

THE RISE OF CRIME IN MALAYSIA

An academic and statistical analysis¹

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Abstract

Crime has been on the increase in Malaysia. This can be verified both by the rise in the index crime statistics and by the depreciation of the Public Safety Index in the Malaysian Quality of Life Index (MQLI) 2004. This paper follows the general development of crime trends with emphasis on the police role and challenges faced by it. Upon this, the standard for measuring crime which can be a yardstick to gauge the crime situation in Malaysia is also reviewed. A statistical analysis of the crime situation showing crime per 100,000 population is then analyzed and discussed. With this the actual growth of crime is mooted together with the classes of crimes that contribute to its rise. Lastly, the academics of the increase of crime and several local reasons like population increase, unemployment, the Indian problem, issue of 'lepak', influx of illegal immigrants etc that are often attributed for its rise are discussed.

Introduction

The public's fear of crime is a major concern for policymakers, more so if it involves a marked and sudden increase of violent and property crime. In Malaysia, nightly news programs² often begin or end their broadcasts with accounts of violent crimes committed by both locals and foreigners. Despite the efforts by the Royal Malaysia Police (RMP), newspaper reporting shows that the public continues to see crime as one of the most pressing problems in society.

¹ Article prepared by ACP. Amar Singh Sidhu for the Conference of the Commissioners of Police/Chief Police Officers/Commandants/Commander Brigades on 23 & 24 / 3 / 05.

² Malaysia Media Monitors' Diary (Diari Pemantau Media Malaysia) – stated on 12/1/05 : “Regrettably, the media plays up the lewd aspect of this inhumanity by flaunting pictures and photographs of in its reports of police or immigration department raids. Whether it be “Siasat” by NTV7, RTM News or “999” on TV3, pictures aired are all too familiar.” It further stated that “In contrast, western media like the BBC or Channel 4 in the UK never film raids of brothels even though these are reported. If pictures are necessary, the focus is on the suspect (the pimp) who has committed the crime of ‘living on immoral earnings’. Newspaper reports of trials of sex offenders often aim to portray the horror and revulsion society feels at the offence, and sympathy for the victim. Western media reporting on such issues shows a high level of sensitivity and respect, which our media would do well to emulate.”

This concern for the increase of crime was further elevated when The Malaysian Quality of Life 2004 Report³ issued by the Economic Planning Unit stated that though the Malaysian Quality of Life Index (MQLI) improved during the period from 1990 to 2002 by 9.8 points, it recorded a downward trend in two of its indices i.e. public safety⁴ and environment. A closer scrutiny of the index showed that the public safety index was the lowest recorded amongst the eleven indices that make up the MQLI as can be seen in Fig. 1 below. The base year 1990 is shown in the figure by the blue line and it denotes its indices at a start of 100 (this is done as only then a comparison can be done). The indices for 2002 are shown by the black line. As we can see, all show an increase except the public safety and environment indices.

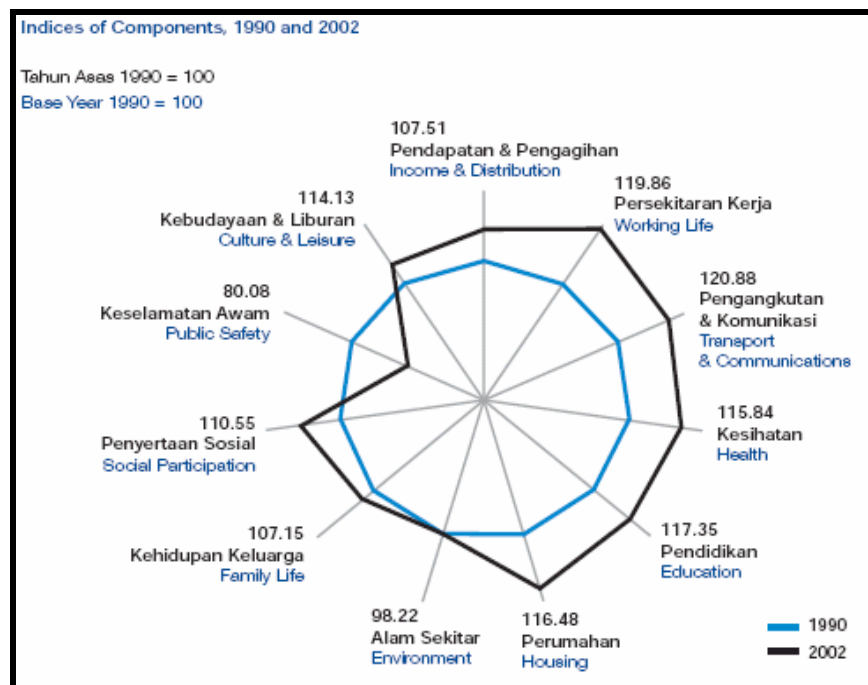


Fig 1: A comparison of indices which are components of the MQLI ⁵

³ The Malaysian Quality of Life Report 2004, Economic Planning Unit, Prime Minister's Dept., Malaysia.

⁴ The Public Safety Index is measured by two sub indices i.e. the crime per thousand population and the road accidents per thousand vehicles. The 2004 Report stated that the crime rate had increased from 3.8 in the year 1990 to 6.2 in the year 2002 where more than four fifths of those crimes were related to property crimes. Road accidents per thousand vehicles increased from 19.4 in 1990 to 23.2 in 2002.

⁵ Source: The Malaysian Quality of Life Report 2004, Economic Planning Unit, Prime Minister's Dept., Malaysia

Adding to this predicament, the Democratic Actions Party National Chairman⁶ and the Consumer Association of Penang⁷, in media statements had reported that the MQLI had been worsening considerably over the past few years, thus increasing the public's anxiety and apprehension of the increase of crime.

The scope of this paper is to show the development of crime in Malaysia and what possible root causes contribute to its evolvment, hybridization and final development. This paper will thus delve into the following:-

- i) **Crime trends in Malaysia** – showing the challenges and subsequent development of crime from the time prior to Independence to that of the present day.
- ii) **Standards of measuring crime**. Measurement by way of Index Crimes as a reliable standard of measuring crime.
- iii) **Statistical Analysis of Crime**. Here we compare the crime statistics for various periods of years. A comparison between the States in Malaysia is made and this will be an indicator of the types of crime prevalent and its relationship to the population.
- iv) **Causal Factors for the increase of crime**. A discussion will be made on the various theories for the involvement and increase of crime. This will be followed by some of the reasons for the increase of crime in Malaysia.

Crime trends in Malaysia

There has been a development of crime trends from the pre-Independence period to that of the present date (refer to Fig 2). It has developed from its humble beginnings of its simple theft, physical injuries caused by direct confrontation and simple wayside robbery, to that of syndicated crimes and now the more complex borderless crimes. Crimes now have become more complex and sometimes impossible to detect. White collar crime has taken a new turn in that it has become trans-border with its transactions taking place thousands of miles away and thus causing jurisdiction problems. Criminals have taken a progressive road to enhance themselves with investigative knowledge thus making the work of the police forensic investigator more arduous and difficult.

⁶ Media statement dated 29 / 12 /2003 by Lim Kit Siang.

⁷ Amarthalingam, T. "Development at any Cost" Consumer Association of Penang.

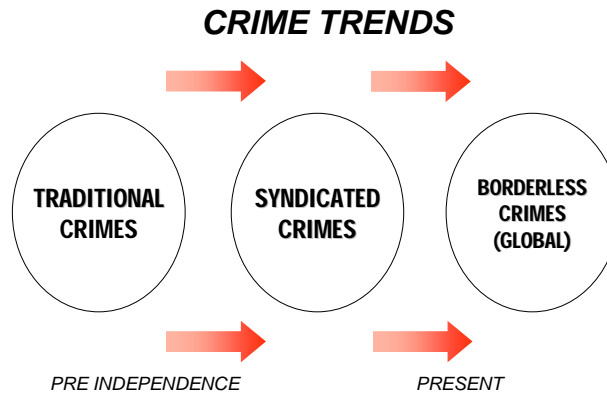


Fig 2: Developments of Crime trends in Malaysia

Standards of Measuring Crime

Now as we know, crime has many faces and there are numerous types of crimes, some developing this very minute as we speak. So how do the police forces of the world quantify them so that they can be compared between countries? Malaysia as a member of the international police community uses the phrase '**Index Crime**' to quantify crime. Index Crime is defined as⁸:-

Crimes that are reported with sufficient regularity and with sufficient significance to be meaningful as an index to the crime situation.

