

**CRIME TRENDS  
IN  
ASIA AND THE PACIFIC**

The Fourth United Nations Survey

Canberra

Tokyo

# **CRIME TRENDS IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC**

**The Fourth United Nations Survey**

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## Foreword

This volume represents a cooperative effort between the United Nations Asia and Far East Institute for the Prevention of Crime and Treatment of Offenders (UNAFEI) and the Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC). The report embodies the results of the analysis of the responses to the Fourth United Nations Survey of Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice in Asia and the Pacific region. Wherever available, the volume presents trend data covering all four United Nations Surveys.

Before the document was finalised, UNAFEI organised a special two-day workshop to discuss the Fourth United Nations Survey on 21 and 22 February 1994. The workshop coincided with the 96th International Seminar on the Promotion of International Cooperation in Criminal Justice Administration. The seminar was attended by 27 representatives of 22 countries from Asia and the Pacific region, Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America. Dr. Satyanshu Mukherjee, Principal Criminologist, Australian Institute of Criminology, chaired and conducted the workshop.

Unlike the report on the Third United Nations Survey (1990), this volume does not include country profiles. UNAFEI, recognising the importance of country profiles on criminal justice, decided to publish a separate volume. It hopes to distribute the two volumes together at the Ninth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and Treatment of Offenders, to be held in April 1995.

We wish to express our sincere appreciation to the UNAFEI faculty, particularly Professor Tatsuya Inagawa, who has helped in the preparation of this report. We also appreciate the editorial assistance provided by Ms. Angela Grant of AIC. Dr. Mukherjee and Ms. Dagger have produced a fine report and we acknowledge their efforts.

We hope this volume will be useful not only to the countries of the region but to the entire United Nations community.

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United Nations  
Asia and Far East Institute

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Director  
Australian Institute of Criminology

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# CRIME TRENDS IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

The Fourth United Nations Survey

Satyanshu Mukherjee and Dianne Dagger

## 1. Introduction and Background

The post second World war 'crime wave' in many Western nations became apparent in the late 1950s and ever since governments have been concerned about its impact on the well-being of citizens. More and more countries find themselves in situations where scarce resources, which otherwise could have been devoted to improving the quality of life of their citizens, are being required to deal with increasing crime. The United Nations has been in the forefront of agencies encouraging debates on the effects of increasing crime and measures taken by member countries to cope with the issue. As early as 1948, the work program of the then social defence section of the United Nations included a significant amount of emphasis on controlling crime and dealing with juvenile delinquency.<sup>1</sup> The World organization also believed that effective response to crime can only be developed through research and information on the levels and nature of crime. Since 1955 the United Nations have held eight quinquennial Congresses. Ever since the First United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders held in Geneva in 1955 the United Nations have repeatedly stressed the need for research and statistical information on crime, criminals and criminal justice. The First Congress concluded that:

Efforts to prevent juvenile delinquency should become more effective and economical as more accurate knowledge is available. Research should be directed both to the identification of measures that are currently employed in the effort to prevent juvenile delinquency and to objective and critical evaluation of the effectiveness of such measures. Comparative, co-ordinated and interdisciplinary research should be carried out to determine the relative effects of programmes in different countries. Through co-operation between researchers from different countries it may be possible to develop a highly promising field of comparative criminology, based on research employing standard definitions and techniques. In this way, uniformities and differences in causal influences, in predictive factors and in results of preventive and treatment programmes can be determined and progress made toward a true science of criminology.<sup>2</sup>

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1 For an excellent history of the United Nations efforts, see E. Vetre, and G. Newman, "International Crime Statistics: An overview from a comparative perspective". *Abstract of Criminology and Penology*, Vol. 17, No. 3 May/June 1977, pp. 251-273.

2 United Nations. *First United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders*. Report prepared for the secretariat, New York 1956.



The recent impetus for collecting crime data through the surveys originated in the Fourth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders held in Kyoto in 1970. In its discussion on Social Defence Policies in Relation to Development Planning, the Congress recognized:

that one of the requirements for sound planning was accurate data; and, in that respect, mention was made of the African and Asian regional meetings, which called for more uniform crime reporting and for a more integrated system of national accounting. Not only should the statistics of crime be interrelated and reconciled, but all kinds of data be collected so that they could be of value for understanding, preventing and controlling criminal behaviour.<sup>3</sup>

Indeed the discussion at the Congress clearly indicated that among the areas in which the United Nations could most effectively help was 'the gathering of statistics and information on a uniform basis, by the use, if necessary, of sophisticated techniques.'<sup>4</sup> The need for data was recognized as part of research in social defence. While conceding that social defence planning could not be designed on a universal basis, the Congress concluded that in order to organize research

systems of criminal statistics, based on the decisions of all public agencies dealing with crime or offenders, should be established, because they are an essential source of information on which planned social action can be based;<sup>5</sup>

The conclusions of the Fourth Congress was endorsed by the General Assembly at its twenty-seventh session in 1972. The first step toward the United Nations Survey of Crime Trends was taken in 1974 when the Secretary-General sent a note to countries 'inviting them to provide information on the situation concerning crime prevention and control and the measures being taken.'<sup>6</sup> The result of this initiative was not entirely satisfactory, the number of countries responding to the Secretary-General's request was minimal. It was mid-1976 when the Secretary-General sent another request, this time enclosing a detailed questionnaire and asked for the cooperation of member states. The response to this questionnaire, symbolizing the first United Nations survey, was highly encouraging; 64 countries returned completed questionnaires and at least 50 of these provided data which could be used for quantitative analysis.

The questionnaire was extensive and it sought information on the levels and nature of crime as well as on measures to deal with crime. Data on offences and offenders

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3 United Nations. *Fourth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders*. Report prepared for the secretariat, New York 1971.

4 Ibid. p. 11

5 Ibid. p. 29

6 United Nations. *Crime Prevention and Control: Report of the Secretary-General, A/32/199*, 22 Sept. 1977, p. 5

were requested for the period 1970–75. The findings from this survey were presented to the United Nations General Assembly in the form of a report by the Secretary-General.<sup>7</sup> Considerable improvements have since been introduced into the questionnaire. The second United Nations survey covered the period 1975–80 and 70 countries responded to the questionnaire.<sup>8</sup> To match the survey data to the quinquennial Congresses the Third Survey covered the period 1980–86. It was always the intention to seek data for a year that overlapped with previous survey. Thus the Fourth Survey was to cover the period 1986–90, 95 countries responded to the Third Survey questionnaire.<sup>9</sup>

The United Nations has been mindful of the importance of these surveys and the constant need to improve the instruments of data collection. These surveys have become an integral part of the United Nations' program in the field of crime prevention. On the 19 December 1991 the United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution 46/152 'Creation of an Effective United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme'. Describing the scope of the program, the Annex to the Resolution states:

17. The programme shall include appropriate forms of cooperation for the purpose of assisting States in dealing with problems of both national and transnational crime. In particular, it may include:
  - (a) Research and studies at the national, regional and global levels on specific prevention issues and criminal justice measures;
  - (b) Regular international surveys to assess trends in crime and developments in the operation of criminal justice systems and in crime prevention strategies;<sup>10</sup>

On the recommendations of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, the Economic and Social Council adopted Resolution 1992/22 entitled 'Implementation of General Assembly resolution 46/152 concerning operational activities and coordination in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice'. In its resolution the Council emphasized the need to commit

human and financial resources necessary to strengthen the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme as a whole, so as to enable it to continue and improve the surveys, as a means of obtaining and providing an updated picture of patterns and dynamics of crime in the world, including its transnational forms; and to carry out the surveys at two-year intervals, with

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7 Ibid

8 United Nations. *Second United Nations Survey of Crime Trends, Operations of Criminal Justice Systems and Crime Prevention Strategies*: Report prepared by the Secretariat, A/CONF. 121/18, 30 May 1985

9 United Nations. *Third United Nations Survey of Crime Trends, Operations of Criminal Justice Systems and Crime Prevention Strategies*: Report prepared by the Secretariat, A/CONF. 144/6, 27 July 1990

10 United Nations, Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Newsletter, Number 20/21 June 1993, p. 17

preparation for the Fifth Survey, covering the period 1990-1992, starting at the end of 1993.<sup>11</sup>

The Fourth United Nations Survey, the subject of this paper, covered the period 1986-90. The questionnaire for this survey was significantly curtailed; most of the questions which sought descriptive information on measures to cope with crime and on effectiveness of measures, estimating future levels of crime, etc., were excluded. A report based on the analysis of the responses from all the regions of the world, is expected to be distributed at the Ninth United Nations Congress early in 1995.

## **2. Quality of Data**

Participation in the United Nations Survey has increased from 64 in the First Survey to 95 in the Third Survey. The Economic and Social Council and the United Nations Congresses have repeatedly expressed their satisfaction with the surveys and requested the Secretary-General to continue with the quinquennial surveys and thus develop the United Nations crime related database. At the same time agencies at the United Nations have been conscious of the need to improve the questionnaire so as to make it effective.

In Asia and the Pacific region a special three-day workshop (23-25 Oct. 1989) was organized by the United Nations Asia and Far East Institute to examine the United Nations survey. The workshop coincided with the Eighty-third United Nations Asia and Far East Institute International Training Course on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in the context of development. The workshop was attended by 26 representative of 16 countries from the Asia Pacific Region, Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America. The author of this paper conducted the workshop. The workshop made a series of recommendations with a view to improving the quality and utility of the survey. In particular, the workshop made a number of recommendations on the format and content of the questionnaire. The workshop also made a number of recommendations concerning distribution and follow-up of the questionnaire, and dissemination of the results of the survey. The report of the workshop together with the recommendations and results of the Third United Nations Survey were distributed at the Eighth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, held at Havana from 27 August to 7 September 1990.<sup>12</sup>

The Eighth United Nations Congress recognised the utility of these surveys and invited countries to assist in the design and development of future surveys. Following the resolution of the Eighth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Branch of the United Nations and the United Nations International Crime and Justice Research

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11 United Nations Crime Trends and Criminal Justice Operations at Regional and Interregional Levels: Results of the Third United Nations Survey of Crime Trends, Operations of Criminal Justice Systems and Crime Prevention Strategies New York, 1993, p. 13

12 For a detailed description of the workshop see United Nations Asia and Far East Institute - Australian Institute of Criminology, *Crime and Justice in Asia and the Pacific: A Report on the Third United Nations Survey of Crime Trends, Operations of Criminal Justice Systems and Crime Prevention Strategies, 1980-1986*, Tokyo - Canberra 1990.

Institute jointly convened a 'Planning meeting on the development of the United Nations Crime and Justice Information programme'. The survey questionnaire was redesigned for the Fourth United Nations survey. The questionnaire was considerably simplified and shortened, it also excluded most of the questions dealing with crime prevention and other measures dealing with crime. The redesigned questionnaire concentrates mainly on quantitative data, and appears to have included most of the recommendations made by the workshop organized by the United Nations Asia and Far East Institute in 1989. It is not yet known, however, whether modified questionnaire has made any impact in terms of higher than usual response rates or better completion rates than in the previous surveys. It was apparent from the first three surveys that participating countries were unable to supply data and information for every item in the questionnaire. In most cases comprehensive data were just not available, and in some cases definitional and classification issues were problematic. It was not possible to analyze the completed questionnaire from every country. However, the workshop in 1989 highlighted the difficulties in interpreting data and details of these can be gleaned from the report of the workshop.<sup>13</sup>

For the Fourth Survey as well, the United Nations Asia and Far East Institute convened a two-day workshop in February 1994, coinciding with the 96th International Seminar of UNAFEI on Promotion of International Cooperation in Criminal Justice Administration.

