



## An Examination of Major Crimes Committed by People aged 1 to 34 years in Jamaica

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### Abstract

**Introduction:** Since the 1970s and 1990s, scholars have used social exclusion, social marginalization, and social segregation to examine the acts of violence committed by people, particularly young people. Crime and violence appear to be a staple in the Jamaican diet, a phenomenon that lingers on from slavery.

**Objective:** This study seeks to evaluate major crimes in Jamaica from the perspective of those aged 1 to 34 years.

**Methods and materials:** The current study employs time series data from 2010 to 2022. The research team obtained data on violent/major crimes. The data were obtained from the statistical department of the JCF. The data were stored, retrieved, and analyzed using the Statistical Packages for the Social Sciences for Windows, Version 27.0.

**Findings:** Over the 7 years (2015 to 2021), 23,465 major crimes were committed in Jamaica by those less than 35 years old. Nineteen and forty-two hundredth per cent of the major crimes were committed in 2015, which has been falling since then. Less than 4 per cent of the major crimes committed in Jamaica by those aged less than 35 years were done in 2021. Furthermore, of the total major crimes, 6.20% of them were aggravated assaults, 11.80% were break-ins, 1.97% were larceny, 18.78% were murders, 13.22% were raped, 24.11% were robberies, 23.92% were shootings. Almost seventeen per cent (16.74%) of the major crimes were done by those aged 1-17 years and 83.26% by those aged 18-34 years old. However, 65.6% of the rapes were committed by those less than 18 years, 5.97% of the murders and 5.67% of the break-ins (Table 9). In 2021, 13.73% of major crimes committed by those 1-34 years old were done by 1-17 years old, which was the least per cent of crimes committed by that aged cohort. During the studied period (2015-2021), 2019 marks the year in which most of the crimes were committed by those aged 1-17 years old (18.04%, n=640).

**Conclusion:** The findings suggest that poverty alone cannot account for the high levels of crime and violence in Jamaica. To address this issue, policies should be designed around social equality, all-inclusion, and economic equity. Such measures would enable a more comprehensive and effective solution to the crime problem in Jamaica.

**Keywords:** Aggravated assault, break-in, homicide, murder, rape, robbery, shooting

## Introduction

One of the leading criminologists in the Caribbean, Professor Anthony Harriott, indicated that in 1977, the rate of major crimes in Jamaica was 768/100,000 and that it rose to 985/100,000 in 1996 (2004). Harriott (2004) indicated that major crimes in Jamaica have been declining since 1989 when the figure was 1112.5/100,000 to 771.0/100,000 in 1998. Although Harriott postulated that major crimes have declined from 1989 to 1998, he opined "The marginalization of a high proportion of the urban poor who inhabit the slums of Kingston and the large towns of Jamaica (Spanish Town, Montego Bay) indirectly contributes handsomely to the problem of violent crimes" (Harriott, 2004a, p. 249). He provided to socioeconomic context to the crime phenomenon in Jamaica, which dates back to slavery, political independence, and the development of Kingston (see also, Beckford, 1972; Cain, 1996; Hall, 1962; Simmonds, 2004; Panza *et al.*, 2017; Paton, 2001; Pryce, 1979; Sives, 2003; Smith, 1953).

Simmonds (2004) presented a table in her work 'The problem of crime in an urban slave society' and showed that from 1800 to 1831, there were 1,798 cases of court sentencing slavery for various crimes, 2.2% of the cases led to the death penalty, and 24.6% to public whippings. After that period, there was the Sam Sharpe rebellion in 1831 and the Morant Bay rebellion in 1865 (Jamaica Information Service (JIS), 2020; National Library of Jamaica, nd; Richards, 1866), which led to the establishment of the current Jamaica Constabulary Force to address the civil upheavals.

Before the establishment of the Jamaica Constabulary Force, the slave owners maintain control through various atrocious acts of violence such as rape, domestic violence (including whipping), murders, and dismemberment to maintain control (Petley, 2018; Paton, 2001). The harsh socioeconomic climate during slavery was violent, and many slaves succumb to the travails of the plantation society in the Caribbean. The reality of the African slaves in Jamaica was aptly experienced by an editorial in the Jamaica Gleaner, which wrote:

On Jamaican plantations, the enslaved Africans worked about 12 hours daily (6 a.m. to 6 p.m.), up to six days a week. They were usually given about half an hour for breakfast and a half-hour lunch break. At the end of their routine tasks or their respective work for the day, they were also expected to do extra tasks such as putting trash in the cattle pens or carrying grass for the planters' horses (The Gleaner, 2021).

The plantation society was a blueprint of violence, inequality, and social oppression in Jamaica (Beckford, 1972), and one holds a premise for socially deviant acts exhibited by many Jamaicans. Despite the injustices and social stratifications of the plantation society (Beckford, 1972; United Nations Caribbean, 2022), these legacies have continued in Jamaica (Beckford, 1972; Gordon,

1978, 1987; United Nations Caribbean, 2022), and must hold a key in explaining the high rates of major crimes. In 2004, the preface to the book 'Crime and criminal justice in the Caribbean' forwarded that there was a Crime and Criminal Justice Conference in Barbados in 1998 and throughout the book, a common theme is the crime problem in the Caribbean (Harriott, *et al.*, 2004). Using a probability cross-sectional research design, Powell, *et al.* (2007) found that Jamaicans indicated that crime and violence were the leading national problem. Ward *et al.* (2017) said, "...violence is the fourth leading cause of premature death in Jamaica after diabetes, stroke and heart disease" (p. 4), which speaks to the devastating role of major crimes on general well-being, particularly young people (see also, Smith & Green, 2007).

