

Assessing The Sociopolitical Security Determinants Of Crime Incidents In Kenya: A Case Of Kibera Informal Settlement, Nairobi City County

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Abstract: Safe and comfortable dwelling is a desire of every individual whether in the formal or informal settlements. However, most studies indicate that people in informal settlements like Kibera tend to experience insecurity and crime incidents more often than those in the formal settlements. Kibera slum is not only the largest informal settlement in Africa and the second largest in the world but it is also associated with a high number of crime incidents, especially at the peak of political activities in Kenya. This trend has drawn considerable concern from the government of Kenya over the years and several strategies have been established to restore security and social wellbeing of the citizens residing in this area. For instance, the government through security agencies has supported community policing initiatives and “Nyumba kumi” initiative. However, it is not clear whether such initiatives have yielded notable results. Lack of notable results may be attributed to different factors including misdiagnosis of the security problem. It is for this reason that this study was undertaken to establish possible sociopolitical and security determinants of crime incidents in Kibera informal settlement. Particularly, the study endeavored to identify the extent to which social factors, political factors, public perceptions of police, and crime prevention strategies contribute to crime incidents in the informal settlement. The study was guided by two theories namely; social disorganization theory and conflict theory of crime. Descriptive survey design to aid collection of primary and secondary data was applied. The study used a combination of stratified and random sampling techniques to get 450 respondents consisting of 384 residents of Kibera and 66 police officers from the local police stations. Data was collected through self-administered questionnaires after which Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was employed to facilitate analysis of the collected data. Means, standard deviations, percentages, and correlations among other statistical approaches were used to present the analyzed the data. Significant correlation was established between the four sociopolitical and security factors (social factors, political factors, public perception of police officers, crime prevention strategies) and crime incidents in Kibera informal settlement. Crime prevention strategies and social factors were established to have the greatest impacts ($\beta_4 = 0.3779$, $p < 0.0019$) on crime incidents in the sampled settlement. This was followed by social factors ($\beta_1 = 0.3726$, $p < 0.0028$), public perception ($\beta_3 = 0.1007$, $p = 0.0300$), and political factors ($\beta_2 = 0.0408$, $p = 0.0028$) in that order. Therefore, crime incidents in Kibera are determined to a great extent by the crime prevention strategies employed by the police officers in the area. There are minimal links between political factors and crime incidents. These findings informed multiple recommendations to policy makers and researchers. For instance, government agencies are advised to increase holistic crime prevention efforts as a matter of priority. The strategies should include sociopolitical concerns of the residents for them to be effective in curbing insecurity and crime incidents. Researchers should also undertake additional studies on other determinants of insecurity and crime incidents which are beyond the scope of the current study.

I. INTRODUCTION

The persistence and rise of crime continue to damage the social fabric of the society especially in Kenya's informal settlements. Adebayo (2013) perceives crime as dysfunctional because it threatens the social stability of the community.

Crime is therefore a social problem that requires concerted effort to control and manage. Urbanization, especially in developing countries like Kenya has been associated with increased levels of violence, crime, and lawlessness as an increased number of persons continue to travel to the City from rural areas in search of employment and other

opportunities. Mushanga (2014) defines a criminal act as an action that contravenes the criminal law or penal code which categorically states what a citizen may not do. Therefore, it is a crime to do what the law prohibits or fail to do what the law requires one to do. The criminal act has to be expressly declared to be a crime by law which is promulgated by state. When the criminal law is enforced without fear or favor, it is termed as rule of law (Mushanga, 2014).

United Nations Habitat sessional paper issued in New York on 31st May (2015) defines informal settlements as neighborhoods of abode where the dwellers have no security of lease. The housing that is in place may not comply with design and construction regulations of the City. Informal dwellings are often situated in ecologically and geographically hazardous areas. They are the most disadvantaged and left out in terms of development. Informal settlements are characterized by deficiency and run-down housing. In addition to the lack of security of occupancy, slum dwellers lack sufficient supply of basic infrastructure, facilities, and public space. Inhabitants of informal settlements are constantly exposed to expulsion, eviction, aggression and disease (UN-Habitat, 2015). Global studies indicate that sixty percent of all City residents in developing Nations have at one time been victims of various crimes over the past six years. The global populace is becoming increasingly urban as new crimes continue to manifest as a result of urbanization. (Prato & Rosbrook-Thompson, 2019).

