



Research Article

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The Incidence of Crime and Implications for Crime Management in the Wa Municipality of the Upper West Region, Ghana

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Abstract

Informed by the Broken Window Theory, this study investigated the incidence of crime in the Wa Municipality of Ghana and its implications for policy and crime management planning. The study employed an exploratory sequential mixed method for data collection in four communities within the Wa Municipality, namely, Dondoli, Bamahu, Mangu, and Kumbiehe. The methods of data collection included Focus Group Discussion (FDGs), Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and a Survey of 180 households. The result showed that stealing (theft), burglary, robbery, banditry and illegal abortion were the common crimes in the Municipality. For crime management planning, the study recommends that community participation should be strengthened through revitalization of Neighbourhood Watch Committees (NWC) in the communities for effective crime prevention and management.

Keywords – Broken Windows Theory, Crime Management, Crime, Ghana, Neighbourhood Watch Committees (NWC)

1. INTRODUCTION

Crime is no doubt a serious menace that affects individuals, communities, nations, and the global society at large. The rate at which it occurs often influences the decision of people to live in certain areas and, as a result, calls for serious concern. When crime becomes a frequent issue in any community, many other issues like the livelihood of people and the development state and/or process of such a community can be affected (Okoro, 2020). According to Havi (2014), many social problems grow out of uncoordinated and disorganized social changes sometimes, especially among those who cannot adjust to ever-changing new environments (Havi, 2014). As social changes continue to emerge, they tend to induce social disorganization, including crime. Crime rates and types of crime vary from one society to another based on the degree of social change in those societies. For instance, while some communities may be infested with a high rate of armed robbery, some others might be faced with other forms of crime like burglary

(force-breaking/unlawful entry), theft, rape, kidnapping and many others. Although Ghana has an improving global recognition as one of the peaceful countries within sub-Saharan Africa, there exist some social vices that have created undesirable impacts on the good name of the country. For instance, Havi (2014) averred that new trends of crimes that emerged in Ghana are gradually growing in the country, which he listed to include serial killings, armed robbery, drug trafficking, fraud, rape, child abuse, prostitution, among others (Havi, 2014), which are already a menace creating negative impacts on the reputation of Ghana. The growth rate of these serial killings, cybercrimes, armed robberies, armed, drug trafficking, human trafficking, arms trafficking, and arms manufacturing could deter potential (local and foreign) investors and other economic activities happening in the country (Havi, 2014).

Generally, ECOWAS countries (including Ghana) have a young population available for the productive sector of the economy and military service (Okon, 2020), of which the majority of them are not formally engaged. Consequently, unemployment remains very high across ECOWAS countries due to the structure of the economy where the industrial sector is lamentably minimal and the majority of the jobs in the informal sectors are poorly paid, without social security and pension (Mbaya & Gueye, 2018). The obvious result is that these young populations are easily engaged by bandits who indulge in different forms of crime since they don't have access to legitimate jobs. Due to the constant growth of social media, mobilizing the youths is made possible and faster (Chukwuere, 2020; Ajayi & Adinlewa, 2020), which of course, the bandits are taking advantage of.

However, Ghana as a nation, has been spending a huge amount of money to maintain law and order across its regions, yet crime rates have continued to rise (Havi, 2014). One of the notable efforts is the introduction of a community policing approach in 2002 by the Ghana Police Service (Acheampong, 2015), which was relaunched in 2011 with establishments of a community policing unit (Okoro, 2020). This singular effort was motivated by the rise in crime rates all over the nation, especially in the urbanized areas, and therefore, was introduced as a preventive tool against the curative measure (professional policing approach). Consequently, a total number of 193 Community Police Assistants (CPAs) selected from different communities across Ghana were trained by the Police, followed by 4,000 others who passed out on 4th May 2018 after three weeks of intensive physical and academic training (myjoyonline.com, 2017; Okoro, 2020). These youth have been dispatched to various communities, including Wa Municipality as CPAs, however, crime has continued to rise in the country. For example, Ghana Police CID on May 25th, 2018 reported that the crime rate shot up slightly in the country during the first quarter of 2018 (published on ghanaweb.com). The overall crime rate was on the marginal increase across the country in the first quarter. According to the department, carjacking, robbery, rape, defilement, murder, human trafficking and narcotics cases recorded between January and May 21, 2018 cumulatively, slightly went up compared to figures from the same period in the last three years.

The Director of Operations, CID maintained that robbery cases recorded nationwide within the period rose to 484. In January, a total of 121 cases were recorded although the figure decreased to 92 in the month of February and went up again in March to 98 and again in April with 103 cases before it finally dropped to 70 as of May 21 (GPS, 2018). On 16th May, 2015, the GPS publication on GhanaWeb indicated that during the first quarter of the year (2015), the Upper West Regional Police Command recorded 170 criminal cases. According to the report, it was 15 more than the 155 offenses recorded in the same period the previous year. Stealing, robbery, and assault cases topped the list of offenses committed in the region with the Wa Municipality recording the highest number of cases. Stealing of Motorbike and burglary are reported as the two common criminal activities in the Wa Municipality. For instance, on 27th March, 2018, Wa Municipal Police Command announced to the general public that the command had several

motorcycles suspected to have been stolen from their rightful owners by criminals in its custody, adding that the motorcycles would be auctioned should the owners refuse to claim them within the timeframe provided.

Some considerable studies conducted on crime in Ghana, have focused on recorded crime data from the law enforcement agencies to measure rate, incidence, concentration, and prevalence of crime without actually approaching the community people who are the main victims or potential victims of crime (Winfree Jr, Bartku & Seibel, 1996; Havi, 2014; Mahama, Akuamoah, Amedagbui & Dese, 2015). This is because most secondary data from the law enforcement agencies may have problems of accuracy, and thus, may not actually represent what is going on in the communities. To this end, it is imperative to add that criminologists are of the contention that the best way to measure crime is by direct observation or questioning. For instance, Wellford (2009) is of the view that criminal justice service cannot be reliable in measuring the level of crime, especially using police reports, instead, the public should be asked directly about their experiences with crime. This is because, most crimes, criminals, and victims are not always reported to the police. Besides, most reported cases get buried at the police level and never saw the passageways of the criminal courts, talk less of the prison. It is a serious problem when most criminological research violate this perspective and accept easier means of measurement (Police official data) (Wellford, 2009).

In some communities, residents already portray the police in bad light which in turn created distrust, forcing them to decide what happens to suspects, thus either to mob or forgive the suspects without involving the Police (Okoro, 2020). The study, therefore, investigates the incidence of crime in the Wa Municipality and the implications for policy and crime management planning using both primary and secondary data. It seeks to; determine the common types of crime and the extent to which they occur based on the institutional and community perspective in the Wa Municipality. It further seeks to establish the implications of these crimes on policy and crime management in the Municipality.

2. THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL OVERVIEW

2.1. Broken Windows Theory (BWT)

The study is underpinned by the broken windows theory as popularised by James Q. Wilson and George L. Kelling in an article (Broken Window: The Police and Neighbourhood safety) which appeared in the March 1982 edition of *The Atlantic Monthly*, based on the supposition that “disorder and crime are linked in a developmental sequence” (Prabhu, 2010:63). However, the lens through which broken windows theory can be seen is disorganization of neighbourhood theory propounded by Clifford Shaw & Henry D. McKay in 1942 which is based on the notion that disorganised neighbourhoods cause crime because “informal social controls broke down” and “criminal cultures emerge” (Prabhu, 2010; Acheampong, 2015; Okoro, 2020). A disorganised neighbourhood is characterized by its weakness in both communalism and collective efficacy to fight crime and disorder. In this regard, a neighbourhood disorganisation and its impact on crime rates can be said to be a consequence of urbanisation. Shaw and McKay (1942) are therefore of the view that crime was a function of neighbourhood dynamics, and not necessarily a “function of the individuals” within neighborhoods. However, Wilson and Kelling (American criminologists) postulated that broken windows occur owing to the lack of capable guardianship in a socially disorganised neighbourhood where informal social control has been lost or weak (Wilson & Kelling, 1982).

Hence, “a socially organised society is a replica of families caring for their homes, confidently interrogating intruders and suspicious behaviours, and ensuring stability with less in and out movement within the community” (Acheampong, 2015:25). The theory explains that when a motivated offender broke a window in a building, and the

broken window is further abandoned or left unrepaired, the motivation of the offenders goes higher, and consequently, more or the rest of the windows are broken (Okoro, 2020). However, this motivation is stimulated by the absence of capable guardianship and the signal that no one cares in the community due to the unrepaired window, therefore, breaking more windows may not result in any official punishment (ibid). Signs of disorders that lead to broken windows may include street drunks, drug peddlers and addicts, attack of pedestrians by panhandlers and physical unsanitary conditions like masses of litter all over the neighbourhood are signs of community deterioration, which leads to a breakdown of informal community control and social organisation (Wilson & Kelling, 1982).

Vandalism of windows can occur in any community as far as the sense of communal regard and the obligation of civility are relegated by action that seems to indicate a lack of common concern. According to Wilson and Kelling (1982), neighbourhoods where properties are abandoned, “weeds grow, windows are broken, and adults stop scolding ill-disciplined children, and families are forced to move out and unattached adults to move in” (Prabhu, 2010:63). Consequently, people start using the streets less frequently, making the streets vulnerable and prone to criminal invasions. In this way, when the community withdraws from the streets, more disorders like drugs trafficking, prostitution, and muggings, surface.

Furthermore, the BWT depicts public order offenses like vandalism and rowdy behavior as capable of creating a downward spiral of neighborhood deteriorations and fear of crimes which lead to more deteriorations and more serious crimes unless checked by the communities. In addition, the steady occurrence of little crimes portrays impressions that nobody cares about the security wellbeing of the communities and that both the citizens and the police agencies have lost security control of the communities. The theory suggests that when police presence increases in a community and when informal rules of conduct are enforced in the community, a less chaotic and safer atmosphere can be achieved. When residents are involved in the activities that partner security wellbeing in their community, the rate of crimes can decrease (Palmiotto, 2000).

Meanwhile, some scholars and criminologists are of a different view, challenging the Broken Window theory. For instance, Taylor’s (2001) book (*Breaking away from Broken Windows*) tried determining the source of civilities and finding out if they erode urban life overtime or not. Taylor’s view is that zero tolerance and order to maintain police strategies that target reduction of fear of crime, “maybe misdirected and should not be adopted axiomatically” (Taylor, 2001; Prabhu, 2010:64). He argues that scholars should rather interpret incivility as an offshoot of an “economically disadvantaged neighborhood”, instead of treating it as an indicator of a disorderly and disorganised neighbourhood, so that crime-fighting can be seen as more important than grim fighting for a long-term reduction in crime. In the same way, Sampson and Raudenbush (1999) (cited in Prabhu, 2010) argued that disorders and crimes are both indicators of the same explanatory process, which “share common structural and social origins”. They maintained that the causes of crimes are rather the “structural disadvantage and weak collective efficacy”, in other words, the “ability of a community to regulate its own conduct” (Lombardo & Lough, 2007; Prabhu, 2010).

2.2. The Nature, Concept and Definition of Crime

Every study on any subject requires a clear conception of the subject at the beginning with some kind of definitions so as to do proper justice to the study. First of all, crime is to be understood as an act that occurs geographically – it has specific place, time and reasons of occurrence. It is a human experience and can be said to be as old as the human race. This is because crime (like conflict) can be traced to the breaking of God’s law by Adam and Eve, and the murder of Abel by Cain in the Bible – which attracted punishment to the trio (Okoro, 2018; 2020). However, crime has

different definitions depending on which perspective one is seeing it from. The word *crime* can be said to originate from the Latin word *crimen* (genitive *criminis*), rooted as *cernō* and Greek *κρίνω*, meaning “I judge”. In law, this simply means charge, guilt, and accusation (Edewor, 2010). Crime therefore can be said to be a breach of a rule or law for which punishment is prescribed by states or some governing authority to deal with defaulter.

Nonetheless, Edewor (2010) posited that all breaches of law or rules cannot be considered as crimes. This is because, breaches of contracts and other civil law offenses are different from breaches of state criminal laws. He also opined that, what is labelled crime and the social stigma attached to it are dependent upon the degree of injuriousness at which the activity is to the general population or the State, as well as its ability to cause serious loss or damage to individuals. The label reflects a hegemony of a dominant population, or a consensus of condemnation for the identified activity and justifies a punishment imposed by the State, when the accused person is tried and convicted of a crime (Edewor, 2010). Typically, crime perpetrators are natural persons, but in some jurisdictions/or moral environments, legal persons and states are also considered to have the capability of committing crime (Ibid).

Crime is a deviant behavior that violates fundamental norms, in other words, cultural standards that suggest how humans should behave in a given society (Lersch, 2007; Havi, 2014). Behaviours which are considered to be inimical to the interest of members of the given society are regarded as criminal act and are embodied in the criminal code in modern complex societies. For instance, the Criminal Code (Amendment) Act, 2003 (Act 646) of the Republic of Ghana outlaws a person from taking the life of another. When a person is found guilty of violating this law, he might be imprisoned for life or pay with his life. However, crime can be defined as any act that violates any criminal law of a country. This is inconsistent with the definition of crime provided by the same Criminal Code of the Republic of Ghana which defined crime as any “act punishable by death or imprisonment or fine”. Ishak (2016) also see crime as illegal activities that are against the law of a nation.