At the workshop, preliminary results of the Fourth Survey from some of the Asia Pacific countries were presented. It was apparent that the Fourth Survey questionnaire was adequate and it was possible for most countries to complete the survey. Although the participants at the workshop included very senior officers from departments or ministries concerned with law and order from various countries, they could not offer any new insights or providing clarifications. Computers are slowly entering offices in most developing countries. However processing and tabulation of criminal justice statistics has not at this stage significantly improved.

It is unfortunate that only a few countries participated in all four United Nations surveys. It is therefore difficult to gauge improvements in the quality of information for a representative number of countries. The workshop report, referred to above, highlighted a number of inconsistencies in the data. The Fourth Survey data from some of the countries showed some clear signs of improvement. These, however, deserve careful scrutiny because of major differences in counting rules making comparisons over time and across countries difficult.

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13 Ibid

### 3. Comparability of Data

The Fourth United Nations Survey data presented in this section relate to 1986-90 and, wherever available, longer term trend data covering previous surveys have been shown. Also, tables and charts show data from a number of countries in the Asia and Pacific region. This method is used solely to be concise and avoid repetition; there is no intention to compare levels and nature of crime between countries. At this point it is important to highlight reasons as to why the data presented in this paper from various countries cannot be compared. However, the data are valuable and enable comparison within a country over time. Comparison between countries is not an objective of the United Nations Survey. The introduction to the Fourth Survey questionnaire clearly states the objectives of the survey as:

- (i) to determine which data are generally available in national data bases, and
- (ii) to serve as an instrument for strengthening cooperation among member states by setting the review and analysis of national crime-related data in a broader context.<sup>14</sup>

Tables and charts presented in this section show the number as well as volume of crimes and these vary significantly between countries. When data from a number of countries are presented side by side in a table or chart it is often hard to resist the tendency to compare. One can only issue cautions against comparison. In his report to the General Assembly on the First Survey the Secretary-General made a very strong plea against comparison:

not all parts of the world document crime events adequately and, even where they try to do so, lack of uniformity in legal systems, in statistical classifications and recording procedures, in police methods or geographical spread may render comparison misleading - so misleading, in fact, that the countries keeping the most careful records are likely to be regarded as having the most criminality when, in fact, they may be doing more to detect and record crime than many others.<sup>15</sup>

These limitations still persist. The reports of all the previous three surveys explain in detail the difficulties in cross-national comparison.<sup>16</sup> It is sufficient, therefore, if the factors which influence the level and nature of officially recorded crimes are just listed:

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14 Questionnaire: *Fourth United Nations Survey*, p. 6

15 Op cit. p. 7

16 See United Nations *Crime Prevention and Control: Report of the Secretary General*, A/32/199, 22 Sept. 1977; *Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in the context of Development: Realities and Perspectives of International Cooperation*. A/CONF. 144/6, 27 July 1991; *New Dimensions of Criminality and Crime Prevention in the context of Development: Second United Nations Survey of Crime Trends....* A/CONF. 121/18, 30 May 1985

- classification and counting rules used
- victims' attitudes to reporting crime
- mechanisms for reporting crime
- citizens' confidence in the police
- level of technology in a country
- definitions of crime
- law enforcement practices and discretionary powers
- standards of services available.
- coordination between subsectors of the system
- legal structure
- resources allocated to different agencies
- social, economic, and administrative structure
- general level of health, education, technology, etc.<sup>17</sup>

Each of the above difficulties can be supported by examples from different countries, but that will expand the length of this volume substantially. However, in order to readily appreciate such difficulties, one or two examples are presented. Table 1 presents data on the number of offences reported to the police, number of offenders arrested, and the offence to offender ratio for assault, robbery and theft for 1990. There are a number of patterns discernible in the data. Let us consider the possible meanings of 'offences reported' and 'offenders'. Offences reported may mean:

**Table 1**  
**Number of Offences Reported, Number of Offenders**  
**and Offence to Offender Ratio, 1990**

	Offence	Assault Offender	Ratio	Offence	Robbery Offender	Ratio	Offence	Theft Offender	Ratio
Hong Kong	7,537	4,913	1:0.7	8,029	2,247	1:0.3	32,008	11,516	1:0.4
Japan	26,609	32,002	1:1.2	1,653	1,582	1:1.0	1,216,214	156,752	1:0.1
South Korea	4,734	5,783	1:1.2	4,760	5,568	1:1.2	78,431	21,283	1:0.3
Malaysia	2,583	1,477	1:0.6	5,817	904	1:0.2	40,503	6,838	1:0.2
Maldives	474	474	1:1.0	28	28	1:1.0	1,676	1,676	1:1.0
Nepal	1,141	1,140	1:1.0	183	614	1:3.4	733	670	1:0.9
Philippines	25,389	25,389	1:1.0	15,545	15,545	1:1.0	27,977	27,977	1:1.0
Singapore	923	461	1:0.5	1,577	493	1:0.3	28,211	5,786	1:0.2
Sri Lanka	15,093	9,789	1:0.6	5,702	5,323	1:0.9	13,177	9,283	1:0.7
Thailand	21,752	21,752	1:1.0	3,396	3,396	1:1.0	33,698	33,698	1:1.0
Tonga	433	269	1:0.6	3	3	1:1.0	722	294	1:0.4

- each and every incident reported or becoming known to the police or
- the offences which the police decide to record or
- offences which following investigation, the police find authentic or
- offences that are cleared by the arrest of one or more persons

<sup>17</sup> For details see Crime and Justice in Asia and the Pacific, 1990

Similarly, offenders may mean:

- distinct individuals arrested by the police or
- number of arrests made, i.e. one individual arrested several times and counted each time arrested or
- number of offenders counted as one for each offence, etc.

Looking at the assault data we observe that Japan and South Korea have more offenders than offences. Maldives, the Philippines and Thailand have exactly the same number of offenders as offences, and the remaining countries have fewer offenders than offences. It would appear that this situation emerges because of differences in counting and classification rules. But the situation is complicated when we observe that in Maldives, the Philippines and Thailand there are exactly the same number of offenders as offences in each offence category of assault, robbery and theft. The data in the table 1 raise a number of questions and we believe they relate to classification and counting rules. For instance, is it possible that all the offences recorded by the police in Maldives, the Philippines and Thailand are cleared and only one offender is arrested for each offence or only the offences that are cleared by the arrests of individuals are recorded? Particularly in the Philippines and Thailand the authorities must use a very specific method of counting offences and offenders. Over the years the authors have examined crime data from a number of countries. It is difficult to reconcile that in the Philippines each of the 27,977 thefts involved only one offender or in Thailand each of the 33,698 thefts was committed by a single offender. This is just one difficulty which makes comparisons problematic.

#### **4. Changes in Recorded Crime, 1975 – 1990**

So far the United Nations crime surveys have been able to gather data on crimes recorded by the police for the past 16 years. Although the number of countries responding to the United Nations Survey has increased consistently, almost 100 countries responding to the Fourth Survey, only about 35 countries have completed the questionnaire for all the four surveys.

The United Nations, in its various publications have observed that globally there have been consistent increases in recorded crime. In a report on the Third Survey it is stated that

Over the past 10 years there has been a considerable increase in crime in most parts of the world. The total amount of reported crime has been growing on a worldwide average of 5 per cent every year, well beyond a rise attributable to population growth. At this rate, crime is rapidly outstripping the capacity of many governments to keep pace with it and has already outpaced their capacity to reduce it.<sup>18</sup>

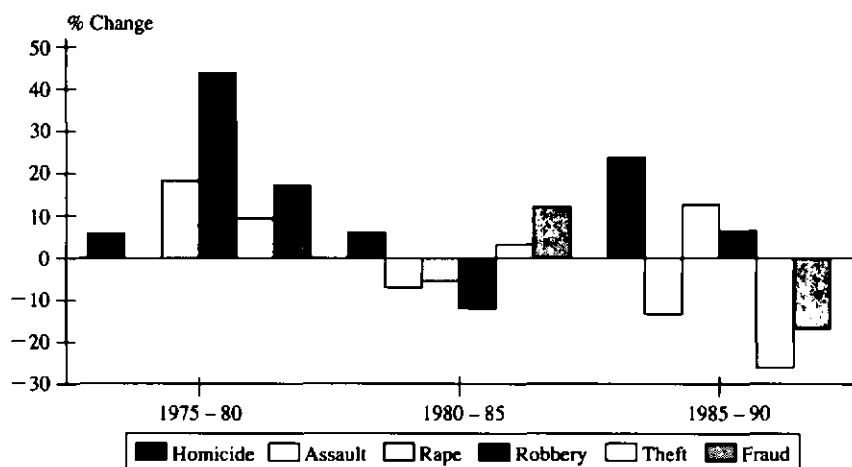
The United Nations report on the Third Survey describes trends in total crime rates. Data from the Asia and Pacific region, particularly for specific crimes, do not

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18 United Nations, 1993, Op cit. p. 4

present such a unidimensional trend. Figures 1 to 3 show increases or decreases in crime rates per 100,000 population by type of crime, in the period 1975 – 1990. For the Asia and the Pacific region as a whole (includes 13 countries for which data were available), we do not obtain a consistent pattern of increase or decrease in crime rate. Between 1975 and 1980 recorded rates of all the six crime categories increased and in particular the robbery rate increased by over 43 per cent. Between 1980 and 1985, an entirely different picture emerges; rates of assault, rape, and robbery declined and the other three offences showed only modest increases. The change between 1985 and 1990 is characterised by a significant increase in the rate of homicides; there were substantial declines in the rates of theft, fraud and assault. In fact, homicide is the only offence that increased during all the three time periods (*see* Figure 1). Between the First and the Second Surveys homicide rates increased by an average of 1 per cent per year; a similar increase occurred between the Second and Third Surveys. But between 1985 and 1990 the average annual rate of increase in homicides was 4.6 per cent (the homicide data in detail in a subsequent section).

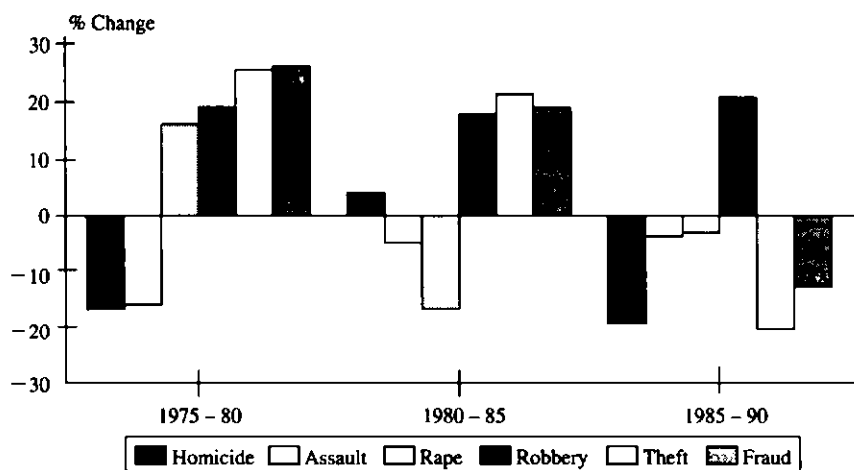
**Figure 1**  
**Asia & The Pacific (13 Countries) Offences Reported**  
**to Police, Percentage Change**



	% Change		
	1975 - 80	1980 - 85	1985 - 90
Homicide	5.04	5.59	23.68
Assault		-6.53	-12.57
Rape	17.54	-4.76	12.63
Robbery	43.29	-11.46	6.87
Theft	9.08	2.76	-24.65
Fraud	16.41	11.85	-15.58

