

Review on the concentration of police stations in the Accra Metropolitan Area and its implications on security and social control

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ABSTRACT: The increasing urban crime rate in Ghana is causing the development of police stations in the Accra metropolitan area. The location of a police station depends on factors influencing crime-prone areas. In Accra, 16 departments report crime situations to the metro coordinator director, who then organizes meetings with the presiding member. Crime rates are typically high in densely populated areas. This study aims to reveal the density of police stations and their impact on security and social control in the Accra metropolitan area. GIS spatial data and tools were used to observe the concentration of police stations, while Arc Software was used to determine the level of concentration and its impact on crime response and social control. Hotspots were also used to collect crime data for better monitoring of police station concentration in Accra and number of crime cases observed in each police station and more police stations presents with its impact on response to crime and social control.

Keywords. Arc Software, GIS spatial data, PM (Presiding Member), MCDs (metro coordinator director), security, social control.

INTRODUCTION

In modern criminal law, crime does not have a simple and universally accepted definition, though statutory definitions have been provided for certain purposes. Crime is inevitably intrinsic in human societies. Van Ryzin and Dishion (2013) said in their research that, the most consistent developmental criminology is the “age–crime curve”— that is the observation that criminal behaviour increases in adolescence and decreases in adulthood. It is the dream of every society to live in crime-free environments. It is a complex phenomenon that changes across cultures and time. According to Justice (2018), "Activities that are legal in one country (e.g. alcohol consumption in the UK) are sometimes illegal in others (e.g. strict Muslim countries). As cultures change over time, behaviours that once were not criminalized may become criminalized. The World Justice Project Rule of Law index was used in USA Justice (2018). – e.g. alcohol

prohibition in the USA). As a result, there is no simple answer to the question 'what is the crime?'. And therefore no single answer to 'what causes crime?' Different types of crime often have distinct causes". American Sociologist Robert Merton (1957) drew on this idea to explain criminality and deviance in the USA. His theory argues that crime occurs when there is a gap between the cultural goals of society e.g. material wealth, and status, and the structural means to achieve these e.g. education, and employment. The existence of crime in societies instils fear and trauma into citizens and hinders them from moving about freely. This breeds insecurities in societies and impedes development. Crime has been on the rise all over the country particularly in the administrative capital. It ranges from gang-armed robbery to street crimes such as pickpocketing, purse snatching, and various scams. In October 2016, the House of Commons Justice Committee

produced a technical report on the treatment of young adults aged from 20 in the Criminal Court of Justice where a proposed strategic approach was recognized that the brains of these young people are developing to mid-20 so some policies may do more harm than good. Part of the report indicated a distinct approach to the treatment of these young adults in the criminal system. The institution mandated to protect the citizens; the police have been quite productive since their commencement. According to the publication by Alexander and Pain (2012), some of the social, spatial, and temporal factors they detailed in urban security threat are: Social factors that give urban challenges such as perceptions, experiences, and responses of different groups of people to urban security threats, such as fear, anxiety, trust, resilience, solidarity, and coping strategies. The authors argued that social factors are influenced by factors such as gender, age, ethnicity, class, and disability. However, they explained spatial factor as another area which includes the physical and symbolic aspects of urban spaces that shape and are shaped by urban security threats, such as crime hotspots, gated communities, surveillance cameras, graffiti, and lighting. The authors argue that spatial factors are influenced by factors such as urban planning, design, governance, and politics. Lastly, Alexander and Pain (2012) touch on temporal factors which provides the next inclusive area on historical and contemporary aspects of urban security threats that change over time and across contexts, such as terrorism, riots, natural disasters, and pandemics. The authors argue that temporal factors are influenced by factors such as media, culture, memory, and anticipation.

Accra Regional Police Command was established in 1952, as the law enforcement body responsible for policing the entire city. Its regional headquarters is located in the Central Business District of the Accra Metropolitan Area. Since its establishment, the Regional Police Command has had 66 commanders and still counting, with the first being Chief Superintendent of Police, Mr. C.H.K. Strike (1952) who assumed the command in August 1952. He was succeeded by the Assistant Commissioner of Police ACP/Mr. D. G. Caruthers. The Accra Regional Police Command is divided into divisions to provide a wide variety of public safety, law enforcement, traffic management, emergency response roles, and public order management responsibilities within their respective jurisdictions in the metropolis. According to Aning (2006), the Ghana Police Service (GPS) has undergone several reforms and changes since its inception in 1831. The GPS was formalized in 1873 and expanded its units and functions over time, such as creating an Escort Unit, a Railway Unit, a Marine Police, and a Criminal Investigations Department. The GPS underwent several reforms and changes in response to the political and social developments in the country, such as independence, military coups, constitutional changes, and democratic transitions. The GPS also faced various challenges and problems, such as inadequate funding, equipment,

training, personnel, and public trust. The GPS was subject to several legislative and constitutional instruments that defined its roles, functions, powers, and accountability. The GPS was also reviewed and assessed by various commissions and committees that made recommendations for its improvement and modernization. The GPS currently operates under the 1992 Republican Constitution, which establishes a Police Council as an advisory body on matters relating to the service. The GPS aims to become a world-class police service capable of delivering planned, democratic, protective, and peaceful services up to standards of international best practice.