Apparently, before an act is considered as a crime, the act should have been found in the statute books as a prohibited act, and the status books must have provided a punishment for such act. Crime is thus a classification created by law or declared as such by the relevant and applicable law, which also provided clauses for punishment of such crime. It is therefore an act harmful not only to individuals but also to communities, societies or the States – a public wrong. However, crime has been seen as a vital part when describing the socio-cultural, political and economic situation of a nation instead of the normal view as being a problem to a given society (Havi, 2014). This position is associated to Durkheim (1938) who posited that deviance is an integral part of all healthy societies and not really a pathological aberration in the character structure of particular individuals. The researcher further noted that, crime exists in every healthy society which in one way or the other performs some necessary positive functions. Crime is normal and a matter of social definition because a society without crime would be impossible. Behaviors considered offensive increases, as society progresses not decreases (Durkheim, 1938).

The members of a society condemn behavioural deviations that depart decidedly from prevailing norms and single them out as crimes. Consequently, criminals serve as identifying signs of the limits of permissible behaviour in the society. Be that as it may, a society can be understood by investigating changes in crime and crime rates, using them as index for changes in society and their characteristics (Havi, 2014:3). Who is a ‘criminal’ is a question only answerable by a competent criminal court of justice. In this regard, a criminal is that person who, after court proceeding and after being proven beyond reasonable doubt is found to have broken the criminal law of the state. An offender cannot be presumed criminal even after being arrested, arraigned, indicted or prosecuted, unless held guilty beyond all reasonable doubt of a particular offence by a competent court of law. Thus, for a person to be classified as a criminal in a competent criminal court of jurisdiction, *actus reus* – the “act of doing something criminal” must be followed by *mens rea* – the “intention to do something criminal (Martin, 2006). This means that a physical evidence of the crime said to have been committed, and the determination of the accused’s pre-intention (criminal

intent) to commit the crime must be present as ingredients to prove beyond reasonable doubt that the accused is guilty.

To this end, it is imperative to add that criminologists are of the contention that the best way to measure crime is by direct observation or questioning. For instance, Wellford (2009) is of the view that criminal justice system cannot be reliable in measuring the level of crime, especially using police reports, instead the public should be asked directly about their experiences with crime. This is because, most crimes, criminals and victims are not always reported to the police. Besides, most reported cases get buried at the police level, and never see the passageways of the criminal courts, talk less of the prison. It is a serious problem when most criminological research disagree with this perspective and accept easier means of measurement – Police official data (Wellford, 2009).

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY AREA

The research location is the Wa Municipality of the Upper West Region in Ghana. It is one of the Municipalities in and the capital of the region. Upper West Region is one of the sixteen (16) regions in Ghana. Other regions include; Ashanti Region, Bono Region, Bono East Region, Ahafo Region, Central Region, Eastern Region, Greater Accra Region, Northern Region, Savannah Region, North East Region, Upper East Region, Volta Region, Oti Region, Western Region, and Western North Region. The Upper West Region was created on 14th January 1983 by the then government with the aim of closing the development gap existing between the area and other parts of the country (Ghana Statistical Service, 2002). In pursuance of the decentralization policy introduced in 1988, a Legislative Instrument (LI) 1800 created the Wa Municipal Assembly from the then Wa District in 2004 (Amoah & Yahaya, 2013). Wa is a township and the capital of Wa Municipality with a population of 102, 446, and 2012 settlement based on the 2010 Ghana census (Ghana Statistical Service, 2012).

Currently, Wa Municipality has population of 126,609 population based on 2018 projection, 62,239 males and 64,370 females (Ghana Statistical Service, 2019; Okoro, 2020), indicating a rapidly consistent increase in population growth. Lying within latitude 1°40' and 2°45'N and longitude 9°32' to 10°20'W and with a land size of 234.74 square kilometers (occupying 6.4 percent of the total land coverage of the region), the area currently serves as a Municipal and Regional capital for the Upper West Region (Wa Municipal Authority, 2013). It is bordered by Nadowli District Assembly in the North, the Wa East District Assembly in the East, Wa West District Assembly to the West and South (WMA, 2013). Wa town hosts the Upper West Regional Police Command, the Wa Municipality Police Command, and the Wa District Police Command, all at one location. The Wa Township which has an Airstrip called Wa Airport, serves as a transportation hub for the Upper West Region with major road that leads north to Hamile, northeast to Tumu and the Upper East Region. The central traditional political authority and an 'ethno-cultural' group of Wa People are known as *Waala* with the *Waali* language.

The Municipality is the most urbanized in the region as it hosts many institutions that attract people to the area. Notable among the institutions are higher institutions; University for Development Studies (UDS), Wa Polytechnic, and a College of Education. These higher institutions (HI) especially the UDS attract large number of students to the Municipality, creating business for the locals; the Landlords, the food vendors, etc. Consequently, crime perpetrators see the students and staffs of the institutions as suitable targets since they display flashy properties like laptops, phones, televisions, cars, motorbikes, and many more. In addition, abandoned and/or uncompleted buildings are seen at many locations of the Wa communities especially Bamahu community (or electoral area) that criminals leverage on to ambush their victims. However, there are over 20 communities in the Wa Municipality. These communities include: Wa, Kpong, Charia, Bamahu, Dandafura, Nakori, Busa, Kperisi, Goohi, Sing, Boli, Jonga, Kolikpara, Piisi, Chansa, Mangu, Dorbile, Kpaguri, Kpalinye, Konjiahi, Kumbiehe, Danko, Chegli, Gberu, Dondoli, Tampalipani and others (GSS, 2013), of which four communities were selected for the study. The four communities

(Bamahu, Dondoli, Kumbiehe, and Mangu) were selected because of their nearness to the Wa-Township, and because of the rate of crime associated to them.

4. METHODOLOGY

Explorative sequential mixed method design was deployed to achieve the objective of this research. The complementary design gives room for pragmatism through the combination of data collected from different sources (Creswell, 2014; Alatinga & Williams, 2016; Okoro, 2020). For this work, primary and secondary data were utilized. The secondary data is the crime report (2015 – 2018) for the Wa Municipality collected from the Wa Municipality Command of the Ghana Police Service. The primary data were collected using qualitative and quantitative methods. The qualitative data were collected using Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and Key Informant Interview (KII), while the quantitative data were collected using a closed-ended questionnaire method. For the data analysis, narratives and descriptive statistics were employed for the qualitative and quantitative strands. The scope of the research include four communities (Mangu Bamahu, Dondoli, and Kumbiehe) of the Wa Municipality, concentrating on the Mala in se crimes (universal crimes inherently wrong by nature) recognised by the Ghana criminal law.