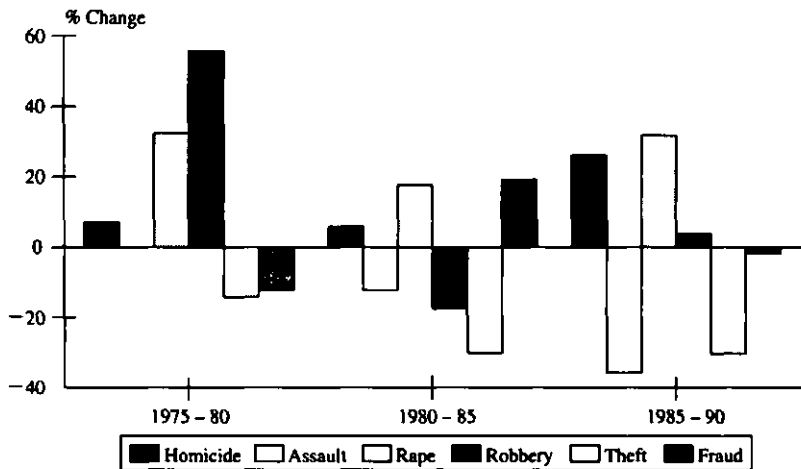


**Figure 2**  
**Asia & The Pacific - Well Off Countries**  
**Offences Reported to Police, Percentage Change**



	% Change		
	1975 - 80	1980 - 85	1985 - 90
Homicide	-16.37	3.70	-18.80
Assault	-15.80	-4.45	-3.53
Rape	15.29	-16.23	-2.94
Robbery	18.53	17.32	20.50
Theft	24.83	21.06	-19.78
Fraud	25.81	18.73	-12.08

**Figure 3**  
**Asia & The Pacific - Less Well Off Countries**  
**Offences Reported to Police Percentage Change**



	% Change		
	1975 - 80	1980 - 85	1985 - 90
Homicide	7.05	5.03	26.23
Assault	32.09	-12.97	-34.78
Rape	32.09	17.50	31.23
Robbery	54.34	-17.94	3.29
Theft	-13.64	-30.23	-30.10
Fraud	-12.12	18.81	-1.84

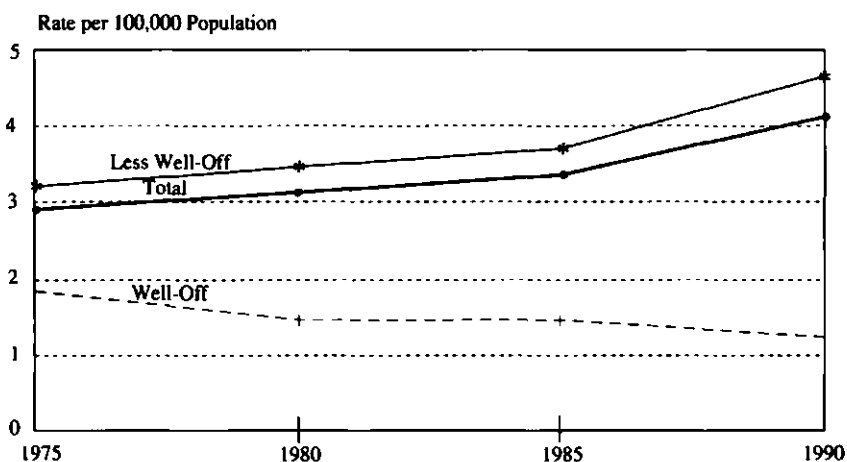
When the data for well off and less well off countries in the Asia and Pacific region are separated some interesting results emerge. For the well off countries the only offence which showed a consistent and robust increase between 1975 and 1990 was robbery (see Figure 2). During the three time periods, 1975-80, 1980-85 and 1985-90, the rate of robbery increased by 18.53, 17.32 and 20.50 per cent respectively, i.e. an average annual increase of between 3.5 and 4 per cent. The most noticeable result for the well off countries was a significant decrease in the homicide rates, during the first and third time periods, but showing a small increase during the second time period. Also worth noting is the fact that the rate of assault declined during all the three time periods. Another welcome feature of the data is that between 1985 and 1990 rates of most offences declined, robbery was the only exception.

For the less well off countries, the rates for two of the most violent offences, homicide and rape, increased sharply between 1985 and 1990. The rates for these two offences increased by 26.23 and 31.23 per cent respectively; that reflects an average annual increase of over 5 and 6 per cent respectively. For the less well off countries, the rate of theft declined substantially, and as numerically theft was the most frequent offence, this may have dampened the overall crime rates of countries.

## 5. Violence in Asia and the Pacific

Scholars, researchers and policy makers tend to agree that a true measure of violence in a society is the level of homicide. The definition of homicide across nations is not likely to differ as much as the definitions of other offences like rape, robbery, burglary, theft, etc. However, factors such as availability of speedy and up-to-date emergency and medical services may affect the level of homicides. For instance, there are countries where a large majority of homicides are committed by the help of weapons other than firearms, but because of lack of adequate and speedy medical assistance many victims, who otherwise would have survived, die. Another factor worth noting is the issue of politically motivated violence which results in many deaths and which are counted in a variety of ways. With these caveats, we present the homicide rates for the region in Figure 4 for the period 1975 to 1990.

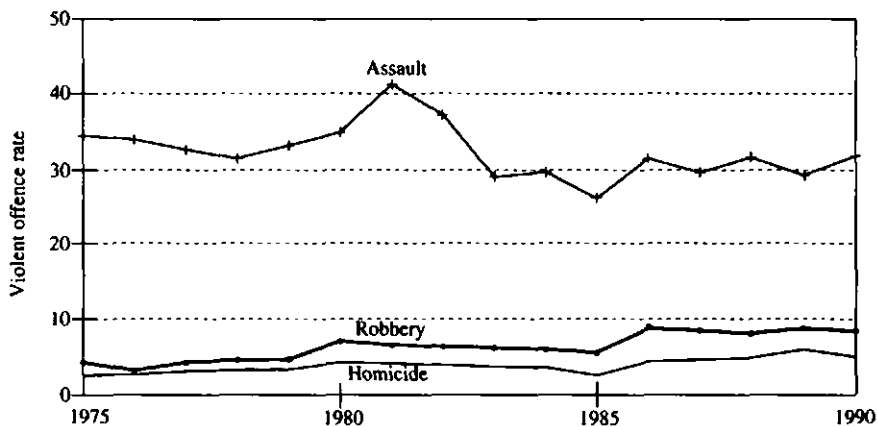
**Figure 4**  
**Asia & The Pacific (13 Countries) Homicide Offences**  
**Reported to Police Well-Off and Less Well-Off Countries**



In section 4 it was indicated that the rates of homicides increased over the four Surveys in some countries. Data in Figure 4 appear to show that the homicide trend for the Asia Pacific region is set by the trend in less well off countries. In reality the homicide rate in less well off countries of the region has increased by about 50 per cent over the period 1975 - 90; the rate in well off countries has decreased by about 25 per cent.

The trend in robbery for Asia and the Pacific is similar to that for intentional homicide, including even the periodic fluctuations (*see* Figure 5). Trend data for assault indicate a stable rate particularly since 1983. Unlike the homicide and robbery data, assault rate in the region began to decline after 1982 and in the rest of the 1980s these rates have been lower than those in the 1970s. Thus, the numerically most frequent violent offence e.g. assault, has kept the total violent crimes under control.

**Figure 5**  
**Asia and the Pacific Total Crime Rate per 100,000 Population**  
**Homicide, Assault, Robbery, 1975 to 1990**



## 6. Results of the Fourth Survey

### *Offences Recorded*

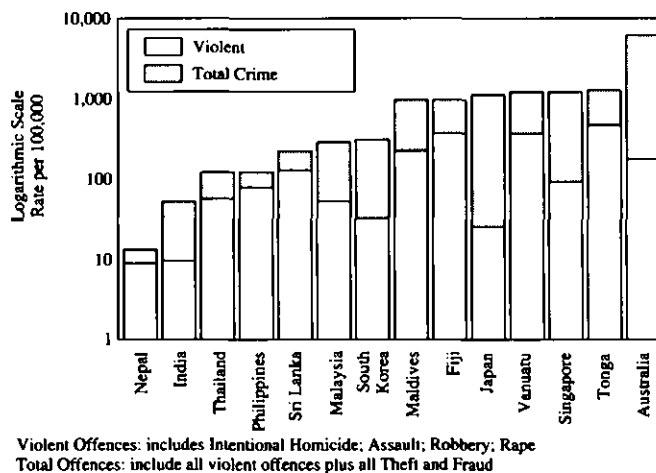
Data on overall trends in crime for the region have been described in the previous sections. In this section we describe in detail the results of the Fourth Survey for each of the 16 countries in the region which responded to the Fourth United Nations Survey. Considering the inadequacies in data supplied by various countries only the following offences have been selected for analysis and these will be presented with the help of charts and tables: intentional homicide; assault; robbery; rape; theft; fraud.

The first four crimes listed above are generally placed under the category of violent crimes and the last two under property crimes. It should be noted that the crime defined as theft for the United Nations Survey includes all such crimes as larceny, stealing, burglary, motor vehicle theft, etc. Before describing the trends in specific crime it would be interesting to examine what crime problem, violence or property loss/damage, besets the countries of the region. In the industrialised world, although the overall recorded crime rate is generally higher than that in the developing countries, violent crimes constitute a small proportion, usually no more than 5 per cent of the total crime. An attempt is made here to examine the situation of 14 countries in the region for which data were available.

Figure 6 presents data on violent and total crime rates for 1990. Because of mammoth differences in crime rates between countries, data needed to be presented carefully. Consider for example the total crime rate of Nepal, 13.46 per 100,000 population, and of Australia, 6389.91, about 475 times that of Nepal. If the data were to be presented in standard bar charts showing violent crime as a proportion of total crime that would have misled the reader. It would have offered an understanding of

the component of violent crimes without offering the true magnitude of overall crimes. It was, therefore, decided to use a logarithmic scale.

**Figure 6**  
**Total Crime & Violent Crime**  
**Rate Per 100,000 Population, 1990**



The data in Figure 6 show, for example, that the total crime rate of Maldives in 1990 was slightly over 1,000 per 100,000 population and the violent crime rate was about 230. Similarly, for Australia the total crime rate was over 6,300 per 100,000 population and the violent crime rate was about 176; and for Japan the total crime rate was about 1,200 per 100,000 population but the violent crime rate was only about 25. Each bar, therefore, presents violent crime rate in relation to total crime rate. As far as violent crime as a proportion of total crime the data in the following table is revealing:

Country	Proportion Violent	Country	Proportion Violent
Nepal	70.3	India	17.8
Thailand	47.2	Philippines	65.0
Sri Lanka	59.2	Malaysia	18.0
South Korea	10.5	Maldives	23.1
Fiji	37.3	Japan	2.1
Vanuatu	31.4	Singapore	8.0
Tonga	36.7	Australia	2.7

The data read in conjunction with Figure 6 provide some interesting insights. Countries can be divided into four categories in terms of overall crime rate. Australia has to be in the 'very high' category; Fiji, Maldives, Japan, Vanuatu, Singapore and Tonga will be in 'high' category (their overall crime rate is above 1,000 per 100,000 population); Thailand, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, and South Korea fall in the 'low' category; and Nepal and India easily fall into the 'very low' category. Three of the four highly industrialised countries (Japan, Australia and Singapore) in

the region have a high or very high level of crime but a relatively low level of violence; the remaining industrialised country, South Korea, has a low level of crime and a low level of violence. Of the five countries with low crime rates three, Thailand, Sri Lanka and the Philippines, have high levels of violence. The conclusion that can be drawn from the above is that industrialised countries record relatively high levels of crime but an overwhelming majority of these are property related crimes and vice-versa. In order to examine the trade off value, a high level of overall crime and low violence vs low overall crime and high violence, one needs further data and work, but it remains an intriguing problem. This type of information can be of particular use to the policy makers. A detailed study of patterns of violence in less industrialised nations can provide valuable information for planning violence reduction. As industrialisation of the country proceeds the policy makers and planners might also keep in mind the characteristics of communities that have preserved low overall crime rate. With these comments we now turn to specific crimes.