The key words here are 'sufficient regularity and with sufficient significance'. Thus in layman's term Index Crime would constitute those offences that are regular and common in occurrence. As an explanatory note, kidnapping is quite uncommon though a very distressing offence – it is not included as a statistic in the index. On the other hand snatch theft though rather small in gravity is included in the index. This may sound rather perplexing to listeners' but it should be noted that the main motive for the coinage of this term Index Crime is to give a general crime situation of a country and this index can be later used to compare between countries.

⁸ Inspector General's Standing Order at para D203

The Royal Malaysia Police Force in its administrative functions further divides this Index Crime into two categories⁹. They are:-

- i) **Violent Crime** which generally includes crimes of violence that are sufficiently regular and significant in occurrence of which there are eight in all. These include murder, attempted murder, gang robbery with firearm, gang robbery without firearm, robbery with firearm, robbery without firearm, rape and lastly voluntarily causing hurt.
- ii) **Property Crime** includes those offences involving the loss of property during which there is no use of violence by the perpetrators. There are seven types of crimes in this category and they include housebreaking and theft by day, housebreaking and theft by night, theft of lorries and van, theft of motor car, theft of motorcycles and scooters, theft of bicycles and lastly other forms of theft¹⁰.

Thus we can see that index crime is the official standard used by RMP in measuring crime. A point to note is that in order to be an index crime, the crime must be reported either by the victim, witness or sometimes on the initiative of the police themselves upon the discovery of a criminal activity. The statistics of index crimes reported form a major base upon which we formulate an analysis and thereupon provide policymakers with indicators on the nature and extent of crime, and they are sometimes used as a yardstick in the measurement of the effectiveness or otherwise of crime prevention measures. As such it is fundamental that these index crime statistics truly give an accurate reflection of the extent of crime.

However it must be noted that there exists a sizeable proportion of crimes that goes unreported and thus unrecorded as index crime. These unreported crimes reflect the dark figures and to get a complete picture of the crime situation we need to obtain a public survey on the perception of crime and complement this with the index crime (refer to Fig. 3). This however is costly and by no means can actually gauge the size of crime.

⁹ Singapore Police (<http://www.spf.gov.sg/>) on the other hand uses the following denominations to measure crime:

- i) Total Seizable Offences – the total number of seizable offences reported in a given time frame
- ii) Overall Crime Rate – refers to the total seizable offences per 100,000 population.
- iii) Index Crime – which is made up of nine offences. They are cheating and related offences, motor vehicle theft, outraging modesty, housebreaking, robbery, snatch theft, rioting, rape and murder.

¹⁰ Previously snatch theft was classified as other forms of theft, but recently because of the sufficient regularity and significance of the continuing incidence of snatch theft, it has been recorded as a separate index crime.



Fig. 3: Limitations of official statistics

Nonetheless there is still always a gap between officially recorded criminality and real criminality. Real criminality always remains an unknown quantity. There are several reasons as to why these dark figures occur, even with the best collected official statistics. Some of these are:-

- The definition of what is crime will varies not only between societies but also within the same society, as the culture, values and attitudes vary over time¹¹.
- The issue of detection is also a problem. Research conducted by Mayhew, Elliot and Dowds¹² showed that the decision to report a crime depends upon a whole range of factors, such as the place where it was perpetrated, the identity of the offender and whether it was thought appropriate to report to the police. Another study by Stanko¹³ revealed that women tend to hide and conceal cases of domestic violence - often fearing the physical, emotional and material repercussions of reporting.
- Official statistics on crime and criminals are also highly dependent on the diligence and accuracy of the different branches of the criminal justice system. The quality of these statistics is subject to the limitations and biases of each branch¹⁴. Police statistics are limited to offences detected, reported and recorded. Statistics of the Courts and correctional institutions are even more limited.

¹¹ Rossi., The Seriousness of Crimes- Normative Structures and Individual Difference , (1994) American Sociological Review, Vol 39.

¹² Mayhew, et al., The 1988 British Crime Survey , Home Office Research Study No 111, London- HMSO

¹³ Stanko., When Precaution is Normal- A Feminist Critique of Crime Prevention , Milton Keynes Open University Press.

¹⁴ Ezzat A. Fattah. , Understanding Criminal Victimization- An Introduction to Theoretical Victimology, Prentice Hall Canada Inc.

- There is the other question of police discretion. There is no guarantee that the offence, once reported, will necessarily find its way into the official statistics. The downgrading of offences so that they can meet headquarters target with some crimes is not uncommon.¹⁵

Thus we can see that dark figures are present in generally all official statistics and this is not just a phenomenon in Malaysia. It is thus submitted that the use of index crime in the measuring of crime is viable for our analysis of crime situation.

The next question is that of the figures that make up the crime index. It is submitted that a review should be made of the figures that make up this index as they are supposed to represent crimes that are '*sufficiently regular and significant*'. A review of the total number of police reports for the year 2004 shows that out of the total reports made by the public, only 14% of them were investigated upon by police. The rest were either RTM¹⁶ (12.1%), NFA¹⁷ (11.7%), NOD¹⁸ (15.1%), ROA¹⁹ (36.1%), or OR²⁰ (11%) – refer to Fig. 4.

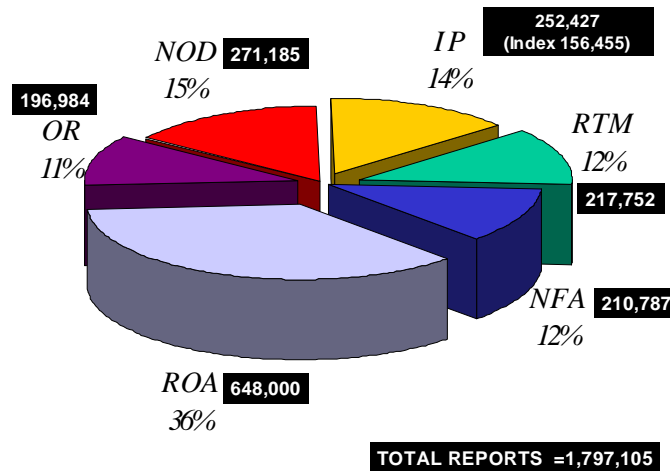


Fig. 4: Police Reports Classification for 2004

¹⁵ Leppard, The Sunday Times of U.K. Oct 23rd 1994.

¹⁶ Refer to Magistrate

¹⁷ No Further Action

¹⁸ No Offence Disclosed

¹⁹ Refer to Other Agencies

²⁰ Other Reports

Thus, out of the 1,797,105 police reports made by the public only 252,427 were investigated upon by RMP. Of these investigated cases 156,455 made up the index whilst the rest were non-indexed cases (Non Index IP's). Thus simply put the index which we heavily base our statistics and thereon crime prevention measures, only forms 8.7% of the total police reports made by the public.

As it may be argued that not all police reports have criminal elements in them, for a better analysis the reports that are ROA and OR are removed from the denominator. This is so as the other reports i.e. NOD, RTM, NFA may have a criminal element in it but due to investigators' discretion are not included in the index. Even with this, the Indexed cases only account for 16.4% out of the total number of reports that were NOD, IP, RTM, and NFA'ed.

On the other hand the total investigated cases (IP cases) formed 26.5% of these reports. It is thus submitted that for an index that is closely linked to the crime situation and the grievances of the public made via police reports, it should be reviewed and more '*regular and significant*' cases included. This would complement our YB Prime Minister of Malaysia's statement that government agencies should be 'customer satisfaction' oriented.

Our closest neighbour, the Singapore police have included cheating and related offences, molesting and outraging modesty as a part of their Index Crimes. ***Similarly RMP may, it is suggested that, after a comparative study between the type of crime and the general crime situation, include certain types of crimes as indices of the Index Crime.*** Commercial Crimes²¹, Narcotics offences, molesting and outraging modesty, rioting etc may be included as Index Crimes.