Regionally, South Africa has experienced a high level of violence and serious crime where the state has not designed informal settlements in urban space. This is in accordance with a study that was done by Monday et al. (2013). The authors argued that informal settlement and crime in South Africa found an interconnection between crime experience and housing. It is also related to population size, density and absence of services among others. The scholars identified issues such as unemployment, political, social stress and bad governance as factors that shape insecurity in informal settlements. They analyzed informal settlements and environmental characteristics in relation to crime and concluded that non-availability of public toilets and waste collection, the limited availability of access to security, the lack of roads to allow accessibility by motor vehicles to residential structures, the inability of firefighters to assess places where fire incidents occur as key issues behind exposure to crime. Few studies have been carried out to scrutinize the very comprehensive physical properties of housing within the informal settlement in relation to crime. (Monday et al., 2013).

Goodfellow (2014) argued that informal settlements nature specific sets of legal and political practices which outline how crime develops and hence how security is affected. He continued to argue that informal settlements are spaces that are often outlawed, and their dwellers are often proscribed by the relationship of their association. Inhabitants of these informal settlements are also conceived to be marginalized. The list of prejudices that are leveled against them is endless as they are also perceived to be anti-establishment, oppositional and whose culture is supportive of activities that are illegal in nature. Informal settlements have a visible absence of law and order; roaming drug dealers,

muggers, teenage gangs, prostitutes, and other peripheral activities that take place with impunity (Goodfellow, 2014).

Kenya's informal settlements are growing at unprecedented rate as more individuals are migrating from rural parts of the country to Cities in search of employment and other prospects that are found in urban areas. This is according to the United Nations-Habitat Report in 2018, Kenya's strategy document for the Slum-Upgrading Programme which was published in May 2018. It was estimated that there are about 2.5 million people living in informal settlements in about 200 settlements in Nairobi. Kibera is the largest slum in Africa and one of the five biggest informal settlements in the whole world. Others are Ciudad Neza in Mexico City, Mexico, Dharavi in Mumbai, India, Orangi in Karachi, Pakistan and Khayelitsha in Cape Town, South Africa (UN-Habitat Report, 2008). The fast growth of informal settlement in Kenyan towns and cities has increased urban poverty and inequality, land grabbing on public utility land and insufficient investment in new low-cost housing. Existing figures during the period of study showed that there was compelling evidence demonstrating dire in many Kenya's urban towns and cities. About 60% of Kenya's City populace live in informal settlements that are characterized by lack of access to sanitation, water, poor environmental condition, inadequate housing and high crime rates. According to Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (2019), sixty percent of the population in Nairobi lives in informal settlements that occupy only six percent of the total land in Nairobi City County and the growth of the slums in Kenya is unprecedented. The population of people living in slums is expected to double in the next fifteen years (KNBS, 2019).

The National Police Service seems to have missed the mark in addressing the security needs of the heavily populated Kibera slum and other informal settlements. Activities such as alcoholic and drug abuse seem to be socially normal in the slums. Majority of drug users are delinquent youth who become aggressive, leading them to continue committing more serious crimes in order to raise money to sustain their addiction. The rate of reported and unreported crimes continues to impact on the livelihood of residents in a negative way. It is against this contextual framework that this study endeavors to identify the extent to which social, economic, political and legal factors contribute to the prevalence and types of crime incidents committed in Kibera informal settlement, to assess the frequency of these crime incidents and their influence on security in Kibera informal settlement, to establish the public perception on police performance and its influence on security and crime in Kibera informal settlement and finally to assess the strategies put in place by law enforcement agencies in managing crime in Kibera informal settlement.