*Intentional homicide:* Tables 2a and 2b present data on the number of intentional homicides recorded by the police and rates per 100,000 population in the countries of the region. The differences in the rates of intentional homicides are striking. These rates vary between a low of less than one per 100,000 population to a high of 48.36. Within certain countries the rate shows some unusual fluctuations. In Sri Lanka for example, the intentional homicide rate jumped from 12.21 in 1987 to 25.16 in 1988 and to 48.36 in 1989 before plunging to 11.68. Such escalation in rates is difficult to explain; one can only speculate its reasons. In 1990, Maldives recorded the lowest and the Philippines the highest homicide rates (see Figure 7).

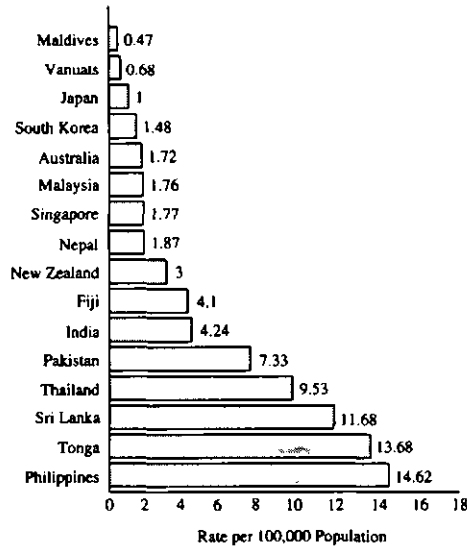
**Table 2a**  
**Number of Reported Crimes**  
**Intentional Homicide 1986 to 1990**

	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990
Australia	308	283	319	284	293
Fiji	19	22	31	12	30
India	27,269	28,513	28,771	31,222	35,045
Japan	1,676	1,584	1,441	1,308	1,238
South Korea	565	562	539	540	633
Malaysia	386	362	346	322	313
Maldives	4	6	3	5	1
Nepal	341	358	381	354	354
New Zealand	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Pakistan	6,153	6,404	6,925	7,427	8,209
Philippines	8,135	9,421	9,391	9,996	8,986
Singapore	71	54	57	71	48
Sri Lanka	1,617	1,997	4,173	8,127	1,985
Thailand	6,444	6,032	4,121	5,740	5,344
Tonga	12	10	10	13	13
Vanuatu	n/a	1	1	2	1

**Table 2b**  
**Rate Per 100 000 Population — Crimes Reported**  
**Intentional Homicide 1986 to 1990**

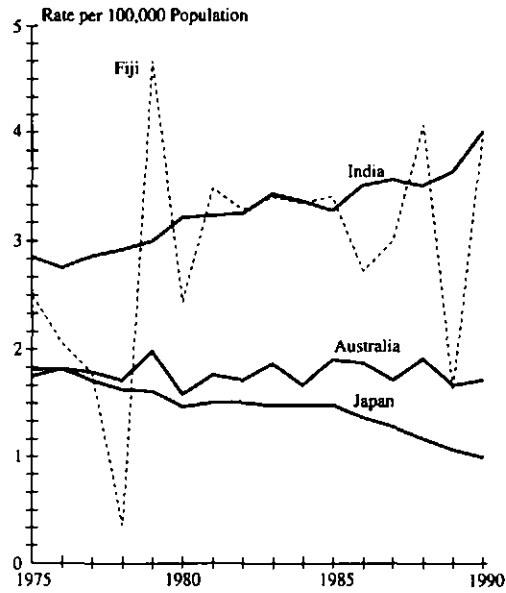
	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990
Australia	1.90	1.74	1.93	1.69	1.72
Fiji	2.66	3.05	4.19	1.60	4.10
India	3.56	3.65	3.61	3.85	4.24
Japan	1.38	1.30	1.18	1.06	1.00
South Korea	1.36	1.35	1.28	1.27	1.48
Malaysia	2.40	2.19	2.04	1.86	1.76
Maldives	2.11	3.08	1.50	2.43	0.47
Nepal	1.99	2.04	2.12	1.92	1.87
New Zealand	2.50	2.60	2.50	2.90	3.00
Pakistan	6.20	6.26	6.57	6.83	7.33
Philippines	14.25	16.43	15.99	16.63	14.62
Singapore	2.73	2.07	2.15	2.64	1.77
Sri Lanka	10.04	12.21	25.16	48.36	11.68
Thailand	12.27	11.29	7.59	10.40	9.53
Tonga	12.53	10.46	10.48	13.64	13.68
Vanuatu	n/a	0.69	0.67	1.29	0.68

**Figure 7**  
**Intentional Homicide 1990**

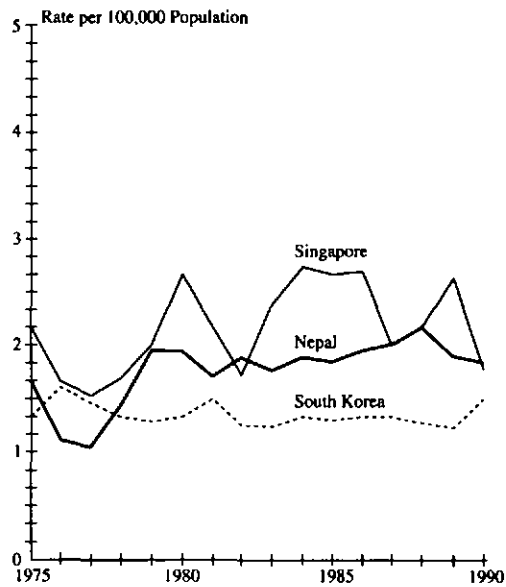


Finally, the long term trend of intentional homicides is presented in Figures 8a and 8b. Data from only six countries were available for the entire period 1975–1990 and these produce some clear patterns. During the 16 year period the intentional homicide rate in Japan has halved; in Australia, Singapore, Nepal and South Korea the rate has remained fairly constant; and in India the rate has increased by approximately 50 per cent.

**Figure 8a**  
**Intentional Homicide, 1975 to 1990**  
**Crimes Recorded, Rate Per 100,000 Population**



**Figure 8b**  
**Intentional Homicide, 1975 to 1990**  
**Crimes Recorded, Rate Per 100,000 Population**





*Assault:* Tables 3a and 3b provide data for the number and rate of assaults recorded by the police. As in the case of intentional homicides, the volume of assaults in the region varies a great deal. Nepal records the lowest rate of assaults and Tonga the highest. Within the region, all the possible trends can be observed in the data, some countries show a rising trend in assaults, others show a stable pattern, and still others record a declining trend. Figure 9 presents a quick glimpse at the assault rates in 1990.

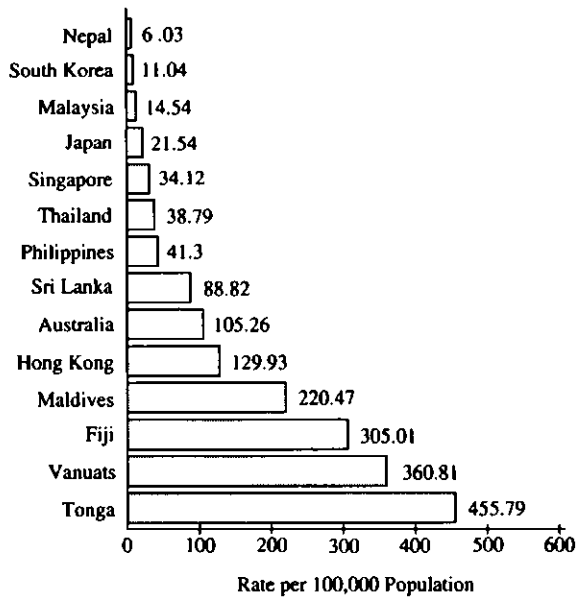
**Table 3a**  
**Number of Reported Crimes**  
**Assault 1986 to 1990**

	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990
Australia	11,095	12,698	14,768	16,910	17,963
Fiji	2,512	2,239	2,210	2,123	2,234
Hong Kong	6,166	6,890	6,855	7,793	7,537
Japan	31,795	30,836	31,323	27,823	26,609
South Korea	4,979	5,290	5,126	4,896	4,734
Malaysia	2,617	2,647	2,616	2,475	2,583
Maldives	436	510	526	474	474
Nepal	452	525	553	527	1,141
Philippines	18,708	22,860	25,845	25,589	25,389
Singapore	751	769	1,002	917	923
Sri Lanka	20,328	19,742	19,027	12,617	15,093
Thailand	9,657	10,387	12,441	12,634	21,752
Tonga	471	506	465	420	433

**Table 3b**  
**Rate Per 100,000 Population — Crimes Reported**  
**Assault 1986 to 1990**

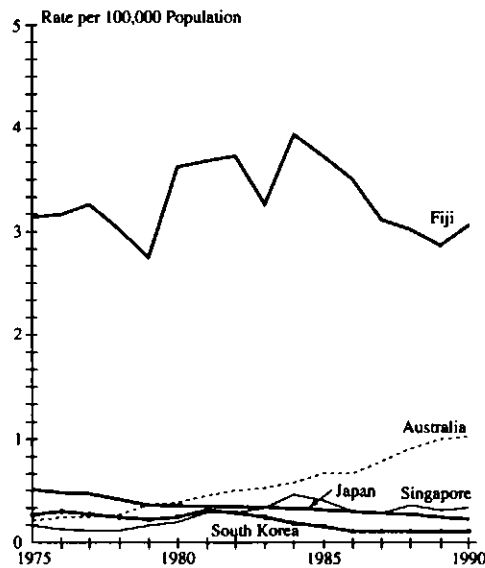
	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990
Australia	68.28	78.07	89.33	100.57	105.26
Fiji	351.33	310.54	299.05	282.31	305.61
Hong Kong	111.45	122.74	120.66	135.26	129.93
Japan	26.17	25.26	25.55	22.60	21.54
South Korea	12.00	12.72	12.21	11.55	11.04
Malaysia	16.25	16.02	15.44	14.26	14.54
Maldives	230.20	261.40	263.00	230.10	220.47
Nepal	2.64	2.99	3.07	2.86	6.03
Philippines	32.76	39.86	44.01	42.58	41.30
Singapore	28.88	29.43	37.85	34.15	34.12
Sri Lanka	126.26	120.66	114.72	75.07	88.82
Thailand	18.39	19.44	22.90	22.88	38.79
Tonga	491.65	529.29	487.43	440.71	455.79
Vanuatu	n/a	313.36	329.24	320.05	360.81

**Figure 9**  
**Assault 1990**



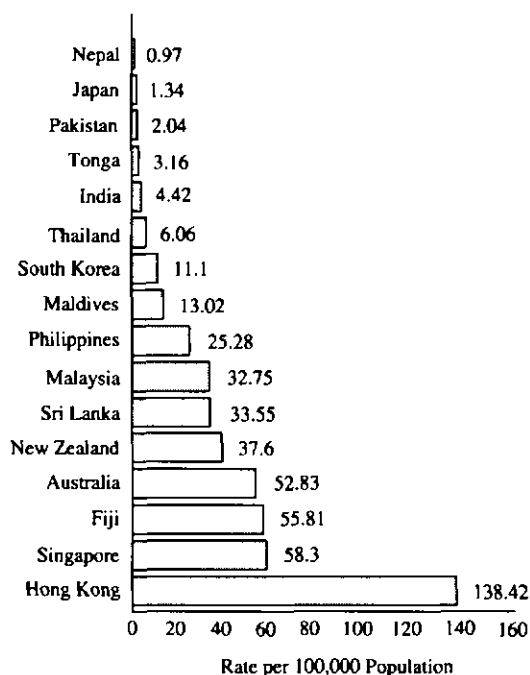
Long term trends for the five countries shown in Figure 10 present an interesting pattern. The volume of assaults in Japan and South Korea is definitely on the decline while in Australia it continues to escalate.

