Safety under siege: Analysis of Perceived Crime Incidence in Ibadan North Local Government Area, Oyo State, Nigeria

Lekan SANNI[1]; *Timothy Oluseye MORENIKEJI[2]; Babatunde Saheed AKINBAMI[3]

[1]Department of Urban and Regional Planning, University of Ibadan, Nigeria.

[2]City Visionnaire Initiative for Urban Development, Nigeria.

[3]Department of Urban and Regional Planning, University of Abuja, Nigeria.

*Corresponding Author: Timothy Oluseye MORENIKEJI tomorenikeji0802@gmail.com

Abstract

It has been known worldwide that crime is a major source of social concern in both developed and developing countries. It is a universal phenomenon which differs only in degree among the various nations of the world. Although, various studies on the incidence of crime in the city of Ibadan, Nigeria, has been documented in the literature, residents' perception on incidence of crime, and perceived livability of the city, has not been given adequate attention. This is a major gap in knowledge this present study set out to fill, using Ibadan North Local Government Area, the most cosmopolitan local government area in the city. A multistage sampling technique was used for data collection. The study area was stratified into political wards and 209 questionnaire administered. Five indices developed such as: Crime Occurrence Index (COI), Causes of Crime Index (CCI), Effects of Crime Index (ECI), Crime Prevention Index (CPI), and Crime Hotspot Index (CHI). The findings showed variation in spatial pattern of crime across residential densities (COI), so the causes (CCI) vary across space. There is a variation on the effect of crime (ECI) on the victims across the residential densities, crime prevention mechanisms (CPI) as revealed by the respondents. Abandoned structure is the major CHI across the study area. Strategies were proposed to reduce occurrence and effects of crime in the study area. This study reveals pervasive crime eroding public trust. It advocates viewing crime as a public health issue, boosting economic opportunities, urban safety, victim support, and community policing.

Keywords: Crime, Incidence, Urban Security, Safety Measure

1.1 Introduction

Crime remain a significant social concern globally (Badiora & Fadoyin, 2014). Akinbami et al. (2024) also assert that every nation, regardless of its level of development, contends with the persistent challenge of crime and criminality, albeit with varying intensities and dimensions.

Crime does not occur in isolation but rather within a defined geographical space (Ige, 2015). As a universal phenomenon, crime differs only in degree across various countries, and its definition, as well as measurement, is influenced by local laws (Ayoola et al., 2015; Adigun et al., 2016). Crime does not occur in isolation but rather within a defined geographical space (Ige, 2015). As a universal phenomenon, crime differs only in degree across various countries, and its definition, as well as measurement, is influenced by local laws (Ayoola et al., 2015; Adigun et al., 2016).

The Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime (2021), in its 2021 Global Organized Crime Index, reported that Africa has the second-highest overall criminality score (5.17), following Asia. This ranking underscores the continent's extensive and diverse illicit activities. Human trafficking, with a continental average score of 5.93, emerges as the most dominant criminal market in Africa, with 30 out of 54 countries exhibiting a significant or severe human trafficking industry. The widespread nature of this illicit economy was exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic, which heightened economic vulnerabilities and increased susceptibility to trafficking.

Crime encompasses a wide range of activities that result in substantial physical, financial, and material losses for its victims. The severity of its impact is best assessed through the perceived intensity of its consequences and the duration of the harm inflicted, particularly from the victim's perspective (Ayodele & Aderinto, 2014). One of the most pressing social issues in Nigeria in recent years has been the increasing rate of urban crime (Agbola, 1997). Badiora et al. (2014) observed that criminal activities have become more alarming, as a considerable portion of daily news reports is dedicated to incidents of murder, theft, and high-profile criminal trials. Studies on crime patterns globally revealed significant variations in crime

rates and trends across different spatial and temporal contexts.

Nigeria's crime problem is multifaceted and poses a serious threat to urban stability, business continuity, and long-term economic development (Adigun et al., 2019). Scholars such as Adigun (2013), Badiora et al. (2014), and Ghani (2017) emphasized that crime is one of the numerous social challenges associated with urbanization, affecting both developed and developing countries. Ghani (2017) further argues that crime tends to be more prevalent in areas characterized by high population density, rapid social change, and poor living conditions.