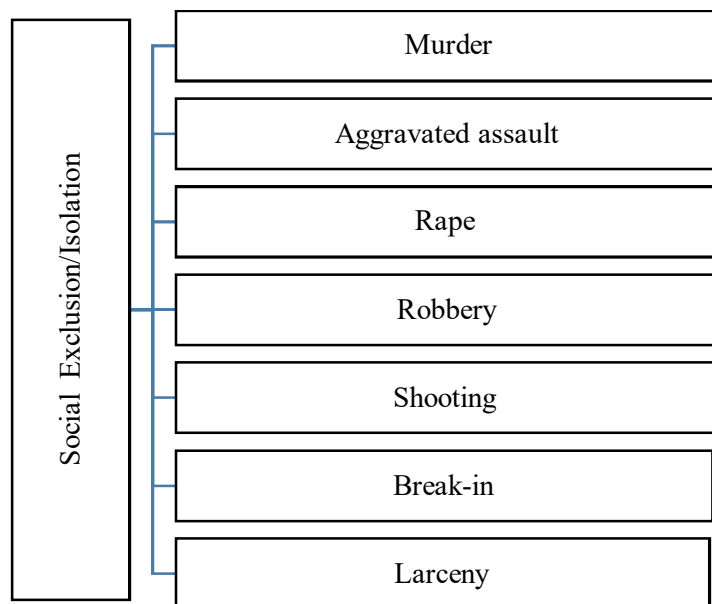
Crime and violence appear to be a staple in the Jamaican diet, a phenomenon that lingers on from slavery. In 2016, Harriott and Jones postulated, "Crime is now the main public safety issue for Jamaicans and a significant threat to the country's human and economic development" (p. ix) suggesting that the crime epidemic must be rooted in some mental issue. The literature has provided extensive coverage of information on crime and violence in Jamaica, and there can be no denying that the problem requires more research to understand the matter. Ward opined, "Youth are the primary cohort of the population that is most affected by crime and violence in Jamaica, both as victims and perpetrators" (Wards, *et al.*, 2017, p. 8), which supports a rationale for an urgent study on the crime phenomenon to safe the future of this nation. Therefore, the current study seeks to evaluate major crimes in Jamaica from the perspective of those aged 1 to 34 years. This research examines the crime pandemic from time series data, and recommendations were provided based on the emerging findings.

## Theoretical Framework

The concept of social exclusion is used in this study to examine criminality in Jamaica, particularly among those aged 1 to 34 years old. In 1974, this concept was made popular by René Lenoir, the then Secretary of State for Social Action in France (Evans, nd). He used it to refer to the 'physically disabled' and the 'mentally disabled' and 'socially maladjusted' (Evans, nd). René Lenoir believed there was a need to improve the conditions of people who have been left out or behind in society to improve social cohesion. Ebersold (1999) articulated that social exclusion as used by René Lenoir at that time in Western Europe was "...aim .., to eliminate the dangers inherent in social inequalities and in the various forms of "exclusion" that would ultimately threaten to shatter the principles on which our economic system is based (p, 1). In 1991, a committee for social cohesion, chaired by B. Fragonard, expanded social exclusion to include economic exclusion (Ebersold, 1999). Evans (nd) opined, "...the current debate has expanded this group considerably and has become more concerned with features of modern life which broadly speaking threaten to exclude people from citizenship and deny them certain rights" (p. 19).

Since the 1970s and 1990s, scholars have used social exclusion, social marginalization, and social segregation to examine the acts of violence committed by people, particularly young people (Grieve & Howard, 2004; Leary & Springer, 2001; Leary, *et al.*, 2003; Remschmidt, *et al.*, 2014; Shihadeh & Flynn, 1996; The University of British Columbia, nd; Thomas & Shihadeh, 2019; Tung, *et al.*, 2019) as well as one's psychological status (Leary, *et al.*, 2006; Weir, 2012)

and emotional disturbance (Merrell& Walker, 2004). The literature uses social exclusion to explain murder and robbery (Shihadeh& Flynn, 1996), shooting (Leary, *et al.*, 2003; The University of British Columbia, nd), and violent crimes, generally (Remschmidt, *et al.*, 2014). Based on the literature this employs a conceptual model that social isolation influences major crimes committed by people aged 1 to 34 years in Jamaica (see Figure 1.



**Figure 1: Conceptual model of social isolation influencing major crimes**

## Methods & Materials

The current study employs time series data from 2010 to 2022. The research team obtained data on violent/major crimes (aggravated assault, break-in, larceny, murders/intentional homicides, rape, robberies, and shootings). The data were obtained from the statistical department of the Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF). The JCF is the only statutory agent that is responsible for collecting and reporting data on crimes committed and arrests made by police. Each year the statistical department of the JCF collects and distributes data on major crimes in Jamaica. The JCF has an interval mechanism that collects, processes verify and publishes statistics on major crimes. The statistics on major crimes are in keeping with the established standards of data on major crimes. The purpose of collecting and publishing data on major crimes is to assist policy maker to understanding the status of crimes in society, and for them to employ social intervention programmes to address the crime phenomenon.

The research team obtained the data from the statistical department of the JCF and converted the file from Microsoft Excel to the Statistical Packages for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for Windows, Version 28.0. The data were stored, retrieved, and analyzed using SPSS. Descriptive statistics and per cents were computed on data, and the results were displayed in tables. The research team also performed bivariate analyses in the form of chi-square and analysis of variance, which were also presented in tabular forms.

## Definition of terms

**Murder/Intentional Homicide** - Murder or intentional homicide in Jamaican law is defined as the unlawful killing of a person with intent or malice aforethought. This means that the perpetrator had the specific intent to cause the victim's death or acted with reckless disregard for human life.

**Robbery** - Robbery in Jamaican law is the unlawful taking of property from another person by force or threat of force.

**Shooting** - Shooting in Jamaican law is the act of discharging a firearm with the intent to harm another person or property. Shooting may be charged as an offence under various Jamaican statutes such as the Firearms Act or the Offences Against the Person Act.

