



Research Paper

Relationship of Territorial Functioning and Victimization, Fear of Crime and Neighbourhood Watch: A Case Study in Malaysia Housing Scheme.

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ABSTRACT: *The paper examine on territorial functioning in the context of victimization, fear of crime, neighbourhood watch and ethnic relations in the public housing in Malaysia. The nature of this paper is conducted in USJ 18 housing area via face-to-face structured interview. Through a stratified random sampling the survey obtained 73% of the total 300 households with 218 samples from the USJ 18 housing area. The data were then examined through descriptive, inferential and factor analysis. The main purpose of the process is to calculate and combine Territorial markers, Territorial behaviour and Territorial Attitudes as to create overall total for territorial functioning.*

Keywords: *Territorial functioning, crime prevention, victimization, ethnic relations, neighbourhood watch.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Several studies have established the relationship between the territorial functioning of high and low crime. [Brown \(1983\)](#) conducted a study to examine the characteristics of burgled and non-burgled houses in suburban neighbourhoods. It was revealed that non-burgled residents expressed more pride over the appearance of their home compared with burgled residents. In addition to being better maintained, non-burgled sites also had more and symbolic barriers. In another study of 63 blocks home in Baltimore, United States, [Taylor et al., \(1984\)](#) revealed that the criminal acts of violence against those who are lower on the street blocks where the residents were more territorial, displayed more markers and feel more a sense of territorial responsibility for the area. In addition, other researchers have revealed that poor maintenance and lack of exterior decoration is associated with susceptibility to crime ([Craik, 1980](#)). If one purpose of environmental crime is to understand the relationship between the perpetrator and the target area, the question arises of how the offenders find the target. Crime pattern theory shows that the offenders look for targets along pathways that make up their normal activities, that the district is "awareness space ([Brantingham, 1981](#)) that the perpetrator used as the basis for the search patterns of crime. Study of the offenders in Pennsylvania found that a property near the main arterial routes is more vulnerable to the victim ([Rengert, 1985](#)). If the perpetrator of the central artery to identify potential areas, perhaps to reduce the vulnerability of the environment by restricting the visibility of the area of the main routes, through the use of roadside vegetation and the designing of the house that do not have any frontage facing the main road ([Ratcliffe, 2003](#)). Another successful way to prevent crime is by adopting the Neighbourhood Watch program in the housing area.

II. TERRITORIAL FUNCTIONING

Studies on the relationships between territorial functioning and victimization fear of crime and neighbourhood watch in Malaysia, have not been conducted before. Since Malaysia is a country and with multiracial population, it would be interesting to conduct a study on the cultural aspect of territorial functioning. Apart from providing the body of knowledge in the area, it could also ease crime reduction in the problem areas of the community. The factors that contributed to the decline in property crime are that the administrative decisions taken to alter the access to police resources for the public; and a shift towards community policing with an emphasis on problem solving and crime prevention.

There are various definitions on territorial functioning but most of the researchers define territorial functioning as the behaviour of an individual or group, claiming control over a particular area ([Becker, 1971](#); [Edney, 1976](#); [Abu-Ghazze, 2000](#), Abdullah et al., 2013). Basically Taylor (1988) described human territorial functioning as a system of attitudes, sentiments and behaviours that are specific to a clearly marked location, which signifies that a group has some expectation of exclusivity of use, as well as responsibility for, and control of, activities in the specific location. In Malaysia, the territorial scenarios were more emphasized between