Statistical evidence highlights a consistent upward trend in crime rates across Nigeria over the past decades. For instance, reported criminal cases rose from 251,055 in 1991 to 319,616 in 1993. Similarly, the number of major crimes increased from 120,911 in 1995 to 144,505 in 2000, with a noticeable escalation in violent crimes observed between 1995 and 2003 (Agbola, 2004; Chinwokwu, 2014; Badiora et al., 2016). Further insights are provided by Kenneth (2021), who conducted a statistical analysis of crime distribution in Nigeria using Principal Component Analysis. The study revealed annual fluctuations in reported crime cases over a span of eleven years, with recorded averages of 14,600.33 in 2009, 14,437.83 in 2010, and 14,942.92 in 2011. This was followed by a decline to 12,904.83 in 2012 and 12,063.42 in 2013. The downward trend continued in subsequent years, with 10,342.58 reported in 2014, reaching a low of 6,677.67 in 2015. However, the figures rose again to 10,602.75 in 2016, followed by 9,357.75 in 2017, 9,093 in 2018, and returning to 14,600.33 in 2019. These fluctuations reflect the dynamic and complex nature of crime patterns in Nigeria, highlighting the need for continuous empirical assessment and targeted policy interventions. Consequently, crime has instilled a pervasive sense of fear among Nigerians. However, the crucial issue is to develop strategies to mitigate this fear to a level where it does not dominate or dictate daily life (Adetula, 2013).

Despite extensive scholarly work on crime in Nigeria and globally, there remains a significant gap in understanding residents' perceptions of crime in specific urban contexts, such as Ibadan North Local Government Area (LGA). Many existing studies emphasized crime rates, patterns, and socioeconomic consequences but overlook residents' subjective experiences and perceptions of crime (Agbola, 1997; Ayodele & Aderinto, 2014; Adigun *et al*, 2016). Understanding perceptions is crucial, as fear of crime can significantly influence residents' behaviors, social interactions, and overall quality of life. While research has examined crime incidence in major Nigerian cities such as Lagos, Abuja, and Port Harcourt (Adigun *et al*., 2016; Badiora et al., 2016), studies specifically examining crime perception in Ibadan North LGA remain scarce.

Given its unique urban dynamics, population density, and socioeconomic diversity, Ibadan North requires localized studies to inform targeted crime prevention strategies.

Furthermore, despite numerous crime prevention policies, crime rates continue to rise in Nigeria (Agbola, 2004; Chinwokwu, 2014; Akinbami *et al*, 2024). The persistence of crime suggests a disconnection between governmental efforts and the lived realities of urban residents. This implies that examining residents' perceptions can provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of existing security measures and inform more community-oriented interventions. Official crime statistics in Nigeria often fail to capture the full extent of crime due to underreporting and lack of reliable data (Karimu, 2014). Perception-based studies can complement official records by highlighting unreported incidents and providing a more comprehensive picture of crime occurrence.

Crime and fear of crime directly affect urban livability, economic stability, and social cohesion—key components of the Sustainable Development Goal 11 (SDG 11) on sustainable cities and communities. However, few studies have explored the intersection between crime perception and sustainable urban development in Nigeria. Given the rising crime rates and the apparent ineffectiveness of governmental measures to address the issue, it is imperative to examine residents' perceptions of crime incidence within their built environment. Against this backdrop, this study evaluates residents' perceptions of crime occurrence in Ibadan North Local Government Area. By informing policy recommendations and contributing to sustainable Urban Safety Strategies.

2.1   Methododology

A systematic multi-stage sampling technique was employed to obtain relevant primary data for the study. In the initial stage, the twelve (12) existing political wards in Ibadan North Local Government Area (LGA) were identified and delineated. Subsequently, these wards were categorized based on residential density into high, medium, and low-density areas. Specifically, seven (7) wards (1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, and 12) were classified as high-density, three (3) wards (8, 9, and 11) as medium-density, and two (2) wards (5 and 10) as low-density.).

In the next stage, a balloting method was used to select two wards each from the high- and medium-density categories, while purposive sampling was employed to select the two wards within the low-density category. Consequently, a total of six (6) political wards were chosen for the study.

For this study, five indices were developed to assess various dimensions of crime. These indices include the Crime Occurrence Index (COI), the Causes of Crime Index (CCI), the Effects of Crime Index (ECI), the Crime Prevention Index (CPI), and the Crime Hotspot Index (CHI). The COI and CCI were utilized to evaluate the incidence and underlying causes of crime in the study area. The ECI measured the potential effects of crime on victims, while the CPI assessed various crime prevention strategies. Finally, the CHI was employed to analyze the physical elements contributing to crime hotspots.

The sampling frame comprised all residential buildings within the selected wards, as the survey targeted household heads residing in these buildings.

A specific percentage of 20.0% of the residential buildings were systematically sampled, and within each selected building, a household head was randomly chosen for questionnaire administration. Overall, a total of 209 questionnaires administered using the household heads.

During the questionnaire administration process, buildings within each selected political ward were systematically numbered. The first building was purposively selected, and subsequently, every fifth building was chosen for sampling. Within each selected building, the first available adult resident willing to participate and provide the necessary information was purposively selected, regardless of their residential status. Questionnaire distribution continued within each ward until the required number of responses was obtained.

3.   Results and Discussion

3.1   Socio-Economic Characteristics

The study findings indicate that a majority (61.7%) of respondents were female, while 38.3% were male. A higher proportion of female respondents was recorded in both high- and low-density residential areas, whereas male respondents were more prevalent in medium-density residential areas. The overall predominance of female respondents was attributed to the higher female population recorded in the 2006 National Census for the study area. Additionally, the engagement of a greater number of women in home-based activities have contributed to their higher representation in the survey sample.