**Violent/Major Crime** - Violent/major crime in Jamaican law refers to criminal offences that involve physical harm or threat of harm to a person or property. This includes offences such as murder, robbery, rape, assault, and battery. These crimes are considered serious offences in Jamaica and carry significant penalties.

**Larceny** - Larceny in Jamaican law is the unlawful taking and carrying away of another person's property with the intent to permanently deprive the owner of that property. Within the Larceny Act are several different categories of Larceny, e.g. Larceny as a Servant, Larceny by Finding, Praedial Larceny, etc.

**Rape**- Rape in Jamaican law is defined as unlawful sexual intercourse with another person without their consent. Rape is a serious criminal offence in Jamaica and is punishable by imprisonment for a term of years or life. Jamaican law also recognizes other forms of sexual offences such as sexual assault, sexual harassment, and incest.

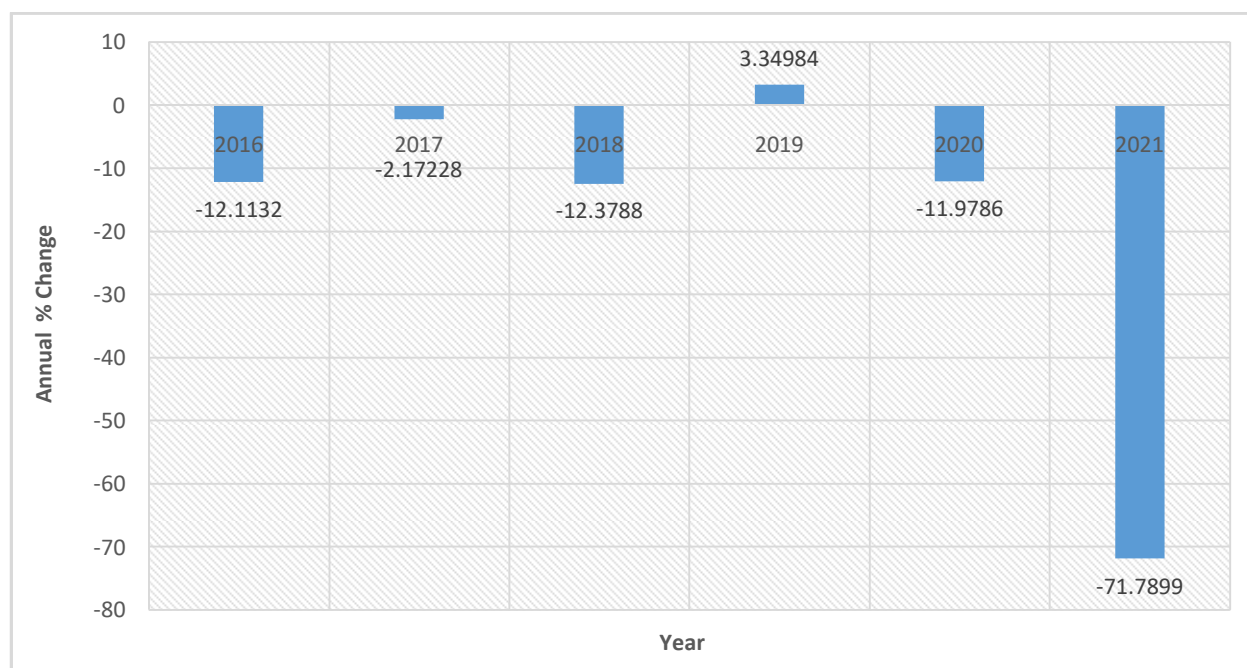
## Findings

Table 1 presents the number of major crimes committed by people aged 1 to 34 years in Jamaica from 2015 to 2021. Over the 7 years (2015 to 2021), 23,465 major crimes were committed in Jamaica by those less than 35 years old. Nineteen and forty-two hundredth per cent of the major crimes were committed in 2015, which has been falling since then. Less than 4 per cent of the major crimes committed in Jamaica by those aged less than 35 years were done in 2021. Furthermore, of the total major crimes, 6.20% of them were aggravated assaults, 11.80% were break-ins, 1.97% were larceny, 18.78% were murders, 13.22% were raped, 24.11% were robberies, 23.92% were shootings.

**Table 1: Number of Major Crimes Committed by people aged 1 to 34 years in Jamaica**

Year	Aggravated Assault	Break-in	Larceny	Murder	Rape	Robbery	Shooting	Total	%
2015	332	688	151	680	572	1,345	789	<b>4,557</b>	19.42
2016	257	466	87	723	498	1053	921	<b>4,005</b>	17.07
2017	222	400	64	839	470	870	1,053	<b>3,918</b>	16.70
2018	212	427	53	651	491	756	843	<b>3,433</b>	14.63
2019	211	399	55	691	509	823	860	<b>3,548</b>	15.12
2020	185	306	40	631	463	634	864	<b>3,123</b>	13.31
2021	37	83	12	192	99	176	282	<b>881</b>	3.75
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,456</b>	<b>2,769</b>	<b>462</b>	<b>4,407</b>	<b>3,102</b>	<b>5,657</b>	<b>5,612</b>	<b>23,465</b>	100.00
<b>%</b>	<b>6.20</b>	<b>11.80</b>	<b>1.97</b>	<b>18.78</b>	<b>13.22</b>	<b>24.11</b>	<b>23.92</b>	<b>100.00</b>	

Figure 1 depicts a bar graph of the annual per cent change in major crimes committed in Jamaica by people aged 1 to 34 years old. For the 7 years (2015-2021), generally, major crimes committed by people the 7 years have been declining witexcept19. In 2019, there was a 3.35% rise in major crimes committed by those aged 1 to 34 years in Jamaica over the previous year. However, in 2021 over 2020, there was an exponential decline in major crimes committed by people 1 to 34 years in Jamaica (71.79%).