Statistical Analysis of Crime in Malaysia

1. General Crime Situation

We now come to the crux of the issue i.e. the crime situation in Malaysia. To have an overview of the situation of crime in Malaysia for the last 20 years, please refer to Fig 5 below which shows the crime statistics in Malaysia from 1980 to 2004.

²¹ "Although this category remains small in the overall total, it is growing at an alarming rate. Commercial crime cases almost tripled between 1994 and 2003, with criminal breach of trust and misappropriation of funds forming the bulk of cases". Extract from Keynote address by the Honourable IGP, Tan Sri Mohd. Bakri b. Hj Omar in conjunction with the official opening of the Seminar on "Industrial Security Issues: A Business Solutions Approach" on the 26th July 2004, Gurney Hotel, Penang.

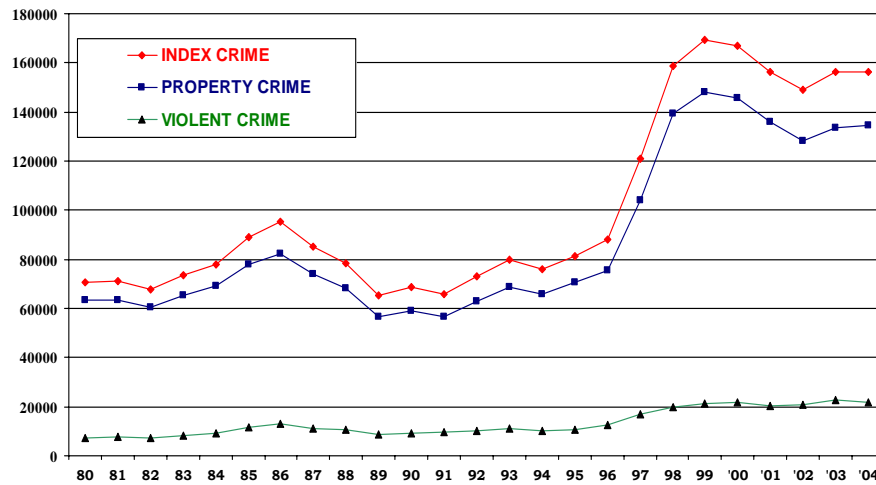


Fig 5. Crime Statistics in Malaysia 1980 – 2004²²

There are a few indicators that we can get from this chart, and they are:-

1. Crimes related to property account for about 90 % of all crimes reported every year. Violent crimes, although attracting the greatest attention of the public and the media, contributes to only 10 % of all crimes reported²³.
2. Violent crime has generally remained along the same gradual growth path. It shows neither an alarming increase of violent crime nor is it affected by the economic situation of the country.
3. On the other hand, property crime has shown a rather volatile growth pattern and it can be seen to be the main contributor of the total index crime in our country. It is also very closely linked to the total index crime situation in the country.
4. Similarly the total index crime in Malaysia shows an increase in crime in the last 20 years. Further scrutiny of the chart shows that it is linked to the economic situation of the country. There are two peaks in the crime index chart. These peaks occur during the two economic downturns in the country. The first peak occurs in the mid 80's whilst the second peak occurs in 1997, both of which coincide with

²² Data obtained from URJ , Bukit Aman.

²³ Keynote address by the Honourable IGP, Tan Sri Mohd. Bakri b. Hj Omar in conjunction with the official opening of the Seminar on "Industrial Security Issues: A Business Solutions Approach" on the 26th July 2004, Gurney Hotel, Penang.

the economic downturn that hit Malaysia during these times. **On a proactive note, this shows that the crime situation in the country is affected by the global / economic situation. Thus as it always does in the cycle of economic upturns and recessions, RMP should be on a crime prevention alert during an economic downturn affecting Malaysia.**

2. The question of rise of crime?

A cursory look at the crime statistics as per Fig. 5 above shows that there is an increase of crime from 70,823 in the year 1980 to 156,455 in 2004. This amounts to an increase of 120 %. Similarly violent crime has grown by 192% and property crime by 112 % during these two periods²⁴. Because of the increase of population during these two periods it may be argued that a better means of measuring the actual growth of crime is to base it on a per 100,000 population index. Thus the following tabulation as per Fig 6.

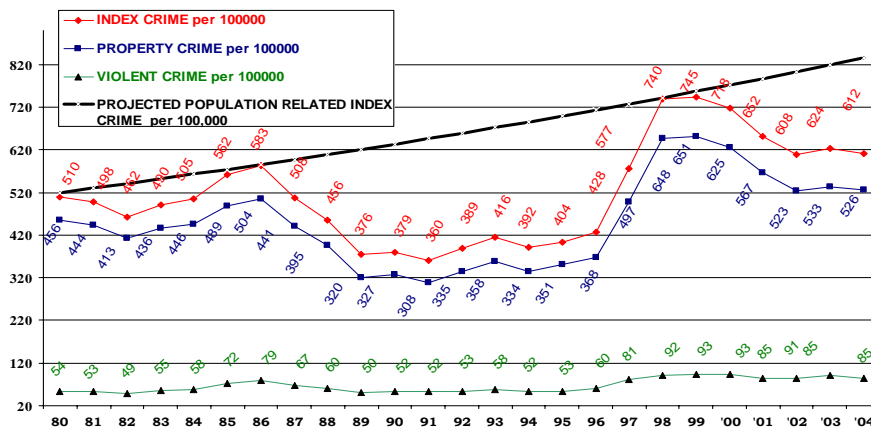


Fig. 6: Crime per 100,000 for the years 1980 - 2004

From the above, a more realistic and actual picture is focused on the crime rate in Malaysia, and the observations are as follows:-

1. Index crime per 100,000 has increased from 510 in 1980 to 612 in 2004. This is an increase of 19.8 %. **Thus by taking**

²⁴ A similar observation was made by the Honourable IGP during his keynote address "Industrial Security Issues: A Business Solutions Approach" on the 26th July 2004, Gurney Hotel, Penang, where he observed that there was a 230% increase in crime from the years 1973 to 2003. Further he stated that whilst property related cases represent the largest number of reported cases every year, violent crimes seem to be growing at the fastest rate based on the year 2003 statistics.

into account population growth in Malaysia, the crime per 100,000 has increased by 19.8 % from the year 1980 to 2004.

2. Similarly violent crime has increased by 57.4 % and property crime by 15.4 %. **This shows that violent crime is growing at a faster rate than property crime.**
3. Taking into account that the population of Malaysia grows at about 2 %²⁵, a population based projected index crime per 100,000 growth rate is tabulated above from the year 1980. In other words, crime is tabulated to grow at 2 % from the base year which is taken at 1980. This is done so that we can compare the growth patterns from our tabulated results to that indexed by our crime statistics. The straight line tabulated from 1980 is shown in the graph above. As can be seen, the population projected index crime per 100,000 rate is higher than the index crime per 100,000 obtained for the year 2004. **This goes to show that crime per 100,000 is growing at a slower rate than the population of Malaysia. Thus though the increase of population affects the increase of crime, it is not proportionate to crime rate.**

Thus it can be concluded that, taking into account the growth of population, crime has increased from the year 1980 to 2004 and that violent crime is growing at a faster rate than property crime.

3. Classes of crimes that contribute to total index crime.

A subjective look is now made to the types of offences that contribute significantly to the rise in total Index Crime in the country. Refer to Fig 7 below.

As can be seen for the year 2004, property crime accounted for 86 % of the total index crime whereas violent crime contributed for the other 14 %. An analysis of the index crimes for 2004²⁶ showed the following:-

- Of the total index crimes reported, vehicle theft (cars, lorries, vans, motorcycles and bicycles) formed the bulk and it accounted for 49 %.
- Theft (excluding vehicle theft and house-breaking) was the next highest factor – amounting to 21 % of the total index crime.

²⁵ Rate of growth of 2 % is provided by Statistics Department, Govt. of Malaysia.

²⁶ Data obtained from URJ Bukit Aman.