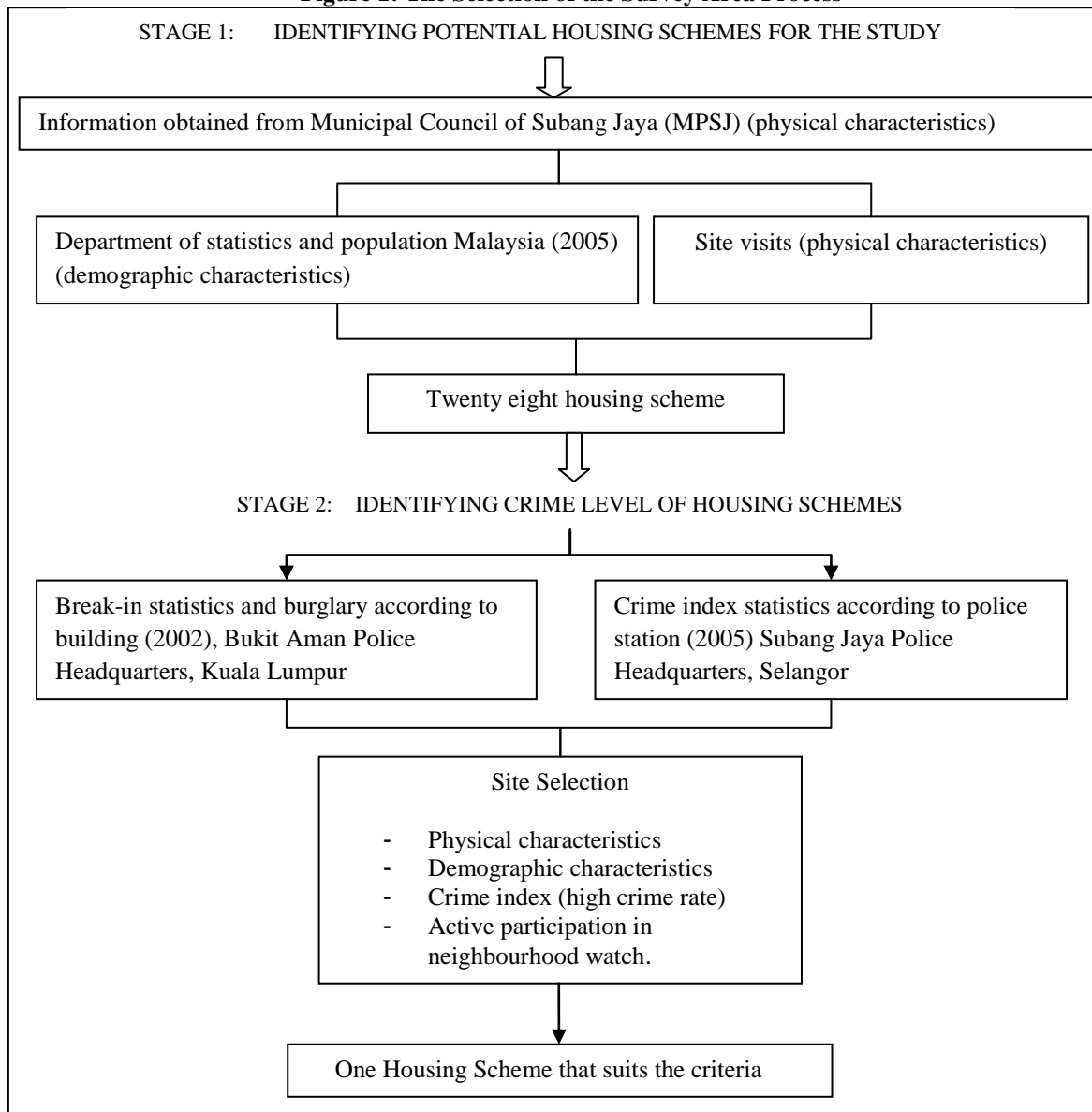
territorial behaviour and ethnicity however not in territorial attitudes. In the Malaysian context, the meaning of outdoor spaces varies according to each resident's upbringings. The main purpose is to see how the three predominant cultures apply the concept of territorial functioning to manage different kinds of spaces they occupy and its effect to counter crime. In order to see the relationship between territorial functioning with victimization, fear of crime and neighbourhood watch. As a result, a strong and active neighbourhoods watch scheme in the housing area was chosen.

III. MATERIALS AND METHODOLOGY

The theoretical framework model that shows the relationship between independent variable and that the territorial functioning and dependent variables consisted of three variables, namely the neighbourhood watch, victimization and fear of crime. To evaluate the theoretical framework on territorial functioning theory, crime and neighbourhood watch, data was collected using questionnaire, interview of respondents, police records, the census, internet search, documentation study and criminal records from relevant departments. The research is quantitative in nature based on the face to face anonymous structured survey questionnaires. The data were also obtained from personal observations (observation sheet) of the respondent's front garden after the completion of each questionnaire. A total of 218 responses were obtained from household respondents in USJ 18, Subang Jaya (73%) response rate.