**Figure 1: Annual per cent change in major crimes committed in Jamaica by people aged 1 to 34 years old**

Table 2 presents the probabilities of major crimes committed by people aged 1 to 34 years in Jamaica from 2015 to 2021. In 2015 (of the 4,557 cases of major crimes committed by people aged 1 to 34 years old), the majority of the cases were robberies (probability equals 0.2952 or 29.52%) followed by shootings (probability equals 0.1731 or 17.31%), and break-ins (probability equals 0.1510 or 15.10%), with the least being larceny (probability equals 0.0331 or 3.31%).



Furthermore, 5 of the 7 years saw shootings being the highest (2017 to 2021) and robberies occupying the remaining 2 years (2015 and 2016). The highest number of cases of major crimes committed by people aged 1 to 35 years were shootings and this occurred in 2021 (probability equals 0.3201 or 32.01%).

**Table 2: Probability of Major Crimes Committed by people aged 1 to 34 years in Jamaica**

Details	2015	2016	2017	2017	2019	2020	2021
Aggravated assault	0.0729	0.0642	0.0567	0.0618	0.0595	0.0592	0.0420
Break-in	0.1510	0.1164	0.1021	0.1244	0.1125	0.0980	0.0942
Larceny	0.0331	0.0217	0.0163	0.0154	0.0155	0.0128	0.0136
Murder	0.1492	0.1805	0.2141	0.1896	0.1948	0.2020	0.2179
Rape	0.1255	0.1243	0.1200	0.1430	0.1435	0.1483	0.1124
Robbery	0.2952	0.2629	0.2221	0.2202	0.2320	0.2030	0.1998
Shooting	0.1731	0.2300	0.2688	0.2456	0.2424	0.2767	0.3201
<b>Total</b>	<b>1.0000</b>	<b>1.0000</b>	<b>1.0000</b>	<b>1.0000</b>	<b>1.0000</b>	<b>1.0000</b>	<b>1.0000</b>

Table 3 presents the number of major crimes committed by people aged 1 to 34 years in Jamaica and the probabilities of the type of crime. The findings revealed that robberies are mostly committed by people aged 1 to 34 years old in Jamaica (probability equals 0.2411 or 24.11%) followed by shootings (probability equals 0.2392 or 23.92%), with larceny being the least committed major crime over the period (probability equals 0.0197 or 1.97%)

**Table 3: Number of Major Crimes Committed by people aged 1 to 34 years in Jamaica by the probability of each type of crime**

Details	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Total	Probability
Aggravated assault	332	257	222	212	211	185	37	1456	0.0620
Break-in	688	466	400	427	399	306	83	2769	0.1180
Larceny	151	87	64	53	55	40	12	462	0.0197
Murder	680	723	839	651	691	631	192	4407	0.1878
Rape	572	498	470	491	509	463	99	3102	0.1322
Robbery	1345	1053	870	756	823	634	176	5657	0.2411
Shooting	789	921	1053	843	860	864	282	5612	0.2392
	4557	4005	3918	3433	3548	3123	881	23465	1.0000

Table 4 presents the probability of Major Crimes Committed by people aged 1 to 34 years old in Jamaica and by year (2015 – 2021). The findings revealed that most of the aggravated assaults committed by people aged 1 to 34 years old were mostly carried out in 2015 (probability equals 0.2280) as well as the break-ins (probability equals 0.2485), larceny (probability equals 0.3268), rape (probability equals 0.1844), and the robbery (probability equals 0.2378). However, most of the murders were committed in 2017 (probability equals 0.1904)

**Table 4: Probability of Major Crimes Committed by people aged 1 to 34 years old in Jamaica and by year**

	<b>Aggravated Assault</b>	<b>Break-in</b>	<b>Larceny</b>	<b>Murder</b>	<b>Rape</b>	<b>Robbery</b>	<b>Shooting</b>
2015	0.2280	0.2485	0.3268	0.1543	0.1844	0.2378	0.1406
2016	0.1765	0.1683	0.1883	0.1641	0.1605	0.1861	0.1641
2017	0.1525	0.1445	0.1385	0.1904	0.1515	0.1538	0.1876
2018	0.1456	0.1542	0.1147	0.1477	0.1583	0.1336	0.1502
2019	0.1449	0.1441	0.1190	0.1568	0.1641	0.1455	0.1532
2020	0.1271	0.1105	0.0866	0.1432	0.1493	0.1121	0.1540
2021	0.0254	0.0300	0.0260	0.0436	0.0319	0.0311	0.0502
Prob	<b>1.0000</b>	<b>1.0000</b>	<b>1.0000</b>	<b>1.0000</b>	<b>1.0000</b>	<b>1.0000</b>	<b>1.0000</b>
Total	1456	2769	462	4407	3102	5657	5612

Table 5 presents the number of major crimes committed by people aged 1 to 34 years old in Jamaica by year (2015 – 2021) and the annual per cent change in the types of crimes. In 2021 over 2020, there was a reduction in all major crimes committed by people aged 1 to 34 years old in Jamaica, with aggravated assaults accounting for the greatest value (80.0%) followed by rape (78.62%), break-ins (72.876%), robbery (72.24%), and so forth. However, shootings had the least reduction in major crimes among the sampled perpetrators (67.36%).

Table 6 presents a disaggregation of the major crimes committed by people aged 0 and older and 1 to 34 years in Jamaica based on the year in which the crimes were committed. Of the 43,641 major crimes committed in Jamaica from 2015 to 2021, 53.77% (n=23,465) were committed by people aged 1 to 34 years old. The findings revealed that 81.25% of all rapes for the 7 years (2015-2022) were committed by people aged 1 to 34 years old, 64.89% of the robberies, 64.09% of the shootings, 31.81% of all the break-ins, and 45.75% of the murders. Furthermore, 90.15% of the shootings that took place in 2017 were committed by people aged 1 to 34 years old, and 79.16% of the robberies. However, 97.04% of the rapes committed occurred in 2018 by people aged 1 to 34 years old.