**Figure 10**  
**Assault, 1975 to 1990**  
**Crimes Recorded, Rate Per 100,000 Population**



*Robbery:* This is one of the most feared street offences and particularly in the Western countries robberies have been increasing. In the Asia and Pacific region most of the countries show a relatively stable trend in robberies. For the year 1990 the rates of robbery in the region varied between 0.97 per 100,000 population in Nepal and 138.42 in Hong Kong (see Figure 11). With one or two exceptions, robbery rates appear to be higher in relatively well off countries than in less well off nations.

**Figure 11**  
**Robbery 1990**



Data for the Fourth Survey, as shown in Tables 4a and 4b, indicate very few unusual fluctuations. Malaysia and Tonga show declining rates during the survey period.

**Table 4a**  
**Number of Reported Crimes**  
**Robbery 1986 to 1990**

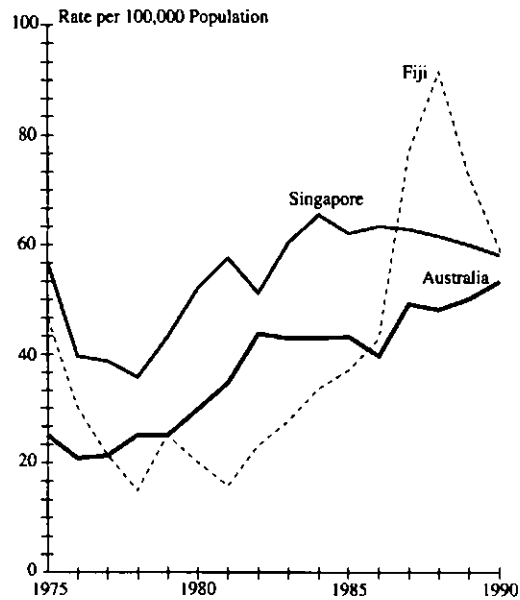
	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990
Australia	6,585	7,967	7,985	8,463	9,015
Fiji	310	542	679	542	408
Hong Kong	5,372	5,461	5,705	6,452	8,029
India	32,839	32,953	30,717	32,376	36,529
Japan	1,949	1,874	1,771	1,586	1,653
South Korea	2,983	3,274	3,765	4,403	4,760
Malaysia	9,070	7,607	6,798	5,473	5,817
Maldives	10	19	14	23	28
Nepal	120	117	110	151	183
Pakistan	1,588	1,493	1,712	2,012	2,288
Philippines	17,051	18,062	16,456	17,695	15,545
Singapore	1,676	1,681	1,674	1,622	1,577
Sri Lanka	5,254	5,380	6,680	12,285	5,702
Thailand	4,786	4,304	4,137	3,925	3,396
Tonga	6	3	3	2	3

**Table 4b**  
**Rate Per 100,000 Population — Crimes Reported**  
**Robbery 1986 to 1990**

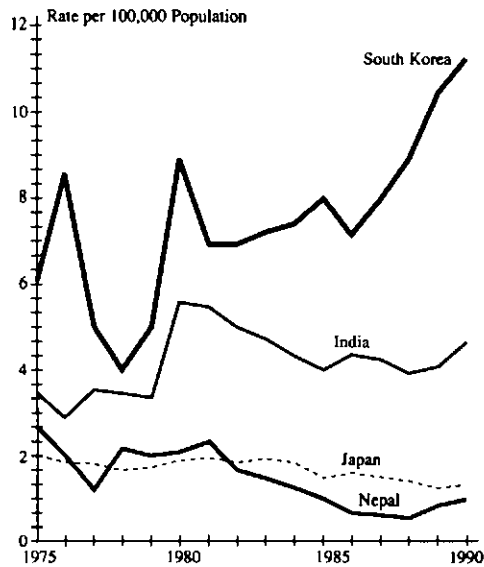
	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990
Australia	40.53	48.99	48.30	50.33	52.83
Fiji	43.36	74.17	91.88	72.07	55.81
Hong Kong	97.10	97.29	100.42	111.99	138.42
India	4.29	4.22	3.86	3.99	4.42
Japan	1.60	1.53	1.44	1.29	1.34
South Korea	7.19	7.87	8.97	10.39	11.10
Malaysia	56.30	46.03	40.13	31.54	32.75
Maldives	5.28	9.74	7.00	11.17	13.02
Nepal	0.70	0.67	0.61	0.82	0.97
New Zealand	40.70	40.50	40.40	42.60	37.60
Pakistan	1.60	1.46	1.62	1.85	2.04
Philippines	29.86	31.49	28.02	29.44	25.28
Singapore	64.46	64.34	63.24	60.40	58.30
Sri Lanka	32.63	32.88	40.27	73.10	33.55
Thailand	9.11	8.06	7.62	7.11	6.06
Tonga	6.26	3.14	3.14	2.10	3.16

Long-term trends, covering the four surveys, however, show a very different pattern. In Singapore, Australia and South Korea, the level of robberies has increased, whereas in Japan and Nepal it has decreased (*see* Figures 12a and 12b). Also, the robbery rates in Japan, Nepal and India have continued to remain very low.

**Figure 12a**  
**Robbery, 1975 to 1990**  
**Crimes Recorded, Rate Per 100,000 Population**



**Figure 12b**  
**Robbery, 1975 to 1990**  
**Crimes Recorded, Rate Per 100,000 Population**



*Please note different Y Axis scale values for Figures 12a and 12b*

**Please note different Y Axis scale values for  
 Figures 12a and 12b**

*Rape:* Although the United Nations Survey defines rape in a way that tries to obtain uniform statistics from various countries, in legal terms the situation is not quite so simple. A number of countries in the World have abolished the offence of rape and in its place the criminal laws now include the offence of sexual assault of different degrees. In the Asia and Pacific region at least Australia and New Zealand are the countries which have repealed their rape laws. The data for the Fourth Survey (see Tables 5a and 5b) show a generally stable rate of rape in the region.

**Table 5a**  
**Number of Reported Crimes**  
**Rape 1986 to 1990**

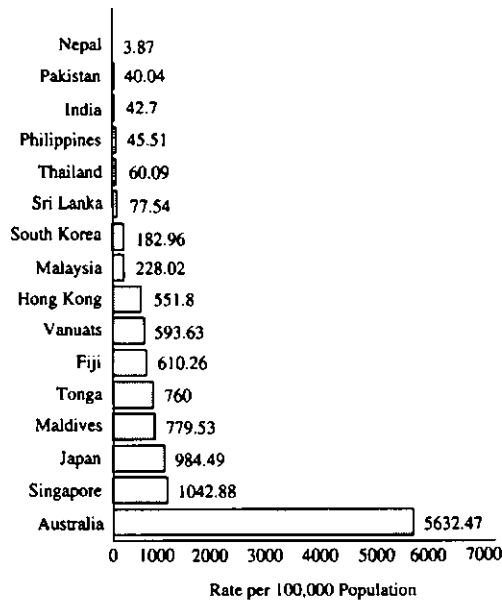
	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990
Australia	2,104	2,278	2,561	2,822	2,806
Fiji	53	80	102	89	98
Hong Kong	72	66	97	120	111
India	7,952	8,559	9,099	9,752	10,068
Japan	1,750	1,823	1,741	1,556	1,548
South Korea	3,909	3,667	3,510	3,726	4,247
Malaysia	688	668	611	576	638
Maldives	3	2	1	3	2
Nepal	71	68	75	67	112
Pakistan	1,564	2,624	1,723	1,661	1,367
Philippines	916	1,046	1,142	1,479	1,814
Singapore	111	99	96	100	111
Sri Lanka	274	277	291	373	369
Thailand	2,661	2,549	2,724	2,621	2,514
Tonga	17	8	6	5	11
Vanuatu	n/a	17	18	29	30

**Table 5b**  
**Rate Per 100,000 Population — Crimes Reported**  
**Rape 1986 to 1990**

	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990
Australia	12.95	14.01	15.49	16.78	16.44
Fiji	7.41	11.10	13.80	11.84	13.41
Hong Kong	1.30	1.18	1.71	2.08	1.91
India	1.04	1.10	1.14	1.20	1.22
Japan	1.44	1.49	1.42	1.26	1.25
South Korea	9.42	8.82	8.36	8.79	9.91
Malaysia	4.27	4.04	3.61	3.32	3.59
Maldives	1.58	1.03	0.50	1.46	0.93
Nepal	0.41	0.39	0.42	0.36	0.59
Pakistan	1.58	1.59	1.63	1.53	1.22
Philippines	1.60	1.82	1.94	2.46	2.95
Singapore	4.27	3.79	3.63	3.72	4.10
Sri Lanka	1.70	1.69	1.75	2.22	2.17
Thailand	5.07	4.77	5.01	4.75	4.48
Tonga	17.75	8.37	6.29	5.25	11.58
Vanuatu	n/a	11.73	12.02	18.75	20.42

*Theft:* The rates of theft show vast differences across countries. Thus in 1990 the rates varied between a low of 3.87 in Nepal and a high of 5,632.47 per 100,000 population in Australia (see Figure 13). In countries with well developed economies like Australia, Japan and Singapore, theft constitutes an overwhelming majority of total offences. Of the total of six offences described in this section, theft accounts for 82.5 per cent in Australia, 82.4 per cent in Japan, and 84.4 in Singapore.

**Figure 13**  
**Theft 1990**



Statistics for the Fourth Survey period, as presented in Tables 6a and 6b, show substantial stability. However, the long-term trend shows some unusual movements in recorded thefts in Australia and South Korea (see Figures 14a and 14b), whereas in India there is a noticeably declining trend.

**Table 6a**  
**Number of Reported Crimes**  
**Theft 1986 to 1990**

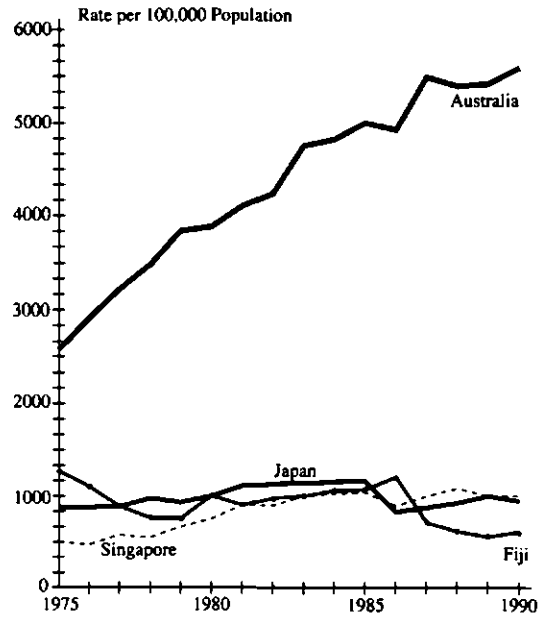
	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990
Australia	796,806	892,483	890,364	910,981	961,188
Fiji	8,500	5,109	4,557	4,420	4,461
Hong Kong	32,221	32,748	29,646	29,614	32,008
India	323,533	310,575	319,848	341,240	353,191
Japan	1,078,319	1,086,060	1,162,789	1,248,511	1,216,214
South Korea	77,297	74,471	73,826	86,492	78,431
Malaysia	56,770	51,724	48,294	39,636	40,503
Maldives	1,782	1,512	1,950	1,449	1,676
Nepal	610	657	590	602	733
Pakistan	34,197	31,175	35,968	41,773	44,863
Philippines	28,183	31,077	28,852	30,244	27,977
Singapore	25,165	26,679	28,256	27,052	28,211
Sri Lanka	14,955	14,217	13,152	11,414	13,177
Thailand	33,284	35,876	43,750	37,840	33,698
Tonga	1,115	1,004	895	660	722
Vanuatu	n/a	595	723	899	872