Bamahu and Mangu were selected as high crime area whilst Kumbiehe and Dondoli were selected as crime low area based on the information provided by the Ghana Police Service of the Wa Municipal Command. Before the selection of the communities, the Wa Municipal command of the GPS was approached to ascertain the crime characteristics of the communities within the suburb of Wa Town. Accordingly, three communities with highest crime rate were provided (for example, Mangu, Bamahu, and Kpaguri) and three communities (Dorbile, Dondoli, and Kumbiehe) with lowest crime rate were also provided. The former and the later were arranged in the descending order of high crime and low crime respectively, and the first two communities were selected from the former, while the last two were selected from the later for the research. The selection of the four study communities was done using purposive sampling technique.

For the qualitative strand of data collection, 9 focused group discussions (1 group with the Community Police Assistants, 2 groups per each community consisting of 1 female group and 1 male group), and 24 key informants (involving chiefs, opinion leaders, assemblymen, and other stakeholders who are abreast with the issues of crime and security in the Municipality) were conducted using purposive sampling method. The quantitative phase involves a survey of 180 respondents selected with the aid of stratified sampling method. The quantitative strand is a community-based survey, actualised with a structured questionnaire that were served face to face. The population was stratified into the four selected study communities in the study area, as the first stage of the sampling process. After this stage, the proportionate sampling technique was adopted to choose respondents from each community, and in the third stage, simple random sampling was employed to get the desired population. One hundred and eighty (180) sample size was taken bearing in mind time, convenience, and resource factors as well as data manageability and representativeness, which are paramount and need to be taken into consideration in the selection of a sample size.

The proportionate number of respondents from each unit (community) required for the study was determined. This was about 1.627192% (for example, the total number of 180 sample size was divided by the total number of population (11,062) in the 4 communities selected for the study, and the fraction was later expressed as a percentage) (Ghosh, 1992; Sarantakos, 2005; Beni, 2012). The number of respondents in each community was multiplied by 0.01627192 to obtain the number of respondents to be sampled from each unit. See table 1 below.

Table 1: Sample frame

Community (Unit)	Population (GSS'2018 projection)	Proportion	Sample
Bamahu	4068	4068×0.01627192	66
Mangu	4086	4086×0.01627192	66
Dondoli	$21682168 \times 0.01627192$	35	
Kumbiehe	740	740×0.01627192	13
Total	11,062		180

Researchers' construct, 2020

The researchers also reviewed existing literature conducted by earlier writers that are related to the study. The sources of secondary data include; books, journals, published and unpublished thesis, magazines and web sites, Ghana Statistical Service reports, crime statistics and other police reports relevant to the study.

5. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

5.1. Background Characteristics of Respondents

Table 2 presents an analysis of the respondents by sex, age, marital status, occupation, religion, education, and the length of stay in communities.

Table 2: Frequency (F) and percentage (%) distribution of the demographic characteristics of the survey respondents

Variable	Category	(F)	(%)	Variable	Category	(F)	(%)
Sex	Male	97	53.89	Marital Status	Single	62	34.44
	Female	83	46.11		Married	94	52.22
Age	16 – 45	117	66.66		Divorced	10	5.56
					Widowed	14	7.78
	46 – 65	49	27.23	Religion	Islam	100	55.56
	above 65	11	6.11	Christianity	76	42.22	
Occupation	Public Servants	30	16.67	Education (Formal)	ATR	4	2.22
	Farmers	42	23.33		Primary	16	8.89
	Traders	46	25.56		JHS	33	18.33
	Students	40	22.22		SHS	57	31.67
	Others	22	12.22		Tertiary	51	28.33
Length of Stay in Wa					None	23	12.78
	2-11	74	55.55				
	12-21	26	25.56				
	21+	21	17.22				

$N = 180$

Source: Field Survey, 2019

A total of 180 respondents were interviewed and from the demographic distribution of the respondents in Table 1, it can be observed that 53.89% of the respondents were males constituting the majority of the respondents over the females. Majority (52.22%) of the respondents were married whilst some were single (34.44%), the rest were either divorced (5.56%) or widowed (7.78%). In terms of religious affiliation, majority (55.56%) of the respondents were Muslims whilst the rest were Christians (44.22%) and African Traditional Religion (ATR) (2.22%). The table also

shows that most of the respondents (66.66%) were between the ages of 16 and 45 years, whilst a few of them (6.11%) fell above 65 years of age the rest (27.23%) were between 46 and 65 years. The occupations of the people were also considered, and the result shows that: the majority of the respondents are traders (25.56%), followed closely by farmers (23.33%), then students (22.22%), others (12.22%), and public servants (6.67%).

Another important demographic characteristic considered is the educational status of the people, the results show that majority of the respondents (60%) had either a secondary (SHS) or tertiary education, whilst a few of the respondents (12.78%) had no form of formal education at all, the rest (27.22%) had some form of basic education. Finally, the number of years respondents stayed in the municipality was considered. This is because only people who have stayed at least 2 years in a place can be able to testify whether an intervention like community policing implementation is yielding results or not. They should be able to tell the difference between the previous year and the current year in terms of crime reduction in the municipality. Thus, only people who had stayed in the municipality for at least 2 years were considered for the study. From Table 1, it is observed that a lot more respondents (55.55%) had stayed in the municipality between 2 – 11 years (14.44%), 25.56% of them had stayed between 12 and 21 years the remaining (17.22%) had stayed in the municipality for more than 21 years.

5.2. Common Types of Crime in the Wa Municipality

The incidence of crime in the Wa Municipality is presented and analysed by looking at the common types of crimes in the Wa Municipality, starting with survey data and thereafter, supporting with qualitative data. The survey data is presented and analysed through a 4 point Likert-type scale of Strongly agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly disagree with assigned values of 4, 3, 2, and 1 respectively (Boone & Boone, 2012). The values were added and divided by 4 to obtain a discriminating mean value or cut-off point of 2.5. Therefore, any item among the composite items that scores a weighted mean of 2.5 or above are considered as agree or a strong factor, while those items with weighted mean less than 2.5 are considered disagree or weak factors (Okoro, 2016; 2020; Chikaire, Ajaero, Ibe & Onogu, 2018). Thus, frequency (f) counts, percentages (%), and mean (\bar{X}) were used to analyse the data collected. Table 3 presents analysis of the survey data on common types of crimes in the study area.

