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THE TERRITORIAL FUNCTIONING AND VICTIMISATION IN LOW VS HIGH INCOME HOUSING AREA

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ABSTRACT

The research studies territorial functioning in housing areas with different land uses and perception of crime levels. Territorial functioning was measured on attitudes and marking behavior. The perception of safety and fear of crime similar to what was measured by the British Crime Survey. The survey involved 144 respondents from two separate Malaysian housing areas. Data were then computed in the SPSS and analyzed via descriptive and Structural Equation Modelling. The equations of the three elements of Territorial behavior, territorial markers and territorial attitudes will be combined to create an overall total of Territorial Functioning. The study shows that territorial functioning improves chances of being victimized in both the neighborhoods.

KEYWORDS: Neighbourhood Watch, Territorial Functioning, housing schemes

1. INTRODUCTION

Crime has been a huge concern for researchers, police and the public. The lack of police manpower in curbing crime in housing areas is an issue yet to be resolved (Bukit Aman Police Headquarters, 2002). Many researchers in the fields of social science believe that territorial functioning is a way to reduce victimisation (Taylor, 1988). This study focuses on the relationships between territorial functioning and the social demographic characteristics of residents in housing schemes in Malaysia. The concept of territoriality should be distinguished from other spatial concepts such as personal space. Animals or man will usually mark the boundaries of their territory so that they are visible to others, but the boundaries of personal space are invisible (Sommer, 1959). Jurisdiction is the area an individual claims because of their job role is called jurisdiction (Roos, 1968) whereas, home range - covers the set of places in the environment that an

individual is familiar with (Stea, 1970). Different culture possesses different behaviour, markers and attitudes that reflect territorial functioning (Taylor, 1988).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Altman (1975) suggested that people tend to be more dominant and influential in their own territories. According to him, territoriality comprises of six common themes: references, such as mating, child rearing and food gathering; ownership of place; personalisation of space using marking devices such as signs and fences; claiming a domain for individuals or group and defense responses to intrusion. He summarises his definitions as "a self/after bonding - regulation mechanism that involves personalization of or marking of a place or object and communicating that is owned by a person or a group." Personalisation and ownership designed to regulate social interaction and help satisfy various social and physical motives. Defense response may sometimes occur when territorial boundaries

are violated. The working definition that is being used throughout this research is from Taylor (1988). He defines territorial functioning as a behavioural pattern and a continuous attitude with an individual or group based on perception, attempt, or control over a physical space, object or ideas and the involvement of human being to manage the division of space and to defend it as a mark of identity.

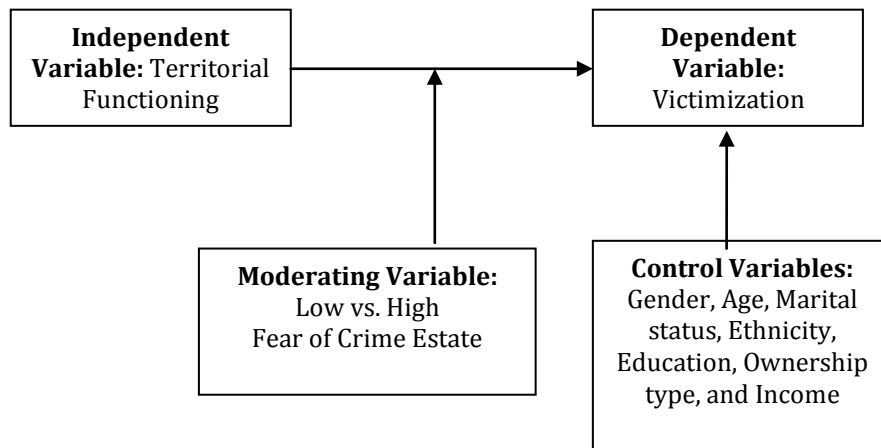
There are various crime control schemes, crime prevention methods and policies. The crime control scheme, using the "Neighbourhood Watch" model, which incorporates policing strategies are being adopted across the nation (The National Unity and Social Development Department, 2005). As a result, there was a decrease in crime of 456 cases from the year 1999 to 2000 and a decrease of 1661 cases from the year 2000 to 2001 for break-in, while a decrease of 914 cases from the year 1999 to 2000, whereas in 2000 to 2001 indicates a decrease in 2346 cases of burglary in the country (Bukit Aman Police Headquarters, 2002). As such, there was an urge to reactivate the neighbourhood watch programme throughout the housing areas with a social disorder (The National Unity and

Social Development Department, 2005). This is arguably due to the effectiveness of the neighbourhood watch scheme. According to the Government Transformation Program (GTP) 2013 Annual Report, the Royal Malaysian Police (RMP) reduced crime to 49,059 cases within 116 days after the launch of 'Ops Cantas' compared to 52,320 cases recorded in the same period before the operation. Of the 49,059 cases, property crime had been reduced to 36,974 cases and violent crime to 12,085 cases compared to the previous period before the operation.