- Robbery (including gang robbery with and without arms) on the other hand amounted for 9.8 %, of the total index crime whilst murder made up for only 0.4 %

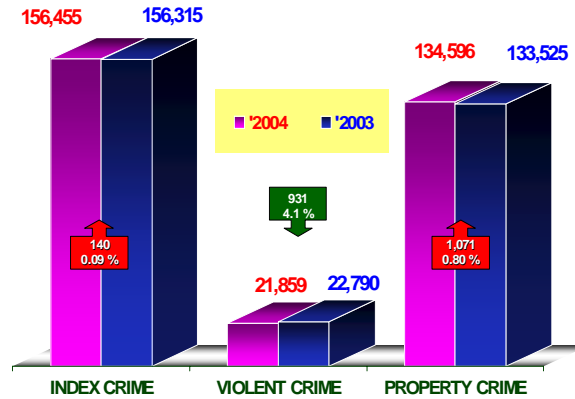


Fig. 7: Comparative Index Crime Rate for 2003 and 2004.

From the above it can be submitted that whilst violent crime like robbery and murder account for much publicity and focus by the press the main contributor for the total index crime in Malaysia is vehicle theft.

Causal factors for the increase of crime

We now come to the semantics and the academic reasons for the increase of crime. A discussion will be made on the various theories for the involvement and increase of crime. This will be followed by some of the reasons for the increase of crime in Malaysia.

1. Academic analysis of rise in crime

This paper will delve into the academic reasons for the *increase of crime* and not just *mere involvement* in it. The classical theories in criminology basically give reasons and justifications for an individual's involvement in crime but they cannot explain for the rise in crime in certain situations. David Downes²⁷ in his paper "Why Inequality is still a factor" highlighted the reasons for the increase of crime and found that increase of crime and inequality (which are results of unrealizable aspirations) are profoundly linked. He based his argument on the following:-

²⁷ Downes, David. , *Crime and Inequality: Current Issues in research and public debate* paper presented at The British Criminology Conference, Loughborough University July 1995.

- The paradox that crime has risen steeply with growing prosperity but persistent inequality during the post-war periods in the U.K.²⁸ only goes to show that when greater affluence is combined with growing inequality and the rise of what has been called a winner/lose culture, crime has climbed even more steeply (James 1995)²⁹.
- The social control theories by Emile Durkheim and Robert Merton³⁰, which depended on the weakening moral guidelines and the blurring of distinction between right and wrong, could explain the above as unrealizable aspirations that are capable of generating disillusionment which thus leads to deviance in general.
- The damage inflicted by the economic changes has also particularly affected the youth, a minority of young men and boys under the age of 25, who are disproportionately drawn from the urban, under-educated, under-employed working class. Youth and crime are so strongly linked because adolescence is a limbo between childhood dependence and adult maturity. Youth with no foreseeable hope of gaining self-respect through regular well-paid work will seek fulfillment through the manufacture of excitement, thus crime (Campbell 1993)³¹
- There is also an exceptionally close relationship between unemployment and crime. For example David Dickinson (1993)³² found that the rates of burglary were linked closely to unemployment rates for young men under 25 years. Steven Messner (1980)³³ also found that higher homicide rates were linked with several indicators of social inequality.

Agreement about the crime-inequality connection has however, never been simple nor unanimous. James Q. Wilson³⁴ is in disagreement with this view and relies on 'human nature' to explain the rise of crime but such an approach makes little sense of the huge variations in crime between societies and over time.

²⁸ For example in England and Wales, official crime rates doubled over the 1979 – 1992 period, most dramatically by 40 % between 1989 and 1992.

²⁹ James, O. (1995) *Juvenile Violence in a Winner-Loser Culture : Socio-Economic and Familial Origins of the Rise of Violence against the person*. London : Free Association Books.

³⁰ They theorized that informal social controls form the bedrock of community stability and the glue of social cohesion. These social controls are moral guidelines and the distinction between right and wrong.

³¹ Campbell, B. (1993) *Goliath : Britain's Dangerous Places* . London: Methuen.

³² Dickinson, D. (1993) *Crime and Unemployment* . Cambridge: Department of Applied Economics.

³³ Messener, S. (1982) *Income Inequality and murder rates : Some Cross- National Findings'* Comparative Social Research 3.

³⁴ Wilson, J. Q. (1975) *Thinking about crime*. New York: Basic Books.

Nonetheless there is a growing consensus amongst modern criminologists that crime and inequality are profoundly linked. ***Virtually all social theorists of crime begin with the paradox that economic growth and greater affluence have produced not less but more, much more crime³⁵. Thus greater development which leads to many with unrealizable aspirations has given rise to an increase of crime.***

2. A Comparison with the rise of crime in Europe

The last 25 years appear to have shown a general increase in crime in European countries³⁶. Although there has been a plateau where the crime rates have leveled off in some European nations (for a few years an occasional reduction) it is impossible to find any European country where the rate is now lower than it was 10 or 20 years ago. It has been argued that to some extent the increase in crime over the last 2 years is substantially weighted by increase in reporting rather than an absolute increase in criminal events. Victims and witnesses may nowadays be more inclined to report crimes because:

- i) More access to telephones.
- ii) It is easier to report.
- iii) Insurance companies require victim to report losses they are claiming.
- iv) Lower thresholds of tolerance about behaviour such as domestic violence, drink driving etc.
- v) Public feel more comfortable about contacting the police.

The European Crime Prevention Sourcebook³⁷ has listed a number of interlinking factors which may partly explain what is precipitating this general rise in crime and insecurity. These include:-

- i) Urbanization (and the exodus from rural areas)
- ii) Loosening Social Controls (more mobility, abandonment of religion and other traditional moral codes)
- iii) Prosperity – more things to steal
- iv) Relative poverty / inequality
- v) Exclusion – underclasses, ethnic minorities.
- vi) Increasing levels of drug misuse and offending to support addictions.

³⁵ Compare with similar opinion:- via extract of statement by the Honourable IGP during his keynote address "Industrial Security Issues: A Business Solutions Approach" on the 26th July 2004, Gurney Hotel, Penang " *My belief is that it is not development per se that contributes to crime. Rather, rapid development causes deep divides in society ; the serious socio-economic imbalance that accompanies rapid development creates a fertile breeding ground for crime. All efforts in development must therefore ensure that these divisions in society are kept to the minimum*"

³⁶ Crime Prevention Information & News. <http://www.uwe.ac.uk/fbe/commsafe/euro3.htm>

³⁷ European Crime Prevention Sourcebook <http://www.uwe.ac.uk/fbe/commsafe/eusor3.htm>

3. Some causes of increase of crime in Malaysia.

So what are some of the causes of increase of crime in Malaysia even though there is greater affluence and development? The Parliamentary Secretary to the Internal Security Ministry, Datuk Abu Seman Yusop³⁸ gave seven main factors that contribute to the increase of crime rate in Malaysia. He stated them as :- unemployment, migration of youth from rural to urban areas, the influx of illegal immigrants, failure in rehabilitating drug addicts, shortage of police personnel and vehicles to combat crime, the public's pathetic attitude and the failure by town planning committees to consider setting up police stations. Countless more reasons can be given on this matter as such some of them are deliberated below. The reasons discussed below are in no way exhaustive.

Population Increase

Population per se has frequently been quoted as the main reason for the increase of crime in Malaysia. Though population increase may be a factor in the rise in crime it is definitely not a major contributor as can be seen from the following graph. Fig. 8 shows the extent of index crime per 100,000 for the relevant states for the year 2004. A comparison of the crime rates is also made with Singapore³⁹.

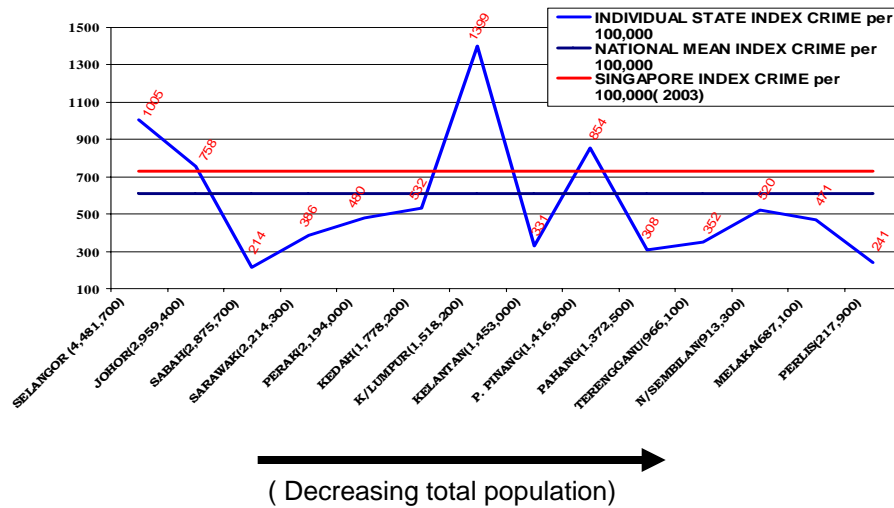


Fig 8: Index Crime per 100,000 in relation to population in states for the year 2004.