The Accra Regional Police Command currently has fourteen (14) divisions, forty-two (42) districts, and one hundred and ten (110) local Police stations and posts. The Accra Central Division is the district head of the Accra Metropolitan Area (Ghana Police Service, 2017). These institutions have been very instrumental in the execution of their core mandate. By the end of 2019, reports proved that crime was reduced by 3% (Ghana Police Service, 2020). This is a result of the effectiveness of these police personnel as well as the cooperation of ordinary citizens. The existence of the police eradicates fear in the masses and also makes it easier to exercise control in the metropolitan. According to Appiahene-Gyamfi (2003), there are many factors involved in the citing of police stations. "Finding an appropriate place for a police station is influenced by different parameters like crime-prone areas, distance from main roads, and distance from police stations, etc. Since finding a location requires a lot of information, a large quantity of detailed information for introducing different places should be collected and analyzed to conduct a correct evaluation of factors influencing the choice" (Rahmani and Golmehr, 2014). Therefore, the concentration of police stations contributes immensely to social control and security. Accra metropolitan area is a well-known district that records higher cases of crime. The highest crime in the district is bribery and corruption, with moderate ones as car stolen, drug, property crimes, and mugged or robbers. The lowest crime recorded in the district is initiating a physical attack because of one's skin colour, ethnic origin, gender, or religion (NUMBEO, 2020). However, there are no statistical data available about the extent or frequency of these acts.

The locations of police stations in the district are described to be uneven and this has affected how crime is been responded to in some areas in the district. These papers deal with the concentration levels of police stations in the district and examine how they affect security and social control in communities.

Background of the study area

The study area is the Accra Metropolitan district. (Figure 1). The Assembly has sixteen (16) Departments and other Units with Heads of Departments who all report directly to

