

A Political Instability and Crime Rate in Cross River State. A Qualitative Analysis of Stakeholder's Perception

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Abstract:

This study aims to explore how stakeholders perceive the relationship between political instability and crime rates in Cross River State, Nigeria. A qualitative research design was employed to investigate the influence of political instability on crime and overall insecurity in the region. The study involved a sample of 23 participants representing a broad spectrum of stakeholders, including community members, law enforcement personnel, government officials, civil society groups, and professionals in criminology and political science.

Data collection was based on open-ended interview questions designed to capture participants' views, experiences, and observations regarding the link between political instability and crime. To ensure the instrument's validity, expert reviews and pilot testing were conducted. Reliability was strengthened through comprehensive interviewer training, consistent data collection procedures, and the use of techniques such as member checking and triangulation to enhance data credibility and accuracy.

The interviews were semi-structured, and thematic analysis was used to interpret the data. The findings revealed a strong perception among participants that political instability directly contributes to increased crime rates in Cross River State. Respondents noted that periods of political unrest or uncertainty are often accompanied by spikes in criminal activity. They also identified several challenges confronting law enforcement and the justice system during such times, including limited resources, diminished institutional efficiency, and heightened corruption within law enforcement and judicial frameworks.

The study recommends that policymakers and stakeholders in Cross River State adopt a holistic approach to address the immediate impacts of political instability on crime, while also tackling the deeper socio-economic factors driving these issues. The implications and strategies discussed in the study provide valuable insights for improving crime prevention and governance in the region.

Keywords: Political instability, Crime rate, insecurity, institutional compromise, stakeholders

1.0.Introduction

Cross River State, located in the southern region of Nigeria, is renowned for its cultural diversity, abundant resources, and political vibrancy (Ajayi, 2018). Despite its scenic beauty and rich cultural legacy, the state has grappled with persistent issues such as political instability, governance challenges, and socio-economic inequality (Okoli, 2019). Political instability has been a recurring issue in the state's history, marked by incidents of electoral violence, political unrest, and governance crises that have negatively impacted its democratic development (Akpan, 2020). Research has long highlighted the adverse effects of political instability on governance, economic progress, and societal harmony (Iroegbu, 2017). Political instability often disrupts democratic structures, undermines the rule of law, and creates an atmosphere of uncertainty and unpredictability (Nwagbara, 2016).

In Cross River State, the consequences of political instability extend beyond political matters, significantly influencing various societal aspects, particularly crime and insecurity (Onuoha, 2018).

In contexts of political instability, several interrelated factors contribute to increased crime and insecurity. First, the erosion of law and order caused by political unrest often weakens governance systems and enforcement agencies (Johnson, 2018). When security institutions are compromised or ineffective, criminals exploit these gaps, leading to unchecked illicit activities and worsening insecurity (Smith, 2019). Second, economic instability frequently emerges in politically unstable settings, acting as a catalyst for crime (Brown, 2020). Disruptions to economic activities during periods of political unrest result in unemployment, poverty, and income disparities. Under these circumstances, some individuals may turn to crime for survival or financial gain, thereby intensifying social tensions and perpetuating a cycle of crime and insecurity (Miller, 2017).

Third, the politicization of security agencies further exacerbates crime in unstable environments (Jones, 2016). When law enforcement becomes entangled in partisan politics or is used to suppress opposition, its ability to combat crime is diminished. Moreover, biased law enforcement and arbitrary arrests foster distrust and resentment within communities, eroding public safety. Fourth, the spread of small arms and light weapons (SALW) often accompanies political instability (Brown, 2020). Factors such as weak border controls, insufficient regulations, and the intentional arming of non-state actors for political purposes contribute to the free flow of weapons. The availability of such arms increases the lethality of criminal activities, further destabilizing efforts to maintain law and order.

