

Building Safer Communities through Institutional Collaboration in Ghana: An Appraisal of Existing Arrangement

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Abstract : The problem of crime and insecurity in urban environments are often complex, multilayered, multidimensional and sometimes interwoven. It is from this perspective that recent approaches and strategies aimed at responding to crime and insecurity have looked at the problem from a social, economic, spatial and institutional point of view. In Ghana, there is much understanding of how various elements of the social and spatial setting influence crime and safety concerns of residents in urban areas. However, little research attention has been given to the institutional dimension of the problem of crime and insecurity in urban Ghana. In particular, scholars and policymakers in the area of safety and security have scarcely interrogated the forms of collaboration that exist between the various formal and informal institutions and how gaps and lapses in this collaboration influence vulnerability to crime and feelings of insecurity. Using Sekondi-Takoradi as a case study and drawing on both primary and secondary data, this paper assesses the activities of various institutions both formal and informal in crime control and prevention in the Sekondi-Takoradi metropolis, the third largest city in Ghana. More importantly, the paper seeks to address gaps in the institutional arrangement and coordination between and among institutions at the forefront of crime prevention efforts in the metropolis and by extension Ghanaian cities. The study found that while there is some form of collaboration between the police and the community, little collaboration existed between planning authorities and the police on the one hand, and the community on the other hand. The paper concludes that in light of the complex nature of a crime, institutional coordination and an inclusive approach involving formal and informal will be critical in promoting safer cities in Ghana.

Keywords : crime prevention, coordination, Ghana, institutional arrangement

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