Table 3: Common Types of Crime in the Wa Municipality

Item	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Mean (\bar{X})
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Stealing	76	42.22	67	37.22	20	11.11	17	9.44	3.12
Robbery	47	26.11	61	33.89	38	21.11	34	18.89	2.67
Armed Robbery	22	12.22	58	32.22	52	28.89	48	26.67	2.30
Rape	26	14.44	37	20.56	51	28.33	66	36.67	2.13
Assault	65	36.11	59	32.78	34	18.89	22	12.22	2.93
Threat to Harm	38	21.11	55	30.56	53	29.44	34	18.89	2.54
Causing unlawful Damage	48	26.67	66	36.67	37	20.56	29	16.11	2.74
Threat of Death	32	17.78	43	23.89	51	28.33	54	30.00	2.29
Causing Unlawful Harm	45	25.00	54	30.00	60	33.33	21	11.67	2.68
Defrauding by false pretense	23	12.78	39	21.67	52	28.89	66	36.67	2.10
Possession of Narcotic Drugs	68	37.78	73	40.56	22	12.22	17	9.44	3.07
Act tending to disrupt peace	22	12.22	35	19.44	70	38.89	53	29.44	2.14
Trespassing	19	10.56	32	17.78	61	33.89	68	39.78	2.01
Murder	21	11.67	30	16.67	58	32.22	71	39.44	2.01

Cruelty to Animal	28	15.56	43	23.89	46	25.56	63	35.00	2.20
Escape from lawful custody	10	5.56	13	7.22	62	34.44	73	40.56	2.01
Illegal Possession of offensive firearm	23	12.78	42	23.33	50	27.78	65	36.11	2.13
Defilement of a child under 16	26	14.44	29	16.11	73	40.56	52	28.89	2.16
Impersonation	17	9.44	31	17.22	71	39.44	61	33.89	2.02
Illegal Abortion	60	33.33	57	31.67	41	22.78	22	12.22	2.89
Rioting	18	10.00	23	12.78	63	35.00	76	42.22	1.91
Causing public nuisance	39	21.67	43	23.89	47	26.11	51	28.33	2.39
Kidnapping	14	7.78	26	14.44	74	41.11	66	36.67	1.93
Forgery	26	14.44	40	22.22	55	30.56	59	32.78	2.18
Arson	32	17.78	38	21.11	57	31.67	53	29.44	2.27

N = 180.

Scale: Strongly agree = 4, Agree = 3, Disagree = 2, Strongly disagree = 1, cutoff point = 2.5

Source: Field Survey, 2019

From the Table 3, Stealing, also known as Thievery or Theft (mean score 3.12) and "Possession of Narcotic Drugs" ($\bar{X} = 3.07$) are the major crimes happening in the Municipality. These are closely followed by Assault ($\bar{X} = 2.93$), and Illegal Abortion ($\bar{X} = 2.89$). Other forms of crime with significant occurrences include Robbery ($\bar{X} = 2.67$), Threat to Harm ($\bar{X} = 2.54$), Causing unlawful Damage ($\bar{X} = 2.74$), and Causing Unlawful Harm ($\bar{X} = 2.68$).

The qualitative results corroborate the survey findings in many ways. For instance, the Wa Municipal Commander (frequently called the District Commander) who participated as a key informant in the study indicated that some crimes are common in the area and some are not. In his words: "Stealing, Burglary, Robbery, and Assaults are the commonest crimes here....stealing is the most prevalent.....rape although handled by DOVVSU occurs but it is not frequent" (DESUPOL-WA DIST, 27.01.19).

Another key informant, a Chief Inspector who doubles as the Rotational Personnel and the Community Policing Desk Officer of the Upper West Regional Command has the same view but disagreed on Robbery and Burglary being common in the municipality when he said that:

Assault and Stealing are the most common crimes in the Wa Municipality. Robbery is not rampant, but assault and stealing, and when we say assault we mean fighting, quarrel within families, and within the community, and when we say stealing, we mean stealing of motorbikes, goats, and other petty-petty things. We have rape cases.....that is why we have DOVVSU who normally take care of those issues, and as a community policing desk officer, I know the objective, the objective is to ensure there is peace within the community. When there is an issue, we educate them and transfer the case to DOVVSU because they specialise in the women and family issues. Burglary is there but it is not one of the major issues, the major ones are the assaults and stealing (Chief Inspector, 24.01.19).

However, the above statement speaks to the fact that Police crime statistics or information from the Police agencies are not enough to understand the prevailing crimes in their communities. Police agencies, especially where community policing philosophy has not been well implemented, only get to know crimes that have been reported to them, but are incognizant of many crimes going on in communities. For instance, burglary (breaking by the use of force with intention to steal) is one of the prevailing crimes in the various communities as indicated by the community members (although merged together with stealing, and 'attempting to steal') but has not been mentioned or has been rebutted by the Police as a common crime in the area. This is evidenced in the interview with one of the key informants, the Naa (Chief) of Mangu community who revealed that:

Theft, breaking of houses, drugs, smoking or alcoholism are the common types of crime in our community. They break people's houses, they pick people's motorbikes, people's accessories, animals, phone, and other gadgets if they have access to it. I have a friend who stays here. They have attacked him severally, but they have never been successful in taking his property. They broke through his window. The second time through his other window the first was his tenant they attacked. As for the man, they first came into his fence, and jumped into the fence and they were peeping through the window. He realised people were around, he put the barb wire across so that these thieves will not be able to get access to his house again. The last attempt of the thieves, he got injury, they tried picking his phone from his window, and he jumped to collect it from them, he fell down and injured his knee. He is still not walking well, that was three weeks ago (Field work, KII, Mangu, 2019).

Also, during a Focus Group Discussion session with the Community Police Assistants (CPAs), one of the discussants indicated that breaking into houses, assaults, threat to harm, stealing of children, stealing of animals like cattle, goats, and drug abuse are the common crimes in his community. He added that rape cases were recorded in the community some years ago, but it is no longer in existence now. As he was finishing, another discussant (from Kumbiehe) cut in, with a statement:

rape just occurred in my community yesterday. I reported the case to the Police Station. Like my colleague said, cases of stealing is everywhere.....they snatch people phones, motorbikes, purse, and even with weapons sometimes (Field work, FGD, CPA, 2019).

The Assemblyman of Kumbiehe – a key informant, during an interview, disclosed that:

Stealing of motorbikes in people's houses, goats, and sheep are the major crime activities in this community. Anytime the place is dark they block people and snatch their motorbikes or sometimes they just catch and snatch your bags. These are the major issues they have been reporting to me. Breaking of houses and shops regularly occur. They cut people windows to have access.....sometimes they stand behind the window and pick your belongings with sticks. Rape is not our problem here, except that our girls are getting pregnant too much making them to drop out of school. Tramadol is also a problem here...both girls and boys take it, especially boys. The criminals are always around Magazine area every night (Field Work, KII, Kumbiehe, 2019).