Table 7 presents the rates of major crimes per 100,000 population of people aged 1-34 years and people aged 0+ years in Jamaica from 2015-2021. In 2015, the rate of aggravated assault for the population 0+ years was 22.26 per 100,000 population compared to 12.17 for people aged 1 to 34 years old. For the 7-year study period, 2021 marks the first time that shooting among those aged 1 to 34 years old fell below double digits (to 9.97). Furthermore, the rate of major crimes committed by people aged 1 to 34 years old is 167.09 per 100,000 in 2015 and this declined to 31.15 per 100,000 in 2021.



**Table 5: Number of Major Crimes Committed by people aged 1 to 34 years in Jamaica by Annual % Change in each Type of Crime**

	Aggravated assault	Annual % change	Break-in	Annual % change	Larceny	Annual % change	Murder	Annual % change	Rape	Annual % change	Robbery	Annual % change	Shooting	Annual % change
2015	332	-	688	-	151	-	680	-	572	-	1345	-	789	
2016	257	-22.59	466	-32.267	87	-42.384	723	6.32353	498	-12.937	1053	-21.71	921	16.73
2017	222	-13.619	400	-14.163	64	-26.437	839	16.0443	470	-5.6225	870	-17.379	1053	14.3322
2018	212	-4.5045	427	6.75	53	-17.188	651	-22.408	491	4.46809	756	-13.103	843	-19.943
2019	211	-0.4717	399	-6.5574	55	3.77358	691	6.14439	509	3.66599	823	8.86243	860	2.01661
2020	185	-12.322	306	-23.308	40	-27.273	631	-8.6831	463	-9.0373	634	-22.965	864	0.46512
2021	37	-80.000	83	-72.876	12	-70.000	192	-69.572	99	-78.618	176	-72.24	282	-67.361
	1456		2769		462		4407		3102		5657		5612	

**Table 6: Number of Major Crimes Committed by people aged 1 to 34 years and the population in Jamaica by the per cent of the crimes committed by those aged 1-34 of the population**

	Aggravated assault			Break-in			Larceny			Murder		
	Pop <sub>1-34</sub>	Pop <sub>0+</sub>	%	Pop <sub>1-34</sub>	Pop <sub>0+</sub>	%	Pop <sub>1-34</sub>	Pop <sub>0+</sub>	%	Pop <sub>1-34</sub>	Pop <sub>0+</sub>	%
2015	332	607	54.69522	688	1813	37.94815	151	338	44.67456	680	1208	56.29139
2016	257	471	54.56476	466	1311	35.54539	87	189	46.03175	723	1354	53.39734
2017	222	384	57.8125	400	1187	33.6984	64	151	42.38411	839	1647	50.94111
2018	212	427	49.64871	427	1206	35.4063	53	143	37.06294	651	1287	50.58275
2019	211	394	53.5533	399	1241	32.15149	55	140	39.28571	691	1339	51.60568
2020	185	414	44.68599	306	1038	29.47977	40		#DIV/0!	631	1323	47.69463
2021	37	355	10.42254	83	908	9.140969	12		#DIV/0!	192	1474	13.02578
	1456	3052	47.7064	2769	8704	31.813	462	961	48.0749	4407	9632	45.7537

Rape			Robbery			Shooting		
Pop <sub>1-34</sub>	Pop <sub>0+</sub>	%	Pop <sub>1-34</sub>	Pop <sub>0+</sub>	%	Pop <sub>1-34</sub>	Pop <sub>0+</sub>	%
572	633	90.36335	1345	1918	70.12513	789	1077	73.25905
498	540	92.22222	1053	1432	73.53352	921	1226	75.12235
470	543	86.55617	870	1099	79.16288	1053	1168	90.15411
491	506	97.03557	756	1276	59.24765	843	1484	56.80593
509	568	89.61268	823	1214	67.79242	860	1252	68.6901
463	548	84.48905	634	1005	63.08458	864	1287	67.13287
99	480	20.625	176	773	22.76843	282	1263	22.32779
<b>3102</b>	<b>3818</b>	<b>81.24673</b>	<b>5657</b>	<b>8717</b>	<b>64.89618</b>	<b>5612</b>	<b>8757</b>	<b>64.08587</b>

where Pop<sub>1-34</sub> denotes the population of people aged 1 to 34 years old; Pop<sub>0+</sub> means the population aged 0 and older

**Table 7: Rates of Major Crimes (x 100,000 population) of the population aged 1-34 years and population 0+ years, 2015-2021**

Detail	2015		2016		2017		2018		2019		2020		2021	
	Pop 1-34	Pop0+	Pop 1-34	Pop0+	Pop 1-34	Pop0+	Pop 1-34	Pop0+	Pop 1-34	Pop0+	Pop 1-34	Pop0+	Pop 1-34	Pop0+
Aggravated assault	12.17	22.26	9.42	17.26	8.14	15.65	7.78	14.08	7.74	14.45	6.56	14.68	1.31	12.55
Break-in	25.23	66.48	17.08	48.04	14.66	37.61	15.66	43.53	14.63	45.51	10.85	36.80	2.94	32.11
Larceny	5.54	12.39	3.19	6.93	2.35	5.24	1.94	5.54	2.02	5.13	1.42	N/A	0.42	N/A
Murder	24.93	44.29	26.49	49.62	30.75	60.33	23.88	47.27	25.34	49.14	22.37	47.23	6.79	52.13
Rape	20.97	23.21	18.25	19.79	17.23	18.55	18.01	19.91	18.67	20.83	16.42	19.43	3.50	16.97
Robbery	49.32	70.33	38.59	52.47	31.89	46.77	27.73	40.31	30.18	44.52	22.48	35.63	6.22	27.34
Shooting	28.93	39.49	33.75	44.93	38.59	54.39	30.92	42.84	31.54	45.92	30.63	45.63	9.97	44.67
<b>Total</b>	<b>167.09</b>	<b>278.44</b>	<b>146.76</b>	<b>239.03</b>	<b>143.60</b>	<b>238.53</b>	<b>125.90</b>	<b>213.48</b>	<b>130.12</b>	<b>225.51</b>	<b>110.73</b>	<b>199.40</b>	<b>31.16</b>	<b>185.77</b>

where Pop<sub>1-34</sub> denotes the population of people aged 1 to 34 years old; Pop<sub>0+</sub> means the population of people aged 0 and older