**Table 6b**  
**Rate Per 100,000 Population — Crimes Reported**  
**Theft 1986 to 1990**

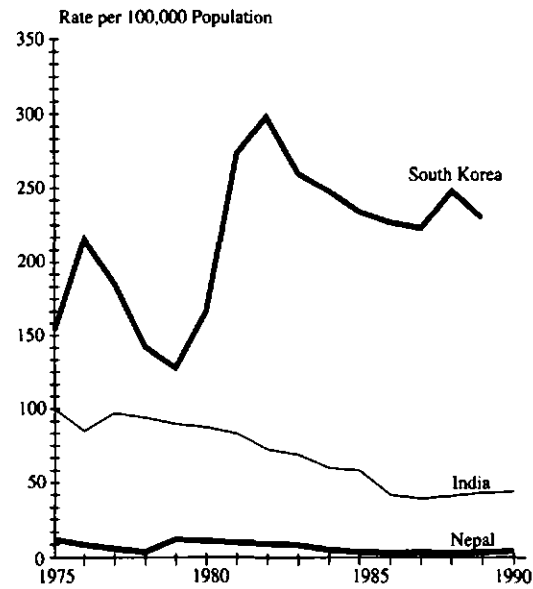
	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990
Australia	4,903.77	5,487.52	5,385.65	5,417.86	5,632.47
Fiji	1,188.81	708.60	616.64	587.77	610.26
Hong Kong	582.38	583.39	521.82	514.01	551.80
India	42.23	39.75	40.15	42.03	42.70
Japan	887.56	889.55	948.34	1,014.09	984.49
South Korea	186.26	179.12	175.88	204.09	182.96
Malaysia	352.41	312.95	285.06	228.41	228.02
Maldives	940.87	774.99	975.00	703.40	779.53
Nepal	3.56	3.74	3.28	3.26	3.87
Pakistan	34.49	30.49	34.12	38.44	40.04
Philippines	49.36	54.18	49.13	50.33	45.51
Singapore	967.88	1,021.09	1,067.43	1,007.37	1,042.88
Sri Lanka	92.89	86.90	79.30	67.92	77.54
Thailand	63.38	67.15	80.53	68.53	60.09
Tonga	1,163.88	1,050.21	938.16	692.55	760.00
Vanuatu	n/a	410.68	482.84	581.26	593.63



**Figure 14a**  
**Theft, 1975 to 1990**  
**Crimes Recorded, Rate Per 100,000 Population**



**Figure 14b**  
**Theft, 1975 to 1990**  
**Crimes Recorded, Rate Per 100,000 Population**



*Fraud:* Fewer countries were able to supply statistics for fraud, one of the difficulties being the differences in definition. In the categories of offences described in this report fraud is the second most frequently recorded crime. Like theft, the offence of fraud appears to be more frequently in countries with well developed economies than that in less well off countries (see Tables 7a and 7b).

**Table 7a**  
**Number of Reported Crimes**  
**Fraud 1986 to 1990**

	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990
Australia	80,878	92,284	122,779	123,439	99,180
Fiji	443	199	194	168	193
Hong Kong	1,508	1,344	1,229	1,299	1,489
India	22,579	22,115	22,705	23,691	24,466
Japan	64,788	69,844	65,125	53,605	50,919
South Korea	54,538	51,708	45,607	42,003	44,035
Malaysia	2,904	2,727	2,750	1,089	1,991
Maldives	5	1	2	0	6
Nepal	28	39	37	36	24
Singapore	2,278	2,172	2,191	2,741	2,554
Sri Lanka	3,516	3,200	2,934	2,271	2,803
Thailand	4,435	4,512	4,093	3,651	3,155
Tonga	59	83	28	63	72
Vanuatu	n/a	7	9	12	8

**Table 7b**  
**Rate Per 100,000 Population — Crimes Reported**  
**Fraud 1986 to 1990**

	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990
Australia	497.75	567.42	742.67	734.13	581.19
Fiji	61.96	27.60	26.25	22.34	26.40
Hong Kong	27.26	23.94	21.63	22.55	25.67
India	2.95	2.83	2.85	2.92	2.96
Japan	244.28	146.40	211.70	190.94	184.44
South Korea	131.42	124.37	108.65	99.11	102.72
Malaysia	18.03	16.44	16.23	6.28	11.21
Maldives	2.64	0.51	1.00	0.00	2.79
Nepal	0.16	0.22	0.21	0.20	0.13
Singapore	87.62	83.13	82.77	102.07	94.41
Sri Lanka	21.84	19.56	17.69	13.51	16.50
Thailand	8.45	8.45	7.53	6.61	5.63
Tonga	61.59	86.82	29.35	66.11	75.79
Vanuatu	n/a	164.96	199.01	289.01	240.31

Accordingly, fraud rates in Australia, Japan, South Korea and Singapore are relatively high. In some countries a significant part of fraud includes credit card and cheque fraud and in recent years the incidence of these appear to have increased.

The United Nations Survey also sought to collect data on other offences such as bribery and drug related crimes. However, because of inconsistencies and inade-

quacies, statistics on these offences could not be considered for analysis. From the statistics on recorded crimes considered in this report it is clear that the countries in the region present no uniform pattern and trend of crime over the period spanning the four surveys. In this context it is important to draw attention to the conclusions reached by the United Nations on the basis of data from the Third Survey. The Report states

The global crime picture is not an encouraging one. There has been an increase in the overall crime rate; and there is the difficult issue of the interrelationship between 'higher' and 'lower' crime rates in the context of socio-economic development. The future may be even more gloomy, as some projections seem to indicate.

Assuming that the rate of population growth will not change dramatically, the projected crime rate may continue to increase considerably. The crime rate at the turn of the century may be four times higher than the figure for 1975. A faster rate of population growth may lead to even more crime at the beginning of the next century. Other non-demographic variables may influence the crime picture as well.<sup>19</sup>

While experts may find the projections to be grossly inaccurate the fact remains that crime, even at its present level, is a problem in almost all countries. In this sense, we must accept the importance of initiating measures to curb the growth of crime which the United Nations has been trying to impress.

In our efforts to explain recorded crimes we very often cite methods of record keeping, level of technology in a country, crime detection procedures, confidence in the police force etc., as important influential factors. Important as they may be, somehow these do not explain adequately enough the level of crime. Consider for example the extremely low crime rate in Nepal and India. The massive difference in the rates between these two countries and some of the economically well off countries cannot simply be explained by the sophistication in record keeping and detection or by a high degree of public confidence in the country's police force.

In a number of countries crime victim surveys have become quite common. So far results of all such surveys indicate that the true level of crime in a country is much higher, between two and four times, than official crime statistics tend to show. But even after multiplying the official crime statistics by the appropriate multiplier, the crime rates in some countries are extremely low. Therefore, as the United Nations conclusions suggest, we need to examine a number of non-demographic factors for a more meaningful explanation of crime rates. These would include not only socio-economic, cultural, and environmental factors but also the changes in life styles of the people.

### ***Offenders Brought into Formal Contact***

So far we have described the level of recorded crimes in various countries of the region. It is now proposed to describe the trend in the number of offenders coming

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into contact with the police. The statistics on offenders is much more problematic than that on recorded crimes. The definition of the term 'coming into formal contact' varies markedly across countries. And since the United Nations Survey does not seek information on the number of recorded offences cleared or solved by the police, it is impossible to ascertain with any confidence the meaning of this term. That is to say that the completed questionnaires do not indicate whether the offenders were responsible for all the offences recorded or a part of these. As indicated in the Third Survey report of the UNAFEI, the offender data supplied by the countries of the region may fall in any one, two or more of the following categories:

- (i) the number of distinct persons arrested, i.e. if a person is arrested on a number of occasions within a year he/she is counted only once;
- (ii) the number of persons arrested may mean a person arrested several times for different incidents during the year and counted each time arrested;
- (iii) the number of persons charged and brought before the courts;
- (iv) the number of persons suspected of committing crimes — not necessarily arrested;
- (v) the number of individuals named as suspects by the victims or complainant;
- (vi) the number of persons warned, admonished or cautioned — not necessarily arrested.

Responses to the United Nations Survey questionnaire appear to show the existence of significant variations in the way countries report offender details. Data presented in Table 1 in Section 3 of this report, clearly demonstrates this variation. The degrees and pattern of differences in the offence to offender ratio across countries are ample evidence of differences of counting and classification rules. With these cautionary notes we present offender data for various countries in Tables 8 to 12. Along with the number of offenders their ratio to population has also been provided.

**Table 8a**  
**Number of Offenders Involved in Crimes**  
**Assault 1986 to 1990**

	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990
Hong Kong	4,827	4,901	5,130	5,261	4,913
Japan	41,888	39,330	39,268	33,828	32,002
South Korea	5,798	5,964	5,890	5,875	5,783
Malaysia	998	1,172	1,367	1,283	1,477
Maldives	436	510	526	474	474
Nepal	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	1,140
Philippines	18,708	22,860	25,845	25,589	25,389
Singapore	426	472	529	496	461
Sri Lanka	15,544	14,528	12,599	7,810	9,789
Thailand	9,657	10,387	12,441	12,634	21,752
Tonga	416	464	320	358	269
Vanuatu	n/a	469	473	n/a	n/a

**Table 8b**  
**Rate Per 100,000 Population — Offenders Involved in Crimes**  
**Assault 1986 to 1990**

	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990
Hong Kong	87.25	87.31	90.30	91.31	84.70
Japan	34.48	32.21	32.03	27.48	25.90
South Korea	13.97	14.35	14.03	13.86	13.49
Malaysia	6.20	7.09	8.07	7.39	8.32
Maldives	230.20	261.40	263.00	230.10	220.47
Nepal	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	6.03
Philippines	33.40	39.86	44.01	42.58	41.30
Singapore	16.38	18.06	19.98	18.47	17.04
Sri Lanka	96.55	88.80	75.96	46.47	57.61
Thailand	18.39	19.44	22.90	22.88	38.79
Tonga	434.24	485.36	335.43	375.66	283.16
Vanuatu	n/a	323.71	315.88	n/a	n/a

**Table 9a**  
**Number of Offenders Involved in Crimes**  
**Rape 1986 to 1990**

	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990
Hong Kong	50	69	92	101	109
India	11,515	11,430	12,911	13,979	14,382
Japan	1,577	1,608	1,480	1,329	1,289
South Korea	5,158	4,553	4,342	4,485	5,345
Malaysia	337	376	385	448	444
Maldives	3	2	1	3	2
Nepal	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	125
Philippines	916	1,046	1,142	1,479	1,814
Singapore	89	60	76	69	80
Sri Lanka	399	353	295	368	598
Thailand	2,661	2,549	2,724	2,621	2,514
Tonga	14	8	5	4	6
Vanuatu	n/a	17	26	n/a	n/a

**Table 9b**  
**Rate Per 100 000 Population — Offenders Involved in Crimes**  
**Rape 1986 to 1990**

	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990
Hong Kong	0.90	1.23	1.62	1.75	1.88
India	1.50	1.46	1.62	1.72	1.74
Japan	1.30	1.32	1.21	1.08	1.04
South Korea	12.43	10.95	10.34	10.58	12.47
Malaysia	2.09	2.27	2.27	2.58	2.50
Maldives	1.58	1.03	0.50	1.46	0.93
Nepal	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	0.66
Philippines	1.64	1.82	1.94	2.46	2.95
Singapore	3.42	2.30	2.87	2.57	2.96
Sri Lanka	2.48	2.16	1.78	2.19	3.52
Thailand	5.07	4.77	5.01	4.75	4.48
Tonga	14.61	8.37	5.24	4.20	6.32
Vanuatu	n/a	11.73	17.36	n/a	n/a