Table 1. Distribution of Copies of the Questionnaire Administered

Selected Wards	Number of Areas	Density	Number of Residential Buildings	Number of Copies administered
1	5	High	155	31
4	9	High	275	55
5	6	Low	180	37
10	5	Low	155	31
11	3	Medium	90	18
12	6	Medium	180	37
Total	34		1045	209

Source: Authors' Field Survey (2025).

Respondents' ages were categorized into three groups, using 18 years as the benchmark for legal adulthood in Nigeria. The majority of respondents in the high-density residential wards (Ward 1: 54.8%; Ward 4: 85.4%) and low-density wards (Ward 5: 75.7%; Ward 10: 63.3%) were between 18 and 35 years old. In contrast, the majority of respondents in medium-density wards (Ward 11: 55.6%; Ward 12: 73.3%) were aged between 35 and 50 years. Overall, 63.2% of respondents fell within the 18–35 age bracket. This demographic trend is significant, as it aligns with the National Youth Development Policy (2009), which defines individuals within this age range as youth. If properly harnessed, this youthful population could be a vital asset for socioeconomic development. Conversely, if their potential remains untapped, they could become a source of social unrest and economic instability, as noted by Okechukwu (2012).

With regard to ethnicity and religion, nearly all respondents (99.5%) were Nigerians. The ethnic composition comprised 86.1% of Yoruba, 9.3% of Igbo, and a small percentage from other ethnic groups. In terms of religious affiliation, 64.7% identified as Christians, 34.8% as Muslims, and 0.5% as adherents of African traditional religions. The fact that all respondents subscribed to a religious belief is noteworthy, as most religious doctrines emphasize moral responsibility and discourage criminal behavior. The religious influence may play a crucial role in shaping attitudes toward crime and ethical conduct.

Regarding income levels, the Oyo State Government established a minimum wage of ₦30,000 in 2020, which served as the baseline for income classification in this study. A substantial proportion (44.3%) of respondents reported earning above ₦50,000 per month, with a concentration of such individuals in Wards 4, 10, 11, and 12. Meanwhile, 36.8% of respondents earned below ₦30,000 per month, primarily in Wards 1 and 5. Additionally, 5.0% of respondents earned between ₦30,000 and ₦40,000, while 13.9% fell within the ₦40,001–₦50,000 income bracket. The findings suggest a significant income disparity across different residential densities, which may have implications for socioeconomic well-being, access to basic amenities, and vulnerability to crime. Lower-income groups, particularly those earning below the state's minimum wage, may be at greater risk of economic hardship, which could potentially influence crime patterns and social stability in the study area.

3.2   Incidences of Crime

Findings show that more than two-fifths (41.8%) of respondents had resided in the study area for a period ranging between one and five years, while 32.3% had lived there for over a decade. Additionally, 15.9% had spent between six and ten years in the area, and 10% had been residents for less than a year. The fact that over 48% of respondents had lived in the area for more than five years suggests a higher likelihood of them providing reliable and informed responses regarding crime experiences and neighborhood conditions.

The spatial distribution of crime experiences among respondents varied across different residential densities. A higher proportion of residents in low-density areas (51.5%) reported having experienced crime in their locality, followed by 43.0% in high-density areas, while the medium-density areas recorded the lowest proportion at 25.5%. Interestingly, the observed prevalence of crime victimization in medium-density areas, despite the lower overall proportion, aligns with the assertion by The Conversation (2016) that students are more vulnerable to criminal activities. Given that medium-density areas are predominantly occupied by students, their lifestyle and perceived financial vulnerability may make them prime targets for crime.

Further spatial variations were observed in the specific types of crimes experienced across different residential densities. The most frequently reported crimes included robbery, burglary, fraud, and cybercrime. Robbery, characterized by offenders seeking to forcibly take valuables from victims, was identified as a major crime across all residential categories. The highest proportion of robbery victims was recorded in low-density areas (36.8%), followed by high-density areas (22.1%) and medium-density areas (9.1%). Burglary was also prevalent, with 9.3% of respondents in high-density areas, 5.5% in medium-density areas, and 8.8% in low-density areas reporting incidents. Fraud was another common crime, affecting 7.0% of respondents in high-density areas, 5.5% in medium-density areas, and 2.9% in low-density areas. These findings suggest that while violent crimes such as robbery are more pronounced in low-density areas, property-related crimes like burglary and fraud are also significantly experienced across all residential categories.

An analysis of the temporal patterns of crime revealed that robbery predominantly occurs at night, as reported by a substantial proportion of respondents across different political wards. This aligns with the conventional understanding that criminal activities, particularly violent crimes, are more likely to occur under the cover of darkness, when surveillance and police presence may be limited. In contrast, cybercrime was reported to occur at any time of the day, indicating its non-restrictive nature regarding time of occurrence. Additionally, respondents generally agreed that crimes rarely take place in the morning or afternoon, suggesting that daytime activities, higher human movement, and social interactions may serve as deterrents to crime. In general, these findings provide critical insights into crime distribution, types, and patterns across different residential densities.

