

Rising Crime and Crime Reduction Strategies in 21st Century Japan

TAISUKE KANAYAMA

Police Policy Research Center, National Police Agency of Japan

Introduction

In the late 1990s, following the collapse of the so-called “bubble economy,” Japan was mired in an economic recession. Furthermore, Japan was also heavily affected by the Asian financial crisis of 1997-98, which is in many ways comparable to the current economic crisis in the United States.

During the same period, Japan faced a sharp increase in crime; the number of all recorded penal code crimes¹ in 2002 represented a 160% increase over the number reported in 1996. Therefore, the Japanese police took strong measures to reduce crime, focusing on both street crimes and break-ins at homes and offices.² Additionally, in 2002, the police began to take steps to lead government policy against crime. In 2003, the Japanese Government set up a ministerial meeting for crime reduction that was composed of ministers from all branches of government. In this meeting a national action plan was set in motion that mobilized all possible resources to fight crime. This plan was designated as the Action Plan to Create a Crime Resistant Society (APCCS).

During the five-year term of the plan, the crime rate fell by 33% in comparison to the rate in 2002; this represented a decrease of more than one million recorded penal code crimes. After 2002, the Japanese economy began to recover. In this paper, we have briefly summarized the results of the Japanese government’s comprehensive measures for crime reduction and discussed both national and local police initiatives that help promote these measures.

Trends in the economy and crime in Japan in the second millennium

Economic situation

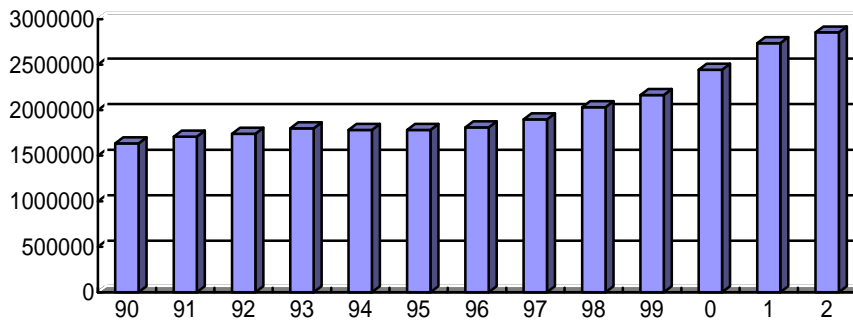
The economic bubble that began in late 1986 and lasted until early 1991 was the third longest period of economic expansion in Japan since the end of the Second World War. At the early stages of this period, it was not considered a “bubble.” During the last phase of this boom, however, the mania for speculation resulted in skyrocketing land and stock prices and the term “bubble” began to be used widely in the 1990s.

A few years after the bubble burst, the growth rate of the Japanese economy declined precipitously. Then in 1997, as the economy was headed for recovery, a financial crisis struck the country, with major banks, security firms and finance companies filing for bankruptcy primarily due to the slump in land and stock prices. Another factor contributing to the country's troubles was the Asian currency crisis that began in Thailand and spread to other Asian countries such as Korea, Malaysia, Taiwan, and Hong Kong. As a result, there was a widespread credit crunch and the annual total debts resulting in bankruptcies reached a record high in 2000 and was estimated to be approximately 2.3 trillion yen. The recession lasted until 2002, and this period later came to be known as the ‘lost decade.’

Trends in crime

As described by Bayley (1976), during the period from 1960s to early 1990s, the crime rate in Japan remained stable and at a low level, with the number of recorded penal code crimes being in the proximity of 1.5 million cases per year. In 1991 however, this situation changed, with the number of recorded penal code crimes rising above 1.7 million for the first time, and then climbing above 2 million in 1998. The financial crisis was followed by another increase in crime, with penal code crimes peaking at approximately 2.85 million in 2002, which was the highest number ever recorded. Overall, the increase in the crime rate during the 5-year period between 1998 and 2002 was a startling 40.3 %. The latter figure is especially sobering when it is compared with the 5.5% rate of increase observed during the 5 years that immediately preceded this period (Figure 1).

