

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TERRITORIAL FUNCTIONING AND BURGLARY IN MALAYSIA

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Abstract: This study examines territorial functioning in housing areas with different land uses and perception of crime levels. Territorial functioning was measured on attitudes and marking behavior. We measured the perception of safety and fear of crime similar to what was done by the British Crime Survey. The survey involved 144 participants from two separate Malaysian local councils. Data were then computed in the SPSS and analyzed via descriptive and (SEM) Structural Equation Modelling. These mathematical 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: territorial functioning, SPSS, (SEM) Structural Equation Modelling, British Crime Survey.

I. LITERATURE REVIEW

Crime is a major community anxiety. Effective policing methods are critical to control it (Zelinka & Brennan, 2001). Fear of crime and victimisation have serious and negative impacts on the community. Where fear of crime is prevalent, community life suffers. The residents typically withdraw from their outdoor activities, decline to participate in social activities and reduce participation in the public space provided (Jacobs, 1961). As Park and Burgess (1967) argue, less interaction with neighbours can lead to racial isolation. In addition, to curb crime everyone must work together regardless of race.

Territorial functioning is the mechanism by which we exclude unwanted people, through the use of physical areas such as fences, hedges, and other indicators, suggesting to people that certain space, usually close to our home, is private and not for public use. Taylor has described human territoriality 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 (Taylor 1988). Territorial behaviour include real barriers for instance walls, fences, locks or those that physically obstruct entry. On the other hand, territorial attitudes is the evidence of care among the neighbours. According to Brower *et. al.* (1983) suggest that under high levels of threat, stronger, more redundant territorial displays become necessary. It is perceived that intruders were more likely to be stopped if planting or fences were present. The findings verified that the fence is a powerful security feature. The presence of a fence means that would-be intruders will have to make a deliberate effort to enter and that the occupant is determined to keep them out.

Burglars' choice of suburb to target is usually not random. They are generally drawn to certain areas through the day-to-day activities of their lives. Areas that are familiar to them are the same types of areas that we find familiar: around schools, shops, recreation areas and work. Many of these can be found near the home, re-emphasising the importance of local geography in determining criminal opportunity. This model of offender behaviour, termed "crime pattern theory", has been articulated for some 20 years (Brantingham & Brantingham

1981). In addition, other theories consider the risk of victimisation. Although originally formulated for violent crime at the macro level, Cohen and Felson's Routine Activities Theory (1979) has been regularly applied to neighbourhood and local-level property crime. The theory states that for a crime to occur, the convergence is necessary of a motivated offender and a suitable target, in the absence of a capable guardian. Clear indications of ownership and occupancy may be sufficient to act as a capable guardian at times, and may, in the eyes of the offender, remove the suitability of the target. Where crime is prevalent, fear of crime exist and the resident's start to withdraw from the daily activities outside the homes (Zelinka and Brennan, 2001). 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. Fear of crime is often a motivating factor in the creation of gated communities (Wilson-Doenges 2000) and in the design characteristics of local areas. Studies of the fear of crime have constituted what is undeniably the fastest growing research area within criminology in the last decade and this shows no sign of diminishing (Ditton and Farrall, 2000).

II. DEPENDENT AND INDEPENDENT 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.

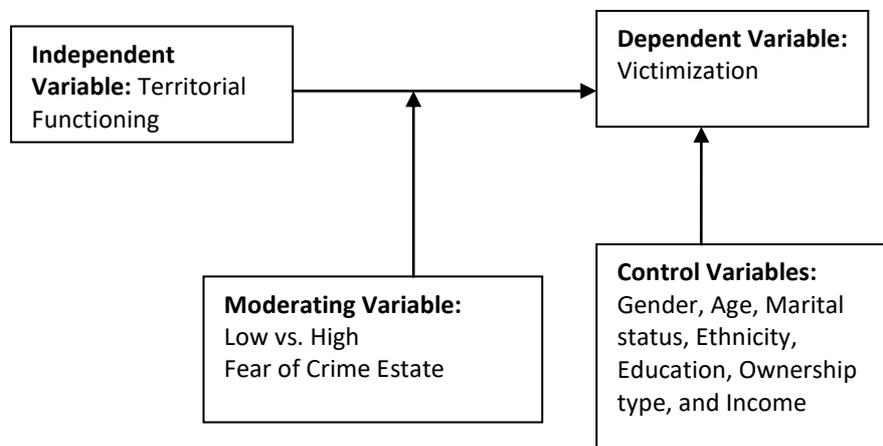


FIGURE I

III. SITE SELECTION

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.

IV. 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.

V. 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

VI. VICTIMISATION

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

VII. THE IMPACT 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 .

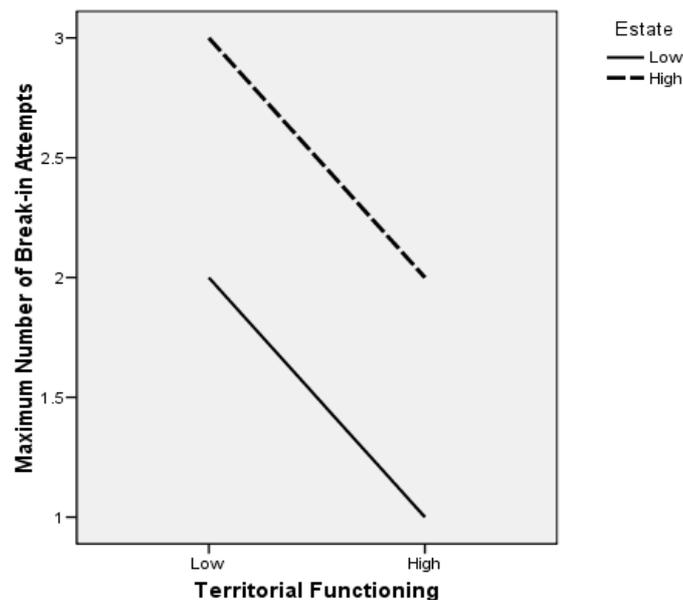


FIGURE II: The impact of territorial functioning and trespasses: Low vs. high crime estate

VIII. CONCLUSION

To conclude, this research is about territorial functioning as a crime prevention tool to reduce burglary. There are 2 important 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).

Therefore, this research will formulate the territorial functioning theory, validate and prove the effectiveness in order to be used as crime prevention tool in reducing burglary in the housing area. This research will give the value added in term of reducing burglary dimension by taking into the consideration of the type of territorial functioning that exist in housing areas which use gated community, non-gated community and neighborhood watch concept.

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