3.3 The Causes of Crime in the Study Area

Table 3 examined residents' perceptions regarding the primary causes of crime, measured using the Causes of Crime Index (CCI). Findings indicate notable variations in the perceived causes of crime across different residential densities. According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (2016), variations can be attributed to the complex characteristics of neighborhoods, including economic disadvantages, spatial segregation, land use patterns, levels of social control, social capital, and trust, as well as the influence of adjacent communities.

Regarding neighborhood population density, a notable proportion of respondents in high-density areas (40 individuals) perceived their neighborhood as moderately populated. Similarly, 76.1% of respondents in low-density areas and 27.1% in medium-density areas also shared this perception. This finding suggests that while high-density areas are typically expected to have high population concentration, subjective perceptions of population density may vary based on factors such as housing layout and infrastructure.

Table 2: **Respondents' Perceived Level of Occurrence of in the Study Area**

Crime Types	COI for the Study Area (Densities)					
	High		Medium		Low	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Robbery	19	22.1	5	9.1	25	36.8
Cybercrime	2	2.3	0	0.0	0	0.0
Illicit drugs	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Occultism	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Burglary	8	9.3	3	5.5	6	8.8
Bribery and corruption	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Fraud	6	7.0	3	5.5	2	2.9
Money laundering	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Terrorism	0	0.0	3	5.5	0	0.0
Kidnapping	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Murder	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Rape	2	2.3	0	0.0	2	2.9
Total	86	41.1	55	26.3	68	32.6

Source: Authors' Field Survey (2021).

Table 3:   **Causes of Crime in the Study Area**

Causes	CCI for the Study Area (Densities)		
	High	Medium	Low
	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)
Unemployment and poor database	48 (55.8%)	55 (100.0%)	33 (45.6%)
Wrong system of government	50 (58.1%)	36 (65.5%)	31 (45.5%)
Poverty	56 (65.1%)	53 (96.4%)	31 (45.5%)
Overpopulation	42 (48.8%)	42 (76.4%)	31 (45.5%)
Corruption	42 (48.8%)	45 (81.8%)	25 (36.8%)
Drugs abuse	43 (50.0%)	42 (76.4%)	31 (45.5%)
Weak judicial system	42 (48.8%)	40 (72.7%)	15 (17.4%)
Peer pressure	48 (55.8%)	51 (92.7%)	29 (42.6%)
Ethnicity and nepotism	30 (34.9%)	33 (60.0%)	18 (26.5%)
Weak institution and powerful individual	29 (33.7%)	34 (61.8%)	36 (52.9%)

Source: Authors' Field Survey (2025).

In high-density residential areas, poverty emerged as the most significant perceived cause of crime, with 65.1% of respondents strongly agreeing. Other major contributing factors identified by residents included a flawed system of governance (58.1%) and both unemployment and poor database management, as well as peer pressure, each cited by 55.8% of respondents. Findings suggest that economic hardship and governance challenges play a crucial role in crime occurrence within densely populated areas, where limited access to resources and employment opportunities may exacerbate social tensions and criminal tendencies.

In medium-density residential areas, unemployment and poor database management were overwhelmingly perceived as the leading cause of crime, with all respondents (100%) strongly agreeing. Additionally, poverty (96.4%) and peer pressure (92.7%) were identified as significant contributing factors. The unanimous agreement on unemployment and poor database management as primary drivers of crime highlights systemic challenges in tracking and managing employment and population data. A lack of structured records may contribute to difficulties in crime prevention and law enforcement efforts, thereby increasing crime rates in these areas.

For low-density residential areas, the predominant cause of crime, as identified by 52.9% of respondents, was weak institutions and the influence of powerful individuals. Additionally, 45.6% of respondents attributed crime to unemployment and poor database management, while other contributing factors—including a flawed system of governance, poverty, overpopulation, and drug abuse—were each cited by 45.5% of respondents. The emphasis on weak institutions and the role of influential individuals suggests that crime in low-density areas may be linked to systemic corruption, lack of effective law enforcement, and the ability of powerful actors to evade accountability. No doubt, findings reinforce the argument that crime is a multidimensional issue shaped by economic, political, and social factors. The variations in perceived causes across residential densities underscore the need for context-specific interventions

3.4   Effects of Crime on Residents

The effects of crime in the study area were categorized using the framework established by Taylor (1995) in The Impact of Crime on Community, which classifies crime effects into social, economic, psychological, and behavioral dimensions. Findings reveal slight variations in the perceived effects of crime across different residential densities, as reported by respondents.