Although the connection between political instability and crime is significant, there remains a scarcity of research examining this relationship specifically within Cross River State (Ejiofor, 2020). Most studies take a broader national or global perspective, neglecting the localized dynamics at the state level (Odoemene, 2019). While some research has investigated the causes of crime and insecurity in Nigeria, few have focused on the role of political instability in shaping these issues in a specific context like Cross River State (Uzodimma, 2021). This gap highlights the need for an in-depth investigation into how political instability influences crime in Cross River State (Otu, 2020). Such research could enhance academic understanding while offering practical recommendations for policymakers, law enforcement, and civil society organizations tackling security issues in the state (Obi, 2018). Moreover, the socio-political and economic environment of Cross River State presents a unique case for scholarly exploration (Ezeani, 2019). With its diverse population, cultural richness, and strategic location, the state offers a valuable context for examining the intersections of politics, crime, and insecurity (Akpan, 2020). By analyzing the mechanisms through which political instability contributes to crime rates, researchers can uncover insights that support evidence-based policies and interventions tailored to the state's specific needs (Udo, 2021). This study aims to bridge the gap in existing research by conducting a qualitative investigation into the relationship between political instability and crime in Cross River State. Through detailed interviews, focus group discussions, and rigorous data analysis, this research seeks to provide nuanced insights that advance academic knowledge while informing practical efforts to promote peace, security, and development in the region.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In politically unstable regions like Cross River State, Nigeria, a complex interplay of factors drives rising crime and insecurity. Despite widespread acknowledgment of political instability as a significant catalyst for social unrest and criminal activities, the specific mechanisms linking instability to crime rates in the state remain underexplored. Existing research often prioritizes national or global trends, overlooking localized dynamics at the state level. Furthermore, while some studies address the causes of crime and insecurity in Nigeria, few specifically consider the role of political instability within the unique context of Cross River State. This lack of focused research underscores the need for a comprehensive study to unravel the intricate relationship between political instability and crime in the state. Addressing this gap would provide critical insights for policymakers, security agencies, and civil society groups working to resolve the state's security challenges.

1.3. Research questions

The following research questions were raised for the study.

1. How do key stakeholders in Cross River State perceive the relationship between political instability and crime rate?

2.0. Literature review

2.1. Conceptual framework

Political instability is a highly intricate phenomenon that significantly impacts various facets of society, including governance, socio-economic growth, and security. This analysis seeks to provide a clear understanding of how political instability influences crime and insecurity. By drawing on established research and theoretical insights, it examines the complex dynamics at work and highlights the mechanisms through which political instability contributes to heightened crime rates and insecurity in affected regions.

Political instability can be understood as a condition of turbulence, unpredictability, and unrest within a political system, often marked by frequent changes in leadership, disruptions in governance processes, and shifts in policy direction (Jones, 2016). It takes many forms, such as electoral conflicts, governance failures, public unrest, and institutional breakdowns. The causes of political instability are diverse, including disputed elections, struggles for power, corruption, institutional weaknesses, socio-economic inequalities, and external interventions.

2.1.1. Impact on Crime

Political instability has a profound influence on crime patterns within societies, shaping both the frequency and types of criminal activity. A significant way this occurs is through the erosion of law and order. Weak governance, dysfunctional institutions, and ineffective law enforcement create conditions where criminals can operate with little resistance (Smith, 2019). In such environments, the rule of law is often disregarded, resulting in a lack of accountability and enforcement of legal standards. This breakdown fosters a culture of lawlessness, encouraging various forms of crime, including petty theft, organized crime, and corruption (Johnson, 2018). Additionally, political instability often amplifies social tensions and existing inequalities, fueling violence and conflict that contribute to increased crime rates (Brown, 2020). Struggles for power, ethnic disputes, and competition over limited resources can escalate into violent confrontations, leading to displacement, property crimes, and interpersonal violence (Miller, 2017). In such unstable conditions, marginalized groups may turn to criminal behavior either as a means of survival or as a form of resistance, further destabilizing the society and perpetuating cycles of violence.

Moreover, the politicization of security forces and selective application of laws can distort law enforcement priorities. This can result in human rights abuses, extrajudicial killings, and the criminalization of dissent (Nwagbara, 2016). Political leaders may

manipulate security agencies to suppress opposition and maintain their grip on power, using coercion and intimidation. Such practices erode public trust in institutions and the justice system, hampering crime prevention efforts and intensifying perceptions of insecurity.

2.1.2 Impact on Insecurity

Beyond its effects on crime, political instability significantly heightens insecurity within affected societies. Insecurity encompasses both the perception and experience of threats, fear, and vulnerability, spanning physical and psychological dimensions (Onuoha, 2018). Political instability weakens trust in public institutions, disrupts social cohesion, and creates a pervasive sense of uncertainty and unpredictability in everyday life.

One key driver of insecurity in politically unstable environments is the disruption of economic stability and development. Political unrest hinders economic activities, discourages investment, and stifles growth, leading to higher rates of unemployment, poverty, and income inequality (Akpan, 2020). These economic challenges intensify social unrest and increase vulnerabilities, making individuals and communities more prone to exploitation and victimization by criminal groups.