**Table 10a**  
**Number of Offenders Involved in Crimes**  
**Robbery 1986 to 1990**

	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990
Hong Kong	1,285	1,575	1,816	2,293	2,247
India	72,204	63,987	61,421	62,827	69,216
Japan	1,842	1,707	1,646	1,444	1,582
South Korea	4,185	3,947	4,471	4,845	5,568
Malaysia	1,062	1,033	1,006	979	904
Maldives	10	19	14	23	28
Nepal	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	614
Philippines	17,051	18,062	16,456	17,695	15,545
Singapore	465	574	577	529	493
Sri Lanka	5,075	5,086	4,230	4,576	5,323
Thailand	4,786	4,304	4,137	3,925	3,396
Tonga	6	1	3	2	3

**Table 10b**  
**Rate Per 100,000 Population — Offenders Involved in Crimes**  
**Robbery 1986 to 1990**

	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990
Hong Kong	23.23	28.06	31.96	39.80	38.74
India	9.42	8.19	7.71	7.74	8.37
Japan	1.52	1.40	1.34	1.17	1.28
South Korea	10.08	9.49	10.65	11.43	12.99
Malaysia	6.59	6.25	5.94	5.64	5.09
Maldives	5.28	9.74	7.00	11.17	13.02
Nepal	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	3.25
Philippines	30.45	31.49	28.02	29.44	25.28
Singapore	17.88	21.97	21.80	19.70	18.22
Sri Lanka	31.52	31.09	25.50	27.23	31.32
Thailand	9.11	8.06	7.62	7.11	6.06
Tonga	6.26	1.05	3.14	2.10	3.16

**Table 11a**  
**Number of Offenders Involved in Crimes**  
**Theft 1986 to 1990**

	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990
Hong Kong	12,915	12,725	11,030	11,449	11,516
India	221,772	203,744	217,638	223,980	218,391
Japan	233,897	236,448	230,837	156,752	156,752
South Korea	31,945	29,358	24,759	21,703	21,283
Malaysia	6,738	7,545	7,597	6,971	6,838
Maldives	1,782	1,512	950	1,449	1,676
Nepal	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	670
Philippines	28,183	31,077	28,852	30,244	27,977
Singapore	5,812	6,226	6,606	5,787	5,786
Sri Lanka	9,441	9,263	7,925	5,985	9,283
Thailand	33,284	35,876	43,750	37,840	33,698
Tonga	514	528	447	375	294
Vanuatu	n/a	572	590	n/a	n/a

**Table 11b**  
**Rate Per 100,000 Population — Offenders Involved in Crimes**  
**Theft 1986 to 1990**

	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990
Hong Kong	233.43	226.69	194.15	198.72	198.53
India	28.95	26.08	27.32	27.59	26.41
Japan	192.52	193.66	188.27	127.32	126.89
South Korea	76.98	70.61	58.99	51.21	49.65
Malaysia	41.83	45.65	44.84	40.17	38.50
Maldives	940.87	774.99	475.00	703.40	779.53
Nepal	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	3.54
Philippines	50.32	54.18	49.13	50.33	45.51
Singapore	223.54	238.29	249.56	215.50	213.89
Sri Lanka	58.64	56.62	47.78	35.61	54.63
Thailand	63.38	67.15	80.53	68.53	60.09
Tonga	536.53	552.30	468.56	393.49	309.47
Vanuatu	n/a	394.81	394.02	n/a	n/a

**Table 12a**  
**Number of Offenders Involved in Crimes**  
**Fraud 1986 to 1990**

	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990
Hong Kong	668	581	573	634	755
India	21,125	20,579	20,657	21,276	21,639
Japan	13,379	13,566	12,791	9,169	7,756
South Korea	51,282	48,406	43,360	39,752	40,867
Malaysia	594	572	586	257	252
Maldives	5	1	2	n/a	6
Singapore	559	663	686	632	652
Sri Lanka	1,867	2,405	1,570	878	1,524
Thailand	4,435	4,512	4,093	3,651	3,155
Tonga	50	74	22	29	47
Vanuatu	n/a	6	2	n/a	n/a



**Table 12b**  
**Rate Per 100,000 Population — Offenders Involved in Crimes**  
**Fraud 1986 to 1990**

	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990
Hong Kong	12.07	10.35	10.09	11.00	13.02
India	2.76	2.63	2.59	2.62	2.62
Japan	11.01	11.11	10.43	7.45	6.28
South Korea	123.57	116.43	103.30	93.80	95.33
Malaysia	3.69	3.46	3.46	1.48	1.42
Maldives	2.64	0.51	1.00	n/a	2.79
Singapore	21.50	25.38	25.92	23.53	24.10
Sri Lanka	11.60	14.70	9.47	5.22	8.97
Thailand	8.45	8.45	7.53	6.61	5.63
Tonga	52.19	77.41	23.06	30.43	49.47
Vanuatu	n/a	4.14	1.34	n/a	n/a

Various United Nations reports allude to the concept of case attrition. Bearing in mind the quality of data, we consider it very risky to discuss case attrition in any definitive way. A true process of case attrition, in our view, would have to have clear details such as:

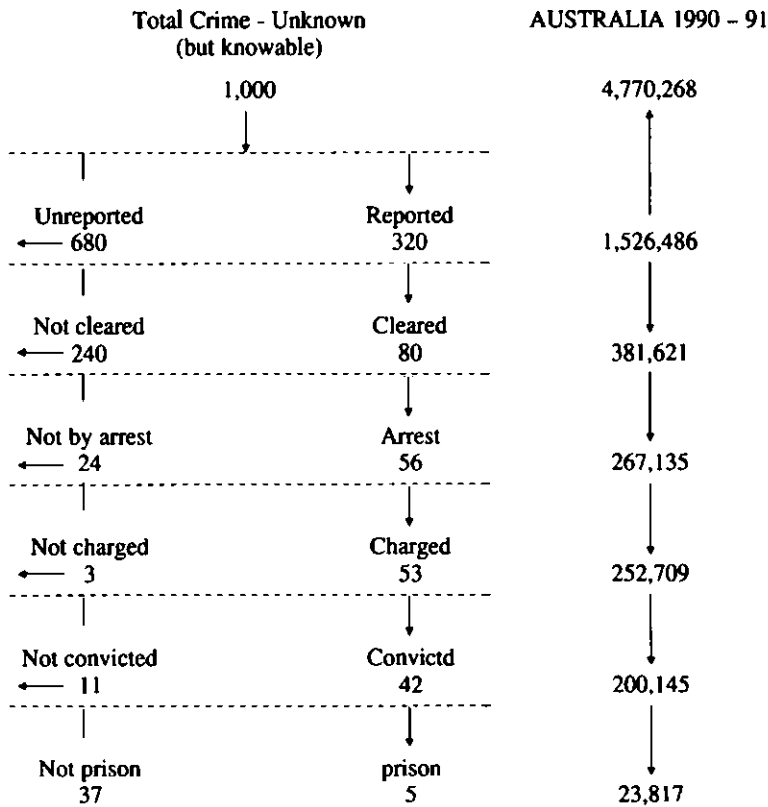
- number of offences recorded
- number of offences solved by the arrests of suspects
- number of suspects charged or prosecuted
- number of suspects tried
- number of offenders convicted
- number sentenced to various penal measures.

A few years ago the authors of this report attempted to estimate case attrition in the Australian criminal justice system. The results of this attempt are presented in Figure 15.

The estimate is based on statistics produced by various official criminal justice agencies in Australia, victim surveys, prison census, etc. We caution readers to use this estimate advisedly. We believe the attitude toward reporting crimes changes over time and changes in legislation and attitudes of those dispensing justice also influence sentencing and punishment. And finally, Australian data draw from eight different systems and this may bring additional complexity.

Reverting back to Figure 15, the estimate informs us that in 1990-91 of over 4.7 million offences that could have occurred in Australia nothing was known about over 3 million of these. Only about a quarter of the offences recorded were cleared or solved by the police. The chart also shows that only 23,817 prison sentences were given, i.e. 0.5 of 1 per cent of total crimes in that year. This type of information, collected and produced on a regular basis, can be of significant value to policy makers. Even the technologically most advanced nations are not close to a system that assists in the development of such a data base. But the idea of having this type of information should remain as an important goal of a criminal justice statistical and information system.

**Figure 15**  
**Estimate of Attrition of Information on Crime**

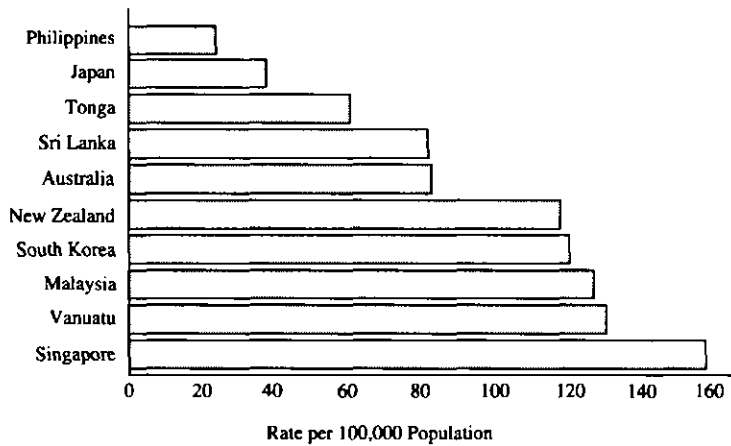


### ***Prison Population***

The four United Nations Surveys clearly show that statistical information on crime is best at the two extremes of the criminal justice system continuum. Most countries that respond to the survey are able to provide statistics for crimes recorded by the police and for the number of individuals in prisons. In between these two levels of data very little information is provided by most countries. Even statistics on prisoners present substantial complexity and a number of these have been cited with examples from various countries in the Third Survey report published by the UNAFEI in 1990.

Figure 16 and Tables 13a, 13b display the number of prisoners on a given day in the country's prisons. Separate data for those in detention pending trial were not available from most countries and therefore the data used in this part may include some of those under trial.

**Figure 16**  
**Asia and The Pacific — Selected Countries**  
**Imprisonment Rates Per 100,000 Population, 1990**



**Table 13a**  
**Prisoner Numbers 1986, 1988 and 1990**

	1986	1988	1990
Australia	11,497	12,321	14,305
Hong Kong	8,207	10,037	12,095
Japan	55,641	54,204	46,858
South Korea	47,870	43,556	52,371
Malaysia	21,944	23,172	22,832
New Zealand	2,720	3,289	4,018
Philippines	15,434	15,418	14,525
Singapore	4,140	5,033	4,320
Sri Lanka	14,617	8,299	14,128
Tonga	118	144	58
Vanuatu	231	247	193

**Table 13b**  
**Rate Per 100,000 Population**  
**Prisoners, 1986, 1988 and 1990**

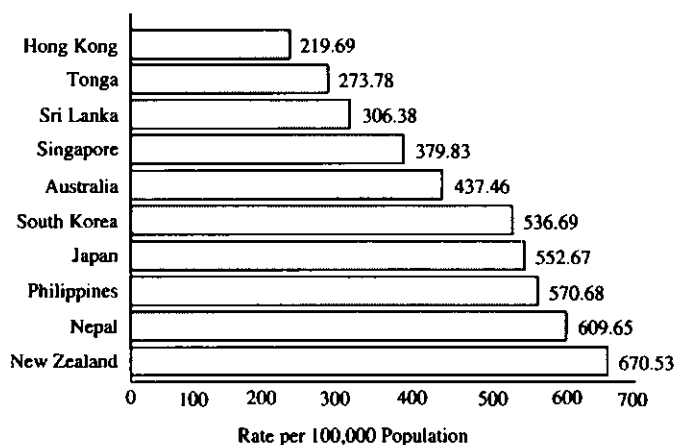
	1986	1988	1990
Australia	70.76	74.53	83.83
Hong Kong	148.34	176.67	208.51
Japan	45.80	44.21	37.93
South Korea	115.35	103.77	122.17
Malaysia	136.22	136.77	128.54
New Zealand	83.75	99.90	120.06
Philippines	27.03	26.26	23.63
Singapore	159.23	190.13	159.70
Sri Lanka	90.79	50.04	83.14
Tonga	123.17	150.94	61.05
Vanuatu	164.82	164.95	131.39

Similar to the patterns and trends in crime, the imprisonment data also show wide variation among countries. The region has some of the lowest imprisonment rates in the world. The Philippines and Japan currently have imprisonment rates of well below 50 per 100,000 population. The data do not show set trends in any of the countries but the two countries mentioned above show a declining imprisonment rate over the Fourth Survey period.