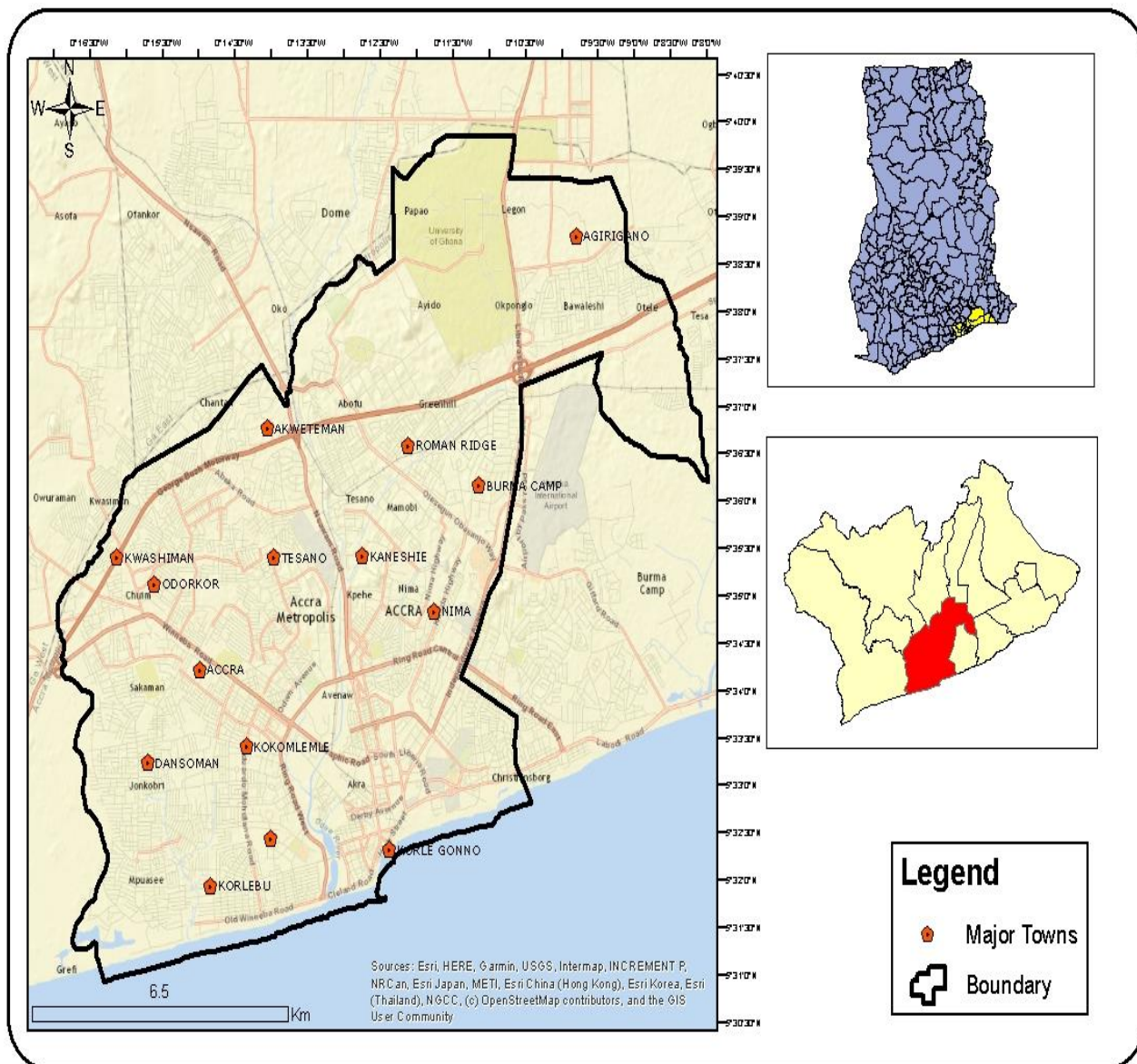


Figure 1. Study area map of Accra district.

the Metro Coordinating Director (MCD) and ultimately to the Metro Chief Executive (Mayor). The General Assembly meetings are presided over by the Presiding Member (PM). The General Assembly has a Membership of 55 comprising 41 elected members, 14 government appointees, 6 members of parliament, and the Metro Chief Executive who also chairs the Executive Committee. In the performance of its functions, the Accra Metropolitan Assembly works through 14 Sub-Committees. These Sub-Committees perform deliberative functions and submit recommendations to the Executive Committee for further deliberation and then to the General Assembly for final decisions and implementation. The Fourteen (14) Sub-Committees include; Social Services, Finance & Administration, Development Planning, Revenue

Mobilization, Justice & Security, Education, Works, Environment, Youth & Sports, Culture & Trade Tourism and Industry, Disaster Management, Food & Agriculture, Health, Women & Children (Accra Metropolitan Assembly, 2020).

The Accra Metropolitan Assembly (AMA) is one of the Two Hundred and Fifty-Four (254) Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) in Ghana and among the Twenty-Six (26) MMDAs in the Greater Accra Region. It was established in 1898 but has gone through several changes in terms of name, size, and number of Sub-Metros. When Ghana returned to constitutional rule in 1993, it derived its legal basis from the Local Government Act, 1993 (Act 462), which currently has been amended as the Local Governance Act, 2016 (ACT 936), and under

Legislative Instrument (L.I) 2034 (Accra Metropolitan Assembly, 2020).

According to the 2010 Population and Housing Census, the total population of the Metropolis was 1,665,086 with females constituting 51.9 percent while males formed 48.1 percent. Using the Greater Accra Population growth rate of 3.1%, the 2018 population of Accra is estimated at 2,036,889. Accra has a daily influx of more than 2 million people who commute to the City for various socio-economic activities. It is therefore estimated that Accra has a daily population of about 4 million comprises of both residents and visitors (Accra Metropolitan Assembly, 2020).

Research objectives

The main objective of this analysis is to reveal the density of police stations and their implications on security and social control in the district. However, it has sub-objectives;

1. Determine the common crimes in the district.
2. Examine the factors contributing to the rise of crimes in the district.

METHODOLOGY

Materials

Resources used in this analysis had its sources from journals, books, newsletters, online documents, and many others as well as online sources. The police station used in this analysis was downloaded from <https://www.rsgislab.ug.edu.gh/>. Archives were also utilized for crime data in the district. Common crimes in the district were categorized into five top crimes; theft, fraud, threat and assault, armed robbery, and rape (Ghana Government, 2013). According to Sellasi (1960), the Criminal Code Act, 29 Ghanaian law was enacted on 12th January 1960. This was a wide range of laws which covered criminal offences and corresponding punishment. The law was amended, reviewed, and strategized by the government of Ghana in 2013, for the greater Accra Metropolitan Area. Crime data was also collected from some police stations (Legon Police Station, Mamprobi Police Station, Roman Ridge Police, Old Fadama Police Station, and Adabraka Police Station). However, most were adamant about giving out crime information even after several explanations of academic usage. Data available was within 6 months (January to June 2016).