II. LITERATURE AND EMPIRICAL REVIEW

A. SOCIAL DISORGANIZATION THEORY

Harold Grasmick and Robert Bursik popularized the social disorganization theory in 1993 from the initial proponents, Shaw and Kemp (2014). Borrowing from Robert

Park and Ernest Burgess' urban ecology theory, Bursik (1988) defined social disorganization as lack of ability among members of a particular community to solve commonly experienced problems or achieve shared values. According to the theorists, a combination of high population turnover rates (residential instability) and rapid transition in the population composition in a given community weakens the community's ability to formulate and implement social control. This social perspective conforms to Park and Burgess' assertion that urban ecosystems such as Kibera informal settlement often experience competition forces as proposed in Darwin's evolution theory. Such an ecosystem is likely to experience some disorganization disruption by new entrants and exit by some of the previous occupants. Deviant behaviors and criminal tendencies may arise from the local competition in the absence of sound regulatory mechanisms.

B. THE CONFLICT THEORY

Conflict theory was borrowed from Karl Marx's Communist manifesto in which he labored to explain the causes and implications of class conflicts between the powerful members of the society (bourgeoisie) and the disadvantaged majority (proletariat). He described the bourgeoisie as the few members of the society who owns and controls means of economic production while the proletariats are the poor and the working-class members of the society. While proposing that the society is in a constant state of conflict between these two groups of people, Marx pointed out that the need to control the political, social, and economic powers is responsible for the perpetual conflict in the society.

The primary tenet of the conflict theory is that there is unjust distribution of resources, which leads to unequal social order within the society. Therefore, superstructures in the form of cultural, social, and political institutions are formed to maintain the status quo through capitalism and against the will of the poor majority. However, worsening the socioeconomic conditions of the poor majority often lead to behavioral adjustment and even revolution in pursuit of socioeconomic justice. United Nations (2006) reported that unequal distribution of political privileges and civic opportunities determines how citizens perceive their position and relate in the society. Different kinds of criminal activities tend to be high among people within the lower end of the socioeconomic ladder.

On linking socioeconomic imbalance and crime, Wright Mills (1956) observed that the powerful members of the society are so privileged to the extent of determining what is criminal and what is not. Therefore, the perceived rate of criminal activities is likely to be higher on the side of the underprivileged members of the society. The power elite are likely to commit a socially and economically heavy crime but go unpunished while criminal activities of the socially and economically deprived individuals are likely to be numerous and petty (Hall & Winlow, 2015).

C. SOCIAL FACTORS AND CRIME INCIDENTS

Social status of a community has higher chances of leading to greater risk of crime victimizations according to

Mushanga (2014). Lofstrom and Raphael (2016) also argued that less privileged members of society have higher chances of being victimized as criminals because they are living in areas with frequent crime incidences. Nevertheless, members of higher social status in developing countries are often involved in property crimes. Therefore, poverty or social status are not necessarily a cause of criminality as much as it is a determinant of crime typology. A report by UNDP (2014), causes of crime are cross-cutting; they are shaped by social-economic inequalities such as unemployment, poverty, and idleness, peer pressure by youth who wish to live a particular kind of lifestyle, inadequate parenting and others.

Poverty, unemployment and lack basic essential goods such as food are major factors that contribute to increase of criminal incidents in the informal settlements. KBK (2018) noted that development of deviant behaviors is often enhanced by the prevailing poverty level within an individual's setting. The researcher explained that people are likely to engage in criminal activities to earn their livelihood when they are in a state of extreme lack. This view was support by the NCRC report which revealed a significant link between high unemployment rate and prevalence of criminal gangs in the community (NCRC, 2012).