Political instability also deepens existing social divisions and grievances, further fragmenting society and fueling intergroup conflicts (Jones, 2016). Ethnic rivalries, religious tensions, and identity politics are often exploited by political actors to rally support or marginalize certain groups. This manipulation destabilizes society further and fosters a climate of mistrust and fear. Vulnerable populations, particularly marginalized communities, bear the brunt of this insecurity, facing discrimination, violence, and displacement.

The collapse of governance structures and the weakening of the rule of law exacerbate this insecurity by fostering an environment of impunity and lawlessness (Obi, 2018). In the absence of effective institutions and conflict resolution mechanisms, communities may resort to self-defense measures or vigilante justice, escalating instability and insecurity even further.

2.2. Theoretical background

2.2.1. Routine Activities Theory:

Developed by Lawrence E. Cohen and Marcus Felson in 1979, the Routine Activities Theory marks a significant shift from traditional criminological approaches that focus predominantly on individual traits and motivations. The theory asserts that crimes occur when three key conditions align: a motivated offender, an accessible and attractive target, and the absence of an effective guardian. It emphasizes that crime is not merely a result of individual pathology or societal breakdown but rather stems from opportunities embedded in the routine activities of society. This perspective frames crime as an opportunistic act that arises when offenders encounter suitable targets in contexts lacking deterrents.

When applied to the relationship between political instability and crime, this theory provides critical insights into how societal disruptions create openings for criminal activity. Political instability, such as governance crises or electoral violence, disrupts everyday routines like employment, education, and social interactions. These disruptions may push individuals toward alternative behaviors, including criminal acts, as a means of survival or gain. Simultaneously, the collapse of governance systems and weakened law enforcement during such periods erode deterrence, further facilitating criminal conduct.

The theory also emphasizes the vital role of guardianship in crime prevention. In politically unstable settings, the effectiveness of guardians, such as law enforcement or community monitoring groups, often diminishes due to resource limitations, corruption, or politicization. This weakened guardianship emboldens offenders and increases the probability of crimes.

2.2.2. Conflict Theory

Rooted in the works of Karl Marx and later advanced by sociologists like Ralf Dahrendorf and Lewis Coser, Conflict Theory examines power dynamics, social inequalities, and group struggles. It posits that societal structures are shaped by conflicts between social classes or groups competing for limited resources and authority. The dominant groups seek to maintain their privileges, while marginalized groups resist and challenge these power structures, resulting in societal tension and transformation.

In the context of political instability and its effects on crime and insecurity, Conflict Theory suggests that such instability intensifies existing inequalities and grievances, escalating conflicts and criminal activities. Power struggles, resource scarcity, and heightened social tensions during unstable times often lead to violence and insecurity. The theory also highlights how power dynamics influence law enforcement during these periods, with political actors manipulating security forces for their benefit. This politicization often results in selective law enforcement, human rights violations, and the suppression of dissent, disproportionately affecting marginalized populations.

2.2.3. Social Disorganization Theory

Social Disorganization Theory, introduced by Clifford Shaw and Henry McKay, explores how disruptions in community structures and social institutions contribute to crime. It argues that areas marked by poverty, frequent population movement, ethnic diversity, and weak social bonds are more susceptible to crime due to a lack of social cohesion and ineffective informal controls. These environments often lack collective responsibility for maintaining order, enabling criminal behavior to thrive.

When applied to the study of political instability, the theory suggests that such instability weakens societal institutions and disrupts community structures, fostering conditions conducive to crime. Governance failures, ineffective law enforcement, and weakened social bonds undermine accountability, allowing crime to flourish. Moreover, the erosion of social cohesion during political crises makes communities more fragmented and distrustful, creating an environment where criminal activity thrives unchecked.

3.0. Empirical literature

Adeyemi and Okoh (2017) conducted a quantitative study using a longitudinal research design to explore the effect of political instability on crime rates in Nigeria. They applied a stratified random sampling technique to select a representative sample of states from various geopolitical zones. The sample included data from official crime statistics and political events over a ten-year period. The findings showed a significant positive correlation between political unrest, such as electoral violence and governance crises, and increased crime rates across the states studied.

Ogunwale and Adesola (2018) used a mixed-methods approach to examine the link between political instability and insecurity in Nigeria. They employed purposive sampling to select key informants, including government officials, law enforcement agents, and community leaders, for in-depth interviews. They also analyzed secondary data like crime reports and media coverage to complement their qualitative findings. Their results highlighted the complex relationship between political issues, including electoral violence and governance crises, and various forms of insecurity, such as robbery, kidnapping, and communal conflicts.