Methods

This study employs GIS spatial data and tools to determine the concentration. The ArcGIS software was used to

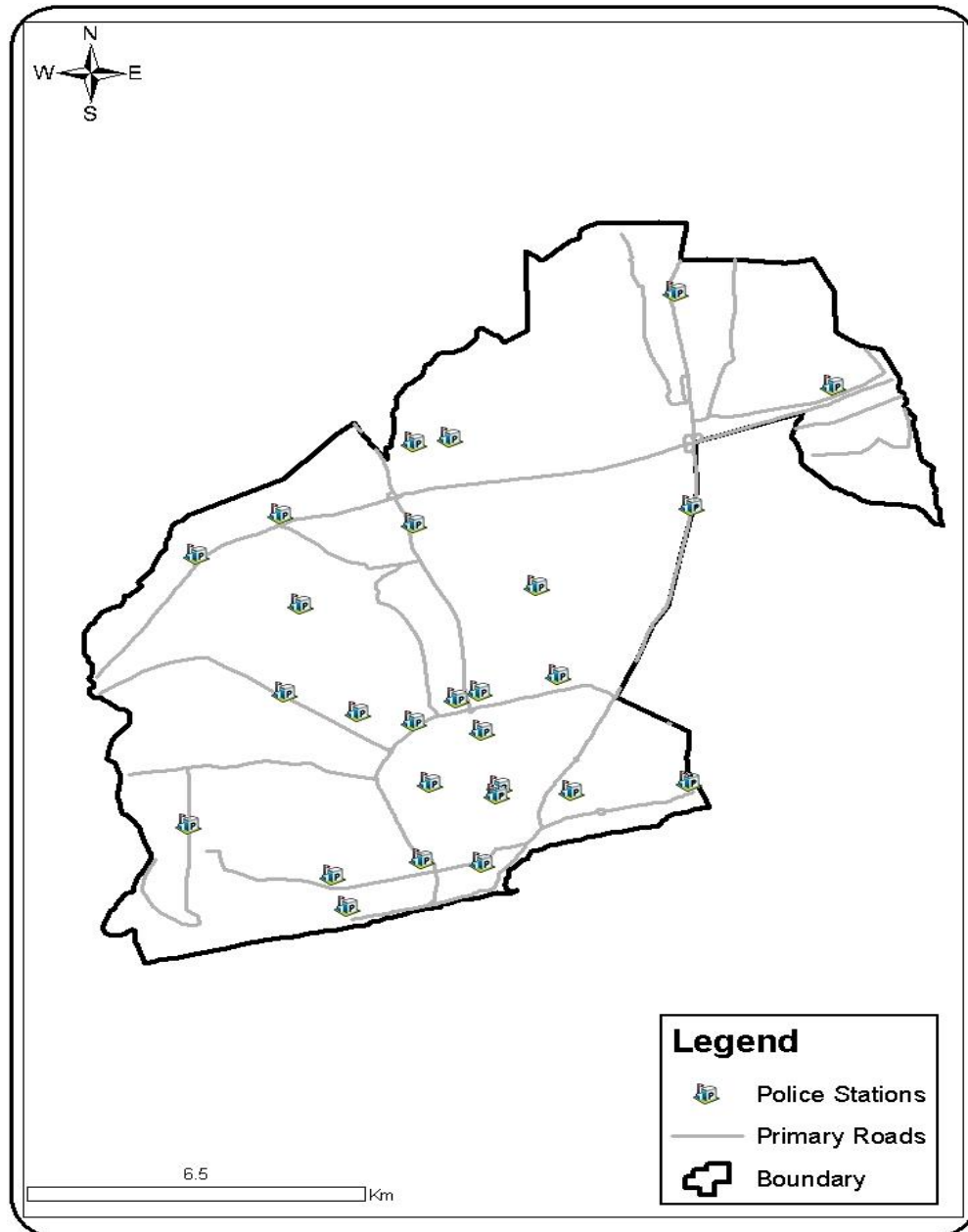
determine the levels of concentration of police stations and their impact on response to crime and social control. Arc-Map was used to execute the density analysis of the police stations (Figure 2). Hotspot analysis was also executed on the crime data to help determine the concentration of crime in the district.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The chart (Figure 5) shows that the Adenta locale has the most noteworthy police station which is 16 and 4 post within the more noteworthy Accra Metropolitan Locale. In the Madina locale, there are 10 police stations and 7 posts inside the city. Weija has seven police stations and 1 post inside the locale while Dansoman, Odorkor, and Baatsona are having 6 each police station in their different locale with 1 police post in each locale. Accra Central has five police stations and 2 police posts. Cantonment, Nima, Kpeshie, and Aiport have three police stations each in their locale with a distinctive number of posts. Cantonment in More prominent Accra Locale has no police posts, Nima has 4 police posts, Kpeshie and Amasaman has 2 police stations each, and Airplane terminal has 2 police posts while Amasaman has 2 police posts. Kaneshie being the final has 2 police stations and 1 police post within the Accra Metropolitan Zone or Locale.