Another key informant, Bamahu Assemblyman, like the previous person disclosed during an interview that theft is the most common crime in his community. In his words:

We experience a lot of crimes here, I can say we have armed robbery issues, theft issues, or stealing issues. There is no rape case here because it has not been reported here within Bamahu. There used to be burglary here but nowadays, it has gone down. Nowadays the commonest thing we have is attacking someone on the road, that is, you will be moving, and they hold you and snatch your things. You park your motorbike, they take it away. Some of them have gun and knives. They snatch student's backs, laptops, phones, etc. and sometimes they break their rooms and take away their properties. Crime was not very common here before, but the presence of the University motivated them. Sometimes, some of the perpetrators are students themselves. Breaking used to be during holidays when the students are not on campus, so when they return, their properties are gone (Field work, KII-Bamahu, 2019).

In support of the Assemblyman's claim, a key informant from the University for Development Studies, Wa Campus situated at Bamahu (the Assemblyman's constituency) who was interviewed revealed that they are three major incidences of crime that are creating an insecurity atmosphere for the school and the students:

1. *Armed robbery where a victim is accosted with either a weapon that can hurt and to compel the victim to oblige and yield to demands from the perpetrator. Armed robbery in the sense that, whether you have a cutlass or a gun or a knife*

once you pull out and use, it is described as armed robbery. 2. Physical attack on the body of the victims, 3. Theft. No rape case has actually been reported to me as Principal. Females have been attacked but not rape, some are blackmailed but not frequent, it might include demanding sex, but the cases that have been brought to me, forced canal knowledge was not part. There is only one case of suicide that has been recorded (Fieldwork, KII-Bamah, 2019).

In Dondoli Community, the Assemblyman disclosed that theft is the major crime disturbing the community and the lives of the residents. He added that some of the community boys form camps/groups in which they use to attack others or to defend themselves against attack from another camps/group. According to him:

We have theft.... our major problem here is theft. Another one is community fighting among themselves...they form camps/groups and fought against each other. It is called camps fighting, they recently came with scissors and fight themselves. Stealing of goats, breaking rooms and collecting money, mobile phone, motorbikes and other things. They also break shops to take people goods and other properties (Fieldwork, KII-Dondoli, 2019).

Also a Focus Group Discussion section with men group at the same Dondoli summarised thus:

These days stealing is in the day time. They can block you on your way and snatch your phones. They collect people's motorbikes, and can beat if they don't have money to give them. They will tell you give me your phone or I will kill you. As for your life, it is more important so you will just give it to them like that. Dondoli and Kumbiehe have magazine, and that's where the criminals stay. They also stay at that mountain side when you pass those shrubs. They steal people's animals and take them there to kill and eat. The Police know they are there, but it seems they are friends to the police. We know the criminals, but we cannot arrest them because we fear being attacked by their groups. They sit with girls together in the evening timeso the girls too are part of them (Fieldwork, FGD-Dondoli, 2019).

Collaterally, the time series based secondary data collected from the Ghana Police Service of the Wa Command (annual crime report statistics) show that Assault and Stealing are the major crimes in the area. Table 4 presents the crime report from 2015 to 2018 showing the common types of crime in the study area. The table contains selected crimes that have continued to occur overtime in the Wa Municipality.

Table 4: Annual crime report of the Ghana Police Service, Wa District Command

Reported Crime/Years	2015	2016	2017	2018
Assault	299	256	245	253
Stealing	412	489	495	462
Offensive Conduct - breach of peace	30	27	23	22
Threat of Harm	46	49	46	55
Causing unlawful Damage	33	34	48	22
Threat of Death	25	23	19	28
Causing Unlawful Harm	11	10	13	15
Defrauding by false pretense	41	51	60	88
Robbery	42	18	41	45
Murder	7	0	2	4
Attempt to commit murder	3	3	0	1
Failure to provide for health and life	2	18	-	21
Rape	2	7	9	5
Defilement of a child under 16	22	15	21	17
Abduction of a female under 18 years	9	7	5	4
Unlawful Entry	19	7	4	7
Possessing forged document (counterfeit)	0	1	2	2

Possession of Narcotic Drugs	0	2	3	9
Attempt to steal	8	11	16	16
Act tending to disrupt peace	4	4	8	4
Trespassing	3	4	4	11
Cruelty to Animal	2	1	2	1
Escape from lawful custody	2	2	0	1
Illegal Possession of Offensive firearm	0	4	2	3
Possession of Forged Note Currency	1	0	0	3

Source: Wa Municipal Police Department Annual Report File (2015 - 2018)

To understand the incidence of crime based on the Police reports, table 4 shows that assault and stealing are the two major crimes in the Municipality. These have been isolated and represented using chart (see figure 1), followed by a chart representing the next six-second highest crime in the table. These include offensive conduct, the threat of harm, unlawful damage, the threat of death, defrauding by false pretense, and robbery, (see figure 2).

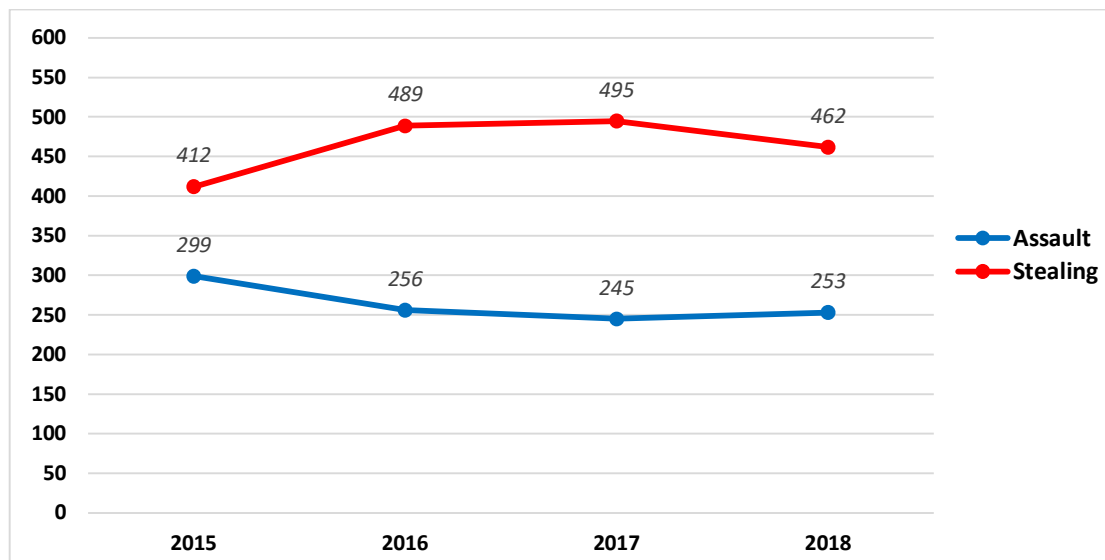


Figure 1: Annual stealing and Assault report of the Ghana Police Service, Wa District Command

Source: Wa Municipal Police Department Annual Report File (2015 - 2018)

Assault and stealing are the major crimes in the Wa Municipality according to the number of reported cases of the Annual crime report of the Ghana Police Service, Wa District Command. Assault cases in the municipality declined from 299 in 2015 to 256 in 2016, and to 245 in 2017, then rose to 253 in 2018 as shown in Figure 1. Stealing however, increased from 412 in 2015 to 489 in 2016, and to 495 in 2017 before declining to 464.