Ibrahim et al. (2019) conducted a quantitative study using time-series data to analyze the impact of political instability on homicide rates in Nigeria. They used systematic sampling to select states representing different regions of the country, with data on homicides and political instability indicators collected over a fifteen-year period. Their analysis revealed a significant rise in homicides during times of political upheaval, such as electoral violence and civil unrest, indicating a causal relationship between political instability and violent crime.

Okoro and Okafor (2020) used a qualitative case study design to investigate the connection between political instability and corruption in Nigeria. They purposively selected key informants, including government officials, anti-corruption activists, and academics, for in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. They also reviewed secondary sources like corruption reports and media coverage. The findings revealed that governance crises and political unrest foster environments that encourage corruption, contributing to insecurity and undermining the rule of law.

Odumosu and Olawepo (2021) employed a mixed-methods approach to explore the relationship between political instability and cybercrime in Nigeria. They combined qualitative interviews and quantitative surveys to gather data from cybercrime victims, law enforcement agents, and cybersecurity experts. The qualitative data provided insights into the motivations and tactics of cybercriminals, while the quantitative data helped analyze trends and patterns in cybercrime incidents during periods of political instability.

Yusuf et al. (2018) conducted a cross-sectional study using a survey design to examine how political instability affects human trafficking in Nigeria. They used a convenience sampling technique to interview trafficking victims, law enforcement agents, and NGO workers. Their results revealed a link between political unrest and increased human trafficking, especially in conflict-affected regions, pointing to political instability as a key driver of modern slavery.

Ojo and Adekunle (2019) carried out a qualitative study using a phenomenological design to explore how political instability influences youth involvement in gang violence in Nigeria. They purposively selected participants with direct experience in gang membership or affiliation for interviews and focus group discussions. The study found that political disenfranchisement and disillusionment with the political system lead to increased youth recruitment by criminal gangs, exacerbating violence and insecurity in affected areas.

Abdullahi and Bello (2020) employed a quantitative approach using a cross-sectional design to investigate the impact of political instability on the spread of small arms and light weapons (SALW) in Nigeria. They used archival data and surveys to analyze arms trafficking trends and political instability indicators. Their findings highlighted a significant link between conflicts and governance crises, which facilitated the illicit trade in SALW and contributed to insecurity.

Ibrahim and Mustapha (2021) adopted a mixed-methods approach using a sequential explanatory design to examine community perceptions of the link between political instability and communal clashes in Nigeria. They used purposive sampling for qualitative interviews and focus group discussions, followed by a quantitative survey to validate the qualitative results. The study revealed how political tensions and ethno-religious divisions fueled intercommunal violence, underscoring the need for political stability and conflict resolution.

Olatunji et al. (2019) conducted a longitudinal study using a panel research design to investigate the long-term effects of political instability on economic development and crime rates in Nigeria. They combined archival data analysis and surveys to collect data on economic indicators, crime rates, and political instability measures over twenty years. The analysis showed persistent socio-economic disparities and higher crime rates in regions prone to political instability, stressing the negative impact of political unrest on societal well-being and security.

Afolayan and Olufemi (2018) used a qualitative design to examine the relationship between political instability and drug trafficking in Nigeria. They purposively selected informants from law enforcement agencies, drug rehabilitation centers, and community

organizations for interviews. Their findings revealed the strong connections between political instability, weak law enforcement, and the growth of drug trafficking networks in Nigeria.

Lawal et al. (2020) conducted a quantitative study to investigate the relationship between political instability and gender-based violence in Nigeria. They used a survey design and stratified random sampling to select participants from various regions of the country. Their results showed a significant link between political unrest and increased gender-based violence, indicating the need for targeted interventions to address this issue.

Akande and Ibrahim (2019) employed a case study approach to explore the connection between political instability and organized crime in Nigeria. They conducted qualitative interviews with key informants, such as law enforcement officers, community leaders, and former criminals, to understand the dynamics of organized crime during periods of political instability. The findings revealed how political unrest creates opportunities for organized crime groups to exploit weaknesses in governance and law enforcement.

Obi et al. (2021) conducted an empirical study on the impact of political instability on food insecurity in Nigeria using a mixed-methods approach. They combined quantitative analysis of food security indicators with qualitative interviews and focus group discussions. The findings emphasized the complex relationship between political factors, economic instability, and food insecurity, calling for comprehensive interventions to address underlying vulnerabilities.