In high-density residential areas, loss of property (economic impact) and disruption of a peaceful atmosphere (social impact) emerged as the most significant effects of crime, with 57.0% of respondents strongly agreeing. Additionally, increasing fear (psychological impact) was identified as a major consequence by 54.7% of respondents, reflecting heightened anxiety and perceived insecurity among residents. Pain and suffering, another social impact, was reported by 53.5% of respondents, suggesting that crime in high-density areas not only results in material losses but also has profound emotional and psychological consequences for victims and the broader community. The prevalence of these effects underscores the vulnerability of residents in densely populated areas, where crime may be more frequent due to socio-economic challenges, overcrowding, and limited law enforcement presence.

In medium-density residential areas, increased desire to relocate (psychological impact) was the most significant effect of crime, with 52.7% of respondents strongly agreeing and suggests that crime contributes to residential instability, as individuals seek safer environments. Furthermore, increasing fear was identified by 50.1% of respondents, reinforcing the psychological toll of crime. Reduction of people's involvement in community-related matters (behavioral impact) and suicidal thoughts (psychological impact) were also reported by 47.3% of respondents each. These findings highlight the potential for crime to erode social cohesion and community participation, as residents become more withdrawn due to safety concerns. The presence of suicidal thoughts as a reported consequence indicates the severity of crime's psychological impact, which could have broader implications for mental health and well-being.

In low-density residential areas, disruption of a peaceful atmosphere (social impact) was the most frequently cited effect of crime, with 61.8% of respondents strongly agreeing and suggests that crime in these areas is particularly disruptive to the general sense of security and tranquility.
Pain and suffering (social impact) was the next major effect, reported by 58.8% of respondents, followed by increasing fear (psychological impact) at 57.4%. The predominance of these effects suggests that, while crime rates may be lower in low-density areas

compared to high-density neighborhoods, its impact on residents' perception of safety and emotional well-being remains significant.

The findings emphasize that crime has far-reaching consequences beyond direct victimization, affecting individuals' psychological states, social interactions, and overall community stability. The prevalence of increasing fear across all residential densities suggests that crime contributes to a widespread sense of insecurity, regardless of the neighborhood type. However, the specific effects vary by residential density. While high-density areas experience higher economic and social losses, medium-density areas face psychological and behavioral consequences, and low-density areas report disruptions to tranquility and emotional well-being.

3.5 Availability of Crime Prevention Mechanisms

The presence of crime prevention mechanisms plays a critical role in deterring criminal activities and enhancing community safety. Findings indicate that a significant proportion of respondents across all residential densities acknowledged the availability of various security measures within their neighborhoods. An overwhelming majority of respondents confirmed the presence of street lighting, with 80.2% in high-density areas, 87.3% in medium-density areas, and 91.2% in low-density areas reporting its availability. Street lighting, a key component of urban infrastructure, enhances visibility and serves as a deterrent against criminal activities, particularly those that thrive in poorly lit environments. The high prevalence of street lighting across all densities suggests an intentional effort to enhance environmental security through improved illumination.
Similarly, gated communities were widely reported, with 73.3% of respondents in high-density areas, 85.5% in medium-density areas, and 80.9% in low-density areas affirming that their residential areas were enclosed by gates. Gated communities restrict unauthorized entry, thereby serving as a security measure to regulate the movement of individuals and vehicles. T he higher percentage in medium-density areas suggests a heightened emphasis on controlled access, possibly due to a mix of residential and commercial activities that require additional security measures.

Table 4:   **Effects of Crime in the Study Area**

Effects		ECI for the Study Area (Densities)		
		High	Medium	Low
		F (%)	F (%)	F (%)
Behavioural	Reduction of people's involvement in community-related matters	38 (44.2%)	26 (47.3%)	17 (25.0%)
	Pain and suffering	46 (53.5%)	22 (40.0%)	40 (58.8%)
Social	Loss of property	49 (57.0%)	23 (41.8%)	24 (35.3%)
	Lower quality of life	35 (40.7%)	24 (43.6%)	21 (30.9%)
	Isolation	33 (38.4%)	22 (40.0%)	37 (54.4%)
	Decreased neighbourhood satisfaction	37 (43.0%)	22 (40.0%)	18 (26.5%)
	Increased desire to relocate	38 (44.2%)	29 (52.7%)	36 (52.9%)
Psychological	Increasing fear	47 (54.7%)	28 (50.1%)	39 (57.4%)
	Suicidal thoughts	37 (43.0%)	26 (47.3%)	33 (48.5%)
	Depression	36 (41.9%)	18 (32.7%)	29 (42.6%)
	More mistrust between neighbours	36 (41.9%)	20 (36.4%)	37 (54.4%)
Social-psychological	Decreased willingness to intervene in events on the street	35 (40.7%)	24 (43.6%)	29 (42.6%)
	Less cooperation	37 (43.0%)	18 (32.7%)	37 (54.4%)
	Decrease in house value	36 (41.9%)	13 (23.7%)	22 (32.4%)
Economic	Decrease socio-economic status	37 (43.0%)	20 (36.4%)	37 (54.4%)
	Disruption of a peaceful atmosphere	49 (57.0%)	15 (27.3%)	42 (61.8%)

Source: Authors' Field Survey (2021).