D. POLITICAL DYNAMICS AND CRIME INCIDENTS

Political dynamics refers to popular beliefs and behavior of a population concerning governance and control of political power. Oxford dictionary defines politics as the processes and activities that relates to a country's governance, with more emphasis on the parties that hold the power. The major aim of politics is to improve the power status of an individual or groups of people in society. Being at the upper end of the power scale is a lucrative state that the privileged members of the society fight to achieve through any means possible, mostly through manipulating the socially and economically deprived folks. Such manipulations are always directed at influencing the governance beliefs of the masses to favor political desires of the powerful elite (Hall & Winlow, 2015). Some of the powerful elite go to the extent of sponsoring criminal gangs to intimidate the perceived rivals and coerce the populace into voting for the political sponsor. Haysom and Opala (2020) noted an increasing number of politically sponsored gangs in several locations across Kenya. The growth of criminal gangs associated with politics in Kenya has even been aggravated by the ethnic polarization which tends to rise every electioneering period. Various reports indicate that vigilantism in Kibera informal settlement has been thriving due to lack of sufficient number of police presence (Haysom & Opala, 2020). These 'vigilante groups' activities are most visible during political rallies where they are used to attack rivals who are deemed to harbor a different political opinion. The notable groups include Siafu, J-10, Al Safa, Yes We Can, Kibera Battalion, Taliban, and Nubians. These groups engage in various illegal activities and are a major source of insecurity in the informal settlements.

E. PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF POLICE PERFORMANCE INFORMAL SETTLEMENT

According to Worrall (1999), most studies regarding community versus police relations have operating support for law enforcement agencies in two distinct dimensions i.e., Image and efficacy. Police efficiency includes perceptions of the police ability to protect citizens, solve crimes and prevent crime. The image includes public perceptions of police fairness and friendliness. Conventional individual level and circumstantial variables have been modeled in an effort to explore their relative influence on citizen perceptions of police effectiveness and image. Results of data gathered from a telephone survey in the USA demonstrated that efficiency and image are autonomous dimensions and that each is predisposed to quite a different rating reliant on which dependent and independent variable are modeled (Worrall, 1999).

Hu, Zhang and Lovrich (2021) carried out a study on police versus public perception whereby, he suggested that public was divided over satisfaction with police by such autonomous variables as age, race, geographic location, gender, social class, respect for rule of law and criminal versus non-criminal context. Nonetheless, these different publics also have unique interests and concerns that separate them in many ways. Some may express a priority concern for safety and order maintenance, whereas others may stress on the significance of sustaining a supportive, nondiscriminatory law enforcement service. Police on the other hand, are bestowed with responsibility of preventing crime, enforcing the law, arresting offenders and protecting the defenseless. Therefore, public perception of the effectiveness of the police needs to reflect the multiplicity of their roles (Hu, Zhang & Lovrich, 2021).

F. CRIME PREVENTION STRATEGIES AND CRIME INCIDENTS

Different scholars on tackling crime in general have suggested different strategies. Majority of the strategies can only be applied in contexts outside informal settles (Mushanga, 2014). Some of these strategies include neighborhood watch which means a group of community members recruited by residents to provide security in the neighborhood. According to Mushanga (2014), members of locality watch are recognized for providing better means of fighting criminal activities especially in places with minimal police patrols. The groups perform patrols within their neighborhoods to control and discourage potential crimes.

Another method that is almost similar to neighborhood watch is known as community policing. Community policing is basically the working together of police officers and residents to combat crime. It is primarily hinged on an assumption that the residents are aware of the criminals and they should inform police officers in good time and appropriate legal action that can lead to apprehension and prosecution of the offender. It is an effective system of eradicating criminals within the neighborhoods (Mushanga, 2014).

III. METHODOLOGY

This study used a descriptive survey design through which data was collected from police officers and 384 residents of Kibera informal settlement. The sample size of 384 residents included proportionate sample respondents from each of the 14 villages in Kibera informal settlement according to the overall population of each village. The police officers were sampled from those assigned to Kilimani Police Station through stratified sampling approach. The descriptive research design helped in describing the sociopolitical dynamics of Kibera informal settlement and their influence on crime incidents within the settlement.

Insecurity and crime incidents in informal settlements were construed as products of four main sociopolitical factors of a particular settlement. The factors include social characteristics of the population, the political environment of the settlement, police perception among the population, and strategies for preventing crime within the environment. The study was based on the understanding that different combinations of the above factors determine the level of insecurity and crime incidents in any particular setting.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDING

Whereas the descriptive analysis was done through frequencies and percentages, the regression analysis was done through a mathematical model presented as;

$$Y = B_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \epsilon$$

Where;

Y= crime incidents

B₀=constant

β_1 - β_4 = Coefficients of the independent variables

X₁ =Social Factors

X₂=Political Dynamics

X₃= Public Perception

X₄= Crime Prevention Strategies.