Figure 1: The number of recorded penal code crimes in Japan (1990-2002)



Comprehensive police initiative to reduce street crime and break-in crime

Background

As already outlined, the number of recorded penal code crime reached a new post-war high for seven consecutive years until 2002. Gravely concerned about this situation, the Japan police undertook unprecedented measures to reduce crime reduction.

To this end, our analyses found that the major increases in crime were in the areas of street crimes and home break-ins. For example, all crime increased over the worst five-year period, but street robberies doubled and snatchings increased 50% during this time (Table 1).

Table 1 : The number of recorded major street crimes³ in Japan (1998-2008).

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Total	1,265,576	1,359,012	1,502,108	1,664,309	1,630,549
Snatchings	35,363	41,173	46,064	50,838	52,919
Street Robberies	1,119	1,495	2,070	2,509	2,888
Car Thefts	35,884	43,092	56,205	63,275	62,673

(Cases)

Source: NPA

Regarding break-in crime, burglaries targeted at a private house increased 50 percent, and robberies targeted at private house, nearly doubled. – striking increase.

This situation had a deep impact on the sense of security in the Japanese public. (Table 2 and Figure 2)

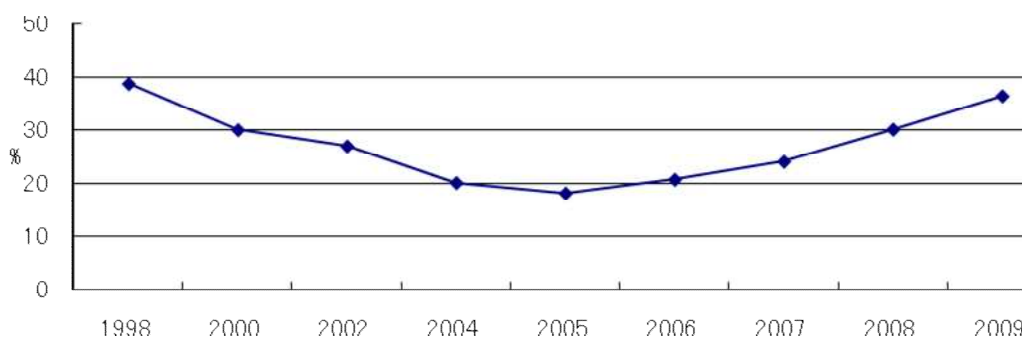
Table 2: The number of recorded major break-in crimes⁴ in Japan (1998-2002)

(Cases)

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Total	252,325	277,179	319,248	332,719	374,602
Break-in Robberies	1,314	1,649	1,786	2,335	2,436
Burglaries	123,863	134,494	154,074	161,833	189,336

Source: NPA

Figure 2: The rate of people who feel positively about Japanese public safety (National Poll 1998-2009)



Source: Cabinet Office

Basic approach to crime reduction

Based on the findings of the crime analysis, the National Police Agency (NPA) established a comprehensive framework for crime reduction and kicked off the campaign for crime reduction in November 2002, named “Comprehensive measures against street crime and break-in crime.”

Beginning in January 2003, all 47 prefectural polices focused upon target communities. They introduced practical plans for reducing street crime and break-in crime based on the current crime situation in targeted community areas. Essential to this effort, was need to implement effective work management strategies and to measure results in order to carry out effective countermeasures to criminal activities. It was also necessary to establish a series of management cycle

to formulate a plan for deterring crime in each community. Such plans needed to be implemented then evaluated continuously.

Police activities against street crime and break-in crime

The many and the various crimes committed by delinquent groups, such as motorcycle gangs and youth gangs cannot be ignored if we are to improve public safety in Japan. Approximately 70% of those arrested for street crime such as purse-snatching, street robberies are juveniles. The police have positioned efforts to crack down on delinquent juvenile groups as an important pillar in the measures against street crime.