The sample was drawn from household respondents of the medium high income in the USJ 18, Subang Jaya were consists of 550 houses in the USJ 18 housing scheme in the Peninsular Malaysia. The overall total of the residents was selected using a stratified random sampling method as respondents of the survey. The stratified random sampling was used to produce more representative and thus more accurate samples. A good general rule of thumb for factor analysis is 300 cases (Tabachnick and Fidell, 1996, Haron, 2008). In overall, the aim of the survey was to obtain 100% response of the total population. Thus, it meant in total, the study was to obtain responses from all 300 respondents. The respondents identified for the survey are the main wage earners or the spouses. Two hundred and eighteen (218) from a total of three hundred (300) questionnaires were obtained. From the face to face questionnaire surveys conducted, the response rate was 73%. Everyone who lives in the neighbourhood has an equal chance of being selected. By using the map obtained from the developer of the housing area where each house was selected and marked. Referring to the survey plan, every third house was selected, the households were then numbered systematically from 1 to 10. The personal approach enabled direct observation of the respondents' activities and enhanced cooperation during the interview. Research was conducted in USJ 18 (UEP Subang Jaya) is located approximately 10 kilometers from Kuala Lumpur and eight kilometers from Shah Alam. USJ mainly residential area, but population increases have seen rapid transformation in the business sector. According to [Postill \(2004\)](#), Subang Jaya is a great 'smart community' e-governance as SJ2005 and achieved within five years of a world-class hub for local communities. [Postill \(2004\)](#) also stated in his research USJ.com.my has retained its autonomy from government, whereas Nwatch has always worked closely with MPSJ, the police and the State Assemblymen. The relation to the study is that territorial functioning is used as a tool to prevent crime in USJ 18 ([Postill, 2004](#)). The site selection concerned a two staged process as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: The Selection of the Survey Area Process



The first stage involved identifying suitable housing scheme for the study whereas the second stage involved the identification of the crime levels of this entire housing scheme. The housing area is chosen out of 28 housing scheme according to four factors which are the crime level, an active neighbourhood watch site, demographic composition and the physical characteristics of the housing scheme. Before the real survey was carried out, the questionnaires undergone the pilot survey to pre-test to ensure that the final version contains no imprecise questions, easy to perceive and perform by the respondents. After the completion of the questionnaire survey the data must perform the statistical test. All Analysis was performed using the Statistical Packages for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Various tests were employed in this study such as descriptive analysis, cross tabulation, correlation analysis and factor analysis. Correlation analysis and factor analysis has been widely applied in the past on territorial functioning to verify the multidimensionality of territorial attitudes and territorial behaviour. The Spearman's rho for ordinal variables and the Mann-Whitney for nominal variables test were widely used to find the association between the two variables. Before the value of the standard items identified as ordinal, there are two formulas is to count the items, which are ordinal and interval variables. In the case of variable mean interval will be reduced from the raw values and the results will be divided by the mean. Then the raw score will be re-expressed by a number of standard deviation from the mean position. This process allows to scores different scales, standardized so that they can be added together to form a total score. There are two reasons to do this. First, the overall territorial functioning of two dimensions: the attitude and behaviour, as measured by different and, thus, have a different response categories. This score cannot be added together until they have been standardized since they are measured by using different scale (Abdullah et al., 2013). Second,

the distribution variable varies not only between the two dimensions, but also in every dimension. This is the reason that the value has no absolute meaning, but relative to the distribution in which they appear. In this case, the standard allows for each individual score to re-consider its position relative to the residual distribution.

2.1 Measures

The survey was conducted to obtain an accuracy of victimization, fear of crime, neighbourhood watch, and ethnic relations among the ethnic groups. The survey instrument used was a nine-page questionnaire booklet used to guide the interviews. The questionnaire was formally administered between 12th of November, 2005 to 18th of January, 2006, covering a period of two months. All of the interviews were conducted from 9.00 am to 6.00 pm and it took only 20 - 30 minutes of the respondent's time. The questionnaire was divided into seven sections as follows: a) Section A – Questions on Respondents Demographic Data b) Section B – Questions on the Concept of Territorial Attitudes c) Section C – Questions on Victimization d) Section D – Question on Fear of crime e) Section E – Questions on Neighbourhood Watch f) Section F – Questions on Ethnic relation g) Section G – Observation sheet

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The territorial functioning process involves possession, definition, and marking of the area with owner's specific identity. In Malaysia the residents displayed security equipments outside homes, safety purpose and they spend precious times beautifying their gardens. Firstly, possession of physical material reflecting one's culture outside the home is a way to convey position and status to the society. Thus, the more a person identifies the physical elements outside the homes the more content that person will be in their position ([Edney, 1976](#), [Haron, 2008](#)). Again, theoretically, territorial functioning differs across different ethnicity in terms of territorial behaviour, territorial attitudes and territorial markers.

