

Crime and Poverty Nexus in Urban Ghana Research Project: Presentation of Key Findings

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Outline of Presentation

- Background: Research project's objectives
- Urbanization and crime in Ghana
- Key research findings
 - Poverty and crime are not always correlated;
 - Weakening social and community cohesion due to fortifications of houses;
 - Perceived health effects of the crime
- Conclusions and Policy implications

Background: Ghana's study's objectives

- Study attempts to bridge this knowledge gap by exploring the relationship between crime and neighbourhood socio-economic characteristics in key Ghanaian cities – Accra, Kumasi, Sekondi-Takoradi and Tamale

Specific Objectives of Research Project:

- ✓ Map and highlight the prevalent types of crime across different socio-economic neighbourhoods within cities.
- ✓ Explore the relationships between neighbourhood socio-economic characteristics and the occurrence rates, types and impact of crimes.
- ✓ Assess the effectiveness of strategies both formal and informal for addressing urban crime in urban neighbourhoods.
- ✓ Assess the study's implications for neighbourhood crime mapping and law enforcement interventions.

Methodological approach

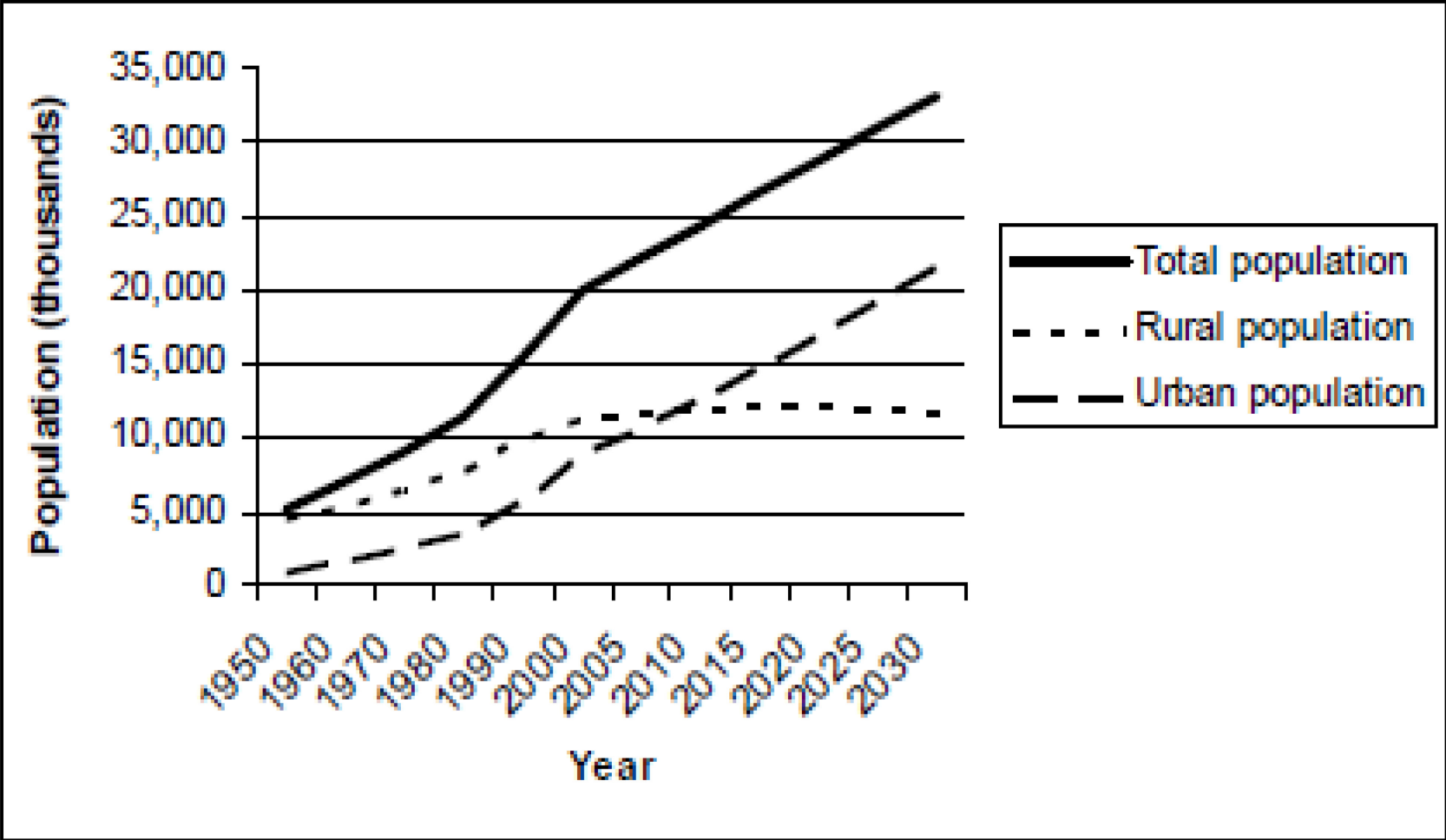
Selected Communities: Survey Sample Allocation and Number of KIIs