3. VARIABLES USED IN THE RESEARCH

Residents who defended near-home space finds the neighbourhood to be safer than residents who did not place a high regard on their surrounding (Brunson, Kuo and Sullivan, 2001). However, Newman's defensible space concept ignores the complexity underlying social processes that determine territorial functioning (Reynald and Elffers, 2009). Our research analyses the impact between Territorial Functioning and victimization across neighbourhood types.

FIGURE 1



4. THE SELECTION OF SITE AREA

This study focuses on two housing areas in Selangor, Malaysia which are occupied by both low and high income people. This form of dwelling accounts for majority of non-gated landed properties in urban Malaysia.

Two housing areas were chosen for the study and their identities are not disclosed in order to maintain anonymity. The first estate represents a low fear of crime estate (in terms of perception), referred to as Estate Low while the second estate represents a high fear of crime estate, identified as Estate High. However, the selection of the estates

in this study was made based on contrasting fear of crime perceptions, while having the demographic profile across estates to be somewhat similar.

5. THE RESPONDENTS

The main wage earner or the spouse was identified in each household. Prior to the survey, the respondents were asked two screening questions. This was done on the doorstep. The first question involved asking respondents whether they had lived at the address for at least a year. Respondents who have lived there less than a year were excluded from the interview. This was to give

a reasonable time for the respondents to develop territorial attitudes and display markers.

A cross-tabulation analysis was used to partition the respondents' profile along the type of estate, that is, either high or low in fear of crime. The results indicate that all the control variables (Gender, Age, Marital Status, Education and Income) indeed do not significantly differ across the type of housing areas. This is an important characteristic to show that proper sampling strategy has been taken into account and any statistical test results subsequent to this could not be attributed to sampling biasness.

6. TERRITORIAL FUNCTIONING, FEAR OF CRIME AND PERCEIVED CRIME

Mann-Whitney U test was conducted to investigate whether any differences exist in terms of *territorial functioning, fear of crime* and

perceived crime across the type of estate (see Table 1). The non-parametric Mann-Whitney was chosen since the study variables are ordinal-ranked across the nominal level of estate type.

All the item measures for territorial functioning did not differ across type of estate. There are no significant differences between high crime estate and low crime estate in terms of the 5 fear factors of *being burgled, being assaulted, having vehicle stolen, being sexually harassed* and *being raped*. It can be safely stated that the respondents from both estates exhibit this fear irrespective of the estate type. However, the perception of crimes such as burglary, car theft, vandalism, drug abuse and hooliganism are significantly higher in high crime estate as compared to low crime estate. This indirectly implies that the locations selected for the study are appropriate.

Table I
Territorial Functioning, Fear of Crime, Perceived Crime: Low Vs High Crime Estates

	Low	High	Mann-Whitney U
<i>Territorial Functioning</i>			
I know the names of most of my neighbours	95.36	76.35	510
I feel responsible for watching over my neighbour's house when they are on holiday	90.25	91.20	465
I feel comfortable living among my neighbours	89.54	85.14	419
<i>Fear of...</i>			
Being burgled	288	167	98
Being assaulted	15.22	13.25	91
Having vehicle stolen	14.66	11.72	74.3
Being sexually harassed	13.79	15.21	83
Being raped	15.78	17.79	91.5
<i>Crime</i>			
Burglary	81.23	53.10	1520**
Car Theft	78.42	56.71	1567**
Vandalism	77.76	56.34	1587**
Drug Abuse	77.08	61.39	1685**
Hooliganism	76.27	58.28	1726**

**p<0.01, *p<0.05

7. VICTIMISATION RESULTS

A cross-tabulation analysis was run to identify whether any association exists between the type of offence and the type of estate (see Table II). There are no significant differences in terms of victimization related to tempered vehicles (including stolen parts) between both estates.

However, high crime estate has greater break-ins (including unsuccessful attempts) than low crime estate.

