons such as culpable homicide, assault, rape, and kidnapping slightly decreased in 2021. However, more cases of grievous hurt were recorded in 2021 (53%) than in 2020 (47%) which signifies an increase in this particular crime. Further, 3 cases of child stealing were recorded in 2021 as against the zero incident in the preceding year.

Relative to crime against property, the results indicate that the police recorded more cases of theft/stealing (54%), housebreaking (57%), armed robbery (54%), false pretense/cheating (51%), and other property related crimes (58%) in 2021 than those recorded in 2020 respectively. This suggests an increase in these crimes some of which may be associated with the looting of government store-houses during the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic. However, there was a slight decrease in number of recorded cases of store breaking (45%), substantial decrease in cases of receiving stolen property (23%) and no single case of bribery and corruption was recorded in 2021. This suggests a decrease in this category of crimes.

Lastly, the results indicates that recorded crimes against the state generally increased substantially if not significantly in the year 2021 from 2020. For example, more cases of unlawful possession of firearms were recorded in 2021 (58%) than in 2020 (42%). Similarly, there were more breach of public peace (83%) and forgery (83%) in 2021 than in 2020 (17% respectively). In addition, a case of escape from lawful custody was recorded in 2021 as against zero incident in the preceding year.

Overall, the result in table 7 indicates that the Police in Plateau State command recorded a total of 2,551 cases in the year 2021 as against 2,750 cases recorded in the preceding year 2020 representing a total decrease of 199 cases (Annual Police Reports Plateau State Command). This however does not necessarily mean that Jos metropolis experienced a decrease in recorded crimes because the figures are for the entire state and not just Jos metropolis. If there was disaggregated data by LGAs across the state, it would have been clearer whether or not Jos metropolis experienced a decrease in recorded crimes. However, interviews with research participants across various communities of Jos metropolis revealed that crime was generally perceived to have increased in Jos metropolis between 2020 and 2021 which contradicts the official data released by the police.

Discussion of Findings

This study examined the prevalence, patterns and trend of crime in Jos metropolis using a mixture of secondary and primary data. Results from the secondary data analysis provided useful insights on the prevalence and trend of crime not just in Jos metropolis but in Plateau state as a whole. In particular, the study found from the secondary/quantitative data analyses that grievous hurt, assault, and rape/indecent assault were among the most prevalent crimes committed against persons as recorded by the police during the two years period.

Further, theft, house breaking, store breaking and receiving stolen property were among the most prevalent property offenses recorded by the police in the state. In addition, the study found that unlawful possession of firearms, breach of peace and forgery were among the most prevalent crimes against the state as recorded by the police. In Jos metropolis particularly, findings from the qualitative data analysis further revealed that the aforementioned crimes were perceived not only as prevalent but also increasing in Jos metropolis. This finding is in line with findings of Alemika's (2015) study which found that property crime and crime against person were the predominant crimes in Nigerian cities. It is evident that

the rate of crime in Jos metropolis has increased in the year under review notwithstanding the official police report which shows a decline in crime in Jos metropolis. It is important to consider the reliability of Nigeria's crime statistics because experts do not rate them highly due to the fact that they are patchy and divergent. Further, many crimes go unreported in Nigeria because of distrust in the police, a lack of police presence on ground and a general feeling that reporting a crime could lead to victimization by the police (Tiwa 2024).

Second, the study especially the qualitative data analysis yielded insightful findings on the patterns of different types of crime in Jos metropolis. In particular, it found that most of the violent crimes occur in the five (5) hour period between noon and 5 Pm and 6 pm and 11Pm. Different crimes occurred at different time depending on the type, nature and place of the crime. Armed robberies occur in Jos metropolis between 5pm and 11 pm, kidnapping usually take place between 6 pm -10pm and 2 am and 4 am respectively. Victims of kidnapping are forced to 'trek' through the bush path to the forest or taken away by motor cycle. Rape which is an offence against person occurs in Jos metropolis between 6am and 10am when people have gone to work (i.e. absence of capable guardians) and 6pm and midnight (when most households are indoors).

Further, theft in Jos metropolis take different forms: car theft is rampant which could occur at any time of the day but interview with the Police reveals cases of car theft are mostly reported between 3 Pm and 10 pm. It occurred mostly at Beer Parlors, Joints, relaxation areas, Churches and event centers (suitable target). The emerging crimes in Jos metropolis are ransom driving kidnapping, cultism and cybercrime. People particularly the youths specialized in various cybercrimes; many of them are either graduates, undergraduate or college dropout, whose distinctive lifestyle of owning a fast car and display of wealth and ostentation is the envy of many of their age mates. They killed and remove parts of the body of their victims for rituals.

Last, the study generated useful findings on the trend of crime in Plateau state and Jos metropolis in particular between 2020 and 2021. Whereas official crime statistics obtained from the police indicated that recorded crimes generally slightly decreased the study found from KIIs that compared with 2020 crime in Jos metropolis increased in 2021.

On the basis of this conflicting findings, there are two important points to note. First, is the need to underscore the fact that the official crime statistics used was for the whole of Plateau state as no disaggregated data by LGAs of the state were available at the SCID office. The absence of disaggregated data made it difficult to ascertain the exact number of recorded crimes in Jos metropolis for the purpose of comparison with the qualitative insights. It is only when and until such data is available that a more reliable comparison can be made between the quantitative and qualitative results of the study.

The second point to note is how unreliable official police crimes statistics can be in determining the actual rate of crime in Jos metropolis or even in Plateau State between the two years period under review. To be reliable, the police recorded

crime for each of the two years period must be compared with the population of the state at the period and multiplied by a standard number for purposes of comparison so that any observed increase or decrease is not attributable to the density of the population. If for example the population of Jos metropolis significantly increased in the year 2021 due to influx of migrants from rural areas, and the official police statistics remain the same or only slightly increased, it could mean that crime rate has declined when the likelihood of victimization is divided among the population.

Conclusion and Recommendation

This study identifies and analysed the prevalence, pattern and trend of crime in Jos metropolis. It is evident from the findings that crimes are on the increase in Jos metropolis, particularly property crimes and crime against person. Crime in Jos metropolis is not spread evenly like every other city. It clumps in some areas and is relatively low in others. This knowledge is used by city dwellers in their daily activities, avoiding some places and seeking out others. The choice, of residents in selecting their neighbourhoods, schools, stores, street and recreation are shaped partially by understanding that their chances of being crime victims are greater in some of these places than in others.

There are locations within the metropolis that have greater propensity for the occurrence of crime at night due to the availability of crime targets, thus becoming hotspots for criminal activities at night. It is therefore important and recommended that efforts of the law enforcement agencies like the police, vigilante groups, and neighbourhood watch are targeted towards the period, place, season and time of these crimes. The police need to be trained frequently to effectively adapt to the changing pattern, trend and the emerging crimes in Jos metropolis for effective crime prevention and control. Lastly, there is need for collaboration and partnership among security agencies and community leaders to curtail high incident and prevalence of crime in Jos metropolis.

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