³⁸ Press statement dated 28 / 9 / 2004. <http://www.thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?>

³⁹ A comparison is made with the rates per 100,000 for Singapore for the year 2003 as the rates for 2004 is not available. It will nevertheless not affect our comparison analysis.

The hypothesis that population increase may be a factor but not a major contributor to the rise of crime is further fortified by the fact that the states of Kuala Lumpur, Selangor, Pulau Pinang and Johor displayed a higher index crime per 100,000 than the mean national index of 612 cases – this is even though, except for Selangor and Johor, the other states are not the most populous in Malaysia (refer to Fig 8 above). The states having a higher population than Kuala Lumpur and P.Pinang (for example Sabah, Sarawak, Perak and Kedah) had showed a lower index crime per 100,000. ***This goes to show that urbanization⁴⁰ and population density affects crime rate, rather than population per se.***

A further comparison is made between the indices above with the index crime⁴¹ of Singapore. Singapore is chosen for comparison as it has similar laws and a comparable criminal justice system. Also the ethnicity, habits and way of life are similar. ***As can be seen that even though Singapore with a population of 4,185,200 (which is slightly less than Selangor 4,481,700) showed an index crime per 100,000 of 731 whereas Selangor tabulated an index crime per 100,000 of 1005.*** Further the states of Kuala Lumpur and P/Pinang, each having a population far less than Singapore also displayed an index crime rate per 100,000 of 1399 and 854 respectively. ***This goes to show that we should review and compare our system of crime control, community policing, and crime prevention techniques to see why Singapore though having similar population density, ethnicity, and criminal justice system, can have a lower crime rate per 100,000. This would in a way help us to lower the crime rates in our areas.***

Unemployment

Unemployment and crime are very closely interlinked. Studies in the West have shown that the economic situation in a country is closely linked to crime trends. Similarly a local study conducted by Abdul Aziz⁴² and Hj. Ahmad Ragib (1987)⁴³ have similarly concluded that ***there is a significant correlation between unemployment and property crime in the police districts.***

A more recent study by Mohd Sabri (2002)⁴⁴ showed that the effects of unemployment to property crime could be seen by the rise in

⁴⁰ Miura, A. a researcher has found that crime is rising in the suburbs of provincial cities in Japan and made a finding that urbanization spurs crime rate. <http://www.japantoday.com/e/?content=kuchikomi>

⁴¹ The index crime for Singapore is obtained from Interpol International Crime Statistics and to be on the same measuring scale as Malaysia the values for fraud and currency offences are excluded. Thus the index per 100,000 obtained for Singapore is 731 cases.

⁴² Abdul Aziz b. Mohd Hashim, *Pengganguran Merupakan Faktor Utama Menyebabkan Peningkatan Jenayah Pecah Rumah di Daerah Temerloh.*, Diploma Sains Kepolisian Project Paper, UKM/RMP.

⁴³ Hj. Ahmad Ragib b. Hj Mohd Salleh,(1987), *"Pengganguran merupakan factor utama menyebabkan peningkatan jenayah harta benda di negeri Pahang"*, Diploma Sains Kepolisian Project Paper, University Kebangsaan Malaysia / RMP.

⁴⁴ Mohd Sabri b. Muhamad (2002) , *Pengganguran dan Jenayah : Satu Kajian keatas banduan dipenjaras Sg. Buluh.*, Diploma Sains Siasatan Project Paper, UM / RMP.

property crimes during the economic downturn in 1997. **He went on to show that 75 % of those convicted of crimes did so due to unemployment and difficulty in finding a higher paying job. The study also showed that amongst the convicted criminals 43 % of them did so to upkeep their drug related habits.** Thus it can be seen that property crime offenders were mainly unemployed or holding low paying jobs and were involved in crime to supplement their drug related habits.

The above findings are further verified by the statistics, obtained from the Prisons Department, showing the relationship between low paying jobs to involvement in crime. It can be seen from Fig 9 that the percentage of criminals earning below the Malaysian Real per Capita Income of RM 13,708⁴⁵ (which makes it to RM 1,142 per month) is alarming i.e approx. 95%.

| Monthly Income(RM) | Total Prisoners | Percentage |
|---------------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| Unemployed | 8,543 | 17.3 % |
| Below 250 | 4,027 | 8.2 % |
| 250 – 500 | 11,880 | 24.1 % |
| 500-750 | 14,778 | 30 % |
| 750 – 1000 | 7,573 | 15.5 % |
| 1000 – 1500 | 1,696 | 3.4 % |
| 1500 – 3000 | 746 | 1.5 % |
| Total | 49, 243 | 100 % |

95 % are earning below Malaysian per capita income.

Fig 9: Convicted Prisoners by Monthly Income⁴⁶

The Indian Problem

Statistically, Indians only comprise 7.7 % (1,68013)⁴⁷ of the total population of Malaysia. Comparatively they represent a small minority group when compared with the Malays (65.1%) and Chinese (26%), but the Indians youths have earned a stereotyped reputation⁴⁸ of being involved in criminal and gang related activities and also in other forms of social ills e.g. alcoholism, drug addiction etc.

⁴⁵ The Malaysian Quality of Life Report 2004, Economic Planning Unit, Prime Minister's Dept. Malaysia

⁴⁶ Statistics from Prisons Department, Malaysia.

⁴⁷ Census 2000 Report, Statistics Dept. www.statistics.gov.my

⁴⁸ Keynote address by Dato Seri Samy Vellu, MIC President, at the MIC National Workshop for Divisional Youth Leaders and launch of Anti-Violence Campaign on 8 / 10 / 2000 in Kuala Lumpur.

The involvement of Indian youth in serious crimes like murder, arson, gang-clashes, rioting, hijacking, factory break-ins and robberies, slashing, extortions and drug trafficking had received much publicity in the mass media. Their exposure and involvement had caused the general Indian community not only to be feared by the other multi-racial communities, but also by their own community. A statistical analysis of the number of Indian youths arrested for crimes and detained under preventive laws reflects the extent of their criminality. Up to date the number of individuals detained under preventive laws for crime of violence at Spg. Renggam Rehabilitation Centre in Johor is 702 of which 316 are Indians compared to 111 Chinese and 111 Malays. Again comparatively, this only reflects the high incidence of criminality within the small Indian community.

Statistically, Indians form a major contributor in gangsterism and gang related activities. There are a total of 285 registered gangs⁴⁹ in Malaysia of which 122 are from the Ang Beng Hoay, 40 from Wah Kee, and 123 thug gangs of which 92 are Indian thug gangs. Please refer to the chart below.

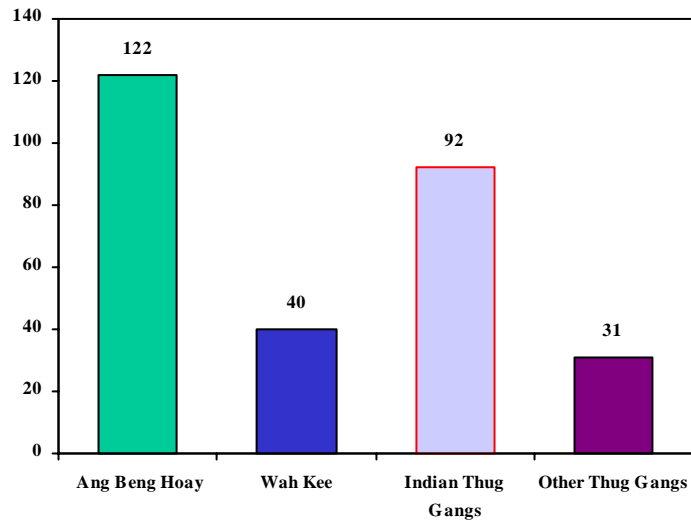


Fig. 10: Registered Gangs in Malaysia.