The population figures for 2020 and 2021 were taken from the World Bank (2022), The figures are per 100,000 population

Table 8 presents the daily number and types of major crimes committed by people aged 1 to 34 years in Jamaica from 2015 to 2021. Generally, the daily number and types of daily crimes committed by people aged 1 to 34 years have been marginally declining, except for an exponential reduction in 2021 over 2022 (72,71%) and an increase of 3.35% in 2019 over 2018. In 2015, 12 major crimes were committed daily by people aged 1 to 34 years old and this declined by 12.35 in 2016 (to 11). Furthermore, 2 murders are committed daily by people aged 1 to 34 years in Jamaica. However, in 2015, 4 robberies were committed daily by people aged 1 to 34 years and this has been steadily declining since then.

**Table 8: Daily Number and Type of Major Crimes Committed by people aged 1 to 34 years in Jamaica**

Year	Aggravated Assault	Break-in	Larceny	Murder	Rape	Robbery	Shooting	Total	Annual % Change
2015	1	2	0	2	2	4	2	12	-
2016	1	1	0	2	1	3	3	11	-12.35
2017	1	1	0	2	1	2	3	11	-1.90
2018	1	1	0	2	1	2	2	9	-12.38
2019	1	1	0	2	1	2	2	10	3.35
2020	1	1	0	2	1	2	2	9	-12.22
2021	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	2	-71.71

Of the 23,465 major crimes committed by people aged 1 to 34 years in Jamaica, 16.74% were done by those aged 1-17 years and 83.26% by those aged 18-34 years old. However, 65.6% of the rapes were committed by those less than 18 years, 5.97% of the murders and 5.67% of the break-ins (Table 9).

**Table 9: Types of Major Crimes committed by people aged 1 to 34 years**

Types of	1-17 years	18-34 years	Total	% of the total (1-17 years)	% of the total (18-34 years)	Total %
Aggravated assault	232	1224	1456	15.93	84.07	100
Break-in	157	2612	2769	5.67	94.33	100
Larceny	50	412	462	10.82	89.18	100
Murder	263	4144	4407	5.97	94.03	100
Rape	2035	1067	3102	65.60	34.40	100
Robbery	577	5080	5657	10.20	89.80	100
Shooting	614	4998	5612	10.94	89.06	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>3928</b>	<b>19537</b>	<b>23465</b>	<b>16.74</b>	<b>83.26</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 10 presents the types of major crimes committed by people aged 1-17 years old and 18-34 years old by the year in which the crimes were committed (2015-2021). In 2021, 13.73% of major crimes committed by those 1-34 years old were done by 1-17 years old, which was the least per cent of crimes committed by that aged cohort. During the studied period (2015-2021), 2019 marks the year in which most of the crimes were committed by those aged 1-17 years old (18.04%, n=640).

**Table 10: Types of Major Crimes committed by people aged 1-17 and 18-34 years by year (2015-2021)**

Details	2015		2016		2017		2018		2019		2020		2021	
	1-17 yrs.	18-34 yrs.	1-17 yrs.	18-34 yrs.	1-17 yrs.	18-34 yrs.	1-17 yrs.	18-34 yrs.	1-17 yrs.	18-34 yrs.	1-17 yrs.	18-34 yrs.	1-17 yrs.	18-34 yrs.
Aggravated assault	39	29 3	39	21 8	38	18 4	39	17 3	41	17 0	33	15 2	3	34
Break-in	34	65 4	32	43 4	20	38 0	20	40 7	33	36 6	10	29 6	8	75
Larceny	18	13 3	10	77	7	57	9	44	4	51	2	38	0	12
Murder	56	62 4	35	68 8	55	78 4	44	60 7	42	64 9	26	60 5	5	18 7
Rape	37 6	19 6	30 6	19 2	30 0	17 0	31 7	17 4	35 4	15 5	31 3	15 0	69	30
Robbery	17 4	11 71	12 3	93 0	10 6	76 4	63	69 3	68	75 5	36	59 8	7	16 9
Shooting	81	70 8	10 8	81 3	14 3	91 0	84	75 9	98	76 2	71	79 3	29	25 3
<b>Total</b>	<b>77 8</b>	<b>37 79</b>	<b>65 3</b>	<b>33 52</b>	<b>66 9</b>	<b>32 49</b>	<b>57 6</b>	<b>28 57</b>	<b>64 0</b>	<b>29 08</b>	<b>49 1</b>	<b>26 32</b>	<b>12 1</b>	<b>76 0</b>
<b>%</b>	<b>17. 07</b>	<b>82. 93</b>	<b>16 .3</b>	<b>83. 7</b>	<b>17. 08</b>	<b>82. 92</b>	<b>16. 78</b>	<b>83. 22</b>	<b>18. 04</b>	<b>81. 96</b>	<b>15. 72</b>	<b>84. 28</b>	<b>13. 73</b>	<b>86. 27</b>