ϵ = Margin of error

A. SOCIAL FACTORS AND CRIME INCIDENTS

Social dynamics such as family and parenting styles were among the contributors to crime incidents in the Kibera informal settlement. Additionally, socioeconomic factors such as poor infrastructures like roads, housing, economic inequality, and unemployment were contributing to crime incidents in Kibera informal settlement. High level of poverty, juvenile delinquency and youth unemployment were also identified as a factor that contributed to crime increase. Prevalence of crime incidents committed in Kibera informal settlement was also influenced by the social factors such as lack of capable guardian to secure residential housings and lack of cohesion among resident's, low-income levels, population demographics and occupation of the residents of Kibera area. Most of the residents in Kibera informal settlement are low-income earners and so are prone to criminal activities as they see it as the alternative cheap way of earning a living. More than 50% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that all social factors covered in the study were

contributing to crime incidents in Kibera with exception of social cohesion Social cohesion on which only 12.6% and 24.6% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively. Lack of basic infrastructures such as roads and nature of housing within the settlement were affirmed as contributors of insecurity within the settlement by 55 (20.8%) and 165 (62.5%) of the respondents while just 17 (6.4%) and 13 (5.0%) of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed with statement about the contribution of these factors to the insecurity in the Kibera informal settlement.

B. POLITICAL DYNAMICS AND CRIME INCIDENTS

Majority of the respondents agreed that lack of establishment of a police station in Kibera contributes to lack of security in Kibera. The study also revealed that politicians do influence youths to unleash violence against their opponents in Kibera for their selfish gains during campaign period, thereby contributing to upsurge of crime incidents in Kibera. 81 (30.7%) and 147 (55.7%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that lack of political goodwill to facilitate establishment of a police post within the Kibera informal settlement contributes to crime incidents within the settlement. A similarly higher percentage of respondents 36 (13.6%) and 180 (68.2%) strongly agreed and agreed with the statement that politicians often protect perpetrators of criminal activities within the informal settlement.

C. PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF POLICE AND CRIME INCIDENTS

All the respondents in the area highlighted common elements of the public perception on police performance and its influence on security and crime in Kibera informal settlement. The element of public perception on police performance included effectiveness, reliability, approachability, and promptness of the police officers. The study established that public perception on police officers was substantially linked to crime incidents in the settlement. Respondents were not satisfied with measures taken by police to manage crime in Kibera. The inquiry on public perception on police performance found that 41.4% and 29.5% of the respondents respectively disagreed and strongly disagreed with the statement that police officers respond in good time whenever they are called upon to attend to insecurity incidents within Kibera. This was followed by 32.6% and 27.3% of the respondents who disagreed with the statement that police officers are approachable whenever there is need for their services. Whereas 35.2% and 26.5% of the respondents were not satisfied with the measures taken by police to manage crime with Kibera informal settlement, 25.4% and 41.7% of them strongly agreed or agreed with the statement that police officers harass members of the public in the course of their duties.

D. CRIME PREVENTION STRATEGIES BEING EMPLOYED TO CURB CRIME INCIDENTS

Four main crime prevention strategies were identified by the study respondents. Majority, 15.8% and 42.1%, of the

respondents agreed with the statement that the national and county governments should avail enough resources to facilitate fight against criminal activities in Kibera informal settlement. This was followed by 21.1% and 40.3% of the respondents who agreed with the statement that community policing programs in Kibera should be made more active while 15.8% and 42.1% of them agreed that Kibera residents should be regularly sensitized against criminal activities. Deployment of sufficient police officers to patrol Kibera informal settlement was agreed upon by 10.5% and 40.3% of the sampled respondents. Lastly, 15.8% and 47.4% of the respondents pointed out that police officers should be motivated and facilitated to respond quickly to distress call from the residents of Kibera informal settlement.