The thug gangs have a registered membership of 3497 of which a majority are Indians. It must be noted that the above figure only reflects the registered or detected members, thus the number of unregistered or undetected members could even be significantly higher.

A further comparison is done on the distribution of thug gangs in Malaysia. The chart below shows the distribution of the registered thug members according to state. It must be again noted that the figures are small as they are of the registered thug members only as the actual thug

⁴⁹ Gangsterism India di Malaysia, Jabatan Siasatan Jenayah RMP, 2003.

members are definitely much more. Nevertheless the chart can be used as an indicator on the distribution.

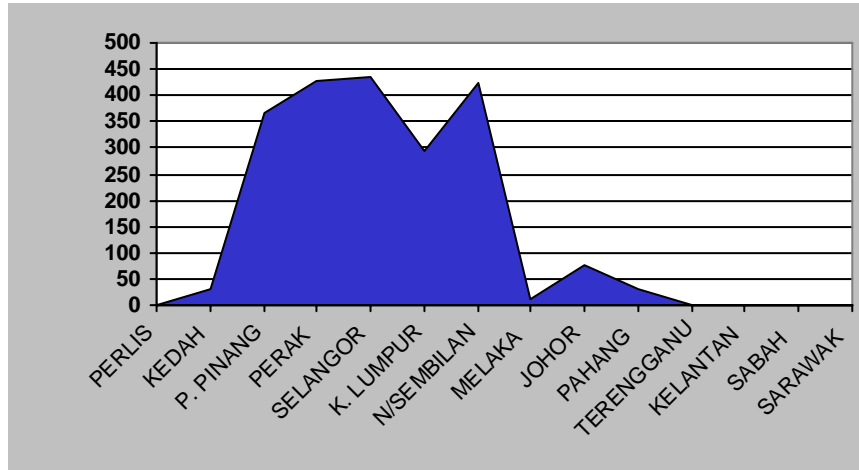


Fig 11: Distribution of registered thug members in Malaysia.

The above chart reflects the fact that the distribution of thug gangs are within the urban states of Selangor, K.L., Perak, Penang and Negeri Sembilan. An analysis of the 2000 Census Report indicates that 79.9 % of the Indian population is in the urban centers and only 20.3% in the rural areas, with a very high density of the population in Selangor (14.6%), Perak (13%), K.L. (11%), Penang (10.6%) and Negeri Sembilan (16%). This would explain the high number of Indian thug members in these states.

The question that looms in the mind of most Malaysians is: Why is there a high incidence of crime within the small Indian population? To date there have been no large scale empirical studies conducted to determine the actual causal factors. However the Social Strategic Foundation (Yayasan Strategik Sosial), a social development network for the Malaysian Indian Community, has conducted a number of micro level studies amongst low-income families residing in squatters, flats and long houses and also areas identified by the police as high-risk neighbourhoods⁵⁰. The study had attributed the main causal factor of violent crime and gang related activities due to manifestations of urban poverty. Unfortunately, poverty research in Malaysia is rural-focused and detailed studies to see the correlations between violence and poverty is required. Nevertheless social research in countries such as South Africa, U.S., and U.K. has established similar trends of correlation between poverty and the black community.

The cycle of poverty in urban Malaysia is not the absence of income or employment but one of access and alienation to mainstream

⁵⁰ Jayasooria, D. , *Social Problems and the Indian Community*, www.yss98.com

society i.e. marginalization. This was not intentionally created but an outcome as a result of urbanization, development and modernization of Malaysia. The social impact of change had affected the different communities in a variety of different ways.

Indians had been associated with plantation labour. However, it must be stated that the Indian share of plantation labour is fast declining as more and more workers are drifting to urban areas in search for better opportunities. A combination of factors such as commercialization, increasing sale of plantation land, inflow of foreign labour, the unattractiveness of plantation employment due to low wages, and others have diluted the appeal of the Indian labour. The move from plantations to urban areas might have given Indians an improved monetary income, but the effect had been otherwise for the lower labour class of Indians. This has caused displacement problems which are attributed to the high incidence in crime.

The plantation communities had two very important roles which are missing in the present low income families residing in urban squatter areas. They are social control and social care. In the plantation communities, there was a structure of control and supervision, not only through the management but by a system of family elders. The then new migrant communities who came during the British period were from the same village in South India, and were mostly related to one another. There was social cohesion and informal family structures which served as a social control mechanism. These communities also provided social support for individuals and families. The plantation management also provided comprehensive services. While there were inadequate and below basic standard, nonetheless management provided employment, education, nursery, healthcare, hospitals, housing, religious facilities and social provisions for the workers.

The Indian community's displacement in the urban setting had been caused by various factors, which are:-

- i) Urban communities are more complex as compared to plantation communities and they pose a multitude of diverse challenges.
- ii) Lack of affordable housing facilities has led to the majority of them to reside in squatter areas or in densely populated low cost flats.
- iii) The absence of elders and the control structures in the new neighbourhoods, and the subsequent breakdown of the social support systems
- iv) Work patterns had changed from normal routine to shifts, which affect family life.

- v) The growth of dysfunctional families resulting in poor parental supervision, domestic violence and the lack of conducive home environment for child growth and development.
- vi) The absence of neighbourhoods for social developments.
- vii) Due to dysfunctional families, their children have poor academic achievements leading to high drop-out rates.
- viii) The high cost of living and poverty stricken families.

All the above factors can be cited as the causal factors. In short the displacement has led to the breakdown of social controls and the social support system. These environments provide the breeding grounds for the criminals and also for the development of the new criminals or other deviant behaviours.

Harrower⁵¹, had stated that we all have a genetic inheritance or genetic potential, but in order for that potential to be realized there has to be some environmental triggers. It also seems clear that the roots of anti-social behaviour lie in early childhood and that certain events can increase an individual's psychological vulnerability. These would include insecure attachment, a weak sense of self, a dysfunctional family, coercive or indifferent parenting, physical, sexual or emotional abuse or neglect, low family income etc.

Thus it can be concluded that the fragmentation of estates, has pushed the Indians to head for the bright lights of the city. On the other hand, instead of jobs they found a daunting poverty that tipped their youths to gangsterism, drugs and crime.

The Indians in urban squatters have developed a sub-culture alienating themselves from mainstream Malaysian society⁵². This subculture is a mindset that is besieged by hopelessness, captive to low self-esteem, and low self image coupled with the lack of opportunities to pursue education and employment. Sociologists have argued that gangs arise in sub-cultural communities where the chances of achieving success legitimately are small.

Thus the emergence of a new Malaysian Indian identity is imperative for the continued sustainability of the Indian community in modern Malaysia⁵³. The Indian community needs a total restructuring, revamping and reorientation to meet the challenges.

⁵¹ Harrower, J. (1998) , *Applying Psychology to Crime* , Hodder & Stoughton.

⁵² Extract from the speeches by MIC President at the MIC General Assembly in 1997. www.yss98.com

⁵³ Extract from the address by MIC President, Dato Seri Samy Vellu at the 57th MIC AGM entitled "Towards a New Identity: Malaysian Indians in a Globalized Society"- May 10, 2003 K.L.

Influx of illegal workers

To understand the relationship between the influx of illegal workers and crime, it would be best to start off with the trends in migrant worker movements in this country. Unlike in many advanced countries, where international labour migration is concerned with those who migrate for work and permanent settlement, the focus on international labour migration in Malaysia primarily centers on contract labour migrants. These are low-skilled workers who are imported for a short duration on a contract basis to alleviate labour shortages in specific sectors.

One can identify three broad trends in migration worker movements in Malaysia. The first wave began in the 1970's. During the initial phase, migrant workers were mostly employed in the rural plantation sector in small numbers. The number of migrant workers grew in the late 1970's and early 1980's to meet widening labour shortages in agricultural and construction sectors.

The second wave coincided with sustained high growth since the late 1980's. Widespread labour and skill shortages, and escalating wages drew large numbers of both documented and undocumented workers.