DISCUSSION

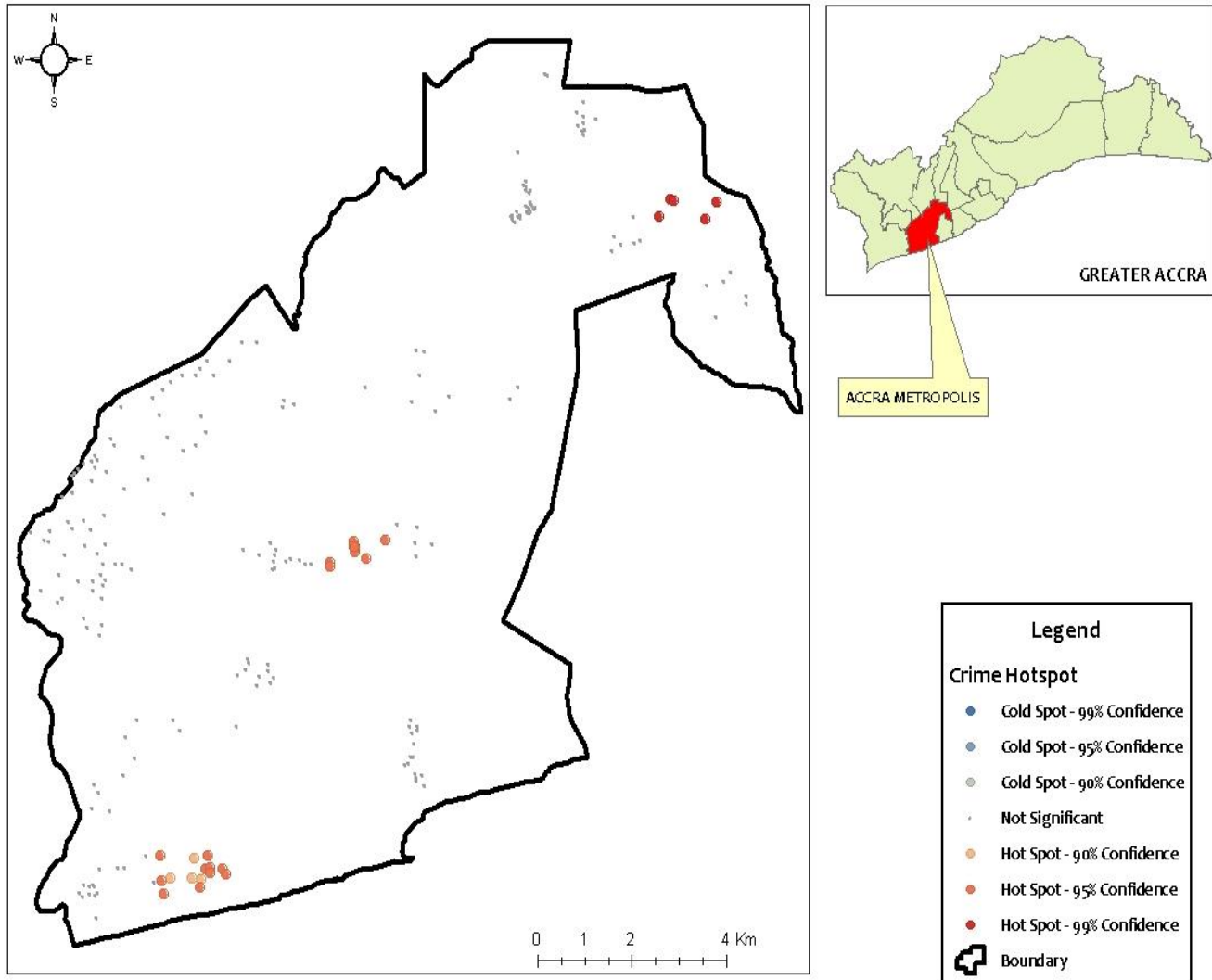
The presence of the body mandated to protect the lives of individuals informs that people should be void of crime and hence careful since they would be scapegoats when caught in criminal acts. Therefore, the consciousness of people about the existence of police stations should be a deterrent to criminal acts. This story however appears to be different in the Accra Metropolitan area. The number of police stations is limited in the peripheries (outskirts) of the town. These are the places that harbour most residential buildings. Due to factors such as the population density and cost of living, people tend to move towards the outskirts of the districts. These places have an inadequate number of police stations. The Ghana Police Service (GPS) has labelled certain areas as "flashpoints" because of the large amount of crime, the lack of police presence, and other factors in the area that make them dangerous for everyone, including the police (U.S. Embassy in Ghana, 2019). Some flashpoints are Roman Ridge and East Legon. However, the crimes that are common in these areas are armed robbery and car theft (carjacking). These places have low and distant police posts. Due to the long distance between the police posts and the location of the criminal activities, most criminals tend to find themselves away from the scene by the time the police show up. This is to say that, most hotspot places have slow police response due to the availability and or proximity of the police to the crime scene (CID Ghana Investigation,