### ***Criminal Justice Resources***

Not many countries responded to the question on the budgetary resources for various segments of the criminal justice system. The best data that were made available on the resources issue related to the number of police personnel. Even in this case most of the responding countries could not provide separate data for uniformed vs civilian personnel or male-female distribution of police personnel. Figure 17 presents the number of police personnel per 100,000 population in some of the countries of the region. Again, the data show a wide variation. The Figure indicates that among the countries that submitted data, New Zealand has the least number of police officers, one officer for 670 people whereas Hong Kong has one officer for every 220 people.

**Figure 17**  
**Police to Population Ratio 1990**



Because of inadequacies in various data sets it is difficult to examine the relationship between the strength of police personnel and the level of crime. Various United Nations publications on the subject show that within countries, of the total criminal justice budget, a majority is allocated to police departments. Research results also show that between 80 and 90 per cent of the police budget is spent on salaries and wages. The point that many researchers and scholars currently raise about the size of police personnel is not necessarily to argue an increase or decrease in their number, but to draw attention to a changing environment and the need to consider carefully how to direct scarce resources to contain crime. In other words these experts raise issues relating to police philosophy and policing strategy. There now exist abundant

literature on the subject and we believe that some international body should develop a data base of such on-going changes in policing. At this stage it is not proposed to identify so-called 'best practices' or 'success stories' but to prepare an inventory of changing policing practices and strategies.

## **7. Conclusions**

In this section we summarise the results of the Fourth Survey, make some recommendations about the future surveys, and briefly describe the value of criminal statistics and international cooperation. In this context we draw the attention of readers to the Report on the Third United Nations Survey prepared by the United Nations Asia and Far East Institute and the Australian Institute of Criminology in 1990. This report makes a large number of recommendations, some of which have relevance for the Fourth Survey as well.

### ***Results of the Fourth Survey***

This report did not attempt to examine the total crime rate for the region because of lack of adequate information. The report, however, grouped six offences for which adequate data were available. As far as trends for the six offences of homicide, assault, rape, robbery, theft and fraud are concerned, the following patterns are obtained:

- Homicide — for the region as a whole the rate of homicide has been increasing since 1975 and during the Fourth Survey period the homicide rate increased by over 23 per cent; this increase is primarily due to increases in the less well off countries of the region.
- Assault: — between the Third and the Fourth Survey, assault rate declined by over 12 per cent.
- Rape — the rate of rape increased by over 12 per cent between the Third and the Fourth Survey; however, this increase is due mainly to a significant increase in less well off countries. Indeed, during the period 1975–1990 the rape rate for less well off countries of the region has almost doubled.
- Robbery — there was an increase of about 7 per cent in the robbery rate between the Third and the Fourth Survey; for well off countries the robbery rate increased by an annual average of 4 per cent since 1975.
- Theft: — there was a significant drop in the theft rate since the Third Survey. During the period 1975–1990 the rate of theft has halved in the less well off countries.
- Fraud — during the Fourth survey period the fraud rate has declined by over 15 per cent. The responses to the Fourth Survey demonstrate the existence of problems concerning the collection and processing of criminal justice statistics. The problems concerning the quality of crime data cannot be resolved in a short period of time. Responses to the United Nations Survey clearly show a desire on the part of governments to participate. The United Nations have been highly successful in sensitizing countries to the need for reliable crime data. It is hoped that member countries will continue to assist the United Nations in its efforts to harmonise criminal statistics.

### ***Importance of information on Crime in the National Context***

Crime is one of the oldest social problems and is not a unique characteristic of any particular society. Two factors have made crime look like a creation of contemporary society: the development of a system of record keeping on crime and punishment, and publicity about crime. In spite of these, no society has yet been able to measure accurately and reliably the volume of crime and identify exact patterns of its distribution.

Statistical information on various aspects of life reveals a lot about a nation. Statistics on people and the land, wealth and development, religion, politics, and society together present a nation's identity. Today, statistical information on various aspects of life have become indispensable in the analysis of development and progress.

Information on crime is much more important today than it ever was. Nations spend between 2 and 10 per cent of their gross domestic product dealing with crime. This is a sum which could have been spent on improving the quality of life of citizens. Governments, particularly in developing countries, often have to make choices while allocating resources for various programs and services. Resources spent on combatting crime do not contribute to improving the quality of life of people. Statistics concerning crime and criminal justice operations can help in planning for a safer community.

Data on crime have become indispensable tools for many governments. Planning bodies of countries have begun using available statistics on crime for allocation of resources. Within various criminal justice agencies use of crime data for various purposes are gradually becoming acceptable. Police departments, for example, use Mapinfo to identify problem locations with a high degree of precision; the courts are developing case management and sentencing information systems; and others are using operations research and evaluation techniques to assess the effectiveness of programs and measures. In all these activities, regular and reliable statistics have become invaluable. This is another area in which some international agencies can contribute by establishing an inventory of such uses.

### ***International Cooperation and Information Exchange***

In conducting the Surveys one of the major objectives of the United Nations has been to strengthen cooperation among member states. This is not only with a view to improving the quality of statistical information but also to develop cooperation through establishing protocols between countries. It is an understatement to say that crime has no geographic boundaries. While some may argue that crimes like assaults, thefts, burglaries, motor vehicle thefts, etc., are only of local concern, even some of these crimes may have implications beyond national boundaries. For example within Australia law enforcement professionals believe that a significant proportion of motor vehicle thefts are perpetrated by people involved in organised crime. Most countries in the world are gradually awakening to the reality of internationalisation of crime. Improved standards of living, increased mobility of people, better and cheaper

telecommunication facilities, and opening of frontiers have contributed to the internationalisation of crime. The concern among the member states was such that the United Nations Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice at its second session in April 1993 passed a resolution to hold a world ministerial conference on organised crime and money laundering in 1994. In November 1994 such a conference was hosted in Naples by the Italian Government.

Internationalisation of crime is construed in two ways: crimes committed by non-citizens and emergence of crimes like organised crime and money laundering, drug trafficking, terrorism, computer crime, international fraud, etc. These crimes consume significant resources of the law enforcement budget and very often require cooperation of police forces from other countries.

As well as bilateral cooperation between two neighbouring countries, there exist a number of organisations of countries initiating conventions and agreements. The examples are the Council of Europe and the European Community, Association of South East Asian Nations, and the United Nations. These organisations have helped develop what we may term as international criminal law. Some of the examples of these instruments are:

- The United Nations Drug Convention signed in Vienna on 19 December 1988.
- The Council of Europe Convention on Laundering, Search, Seizures and Confiscation of the Proceeds from Crime.

The Council of Europe Convention on Laundering, Search, Seizures and Confiscation of the Proceeds from Crime.

The Council of Europe's Money laundering Convention is in part designed to facilitate international cooperation.

In order to encourage world-wide cooperation in combating money laundering, the convention does not use the word European in its title. This reflects the drafters' opinion that the instrument should from the outset be open to like-minded states outside the framework of the Council of Europe.<sup>20</sup>

The Council of Europe's Money Laundering Convention first describes measures to be taken at national levels. It also mandates that each member country adopt appropriate legislation and other measures to confiscate proceeds of crime.

The Council of Europe achieves cooperation of member countries

- a. by recommendations to governments concerning guide-lines for legislation and practice. These recommendations are not binding but exercise an important influence on national legislation;
- b. by preparing conventions on criminal law subjects;

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<sup>20</sup> Nilsson, H. G. "The Council of Europe Laundering Convention: A Recent Example of Developing International Criminal Law", *Criminal Law Forum* Vol. 2, No. 3 Spring 1991, p. 423

- c. by exchange of information and views in the framework of conferences, colloquia and seminars and the publication of bulletins.<sup>21</sup>

There exists examples of national action resulting in facilitating international cooperation. The British Drug Trafficking Offences Act of 1986 and the creation of the Customs Drug Financial Investigation Branch have resulted in the successful assets seizures program. The Branch is authorised to gather voluntary disclosures from banks and other institutions of suspicious financial transactions. International cooperation has increased as custom services from different countries collaborate to monitor the international flow of drug money as it is laundered through banks and corporations. Of course legislative compatibility between countries is essential and some of the matters that national legislatures must deal with are: confidentiality of bank clients, the need for free flow of capital, and the standing of various financial centres.

Around the world criminal justice agencies are developing and adopting new initiatives to deal with crime. Community policing in various forms, crime prevention strategies, family group counselling, diversionary programs, boot camps, home detention, etc., are increasingly being used in various countries. A lot of ground work for effective measures have already been accomplished, and these can be adopted in other countries with necessary adjustments.

In many countries the prevention of crime has assumed new meaning, and significant resources are being diverted to this end. In the United States of America, Scandinavia, and Western Europe large scale research studies have been funded to examine the link between early children development and future delinquency. This is with a view not only to establishing causal linkages but also to implementing appropriate interventions. Such studies can offer valuable knowledge for the prevention of crime.

The Canadian Government's determination to prevent crime is an example worthy of attention. Recognising the limits of society's response to crime, the standing Committee on Justice and the Solicitor General of the House of Commons of the Canadian Parliament unanimously agreed to commence a study of crime prevention in late 1992. Over a four-month period, November 1992 to February 1993, the Committee collected evidence from experts. The evidence convinced the member of the Committee that "threats to the safety and security of Canadians will not be abated by hiring more police officer and building more prisons."<sup>22</sup> The Committee agreed

that crime will always be with us in one form or another, and will require police, court, and correctional interventions. At the same time, it believes in reducing opportunities for crime and focusing

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21 Tsitsoura, A. "International Co-operation in Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in European Countries.", Resource Material Series No. 37, April 1990, p. 87

22 Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, Standing Committee on Justice and Solicitor General. Crime prevention in Canada: toward a national strategy: twelfth report of the Standing Committee on Justice and the Solicitor General, Bob Horner, Ottawa, Queen's Printer for Canada, 1993, p. 2



increasingly on at-risk young people and the underlying social and economic factors associated with crime and criminality. This comprehensive approach involves partnerships between governments, criminal justice organizations, and community agencies and groups. And it situates the crime problem in a community context and sees its solution as a social question.<sup>23</sup>

The funding of crime prevention efforts has always been problematic. Although criminal justice agencies are eager to contribute to making society safer, limitations on resources have been a handicap. In this context, the Committee's recommendation number 3 is worth nothing:

The Committee recommends that a share of the monies forfeited as proceeds of crime be allocated to crime prevention activities and that the federal government allocate 1% a year of the current federal budget for police, courts and corrections over a five year period. At the end of five years, Canada should spend 5% of the current federal criminal justice budget on crime prevention.<sup>24</sup>

Among other recommendations were the establishment of an International Crime Prevention Centre and the creation of a National Crime Prevention Council. In 1994 these recommendations have taken shape.

In the interests of international cooperation, it would be of great value if all the efforts mentioned above were documented and disseminated widely so that countries interested in crime prevention become aware of such new and emerging initiatives and the agencies responsible for them.

#### **About the Authors**

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid. p. 17