The third phase was a period of stabilization of migrant worker inflow following slower economic growth and the introduction of severe penalties for illegal entry and employment. Since 1998, the number of migrant workers has hovered between 800,000 and 1.2 million, depending on economic performance. The current estimate of illegal migrant workers in the Peninsula is about 300 to 400 thousand, or one illegal worker for every three documented workers⁵⁴.

It is this influx of foreign workers that is perceived by many to impinge upon public safety and security, as some migrant workers, particularly the illegal migrants are engaged in criminal activities. The number of crimes committed by migrants has increased three-fold from 1,333 in 1992 to 3,113 in 2002 (refer to Fig. 12 below). Indonesians, by virtue of their larger presence committed the most number of crimes (about 62 % of the total crimes committed by foreigners). However, the proportion of crimes committed by foreigners merely hovers around 2 % of the total index crimes in Malaysia. On a per capita basis, foreigners on average commit about 3.8 crimes per 1000 foreign population, whereas Malaysians committed 5.3 per 1000 population. ***This goes to show that on a per 1000 basis Malaysians commit more crime than foreigners.***

⁵⁴ Kanapathy, V. *International Migration and Labour Market Developments in Asia: Economic Recovery, The Labour Market and Migrant Workers in Malaysia*, 2004 Workshop on International and Labour Markets in Asia organized by the Japan Institute for Labour Policy and Training.

| Year | Number of Crimes by Foreigners | % of Total Crimes Committed by Foreigners | Crimes by Foreigners per 1000 Foreigners | Crimes by Malaysians per 1000 Malaysians |
|----------------|--------------------------------|---|--|--|
| 1992 | 1,333 | 1.8 | 3.8 | 3.8 |
| 1993 | 1,746 | 2.2 | 4.0 | 4.0 |
| 1994 | 757 | 1.0 | 1.6 | 3.7 |
| 1995 | 2,171 | 2.7 | 12.1 | 3.8 |
| 1996 | 2,019 | 2.3 | 2.2 | 4.1 |
| 1997 | 1,599 | 1.3 | 1.7 | 5.5 |
| 1998 | 2,385 | 1.5 | 2.4 | 7.1 |
| 1999 | 3,970 | 2.3 | 3.8 | 7.3 |
| 2000 | 3,488 | 2.1 | 3.0 | 7.0 |
| 2001 | 3,364 | 2.1 | 3.9 | 6.4 |
| 2002 | 3,113 | 2.1 | 3.3 | 6.0 |
| Average | | | 3.8 | 5.3 |

Fig. 12: Statistics of Crimes by Foreigners from 1992 - 2002⁵⁵

Studies conducted locally by Hj Massari⁵⁶ have shown that statistically the presence of foreign workers in Johor has not affected the rise in index crime. The number of crimes committed by foreigners is small compared with that committed by locals. Nevertheless he observed that ***the foreign workers are more prone to committing violent crimes.***

Similar studies in Sarawak by Hj. Zaidi⁵⁷ also showed that though foreigners contributed little to the total index crime, they nevertheless (especially the Indonesians) ***have a propensity to commit violent crime.*** In Sabah on the other hand, via a study by Mohd. Bakri Zinin⁵⁸, it was observed that foreigners contribute to 80 % of the incidence of violent crime and 15 % to 25 % of property crime. ***He also pointed out that, being a non confrontational crime, the incidences of foreigners in property crime in Sabah could be much more.*** Nonetheless the usage of firearms

⁵⁵ The chart is tabulated to 2002 only, since the statistics of foreigners for 2003 and 2004 is unavailable.

⁵⁶ Hj. Massari b. HJ Hashim (1994), *Impak Pendatang Haram keatas Kejadian Jenayah – Satu Kajian dinegeri Johor*. Diploma Sains Kepolisian Project Paper , UKM / RMP.

⁵⁷ Hj. Zaidi b. Hj. Morshidi (1996), *Masalah Pendatang Asing Tanpa Izin (PATI) dan Hubungannya dengan Jenayah, Satu Kajian di Kuching, Sarawak*. Diploma Sains Kepolisian Project Paper, UKM / RMP.

⁵⁸ Mohd Bakri b. Mohd Zinin (1994) , *Impak Pendatang Haram keatas Jenayah*, Diploma Sains Kepolisian Project Paper , UKM / RMP.

and violence by foreigners in Sabah was definitely high. Anuar Bashah⁵⁹ further went on to state that this fear by locals upon foreigners may lead to a rift / indifference of opinion between the public and police which results on the so called 'inaction / insufficient action of police against these foreigners committing violent crimes'.

It is thus submitted that foreign migrant workers though statistically contributing to only 2 % of the total index crime they, when they do, nevertheless commit violent crimes which are a cause for concern as it affects both police image and public safety.

The issue of 'Lepak'

The issue of 'lepak' has sometimes been linked to crime rates in certain districts. A study conducted by Mohd. Fauzi b. Saari (1994)⁶⁰ (the present Director CID) found that ***there was no correlation between this practice of 'lepak' with the indulgence of crime by youth.*** Though this study was conducted in the areas of Dang Wangi, Kuala Lumpur it nevertheless will hold true in other districts in Malaysia. The study however puts a caveat on the above statement in that if this practice is let to carry on until it becomes a normal phenomenon, it will lead to a deviant behavior and thus jeopardize the country's development.

Narcotics and Crime

Narcotics abuse by individuals has a correlation to the commission of crime. A local study by Gan Kong Meng⁶¹ has shown that drug abuse by individuals is closely related to property crime. These crimes were further attributed to sustain their drug abuse affliction. ***Their involvement in crime,*** as shown by Haris Wong⁶² ***in a study conducted on inmates at Rehabilitation Centers, revealed that 74 % of them went on to commit crimes to sustain their habits.*** The other 26 % could sustain their drug problems without committing crimes. Of those who committed crimes the vast majority (70 %) committed property crimes to sustain their habit. The rest committed violent crimes.

Having shown the affinity of drug abusers to crime, the statistics of the number of registered drug abusers in this country which amounts to

⁵⁹ Anuar Bashah (1994) ,*Masalah Pendatang dan Impak ke atas Jenayah – Satu Kajian di Selangor*, Diploma Sains Kepolisian Project Paper, UKM / RMP.

⁶⁰ Mohd Fauzi b Saari,(1994) *Budaya Lepak: Kaitannya dengan jenayah dikalangan remaja – satu kajian didaerah Dang Wangi, Kuala Lumpur.* Program Diploma Sains Kepolisian Project Paper, Fakulti Sains Kemasyarakatan dan Kemanusiaan, UKM/RMP.

⁶¹ Gan Kong Meng (2003), *Hubungan diantara Penyalahgunaan Dadah dengan Tingkahlaku Jenayah (Satu Kajian dinegeri Pulau Pinang,* Diploma Sains Kepolisian Project Paper. UKM / RMP.

⁶² Haris Wong b. Abdullah(1998), *Satu Kajian tentang sejauh manakah penglibatan penagih dadah dalam jenayah indeks.* , Diploma Sains Kepolisian Project Paper, UKM / RMP.

38,672⁶³ is quite daunting if we follow the finding above by Haris Wong that 74 % of them will commit crime to sustain their habits.

Nevertheless, an in-depth study has to be conducted in this aspect to see the relationship between the registered drug abusers in the country and the general index crime situation, particularly that of property crime.