## Discussion

Jamaica Observer (2022) indicated that 875 Jamaican children have been arrested for various major crimes (aggravated assault, 65; break-ins, 175, robbery, 89; rape, 175, murders, 79; shooting, 66), which is a proper fraction of the crime pandemic. The current study found that of the 43,641 major crimes (aggravated assault, break-ins, robbery, rape, murders, shooting, larceny) committed from 2015 to 2021, 53.77 per cent of them were carried out by people aged 1 to 34 years. Furthermore, the current findings revealed that 81.25% of all rapes were committed by people aged 1 to 34 years old, 64.89% of the robberies, 64.09% of the shootings, 31.81% of all the break-ins, and 45.75% of the murders. In addition, 65.6% of all the rapes committed by those aged 1-34 years old were done by children (i.e., 1-17 years old). Globally, of the 200,000 homicides, 42% were committed by youth (aged 10 -29 years; World Health Organization,

2020), which is 3.75% less than per cent of murders carried out by young Jamaicans. Furthermore, statistics from Puzzanchera (2020) revealed that young Americans accounted for 49% of all youth arrests for major crimes and 57% for aggravated assaults, which is comparable to the Jamaican experience.

The extent of the crime pandemic in Jamaica even extends beyond the previously mentioned findings as 90.15% of the shootings that took place in 2017 were committed by people aged 1 to 34 years old, and 79.16% of the robberies. However, 97.04% of the rapes committed occurred in 2018 by people aged 1 to 34 years. The crime statistics presented in this research appear daunting within the content of a crime conference that sought to provide the solution to the pandemic in 1998 (Harriott, 2004a) and many studies that have been conducted over the years to include policy recommendations and crime control (Robotham, 2003; Harriott, 2004b, 2009; Jones, 2014). It begs the question, what are we doing wrong in the quest for a solution to the crime pandemic in Jamaica?

A study of 114 offenders (males, 103; females, 11) whose average age was  $17.6 \pm 1.9$  years found that violent behaviour was associated with psychosocial factors (Renschmidt *et al.*, 2014). Renschmidt *et al.* (2014) when young people were treated from a psychosocial perspective, the degree of repeated behaviour was significantly reduced. In the Caribbean, policymakers have never sought to address crime from a psychosocial and economic perspective, which would take into consideration social exclusion, inequality, social oppression, and their influence on cognitive functionality and by extension behaviour.

This study is theorizing a new pathway in crime solution, a mental health or psychological approach. For decades, high social inequality has existed in Jamaica (Gordon, 1978, 1987) and this has perpetrated social oppression. Smith & Green (2007) opined, "In sum, the academic literature suggests that oppressive environments are closely linked to hostility and violence. Therefore, policymakers must focus on both prevention and intervention strategies to reduce children's exposure to violence and youth involvement in violence. To prevent and reduce violence in ensuing generations, risk factors at all levels of the ecological system must be addressed, preferably simultaneously" (p. 423). For decades, many Jamaican children have been living in socially excluded environments, and this was not brought into the discourse of crime and violence.

A study by Killen *et al.* (2002) found that children interpret the social exclusion they live in and this produces a certain response, socially maladjusted youths and adults (Bynner, 1999; Colorado Department of Education, 2015; Merrell & Walker, 2004). which must be brought into the discussion of the crime pandemic in Jamaica and the wider Caribbean. Merrell & Walker (2004) articulated that social maladjustment is "operationalized as a pattern of engagement in purposive antisocial, destructive, and delinquent behaviour" (p. 901). There is much denying in Jamaica that there is social exclusion among the masses and public policies have not sought to address this reality. Harriott (2004a) referred to the social exclusion of the urban poor in Jamaica as marginalization. It is this structured marginalization, social exclusion, and social isolation from the system this internalized by the people and is fueling the crime monster in Jamaica. Social oppression and exclusion have translated into psychologically maladjusted young people, which

accounts for the crime pandemic highlighted by the current study. Young people are merely using antisocial acts to beckon to the ruling class that they need a change in the system and that they desire equity.

The involvement of young people in criminality is an expression of their dissatisfaction with the social structure and nothing else. These young people are labelled as socially, emotionally, and psychologically maladjusted, and the reality is the system is using power on the people instead of examining their silent voices. Socially, emotionally, and psychologically maladjusted people need to be listened to (Taylor, 2011) instead of the current firsthand power relations of the system and more social exclusion. A critical aspect of human existence is the feeling of belonging to something and when this is hampered, people may be withdrawn, engage in antisocial behaviour, and be socially maladjusted (Evans, *et al.*, nd). This point is adequately articulated by Evans *et al.*, (nd) who wrote “..., social exclusion may have close empirical relations to other social problems that threaten the stability and prosperity of society at large such as crime, violence, social pathologies, societal divisions, racism, xenophobia, etc. (p. 5)”

The solution to the crime problem, therefore, has been circumvented for decades, marginalization or social exclusion, and while the powered class lingers as to whether it should include the masses in rearing the benefits in that society, structure an all-equitable system, foster a sense of belonging in society and have political inclusion for the people, the fruits of their actions are the involvement of more young people into criminality. The reality is, socially excluding children from society is influencing their psychological state, and this is brought into adulthood. Bynner (1999) expressed it this way, “Socio-economic background is one of the main predictors of cognitive development that provide the underpinnings of educational achievement, and on which much success in later life depends” (p. 3). Clarke (2006) articulated that political independence on August 6, 1962, did not address the colonial structure of inequality and exclusion of the masses (see also, Kelly, 2020). The social exclusion, social rejection, or marginalization of the masses has cascaded from the plantation society (Alexander, 1977; Austin-Broos, 1994; Gordon, 1978, 1989; Smith, 1965, 1984) and these are producing aggressive, frustrated, retaliatory, and political apathetic people (Eisenberger, 2012; Weir, 2012).