The results from the theoretical strategy described earlier, the study examined four elements from the survey that is territorial functioning, victimisation, fear of crime and neighbourhood watch. Predatory crimes discussed were obtained from the respondents household members who will be admitted within the last six months (a) victims of violence in the neighbourhood or (b) a household burglary or theft victimization.

The analysis of the statistics indicate that the analysis generated suggest that the sample were adequate (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy, 0.804; Bartlett's Test of Sphericity with a Chi-square value of 1604.917) is not significant at ($p > .05$, $df = 66$).

This signifies that the territorial functioning score could not be totaled as a whole score. According to the screen test method, two factors that explain 52.5% of the total variation was extracted. The first factor is important because it balances a large proportion of variance among the items. In the analysis, the factors that exposed this factor account for 15.8% of the total variance and the eigenvalue is 6.307. The analysis indicates that there is a clear distinction in how residents perceive territorial functioning. Factor 1 represents territorial attitudes while Factor 2 represents 15.8% of the total variance. As a result from the factor analysis, the territorial attitudes and behaviour scores were not combined to form a total score for territorial functioning but were analyzed separately. The territorial functioning scores were then ranked high, medium and low by applying the trichotomised scale as suggested by ([De Vaus, 1986](#), [Abdullah et al., 2012](#)) The associations of territorial functioning and demographic characteristics were then examined by employing the Spearman's rank correlation when the variables were ordinal in nature, while the Mann-Whitney test was used particularly to the nominal variables.

4.1 The Relationship between Territorial Functioning and Demographic Characteristics

These analyses investigate the relationships between territorial functioning (territorial attitudes and territorial behaviour) and demographic characteristics. The result of the analysis indicates that there is a significant relationship between territorial attitudes and gender. This reveals that men are found to display more territorial attitudes than women. The results of the analysis disclose that there is a significant relationship between territorial attitudes and age (older people displays higher territorial attitudes). The existence of significant relationships between territorial functioning (territorial attitudes and territorial behaviour) and duration of tenancy indicates that people who live in the area longer display higher territorial functioning (territorial attitudes and territorial behaviour). Size of household has a significant relationship with territorial behaviour. Furthermore, this concludes that people who live in a bigger household size display more territorial behaviour.

4.2 The Relationship between Territorial Functioning and Victimization, Fear of Crime and Neighbourhood Watch

The victimization and territorial behaviour result is significant. This findings reveals that people who have not been victims display higher territorial behaviour. The study also found no relationship between territorial attitudes and territorial behaviour and fear of crime. According to the study, woman and older adults were seen to display highest in fear of crime. Thus it can be concluded that those who are active in neighbourhood watch schemes engage in displaying stronger territorial behaviour. People who display higher territorial attitudes have stronger relationship with the residents in the area. The significance associations between territorial behaviour and ethnicity were also found in this study (a) garden chair and ethnicity, (b) garden table and ethnicity (As evident the residents engage in small talks and long conversations), (c) steel gate and ethnicity, (d) alarm and ethnicity and (e) padlock and ethnicity. As for the safety features, most of the residents feel safer and were safer in the gated environments and utilising the padlocks while the alarm is an alternative and additional safety features for the residents.

V. CONCLUSION

Crime reduction strategies need a holistic consideration. Nevertheless, territorial functioning is a useful crime prevention initiative that must be encouraged, especially in less stable low income neighbourhoods where other methods such as target hardening may not be appropriate due to limited monetary resources. Many residents now are aware and joined "Neighbourhood Watch" schemes which focus on one aspect of territorial functioning that is surveillance. Thus, incorporating other aspects of territorial functioning that indicate territorial ownership must be encouraged, especially in areas which have already set up such schemes. The possibility to eliminate the total crime was unachievable in this study. Besides that, maybe in the future, crime must be prevented in conjunction with the conditions that the architects, analysts, landscape architects, residents, police and local authorities involved themselves directly in the planning and work together to create a comprehensive security policy via building by-laws for housing projects in the future. Professionals involved in design process of residential areas such as architects, landscape architects and planners must consider the impact their designs can have on crime.

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