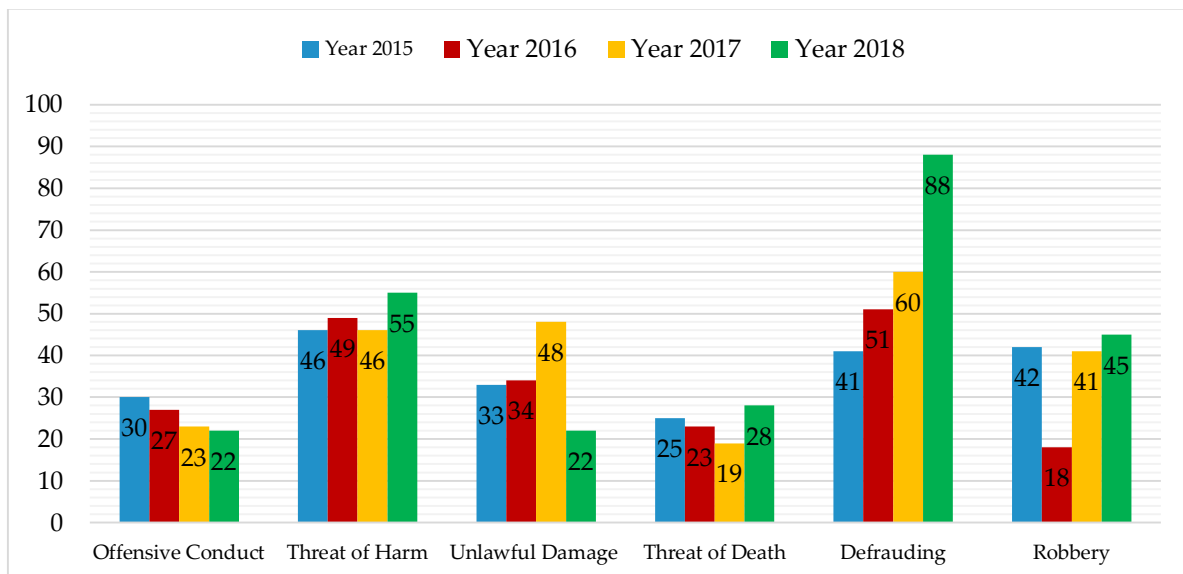


Figure 2: Annual crime report of the Ghana Police Service, Wa District Command

Source: Wa Municipal Police Department Annual Report File (2015 – 2018)

There is no regularity in decline or otherwise of the number of crimes reported over time, as shown in Figure 2. Whilst the number of reported cases of offensive conduct is seen to have steadily declined over the period, the number of reported cases of defrauding by false pretense is seen to have been on a steady rise over the period. Defrauding by false pretense increased steadily from 41 in 2015 to 88 in 2018, a 115% increase. The rest, however, are inconsistent. For instance, the number of reported cases for the threat of harm rose from 46 in 2015 to 49 in 2016, and reversed to 46 in 2017, and then shot up to 55 in 2018, that for unlawful damage continued rising from 33 in 2015 to 48 in 2017, and declined to 22 in 2018. Threat of death declined from 25 in 2015, to 23 in 2016 and to 19 in 2017, then shot up 28 in 2018. Finally, Robbery declined from 42 in 2015 to 18 in 2016 and shot up to 41 in 2017, and to 45 in 2018.

It is now visibly clear through the data triangulation (the interview, the survey, and the secondary data) that Assault and Stealing are the most prevailing crimes in the Wa Municipality. Though the respondents strongly believed possession of narcotic drugs is one of the most prevailing crimes in the municipality, the data from the police department suggested otherwise. However, from the analysis, the main crimes in the study area include: stealing, unlawful damage, assault, robbery, threat to harm, illegal abortion, unlawful harm and possession of narcotics. The perpetrators target motorbikes; animals like goats, cattle, turkeys, chickens; phones, students and worker's laptops; money; women's bags; students' bags; goods of private business owners; and other accessories. Also, children have been stolen in some locations. In most of the stealing cases, shops and houses have been burgled causing property damage and others. unlawful damage. In the same vain, the finding shows that most of the robbery cases manifest in the form of snatching properties of residents effected by blocking their targets at lonely locations, and sometimes, in the daytime. In the process of robbing their targets, perpetrators inflict injury on their victims, and may issue threat of harm, and/or pull out their weapons (Gun, cutlass or knives) to scare their victims.

6. DISCUSSIONS OF FINDINGS

Based on the results, the common types of crime in the Wa Municipality are street crimes, which include robbery, stealing (theft), threat to harm, assault, unlawful harm, possession of narcotic drugs, unlawful damage, and illegal

abortion. The most prevailing crimes are stealing, robbery, and assault. The stealing or theft manifest in the form of property theft (stealing and burglary). The perpetrators steal animals and other properties like motorbikes, phones, laptops, Television sets, accessories and others. and in some locations, streetlight accessories. While the robbery manifest in the form of snatching of properties from victims with force and sometimes with the threat of life. Similarly, Assault manifests in the form of fighting – group fighting against other groups for identity, and body injury due to robbery and/or other form of crime where the victims try to resist. The stealing of these valuable properties sometimes create conflict among the residents as they often precipitate disagreement and distrust across different groups in the communities. According to Okoro (2018), conflict occurs in the presence of disagreements over issues of substance between individuals or groups. This is however, in consistent with the social disorganization theory by Shaw and McKay (1942) which is anchored on the notion that disorganized communities create crime when informal social controls (like the watchdog committee and other form of indigenous crime prevention arrangements) break down, precipitating criminal activities.

Also, the findings is congruous to the Broken Window theory of Wilson and Kelling (1982:12) which posits that “weeds grow in neighborhoods where property is abandoned, causing breaking of windows, and making adults to stop scolding ill-disciplined children, cause families to move out and unattached adults to move in”. Consequently residents as a result of fear of being victims begin to use the streets less, and the streets become lonely and vulnerable to criminal invasion. In this sense, crime creates a downward spiral of neighbourhood deterioration and fear of crime which can lead to more deterioration and more serious crimes if not checked by the affected community. This is because consistent occurrence of little crimes like stealing, assaults, possession of illegal drugs, and others can portray the impression that people don’t care about the community, and can further depict that both residents (informal social control) and the police (formal) have lost control over the community. Also in accordance with Murphy (1995), the root causes of crime, looking at the type of common crime frequently occurring in the study area might include poverty, unemployment, underemployment, weak schools, alcoholism, single-parent families, teenage pregnancy as pointed out by the Assemblyman of Kumbiehe, and a society of selfishness and greed.