Picture 2. Police stations in Accra district.

1921). Most districts like the central business district are known to have recorded a higher number of criminal acts in the past years. These areas, though harbour quite some police stations are still regarded as a flashpoint or hotspot. This is due to the population density of the area. Korle-bu and Mambrobi are districts located in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana and Chorkor is a neighborhood in the Accra Metropolis district, which is part of the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. There is a police station located in Mambrobi and Chorkor. Most parts of Tudu in the central district of Accra are known to host most criminal incidents in the district. The airport district has three stations where

east-legon is one of the hotpot areas for high crime rates with three police stations. Due to the economic activities going on in these areas, it is difficult to arrest culprits since it will be difficult to spot criminals. Shops are mostly robbed at night. Popularly known as pickpocketing in the day and robbery in the night, the central business district has gradually been accepted as the most dangerous place in the district. The northeastern parts of the metropolis are noted as crime residential places. According to the crime reports by the United States embassy in Accra, property crime remains a concern. These residential places are the abode of most foreigners and out of the 10 incidents of

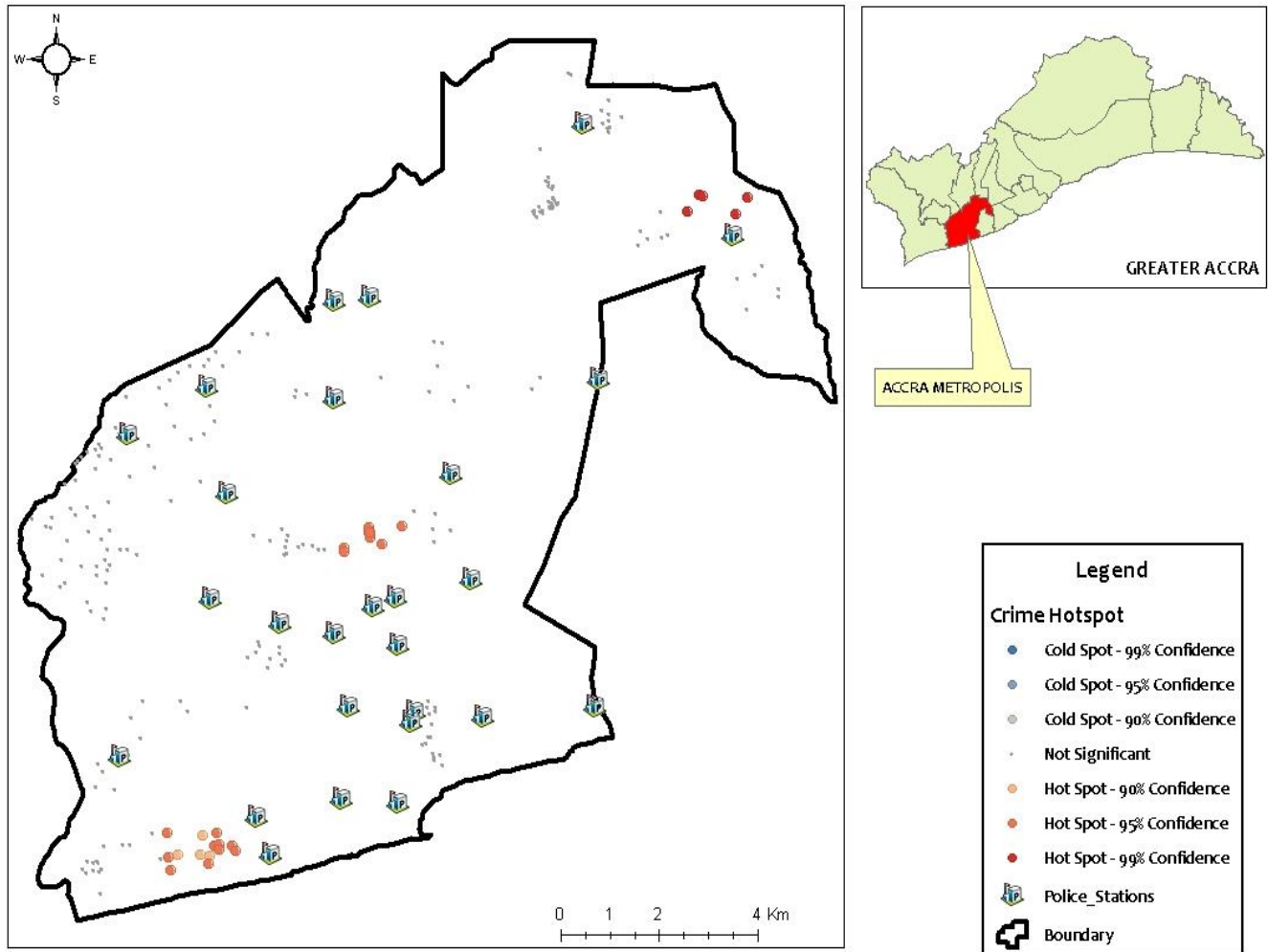


Picture 3. Hotspot result of crime data in areas of Accra Ghana.

carjacking that happen nationwide, 5 are from the district particularly residential areas in the Accra metropolis (U.S. Embassy in Ghana, 2019). According to Oteng-Ababio *et al.* (2006), analysed data and came out with a finding that indicates more strongly related views on local crime levels in certain parts of the cities and local communities. They indicated that respondents who lived in low-income deprived situations were more likely to think of committing a crime than those living in affluent areas.

Figure 2 shows the indications of police stations in the Accra district. This is attributed to the population density of most areas in the district and also inadequate police personnel and Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs) for the limited personnel. There are common crimes identified in the district. The red dot spot shows the hot spots crime areas in the district and the light blue dots show the cold spots which is 90 degrees confident that the crime rate level in that district is minimal. Figure 3 indicates the hotspot results of crime data in areas of Accra Ghana. The hot