City	Community	Community status	SE	Households Sampled	No. of Interviews
Accra	Airport West	Upper-class		30	13
	Dansoman	Middle-class		300	
	Glefee-Dansoman	Low-class		60	
	Nima	Low-class		510	
Kumasi	Ahodwo	Upper-class		60	14
	Oforikrom	Middle-class		465	
	Aboabo	Low-class		360	
Sekondi-Takoradi	Chapel Hill	Upper-class		165	11
	Anaji Estate	Middle-class		135	
	New Takoradi	Low-class		210	
Tamale	Russian Bungalow	Upper-class		45	13
	Zogbeli	Middle-class		225	
	Aboabo-Tamale	Low-class		180	
Total				2,745	50

Urbanization and Crime in Ghana

- Ghanaian cities and towns are growing but challenged by limited employment, poor infrastructure and services, and weak governance structures.
- However, this situation has not deterred continuous influx of population, especially the youth into cities.
- Ever growing and unplanned cities population tend to overstretch the resources of the state not only in terms of services and infrastructure but also policing services (UNOWA 2007; Owusu et al 2015).
- Rapid urbanization with the context of massive sprawl of cities and overstretched services of the police and other state security agencies create opportunities for crime and insecurity (UNOWA 2007; Muggah 2012).
- ever-increasing urban middle class and income inequalities, and growing incidence of slum and poverty in Ghanaian cities;

Ghana's Total and Population Growth Trends and Projections, 1950-2030



Source: 2005 World Urbanization Prospects (Farvacque-Vitkovic et al. (2008, p. 2)

One city, two faces?



Decadal aggregate crime growth and variation in Ghana, 1980–2010

Crime type	Decade aggregate			Inter-cohort variations (%)	
	1980-1989	1990-1999	2000-2010	1980-1999	1990-2010
Murder	3,527	3,473	5,313	-2	35
Assault	446,625	645,903	972,722	31	34
Robbery	1,848	1,345	12,069	-37	89
Theft/stealing	416,145	517,420	801,483	20	35
Narcotics	228	465	5,481	51	92
Total	868,373	1,168,606	1,797,068	26	93

Source: Crime Statistics Bureau, Accra (Ghana Police Service)

Robbery and Murder cases in Accra and Kumasi, 2000-2010

Major crime	City	Year											Total
		2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	
Robbery	Accra	216	442	540	231	193	640	825	494	750	705	586	5622
	Kumasi	72	150	190	284	352	486	828	591	279	227	272	3731
Murder	Accra	72	64	74	66	92	81	70	89	75	74	66	823
	Kumasi	86	139	81	102	108	50	73	54	60	47	94	894

Source: Crime Statistics Bureau, Accra (Ghana Police Service)



Key Research Findings

1. Poverty and crime in Urban Ghana: middle-class neighbourhoods were generally viewed as unsafe and insecure compared to upper and low class neighbourhoods

- A widely-held and robust conclusion in crime studies is that neighbourhoods with higher levels of poverty will at the same time experience higher levels of crimes compared to middle and upper-class neighbourhoods (see Wilson, 1987; Peterson et al., 2006; Sampson, 2006; Ceccato, 2012).
- low-class neighbourhoods with their poorly planned built environment and limited infrastructure and services, and housing poor and low-income groups are generally regarded as areas of high crimes.
- Analysis of interviews with the Ghana Police support the idea that low-class neighbourhoods are unsafe and insecure.