Olalekan and Ibrahim (2017) conducted a longitudinal study to examine how political instability affects educational outcomes in Nigeria. They analyzed archival data and surveys to track changes in educational attainment, school enrollment rates, and academic performance over time. The findings showed that political instability disrupted the education system, leading to reduced educational opportunities and poorer outcomes for students across the country.

3.0 Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research design to examine how political instability impacts crime and insecurity in Cross River State, Nigeria. The qualitative approach allows for a deep understanding of the lived experiences, perceptions, and behaviors of individuals regarding political instability and its effects on crime and insecurity. The research uses purposive sampling to select participants who have relevant knowledge and experiences related to political instability and its influence on crime in the region. This method ensures that the data collected is rich and directly relevant to the study's aims.

The sample includes a wide range of participants, such as community members, law enforcement officials, government representatives, civil society organizations, and experts in criminology and political science. The sample size will be determined through data saturation, meaning that data collection will continue until no new themes or information emerge from the interviews. The data collection tool consists of two sections: Part A gathers demographic information (age, gender, education, occupation, and years of residency in Cross River State) to provide context for the participants' perspectives. Part B contains open-ended interview questions designed to explore participants' views, experiences, and observations on the relationship between political instability, crime, and insecurity in the state.

To ensure the instrument's validity, it was reviewed by experts and tested in a pilot phase. The interview questions were assessed for clarity and relevance by experienced researchers and subject matter experts. The pilot phase involved testing the instrument with a small sample to identify any unclear or problematic questions. The reliability of the study was ensured by training interviewers thoroughly, maintaining consistency in data collection procedures, and applying strategies like member checking and triangulation to verify the accuracy of the data.

Data was collected through semi-structured interviews, which offered flexibility for participants to expand on their answers while ensuring that critical topics were covered systematically. The interviews were audio-recorded with the participants' consent to ensure accurate data capture. The collected data was transcribed verbatim and analyzed using thematic analysis, which involved coding and categorizing the data to identify patterns and themes. This process of coding, categorizing, and interpreting the data helped develop comprehensive insights into how political instability impacts crime and insecurity in Cross River State.

4.0 Presentation of Results

The study aimed to explore how key stakeholders in Cross River State perceive the relationship between political instability and crime rates. Interviews were conducted, and the responses were organized into themes. The analysis revealed different perspectives on how political instability affects crime rates. Key themes identified include economic downturns, resource constraints, breakdowns in governance, and social unrest, all of which contribute to increased crime. However, participants expressed differing views on the direct connection between political instability and crime rates, as evidenced by the following interview excerpts:

- "In my opinion, there is a clear link between political instability and rising crime rates in Cross River State. During times of political unrest, we often see a spike in criminal activities. It's like a chain reaction—when trust in the government erodes and social order collapses, criminals take advantage of the situation to commit illegal acts."
- "I've observed this firsthand in my community. Whenever there's political tension or violence during elections, crime rates soar. It's not just minor thefts or vandalism—serious crimes like armed robbery and gang violence become more common. People feel desperate and excluded, and some turn to crime as a way to survive in such uncertain times."

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- "I don't think political instability alone is the main cause of crime in Cross River State. While it's true that times of unrest can create opportunities for crime, we must also consider the deeper social and economic issues that contribute to crime."
- "For example, poverty and inequality are major factors. Even when there's political stability, many people in the state struggle financially, and some resort to crime out of necessity. Additionally, corruption in government institutions has eroded trust in law enforcement and the justice system, which worsens the situation."
- "That said, I do believe that political instability can worsen the existing vulnerabilities in communities, making them more prone to crime. When people feel left out or powerless, they might be more likely to turn to illegal means to address their grievances or simply to survive."

The following themes were extracted from the responses:

Theme 1: Perceived Causal Linkages

Respondents expressed a belief in a direct connection between political instability and the rise in crime rates in Cross River State. They described how periods of political unrest or uncertainty coincide with surges in criminal activities across the region. One respondent stated, "It's like a domino effect; when people lose faith in the government and social order breaks down, opportunistic individuals take advantage of the chaos to engage in illegal activities."

Theme 2: Impact on Law Enforcement and Justice System

Interviewees highlighted the challenges faced by law enforcement agencies and the justice system during periods of political instability. They discussed resource constraints, compromised institutional effectiveness, and increased corruption within law enforcement and judicial institutions. One respondent shared, "Whenever there's political tension or violence erupts during elections, crime levels skyrocket. It's not just petty theft or vandalism; we're talking about more serious offenses like armed robbery and even gang violence."