Another common preventive measure is the use of security doors and burglary-proof installations, reported by 70.9% of respondents in high-density areas, 87.3% in medium-density areas, and 67.6% in low-density areas. These reinforcements act as barriers against forced entry and home invasions, particularly in areas prone to burglary and robbery. The slightly lower percentage in low-density areas may be attributed to fewer reported crime incidents, reducing the perceived necessity for such reinforcements.

Additionally, more than half of the respondents across all residential densities acknowledged the presence of other security mechanisms such as wall fences, surveillance cameras, government security agencies, private security firms, voluntary security groups, and indigenous security practices.

Measures collectively contribute to crime prevention by enhancing surveillance, fortifying properties, and fostering community-based security initiatives. Despite the reported presence of various crime prevention mechanisms, security challenges persist within and around the study area. Notably, the Sahara Reporter (2021) highlighted recurrent social unrest in Labiran, a neighboring community, indicating that the mere presence of security infrastructure does not guarantee absolute safety. This suggests that crime prevention requires a multi-dimensional approach that goes beyond physical security enhancements.

3.6 Respondents Perception of Crime Prevention Mechanism in the Study Area

Respondents' perceptions regarding the most effective crime prevention mechanisms varied across different residential densities, reflecting the unique security challenges and infrastructural differences in each area.

In high-density residential areas, government security agencies were rated as the most effective crime prevention mechanism, as indicated by 64.0% of respondents. This suggests a strong reliance on formal law enforcement structures in densely populated areas, where crime rates are typically higher due to overcrowding and socio-economic challenges. Private security agencies were the second most preferred mechanism (62.8%), indicating that residents also trust privately hired security personnel for neighborhood safety. Street lighting and security door/burglary-proof installations were equally valued (61.6%), reinforcing the importance of environmental design in crime prevention.

In medium-density residential areas, street lighting emerged as the most effective crime prevention mechanism, with 80.0% of respondents emphasizing its role in enhancing visibility and deterring criminal activities. Security doors and burglary-proof installations ranked second (72.7%), highlighting residents' emphasis on personal and household security. Additionally, wall fencing and indigenous security knowledge were perceived as equally important (70.9%). The appreciation of indigenous security practices suggests that community-based security strategies, such as local vigilante groups and traditional conflict resolution methods, remain relevant in ensuring safety.

Conversely, in low-density residential areas, surveillance cameras and government security agencies were identified as the most effective crime prevention mechanisms, with 85.3% of respondents endorsing their effectiveness. Finding suggests a greater emphasis on technological surveillance in less populated areas, where monitoring large residential properties can be challenging. Security doors and burglary-proof installations were also widely regarded as effective (79.4%), while private security agencies were strongly preferred by were strongly preferred by 64.7% of respondents.

3.7 Crime Hotspot

The study examined key crime-prone locations within the study area, with abandoned structures emerging as the most significant crime hotspot across all residential densities. 79.1% of respondents in high-density areas, 70.9% in medium-density areas, and 70.0% in low-density areas identified abandoned buildings as primary crime hotspots. Structures likely serve as hideouts for criminal activities, providing cover for illicit operations due to their secluded and often neglected state. The high prevalence of abandoned buildings as crime hotspots underscores the impacts of urban decay and inadequate property management on community safety.

In high-density residential areas, additional crime hotspots included bushy pathways (41.9%) and bus terminals (40.7%). Locations may facilitate criminal activities due to their low visibility, lack of surveillance, and transient nature of users, making them ideal spots for theft, robbery, and other crimes. In medium-density residential areas, public schools were the second most significant crime hotspot, as reported by 54.5% of respondents. This finding suggests that schools, particularly during after-school, may be vulnerable to criminal activities such as vandalism, gang-related incidents, or illicit drug activities.

Similarly, liquor joints and bus terminals were reported as crime-prone areas, with 52.7% of respondents identifying them as hotspots. Liquor joints are often linked to alcohol-induced altercations, illicit transactions, and gang activities, while bus terminals may attract petty crimes such as pickpocketing and fraud, given the high volume of commuters. A similar pattern was observed in low-density residential areas, where public schools (57.4%) and bus terminals (54.5%) were identified as key crime hotspots. It suggests that, irrespective of residential density, public spaces with limited surveillance and high human traffic remain vulnerable to criminal activities.

The predominance of abandoned structures as crime hotspots across all residential densities highlights the negative impact of neglected urban spaces on security. Unoccupied and dilapidated buildings provide opportunities for criminal activities, emphasizing the need for urban renewal policies, stricter property regulations, and redevelopment initiatives to mitigate crime risks.