Motor Vehicle Theft

Motor vehicle theft amounted to 76,612 cases out of the total index crime of 156,455 cases for the year 2004. This is 49 % of the total index crime for the year 2004. Please refer to Fig 13 below which shows the comparison between total index crimes to that of motor vehicle theft for a period of 25 years i.e. 1980 to 2004

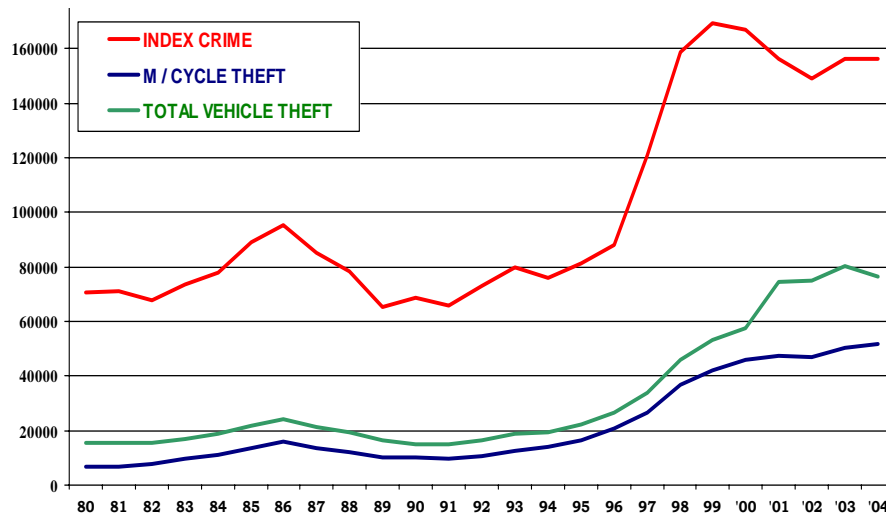


Fig. 13: Comparison of Index Crime and M/Vehicle theft statistics

It can be seen that in the past few years, motor vehicle theft has contributed a lot to the total index crime of the nation. ***From 1997 onwards the contribution by motor vehicle theft to the total index crime has been growing.*** Prior to this for example ***in 1994 motor vehicle theft only contributed to 25.6 % of the total index crime.*** This shows that the contribution by motor vehicle theft has almost double in the last 10 years. This dramatic increase is a cause for concern. Further it can be seen that amongst the main contributors of vehicle theft, is the theft of motor cycles. It took up 67.3 % of the total motor vehicle theft statistics for the year 2004.

It is thus submitted that if this theft of motor vehicle is reduced, it will correspondingly reduce the index crime of the nation. In fulfilling this

⁶³ Statistics from Jabatan Narkotik , Bukit Aman, K.L.

endeavor rather than resting it solely on the hands of the police, we can use the opportunity based crime theory⁶⁴ as a necessary corrective measure rather than the traditional criminological theory. Environmental criminologists are now stating that some settings provide more crime opportunities than others and that no crime can occur without the physical opportunity to carry it out. Thus whatever one's criminal inclinations, one cannot commit a crime without overcoming its physical requirements.

Bringing this to our context here, manufacturers of motor vehicles especially motor cycles must ensure that anti theft mechanisms be updated⁶⁵ and made more fool-proof. It will only require a small effort on the part of the manufacturers but its affect will definitely bring the statistics down which in turn if we compare the losses of 51,560 m/cycles for the year 2004, the economic influence will run in the millions both for Malaysians' and insurance companies. The enforcement of this also will be easy as it can be made a criterion before a vehicle is accepted for registration in this country.

CONCLUSION

The Malaysian public is apprehensive of the general rise in crime in the past few years. This is indicative of the depreciation of the Public Safety indices in The Malaysian Quality of Life Index 2004. Though the crime rate per 100,000 has risen by 19.8 % from the year 1980 to 2004, it nevertheless is lower than the growth rate of the population of Malaysia i.e 2 %. Nonetheless media as we know plays an important role in developing and influencing society's perception on the increase in crime and violence as compared to that of official statistics⁶⁶. Thus the over sensationalization⁶⁷ of crime by the press and media has caused this fear amongst the public.

Crime in Malaysia as in other developing countries has blossomed from its humble beginnings of simple theft, wayside robbery, etc to that of syndicated crimes and borderless white collar crimes that poses a lot of difficulties for the forensic investigator. All this in a way would affect the

⁶⁴ Felson, M. *Opportunity makes the thief : Practical theory for crime prevention*. The Report was produced in 1998 by The Home Office Policing and Reducing Crime Unit Research, Development and Statistics Directorate. <http://www.rouncefield.homestead.com/files/a-soc-dev-20.htm>

⁶⁵ Theft of motor cycles is relatively easy and it requires only an Alan-key to break the lock. Further manufacturers only spend less that 0.5 % of the total cost of manufacturing on anti theft mechanism e.g. locks.

⁶⁶ Refer to extract of speech by YDH Tan Sri KPN during his keynote address "Industrial Security Issues: A Business Solutions Approach" on the 26th July 2004, Gurney Hotel, Penang where he stated that "According to statistics compiled by Interpol, Malaysia has amongst the lowest number of reported crimes per 100,000 inhabitants , compared even to developed countries like the United Kingdom , Germany, The U.S. , and France. Our figure of 730 cases per 100,000 inhabitants in 2002 for instance compares favorably to the figure of 11,327 for the U.K. , 7,963 for Germany (in 2003) , 4,161 for the U.S (in 2001) and 6,666 for France (in 2003)."

⁶⁷ Heath and Gilbert (1996) had found that the relationship between media presentations and crime is dependent on the characteristics of the message and the audience.

proper mode in which the police measure crime, thus leading us to review our indices that make up the Index Crime – which is a mode of quantifying crime for international comparison purposes and more important, for a more efficient and effective crime prevention benchmarking tool. RMP may after a comparative study between the type of crime and the general crime situation, include certain types of crimes as indices of the Index Crime.

On the question of rise of crime in Malaysia, numerically crime has increased by 120 % from the year 1980 to that of 2004, this is if we compare the statistics of index crime for 1980 which was 70,823 and 2004 which was 156,455. On the other hand, if we compare on a per 100,000 population basis then for the years from 1980 to 2004 the crime rate has grown by 19.8 %. There are a few observations made in the study above and which can be summarized as follows:

- The crime rate is affected drastically by the general economic situation which affects the country. Therefore as it always does in the cycle of economic upturns and recessions, RMP should be on a crime prevention alert during such an economic downturn affecting Malaysia.
- For the year 2004, crimes related to property accounted for 86 % of the total index crime whereas violent crimes, though attracting the greatest attention from the public and media, contributed to the other 14 %.
- Violent crime is growing at a faster rate than property crime. A comparison between 1980 and 2004 has shown that violent crime has grown by 57.4 % whereas property crime has increased by 15.4 %.
- Property crime which is the main contributor of the total index crime situation of the country is mainly made up of vehicle theft indices. Of the total index crimes reported, vehicle theft contributed to 49 % and this was made up mainly of motor cycle theft.

With regards to the causal factors affecting the increase of crime several reasons were discussed though as stated earlier they are not an exhaustive list. The increase of population per se does not affect the increase of crime. Crime rates are affected more by urbanization and population density. This can be shown by the example that though the states of Sabah, Sarawak, Perak and Kedah which have a higher population than Kuala Lumpur they had shown a lower index crime per 100,000. A further comparison between Selangor and Singapore had shown that though both have a similar population, the former had shown a higher index crime per 100,000 than Singapore. This was also true for Kuala Lumpur and Pulau Pinang notwithstanding the fact that they have a lower population base. This leads us to call for a review and study of the

Singapore system of crime control and crime prevention techniques as both these jurisdictions have similar ethnicity, habits and way of life. This would be useful in lowering the crime rate in these areas.

With regards to unemployment, studies have shown a significant correlation between unemployment (which includes those having difficulties in finding a higher paying job) and property crime. A review of the 49,243 prisoners in our correction facilities has shown that 95 % of them earned less than the Malaysian Real per Capita Income⁶⁸.

The Indian thug gangs have formed a major contributor in gangsterism and gang related activities. This in turn has led them to their high involvement in violent crimes. The influx of illegal workers has also set the pace for the increase of violent crime thus the sharp rise of violent crime by 57.4 % from 1980 to 2004.

Narcotics abuse by individual's has been shown to have a correlation to crime in general but it is urged that an in-depth study be conducted to see the relationship between the registered drug abusers in the country and the general index crime situation, particularly that of property crime.

Lastly it is suggested that since motor vehicle theft makes up 49 % of the total index crime of the country it would definitely make a difference to the total index crime if this crime is reduced. Further, rather than the RMP solely taking the brunt of this endeavor, the manufacturers should be made to make their vehicles theft – proof. This is so since at the present moment vehicles especially motorcycles are stolen with effortless ease due to the lack of effective and fool-proof anti theft devices. The small cost encountered by the manufacturers will definitely be made up by the millions saved by Malaysians' as a whole, taking into account that 51,560 motor cycles were stolen last year.

⁶⁸ If we set this up with the number of unemployed persons in Malaysia which stands at 3.5 % of the total population of 25 million our base of potential property crime offenders is staggering!