Households assessment of level of safety when walking alone in the night by SE status of community

Rating	Neighbourhood (%)			Total
	Low-class	Middle-class	Upper-class	
Very safe	27.2	16.8	35.9	23.7
Safe	43.3	42.3	42.7	42.9
Not safe	26.7	36.4	19.0	29.9
Don't know	2.8	4.5	2.4	3.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Households assessment of crime rates by SE status of community

Crime rating	Neighbourhood (%)			Total
	Low-class	Middle-class	Upper-class	
Increased	15.9	25.5	10.0	19.3
Stayed the same	10.7	18.5	16.5	14.6
Decreased	70.5	49.3	58.4	60.3
Don't know	2.9	6.6	15.1	5.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Household crime questionnaire survey, 2014

- Explaining perception of lack of safety and insecurity in middle-class neighbourhoods compared to low and upper-class neighbourhoods:
 - For Low-class neighbourhoods;
 - ✓ Strong social and community bonding and cohesion
 - ✓ Presence of guardians at all times of day
 - ✓ Absence of opaque walls which allows natural surveillance
 - For Upper-class neighbourhoods;
 - ✓ Intense use of target hardening measures
 - ✓ High presence of private and public security guards
 - ✓ Better community infrastructure, particularly road network
- Limited presence of the above conditions in middle-class neighbourhoods account for the predicament of these neighbourhoods.

2. Weakening social and community cohesion due to fortifications of houses

- Middle and upper-class households have responded to incidence of crime and fear of crime by adopting residential building designs characterized by high opaque walls with(out) barbed wires; metal burglar-proofed windows and doors; surveillance equipment, etc.
- Target hardening of buildings obstructs lines of sight (or prevents natural surveillance, access control and territorial reinforcement), and ineffective as crime prevention tool.
- Fortification of houses by wealthy Ghanaian households are reconfiguring housing types and consequently social relations.
- Weakens social cohesion as individuals and groups are increasingly separated by walls and other barriers.

Fortified Houses with Target Hardening Structures in Middle/Upper-class Areas



Key research finding...

- Target hardening does not prevent crimes, particularly armed robbery.
 - As a respondent noted: *‘fortifying your house with metal burglary proofs and high walls only delays the entry of the criminals. If you do not get help from neighbours or the police, the criminals will eventually break in and attack you and your family’*.
- Target hardening creates ‘fortified enclaves’ or ‘islands of security zones’ as wealthy households are vulnerable to attacks from just outside their homes or behind their walls.
 - living in a hardened target may reduce crime, however, it has very limited or no impact on community crime incidence and the fear of crime.

3. Perceived health effects of the crime

- ▶ Urban crime is largely perpetuated by males aged (18–35 years) but more females (53%) than males are victims
- ▶ Our findings indicate a multidimensional effect of the crime experience on the victims, including deep emotional, psychological, mental and physical effects.
- ▶ The most reported emotional effect on both males and females was excessive anger (22.2% and 19.9%, respectively).

Conclusions and Policy Implications

- Multiplicity of factors contribute to the prevalence of crimes in Ghana's cities, we therefore suggest an integrated response as an effective strategy rather than standalone efforts of households:
- ✓ Strengthen police and criminal justice system;
- ✓ Promote effective urban planning and governance;
- ✓ Develop community-based approaches to enhance safety and security;
- ✓ Strengthen social capital through initiatives that seek to develop communities themselves to respond to problems of crime and violence.
- An integrated crime response can be anchored within the existing decentralized development planning, management and administrative framework of Ghana.

Thanks for your attention

Acknowledgement

This work was carried out with the financial support from the UK Government's Department for International Development (DFID) and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Ottawa, Canada. However, the views expressed in this presentation are solely those of the authors.