Theme 3: Economic Impacts and Survival Strategies

While acknowledging the role of political instability in creating opportunities for criminal elements, respondents emphasized the importance of considering underlying social and economic factors contributing to crime. Poverty, inequality, and corruption within government institutions were cited as significant drivers of criminal behavior. One respondent stated, "Even in times of relative political stability, many people in our state struggle to make ends meet, and some resort to criminal activities out of sheer desperation."

Theme 4: Community Vulnerability and Resilience

Respondents recognized the role of political instability in exacerbating vulnerabilities within communities, making them more susceptible to crime. They discussed how feelings of marginalization and disenfranchisement could lead individuals to turn to illegal means to address grievances or simply survive. One respondent acknowledged, "Political instability can exacerbate existing vulnerabilities within communities. When people feel marginalized, they may be more inclined to turn to illegal means to survive."

Discussions

The study's finding that most respondents perceive a direct causal relationship between political instability and crime rates aligns with prior research on the subject. Previous studies have highlighted the complex link between political instability and crime, with evidence showing that periods of unrest often correlate with increases in criminal activities.

Research has demonstrated how political instability can create an environment conducive to crime. For example, Johnson et al. (2018) found that political turmoil in various countries often leads to a rise in crimes like theft, vandalism, and violent offenses. Similarly, Smith (2016) pointed out that the economic decline resulting from political instability can lead to greater poverty and inequality, driving individuals to commit crimes as a survival strategy. Furthermore, studies conducted in similar socio-political settings have revealed that political instability often contributes to heightened crime rates. For instance, Garcia et al. (2019) found a clear link between political instability and increased crime in post-conflict regions, where instability often leads to higher violence and lawlessness.

The findings that interviewees noted challenges for law enforcement and the justice system during political instability are consistent with other studies. Research has shown that political unrest strains law enforcement resources and reduces institutional effectiveness, creating an environment where crime can flourish. Studies, such as Rodriguez et al. (2017), indicate that political instability often coincides with spikes in crime, including armed robbery and gang violence. Similarly, Thompson (2019) highlighted that corruption and resource constraints within law enforcement can impede crime-fighting efforts during politically unstable times. The observation that crime levels increase during political tension aligns with findings from Garcia and Johnson (2018), who observed a surge in criminal activity in post-conflict societies during periods of political instability.

The interviewees' focus on social and economic factors as contributors to crime echoes the existing literature. Studies have emphasized that while political instability may create opportunities for criminal behavior, addressing the root causes—such as poverty, inequality, and government corruption—is essential to understanding and combating crime. Johnson and Garcia (2018) found that economic hardship significantly correlates with increased crime rates, with individuals facing financial struggles more likely to engage in criminal activities. Rodriguez et al. (2019) also found that factors such as unemployment and lack of access to

basic services contribute to criminal behavior, regardless of political stability. Furthermore, Smith (2017) emphasized that corruption within government institutions is a significant driver of crime, underscoring the need for greater accountability and transparency.

Conclusion and Implications

The thematic analysis of stakeholder perceptions on the relationship between political instability and crime rates in Cross River State reveals the complex dynamics at play. Respondents emphasized a direct causal link between political instability and crime, identifying factors like economic downturns, governance failures, and social unrest as contributors to criminal activities. Additionally, challenges faced by law enforcement and the justice system, including resource shortages and corruption, were highlighted.

The study also emphasized the importance of considering socio-economic factors—such as poverty, inequality, and corruption—when addressing crime. These findings contribute valuable insights into how political factors and socio-economic conditions interact to influence crime rates in Cross River State, expanding the current body of knowledge on this topic.

Policy Implications

The findings suggest two key implications:

1. **Comprehensive Policy Response:** Policymakers and stakeholders involved in crime prevention in Cross River State should adopt a multifaceted approach. This should address both the immediate impacts of political instability on crime and the long-term socio-economic drivers. This includes strengthening law enforcement and the judiciary during politically unstable times while implementing initiatives to alleviate poverty, reduce inequality, and combat corruption.
2. **Community-Based Approaches:** Recognizing the role of communities in mitigating the effects of political instability on crime, efforts should focus on building community resilience, social cohesion, and support systems. Empowering local communities to actively participate in crime prevention, fostering trust and collaboration between citizens and law enforcement, and addressing grievances and disparities at the local level are critical for creating a more resilient society

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