Table 6: Crime Prevention Mechanisms in the Study Area **Source:** Authors' Field Survey (2021).

Preventive mechanisms	CPI for the Study Area (Densities)		
	High	Medium	Low
	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)
Street light	53 (61.6%)	44 (80.0%)	42 (61.8%)
Gated community	43 (50.0%)	36 (65.4%)	39 (57.4%)
Security door/burglary proof	53 (61.6%)	40 (72.7%)	54 (79.4%)
Wall fenced	35 (40.7%)	39 (70.9%)	49 (72.1%)
Surveillance camera	54 (62.8%)	36 (65.4%)	58 (85.3%)
Government security agency	55 (64.0%)	32 (58.2%)	58 (85.3%)
Private security agency	54 (62.8%)	37 (67.3%)	44 (64.7%)
Voluntary security agency	50 (58.1%)	37 (67.3%)	42 (61.8%)
Indigenous Knowledge	48 (55.8%)	39 (70.9%)	41 (60.3%)

Table 7: Respondents' Perception on Crime Hotspots in the Study Area

| Physical elements	CHI for the Study Area (Densities)		
	High	Medium	Low
	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)
Abandon structures	68 (79.1%)	39 (70.9%)	48 (70.6%)
Liquor joints	18 (20.9%)	29 (52.7%)	18 (26.5%)
Bushy pathways	36 (41.9%)	28 (50.9%)	33 (60.0%)
Bus terminals	35 (40.7%)	29 (52.7%)	30 (54.5%)
Public schools	53 (61.6%)	30 (54.5%)	39 (57.4%)

Source: Authors' Field Survey (2021).

Figure 1 illustrates the identified crime hotspots within the study area, as reported by respondents. In high-density residential areas, 34.9% of respondents highlighted specific locations as crime-prone, including Agbadagbudu, Yemetu Agip, Bere, Kanike, Odoye, Oke-Are, Yemetu, and the Omolewa axis. These areas may experience higher crime rates due to factors such as population density, economic challenges, and inadequate security infrastructure.

In contrast, only a small proportion (3.6%) of respondents in medium-density areas acknowledged crime hotspots, specifically pointing to Poly Junction and Poly Road. The relatively lower identification of hotspots in medium-density areas could suggest better security presence or lower crime visibility. Interestingly, no respondents in low-density residential areas identified any specific crime hotspots, indicat-ing that these areas may experience fewer security concerns or that crime incidents are more dispersed rather than concentrated in particular locations.

This spatial variation in crime hotspot identification reinforces the link between urban structure, population density, and crime patterns. High-density areas, with their greater human activity and socio-economic complexities, appear more prone to crime clustering, necessitating targeted crime prevention and urban safety strategies.
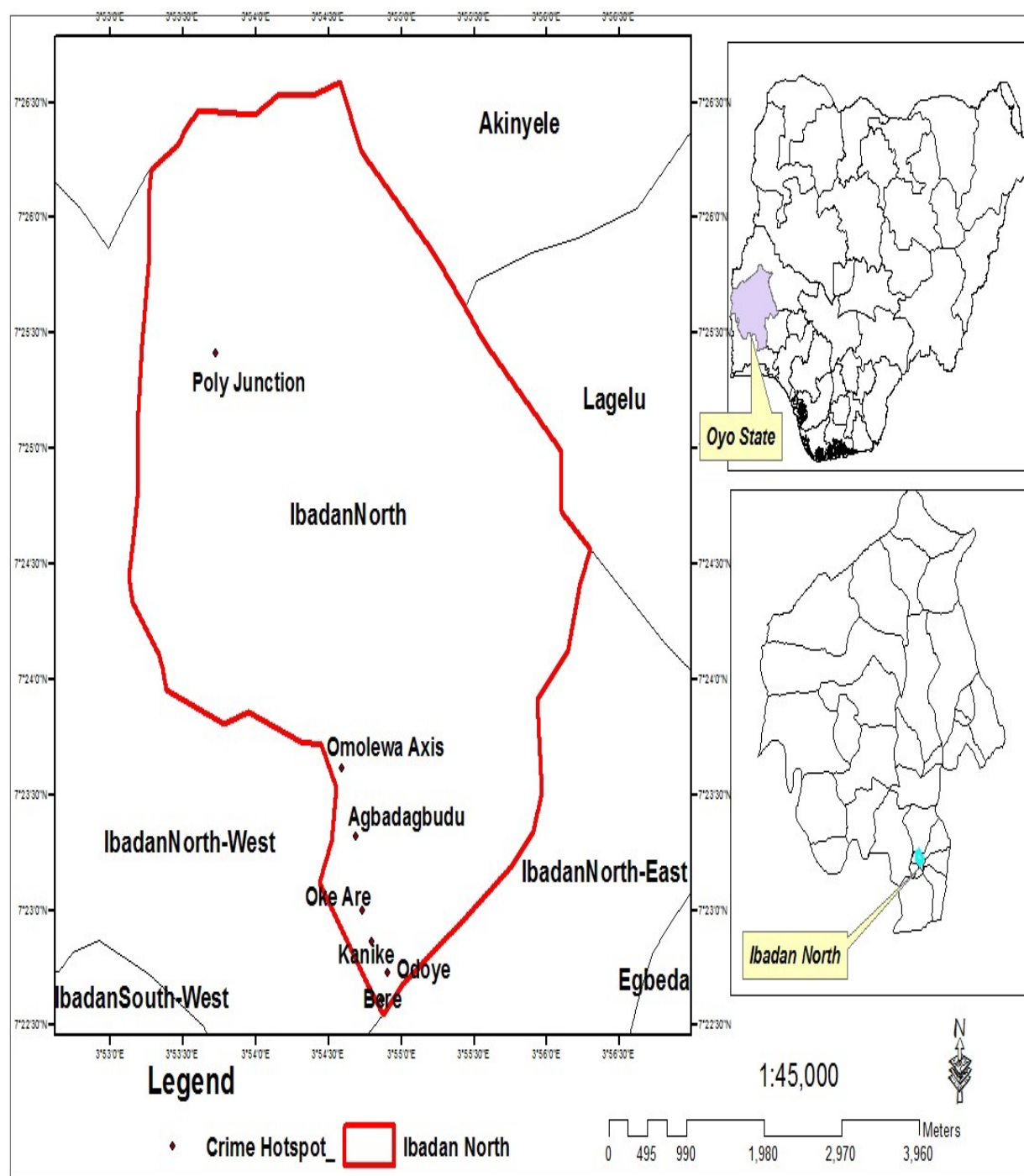
Figure 1: Map of the Study Area showing Crime Hotspots.