The results apparently show that many crimes can exist in communities without forming part of the police reports. It is now clear however that Police report cannot be relied upon when assessing common types or prevalence of crime in any community. This is in tandem with Pazzani and Tita (2009) whose position is that victims of crime don’t report crime to the police due to some situations. They identified some of the situations as cases where the victims and the suspects are both acting criminally or know each other. In such cases, crimes like physical assaults, rape, and illegal abortion evade police desk. Burglaries (unlawful entries/damage) and stealing in which items of little value are damaged and/or stolen may not be reported because the victim may not believe it is worth the time and trouble to engage the Police. Results of the interviews and focus group discussions at Dondoli indicate that residents don’t report crime incidences to the Police because of lack of confidence and trust in the agency. They submitted that suspects reported or handed over to the police are suspiciously released back to the community, putting the lives of those who reported them in danger.

This is capable of undermining the credibility of police report. Of course, that is the reason why Police see Dondoli as a low crime area, which has been debunked by the results of this research work. Crime occurrence is found to be a frequent issue in the various communities within the Wa Municipality, and this is capable of affecting development. Students environments have become attractive arena to criminals as they target students’ studying materials especially laptops and smart phones. It could be deduced that effective policing strategies targeting public safety is urgently needed to curtail the peril already posed by the crime incidences in the study area. This is because, public safety is a bedrock of any sustainable development.

One of the important findings of this work is that participants especially the Police officers and the residents of Bamahu maintained strongly that crime rate in Bamahu skyrocketed owing to the implantation of a higher institution of learning (University for Development Studies) in the area. This therefore speaks to the fact that development comes with positive and negative indices that beg for attention of development planners. Our environment is ever-changing, but lack of consciousness of development planners, lack of responsive governments and stakeholders to recognize these changes aggravates the problem. It also shows that urbanisation attracts criminals, as they see new opportunities, people of high classes tend to display flashy and valuable materials that can be targeted. This is in agreement with Havi (2014) who maintained that “various social problems stem from uncoordinated and unsystematic social changes sometimes, particularly among those who are unable to adapt to ever-changing new environments” (Havi, 2014:4). Meanwhile, it is clear that rapid social change always tend to produce social disorganisation, which in itself precipitate crime.

The findings also support the Routine Activity Theory of Cohen and Felson (1979) which focuses on predatory crimes, the offenders, the targets, and the guidance. They defined predatory crimes as “illegal acts that involved the direct damaging or taking of a person or property of another”, while arguing that opportunity for crime is likely to present itself during routine activities in a socially disorganised neighbourhood so that when a potential offender (perpetrator of crime) meets a suitable target (victim and/or property) in the absence of a capable guardian (informal or formal security agency), crime occurs. Suitable targets include those attractive materials of vulnerable victims that might appeal to an offender like motorbikes, laptops, phones, animals and other stealable materials as in the case of Wa Municipality.

7. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS FOR CRIME MANAGEMENT

The study concludes that the common types of crime in the Wa Municipality are mainly Burglary, Stealing (theft), Assault, Robbery, Unlawful Damage, Threat to Harm, Illegal Abortion, Unlawful Harm, and Possession of Narcotic Drugs. Other types of crime identified in the area, although not frequent, include rape, armed robbery, stealing of children, and Suicide. The suicide case was committed by one of the students of the University for Development Studies Wa Campus. However, among all, the most prevailing crimes found in the area are stealing, robbery, and Assaults. The stealing or theft manifest in the form of property theft, sometimes the perpetrators are caught in the act – which can be seen as ‘attempting to steal’ and ‘unlawful entry’ cases. The properties the perpetrators target include animals, motorbikes, business goods, phone, laptops, purses, monies, and other attractive properties of their victims. While the Robbery manifest in the form of snatching of these properties from the victims with the use of force and sometimes with threat of life. Similarly, Assault manifests in the form of fighting – group fighting against other groups for identity. This causes body injuries among the groups. Sometimes they get involved in robbery acts and/or other forms of crimes. The group fighting is unique to Dondoli electoral area.

Nevertheless, through the qualitative results, crime is found to be higher in Dondoli and Mangu than Kumbiehe and Bamahu, disputing Police report that saw Dondoli community as a low crime area. Police report is therefore not enough in assessing crime prevalence in communities. It is also discovered that students of the UDS who are domiciled in Bamahu are the major attractions for crime in the area, as the perpetrators target their belongings. Based on the findings, the implication for crime management planning can be inferred through the following:

1. The Wa Municipal, the regional, and the national security stakeholders should invest efforts into reorganising the communities in the Municipality by designing a security framework where the Police Service and the community members who are the major stakeholders would share decision making powers for peace, security and development.

2. The Neighbourhood Watch Committee (NWC) which was in existence in and was owned by the communities before the Community Police Assistants (CPAs) approach was introduced by the national government, should be refurbished as the qualitative evidence show that they understand their communities better than the Police and the CPAs and of course can be understood and trusted better. By so doing, stranger to stranger policing can be reduced and as well reduce crime occurrence. Willing individuals (both youths and elderly) can be selected and trained through the help of the Chiefs, assemblymen, and opinion leaders of the communities to enable the communities to own the initiative and build trust and confidence in the people. They should be a strong collaboration and all-inclusive decision making in the selection, and many more. the Chiefs, the Assemblymen and the Ghana Police Service should decide together for the selection. Instead of the CPAs, the NWC volunteers should be presented to the national government for monthly stipend, since one of the reasons they went extinct was lack of monthly remuneration.
3. The stakeholders – the Police, the Upper West Regional and Wa Municipal leaders, community leaders, Landlords, public and private institutions, NGOs, including business owners should form a security forum for effective policing partnership whereby the security concerns of residents will be constantly noted and resolved. Local leaders among the NWC per communities can be involved in the meetings who would later disseminate the resolves of the meetings to other volunteers of the committee. Through this, many crime neighbourhood problems would readily come to the attention of the police.
4. The new security framework to be designed by the stakeholders for the Municipality should see the chiefs and traditional leaders in the various communities as the chief security officers of their communities, see the residents as the owners of their security development processes, and see the GPS as servants of the communities. This would create a strong and effective policing arrangements for the communities. With this arrangement, the chiefs and the traditional leaders can play consultative and supporting roles in selection and maintenance of NWC and the overall wellness of the Municipality.

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