Many people are not cognizant that social exclusion or rejection is one of the most ‘painful’ experiences for a human because people thrive on social connections, the ‘need to belong’ or the most basic human motivation (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Bowlby, 1969; Eisenberger, 2012; James, 1890; Pond, *et al.*, 2014). According to Pond *et al.*, (2014), “social exclusion reduces cognitive performance” and this means that by ‘breaking the bond’ of belonging to Jamaica, young people are retaliation against a system that has isolated them. The crime pandemic is, therefore, an indication of the depletion of the self-regulatory energy of young people, and accounts for their destructive behaviour as well as explains the high degree of aggression and frustration they exhibit (see, Leary, & Springer, 2001; Leary, *et al.*, 2006).). Pond *et al.* opined, “Perhaps due to these self-regulatory deficits, socially excluded people engage in a variety of self-defeating behaviors”, and so offers some context for the engagement of young Jamaicans in criminality as well as their eagerness in the retaliatory acts. Furthermore, studies have shown that there is a relationship between feeling rejected and domestic violence (Barnard, *et al.*, 1982; Crawford & Gartner, 1992), and this explains our thesis that social exclusion and rejection in



Jamaica are accounting for the crime pandemic. One study goes further than establishing a relationship between social exclusion and domestic violence to school shootings (Leary, *et al.*, 2003) and aggression (Pond, *et al.*, 2014).

Even outside of the study by Leary *et al.* (2003), an edited book by Grieve & Howard (2004) extensively examined the association between social exclusion and people's involvement in criminality (see also, Johnson, *et al.*, 2018; Tung, *et al.*, 2019). Shihadeh & Flynn (1996) revealed that social isolation among Blacks in the United States was associated with murder and robberies and Professor Shelley Hymel extended the impact on shooting (The University of British Columbia, nd), which this study is offering as an explanation for the high number of major crimes committed by Jamaicans less than 35 years old. The issue of isolation and its influence on youth involvement in crimes was established by Thomas *et al.* (2013) who opined, "We propose that structural resource deprivation and a weak civic participatory culture foster institutional isolation among youth, which, in turn, elevates rates of crime" (p. 1167). Therefore, Jamaican society will not adequately address the crime problem without an all-inclusive society.

## Conclusion

This research provides valuable insights into the prevalence and trends of major crimes committed by people aged 1 to 34 years old in Jamaica from 2015 to 2021. The findings indicate that, while crime and violence remain significant problems in the country, there has been a general decline in major crimes committed by this age group over the study period. Notably, there was a significant reduction in major crimes committed in 2021, which represents a positive development in the fight against crime in Jamaica.

The study's findings also reveal that robberies and shootings were the most prevalent types of major crimes committed by people aged 1 to 34 years in Jamaica, with larceny being the least committed. Moreover, the research highlights the alarming fact that a significant proportion of major crimes were committed by individuals aged less than 18 years old, particularly in cases of rape. This suggests the need for targeted interventions to address the underlying social and economic factors that contribute to youth involvement in crime and violence.

The study's findings highlight the importance of policies designed around social equality, all-inclusion, and economic equity to address the crime problem in Jamaica. Such measures could help to reduce the prevalence of major crimes committed by people aged 1 to 34 years old in Jamaica, as evidenced by the declining trend observed in this study. However, it is essential to emphasize that policy interventions should be guided by a thorough understanding of the underlying causes of crime and violence in Jamaica, which requires continued research and analysis.

There is, therefore, a further need to explore contemporary realities related to the social and economic factors that contribute to youth involvement in crime and violence in Jamaica, including poverty, social exclusion, and marginalization. Addressing these underlying factors will require a collaborative effort from policymakers, law enforcement agencies, civil society, and other stakeholders to ensure that policies are effective and sustainable.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings adduced, the researchers believe that targeted interventions should be implemented to address the underlying social and economic factors that contribute to youth involvement in crime and violence in Jamaica. These interventions could be designed to improve access to education, employment opportunities, and other essential services for young people, especially unattached youth living in poverty. By providing young people with a greater sense of social connectedness as well as the resources needed to improve their livelihood, we can help to reduce their involvement in criminal activities.

In terms of a policy framework, it is felt that going forward, the design policies geared at targeting the root causes of crime be designed and implemented to improve social inclusion and economic equity in Jamaica. Such policies could include redistributive measures, progressive taxation, and investments in social infrastructure that promote equal opportunities and reduce inequality in society. By reducing social and economic disparities, we can help to address some of the root causes of crime and violence in Jamaica.

Finally, it is recommended that law enforcement efforts should be strengthened to combat crime and violence in Jamaica while ensuring that human rights are respected and protected. This could involve measures such as community policing, intelligence-led operations, and the use of technology to enhance crime prevention and detection efforts. By improving law enforcement efforts, we can help to create a safer and more secure society for all Jamaicans.

It is also believed that future research ought to be conducted to focus on further exploring the impact of social and economic factors on youth involvement in crime and violence in Jamaica. Such research might consider conducting longitudinal studies that track young people's life trajectories to identify critical risk factors and protective factors associated with criminal behaviour. By gaining a deeper understanding of the factors that contribute to youth involvement in crime, we can design more effective interventions to prevent it.

Furthermore, it may prove useful to investigate the effectiveness of existing policy interventions in reducing crime rates in Jamaica. This could involve rigorous evaluations of policy interventions, including randomized controlled trials, to assess their impact on crime prevention and reduction. Additionally, it may prove valuable to explore the perspectives and experiences of young people who have been involved in crime and violence in Jamaica. By better understanding their motivations and experiences, we can design policies that are more responsive to their needs and that are more likely to succeed in reducing crime rates in Jamaica.

In Jamaica, major crimes were not examined from the perspective of social isolation, social segregation, and/or social exclusion. The current study forwards that the crime pandemic in Jamaica must be examined from the vantage point of social exclusion. The challenge has been that historically crime policies were designed from poverty and the evidence shows that this is not the correct prognosis. Without drafting policies around social equality, all-inclusion, and economic equity, the crime problem will never be lowered or adequately addressed in Jamaica.

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