spots given 99 degrees confidence show that the crime rate in that particular district proves high, that particular district reflects pickpocketing, car snatching, and rape with many more. The light blue dots show not significant, meaning the crime level is very low while the light blue dots show 95 degrees cold spot and 95 confidence in the crime rate in the area. From 95 to 99 degrees shows a very high flashpoint for criminal acts. The densely populated areas always have high crime rates. Figure 4 produces the density analysis of police stations in the district of Accra. This is due to the densely populated areas in the southwestern corner of the district Chokor and most of Tudu. East Legon and Roman Ridge areas fall within the red spots which are 95 to 99 degrees crime level which is very high. According to Accra regional police office statistics. Figure 5 shows the district police stations and police posts in Accra. Roman Ridge in the districts of Adabraka, Nima, and Kotobabi has three districts and three police stations with four police posts namely Holy



Picture 4. Density analyses of police stations in the district of Accra Ghana.

Gardens, Ridge Hospital Area, Dzorwulu, and Roman Ridge where Roman Ridge has been identified as the most crime hotspots among these four areas within the metropolis. The main objective is to identify more crime scene areas in the district and once the crime is high there would be more existence of police stations to arrest these criminal activities. The crime scene areas and its hotspot areas with percentages. The central district of Accra has one of the highest crime rate activities in the metropolis with 95 to 99 degrees confidence with more police stations. Many things lead to these high crime rates in the Accra metropolis. The youth in the district are the targets of these criminal acts. In Graham's research (2010), the youth constitutes the ages of 20 to 50 years old. According to Adu-Mireku (2002), fear engulfed the residents of the metropolis and the youth in the constituents possessed arms to do criminal activities which always scared the residents in the area. They are the active drivers in this act due to unemployment which always gives them the second thought to commit crimes. Where there are no jobs for the young men or the youth to be precise, they engage in

fraud, car snatching, rape, and other social vices. The desire to be rich quickly also causes these envious attitudes to change the perceptions of some youth to rob people with a gun and collect precious items from them in a criminal way.