TABLE II
Victimization: Low Vs High Crime Estates

		Estate		
		Low (n=58, 40.28%)	High (n=86, 59.72%)	Total
Parts stolen from vehicles ($\chi^2 = .54$)	Yes	16 (53.3%)	14 (46.7%)	30 (21.5%)
	No	31 (36.9%)	53 (63.1%)	84 (78.5%)
Vehicle tempered or damaged ($\chi^2 = 2.748$)	Yes	10(25%)	30(75%)	40(35.7%)
	No	30(41.7%)	42(58.3)	72(64.3%)
Burglary [†] ($\chi^2 = 3.58$)	Yes	2(28.6%)	5(71.4%)	7(4.9%)
	No	72(52.6%)	65(47.4%)	137(95.1%)
Unsuccessful attempt at burglary* ($\chi^2 = 5.022$)	Yes	4(19%)	16(76.2%)	21(14.6%)
	No	61(49.6%)	62(50.4%)	123(85.4%)
Deface or damage to house* ($\chi^2 = 4.749$)	Yes	5(33.3%)	10(66.7%)	15(13.6%)
	No	52(49.5%)	53(50.5%)	105(95.5%)

[†]p<0.10, **p<0.01, *p<0.05

8. THE EFFECT OF TERRITORIAL FUNCTIONING AND CRIME

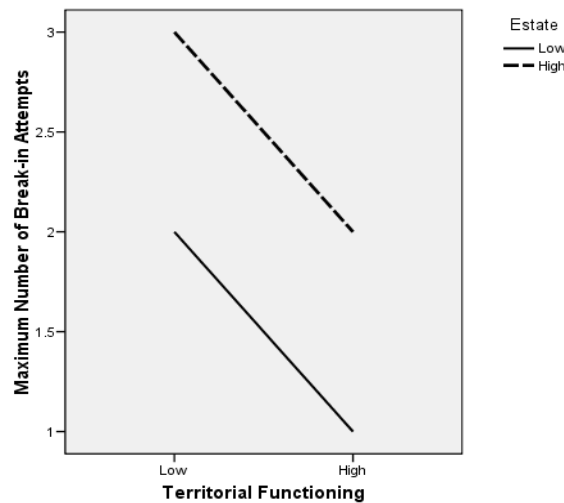
The main objective of the study was to ascertain the link between territorial functioning and crime, and whether the strength of this impact

differs across estate types. We find that territorial functioning has a negative influence on the number of break-ins, regardless of neighbourhood (see Table III). This is further illustrated in Figure II.

TABLE III
Hierarchical Regression Dependent Variable: No. of Trespasses

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Variables	Territorial Functioning (TF)	TF + ET	TF + ET + (TF x ET)
Territorial Functioning (TF)	-0.191 **	-.185**	.167
Estate Type (ET)		.161*	.745 [†]
TF x ET			-.677
ΔF	7.677**	6.007*	1.96
ΔR ²	.041	.029	.008

Notes: Estate 1=Low Crime Estate, Estate 2= High Crime Estate. **p < 0.01, *p <0.05 and [†]p < 0.10. Values for variables are standardized β.

FIGURE II: The effect of territorial functioning and trespasses: Low vs. high crime income housing area

9. CONCLUSION

As a conclusion, this research is about territorial functioning as a crime prevention tool to reduce victimisation. There are two significant points which indicate the importance of this research which are 1) Researchers have measured the territorial functioning through a variety of methods over the years (Foster et al., 2011; Dunstan et al., 2005) but little attention has been paid to the cross validation of these features (Abdullah et al., 2013). 2) Malaysia have significantly higher territorial functioning than the British residents with respect to attitude and territorial markers (Abdullah et al., 2013).

The perspective in the Malaysian context. In order to implement the crime prevention strategies, it requires a comprehensive programme. The factual objective is impossible to achieve in the sense of introducing the territorial functioning concept in a whole new environment as the neighbourhood watch area. These crime prevention programmes should acquire full cooperation from the residents, police force, and the private sector. Identify crime and disorder problems in and around the site. Analyse current or proposed design based on existing crime problems and potential criminal opportunities. Develop preventive or corrective design options. Monitor and evaluate how the implemented option affects crime, resident surveillance, interaction, and territoriality. A decrease in crime incidents is not an accurate indicator of success in running the crime prevention programme. A precise evaluation of the programmes should be done to identify possible factors that may result in the decrease of criminal activities, a decrease regardless of the programmes in place. In planning a useful evaluation study, it is important to have a 'fine-grained' characterisation of the programme to be evaluated. This

characterisation needs to take into account the programme approach, programme type and programme specification so that the specific evaluation considerations of evaluation form, approach and method (the evaluation model) will be appropriate and adequate for the evaluation study. When this is done, an evaluation study is most likely to yield the information critical to the decisions and judgments to be made by the key stakeholders and other significant audiences.

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