E. CRIME INCIDENTS IN KIBERA INFORMAL SETTLEMENT

The most prevalent crime was assault at 17% followed closely by house or shop breaking at 16%. General stealing was third at 14%, followed by domestic violence cases at 13%. The fifth was creating disturbance at 8% followed closely by malicious damage to property at 7%. The seventh was defilement of persons below the age of eighteen years at 6%, followed by respondents who identified rape and illegal connection of electricity both at 5% respectively. Eleventh was illegal connection of Nairobi city water supply at 3% and lastly, the offence of murder was least pronounced at 2%. The findings conform to a similar study, which was commissioned by the National Steering Committee on Peace Building and Conflict Management in 2014. The study established that theft, robbery, break-ins, and mugging were the most prevalent types of crimes in Kibera, Mishomoroni, Manyatta, and Bondeni informal settlements in Kenya. These kinds of crimes can be traced back to the economic status of the perpetrators since their successful execution mostly provides some economic advantage to the criminal, especially in the case of theft, robbery, and break-ins (Shabane, 2018).

F. REGRESSION ANALYSIS

A regression analysis was performed to establish how the four independent variables of social factors, political factors, public perception, and crime prevention strategies interact to produce a combined influence on the independent variable, insecurity and crime incidents in Kibera informal settlement. A multiple linear regression analysis was performed to verify the mathematical model presented under section 4.0 above;

	Coefficients	Std error	T	Sig.
Constant	2.4255	1.3928	1.7414	0.09221
Social factors	0.37263	0.11422	3.2624	0.00283
Political dynamics	0.04079	0.01996	2.0436	0.01926
Public perception	0.10069	0.0444	2.2678	0.03002
Crime Prevention strategies	0.37788	0.11082	3.4099	0.00193

Table 1: Relationship between Crime and Informal Settlements

The regression analysis of crime incidents against the four sociopolitical and security factors shown in the table above indicates positive and significant relationship between each of the four factors and crime incidents in Kibera informal

settlement. For instance, crime prevention strategies were found to be the most impactful factor ($\beta_4 = 0.3779$, $p < 0.0019$) because the strategies such as deployment of police officers to patrol the area are directly focused on suppressing criminal activities in an area (Braga et al., 2019). The coefficients can be expressed in a mathematical model as;

$$\text{Crime incidents (Y)} = 2.4255 + 0.37263\beta_1 + 0.04079\beta_2 + 0.10069\beta_3 + 0.37788\beta_4$$

The implication is that crime incidents in Kibera informal settlement should be at 2.4255 units when all the four sociopolitical and security factors are kept at zero units. That is, around two (2) criminal cases are expected to occur within the settlement without any influence from the four factors. However, an introduction of any of the four factors is likely to influence the number of crime incidents by the units included in the model. For instance, a decrease or increase in social factors such as improved or deterioration of parental care is likely to decrease or increase crime incidents in Kibera by 0.37263. (37%). A person's social environment plays a key role in character building (Garbarino, 2017). Similar explanations hold for the other three factors as have been discussed in the proceeding sections of the previous sections.

V. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Generally, the four sociopolitical and security factors had different levels of impact on crime incidents in the sampled informal settlement. Crime prevention strategies provide biggest (0.37788) influence on insecurity and crime incidents in Kibera informal settlement. The second impactful variable was social factors with 0.37263 influences, followed by public perception at 0.10069. Political factors were established to be the least impactful variable in regard to crime incidents in Kibera informal settlement. They provide 0.04079 influence on the study's dependent variable.

In order to address the social such as poor housing and income inequality which contributes to insecurity and crime incidents in the Kibera informal settlement, the Government of Kenya and Nairobi City County Government should speed up the slum upgrading programs and in partnership with the NGO's. This study recommends better provision of services in the informal settlement through tailor-made programs targeting to improve the welfare and the lives of the residents in the informal settlement. These will greatly improve the infrastructure, clean water, better housing and security in the informal settlement as the informal settlement will be opened up for accessibility and residents will enjoy better quality of life.

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