On the other hand, those who beg for alms in our marketplace, always asking for food also fall victim to such criminal attitudes, especially in densely populated areas in the various towns, houses and the metropolis. These are some of the factors that increase the crime rate in these district areas of Accra. The possible objective or aim is to identify social crimes in the various district areas of Accra and control them by putting up police stations to arrest these social crimes in the Accra metropolis. Wilson and Kelling (2017) proclaim that disorderly behaviour creates fear, and unchecked can lead to criminal conduct. Residents in the metropolis do not only fear crime but also fear being bothered by disorderly people who are disreputable, or unpredictable; drunk addicts, rowdy teenagers, prostitution, and the mentally disturbed. In the year 1982, Wilson and Kelling indicate clearly that, these

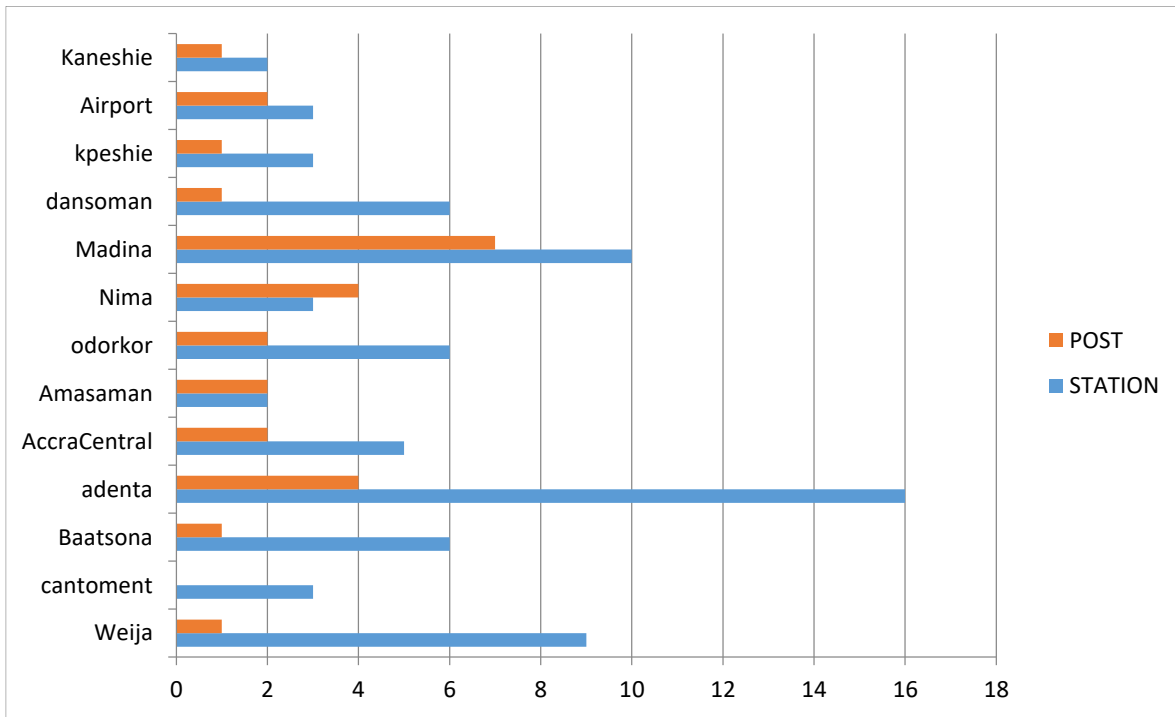


Figure 5. The district police stations and posts in the greater Accra metropolitan region Ghana (Source: The Greater Accra Police Head office data section, 2023).

people engage in all kinds of criminal acts such as theft, mugging, robbery, rape, and drug smuggling. Unemployment rates, poverty rates, and expectations of workers were not examined, all these are indications of crime increase in the Accra metropolis. Ghanaians who perceive disorderly behaviour to be rampant in their communities will undoubtedly have less trust in the police, while those who think otherwise will have more faith in the police. In that case, they noted again that, Neighborhood disorder, as argued by police has severe direct and indirect consequences for the livelihood of residents. Graham (2010) acknowledged that safety and security are structuring forces for cities as they impact every facet of urban life at the individual, household, community, and city levels.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This paper has highlighted the need for all-inclusiveness of the provisions of urban safety insecurity and social control on the crime rate in the Accra metropolis. The key stakeholders, individuals, and private securities for crime prevention need to help and initiate strategies to be established to prevent crime in the Accra metropolis. It also calls for the reconsideration of security intervention in certain crime areas or zones in the urban areas especially densely populated areas left unchecked on crime scenes in the Accra metropolis. It is, therefore, recommended that

the government policies should be geared towards safety measures on crime in the urban areas and provide formal control mechanisms that prevent crime in both local sectors and urban cities, especially the Accra metropolis. Crime-prone zones in urban areas should be actively well-resourced with police detective equipment for crime suspects and police stations in crime zone areas. The awareness of crime rates in Accra metropolis should be checked regularly to stop criminal activities and make the environment fear-free for people living in these crime areas.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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