Source: Authors' Field Survey (2021).

3.8   Respondents' Perceived Level of Safety in the Study Area

Table 8 shows that fewer than half of respondents described their living environment as either 'very safe' or 'safe.' The majority of respondents (54.7%) in high-density areas, 50.9% in medium-density areas, and 48.5% in low-density areas—reported feeling only 'fairly safe.'

crime across residential densities. Addressing crime hotspots can deter criminal activities and reduce their frequency. Additionally, physical structures that contribute to crime should be either demolished or repurposed for the collective benefit of residents.

This prevailing sense of moderate safety suggests that residents navigate their daily lives with an underlying fear of potential threats. Such pervasive anx-

Table 8: Respondents' Perceived Level of Safety in the Study Area

Responses		Residential densities		
		High	Medium	Low
Very safe	F	7	3	1
	%	8.1	5.5	1.6
Safe	F	22	17	14
	%	25.6	30.9	20.5
Fairly safe	F	47	28	33
	%	54.7	50.9	48.5
Not safe	F	7	6	0
	%	8.1	10.9	0.0
Not safe at all	F	3	1	0
	%	3.5	1.8	0.0
No response	F	0	0	20
	%	0.0	0.0	29.4
Total	F	86	55	68
	%	41.1	26.4	32.5

Source: Authors' Field Survey (2021).

4. Recommendations

To create a safer environment for living, working, and recreation, the following measures are recommended:

• Crime should be addressed as a public health issue, utilizing awareness campaigns and modern technology to ensure widespread reach. Given that crime patterns vary across different areas, a one-size-fits-all approach is unlikely to yield effective results.

• The government should foster an environment conducive to economic growth, as poverty, unemployment, weak institutions, and unchecked influential individuals have been identified as key drivers of

iety may be indicative of ongoing security challenges or a lack of confidence in existing crime prevention measures. It highlights the need for targeted interventions to enhance community safety and foster a greater sense of security among residents.

• Support mechanisms should be established for crime victims, given the significant impact crime has on mental health. Crime prevention strategies should also be strengthened through the continuous training and capacity-building of security personnel. Urban spaces should be redesigned to integrate conventional safety measures that help curb criminal activities effectively.

5. Conclusion

This study, using Ibadan North Local Government in Oyo State as a case study, examines crime incidence and its effects on residents. Findings indicate that crime is widespread in the area, and residents also experience crime in other locations, emphasizing that no space is entirely safe—crime occurs when an offender's activity intersects with that of a potential victim or target.

Public perceptions of crime significantly shape community sentiments and influence trust in the criminal justice system. Studies suggest that individuals who perceive their neighborhoods as unsafe are more likely to adopt precautionary behaviors and exhibit reduced confidence in law enforcement. Moreover, the fear of crime can alter social interactions, making some residents more isolated and distrustful of others.

It is imperative for policymakers and law enforcement agencies to take public concerns seriously by implementing proactive measures such as increasing police presence and adopting community policing strategies. Strengthening relationships between residents and security agencies can also foster collaboration in crime prevention efforts. By addressing public perceptions of crime and implementing targeted interventions, safer and more cohesive communities can be established, ensuring that residents feel secure and empowered.

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