Prevention of crimes is a major goal. For prevention of street crime and break-in crime, it is important not only to arrest street criminals and burglars, but also, to enhance preventative measures such as cracking down on carrying knives and lock-picking tools in accordance with the Minor Offences Law and the Firearms and Swords Control Law. This will help prevent crimes before they occur.

The police also engaged in other preventive activities aimed at reducing elements that may encourage criminal activity. Some of these measures include the removal of illegally parked bicycles, posters of escort services and graffiti and are conducted with the cooperation of the community, public and private sectors.

The national initiative, “Action Plan to Create a Crime-Resistant Society”

Ministerial meeting

While taking various counter measures to combat the increase in crime, the National Police Agency of Japan (NPA) was also conducting a national governmental consensus on crime reduction. During this same period, the public’s sense of fear regarding the increase in crime had reached lawmakers. This led legislators in the majority Liberal Democratic Party to create a party policy addressing crime reduction entitled “The urgent motion on public safety.” In

addition, the major opposition party, the Democratic Party, also incorporated a crime reduction policy in their “The manifesto 2003.”

In response to these moves, the Japanese cabinet initiated “The ministerial meeting against crime” in September 2003. This meeting included ministers from all branches of government and was chaired by the Prime Minister. In December of 2003, this committee adopted “The Action Plan to Create a Crime-resistant Society (APCCS).”

The APCCS emphasized three main points. The first point emphasized promoting initiatives to encourage the public to participate in crime prevention. The second point endorsed the development of a social environment that is crime-resistant. The third point stressed the need to overcome bureaucratic sectionalism in the course of the promotion of measures aimed at fighting crime.

In accordance with these three points, the APCCS required participating authorities to take action on 148 individual measures to implement this plan. These included activities such as support for anti-crime volunteers, strengthening of police activities at *kobans*⁵, promotion of crime prevention through environmental design, an increase in the number of license plate recognition cameras, promotion of juvenile education in communities, enforcement of immigration laws, and a reduction in the number of illegal residents. After the adoption of the APCCS, the ministerial meeting also created two more programs: “Program to promote safe community building” and “Program to protect children from crime.”

Outlines of APCCS

Based on these the points outlined in the APCCS, most ministries then worked to plan 148 individual measures, which were divided into five major categories.

1. Prevention of crime that threatens the daily lives of citizens.
2. Community involvement in the prevention of juvenile crime.
3. Implementation of measures to protect against transnational menace.

4. Protection of the economy and society from organized crime.
5. Development of fundamentals for public safety.

Prevention of crime that threatens the daily lives of citizens

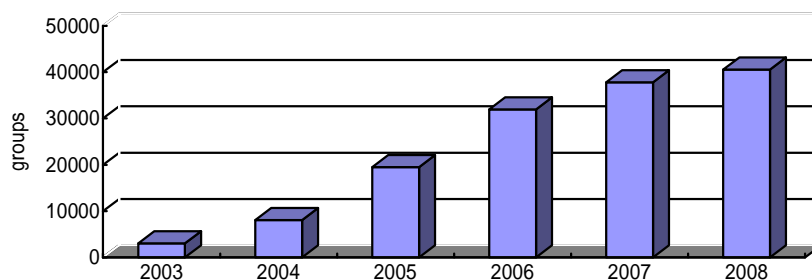
The first category contains three sub-categories: restoration of social bonds and building safe communities (19 measures), distribution of products and systems effective for crime prevention (15 measures), and protection of crime victims (8 measures).

The major actions taken in the first sub-category involved support for voluntarily crime prevention activities conducted by community members, development of private security entities, and promotion of crime-resistant designs for roads, parks, and parking lots. Additionally steps were taken to strengthen koban-based activities that bring the police into contact the community (e.g., community policing, problem-oriented policing, etc.). Action taken in this category also included promotion of the type of crime-resistant product design and environment that is based on the situational crime prevention theory (Clarke1992).

These actions brought significant results.

The number of volunteer crime prevention groups active in Japan increased from 3,056 in 2003 to 40,538 in 2008. In addition, the number of people participating in these programs was 2.34 million in 2007, as compared with only 0.18 million in 2003 (Figure 3).

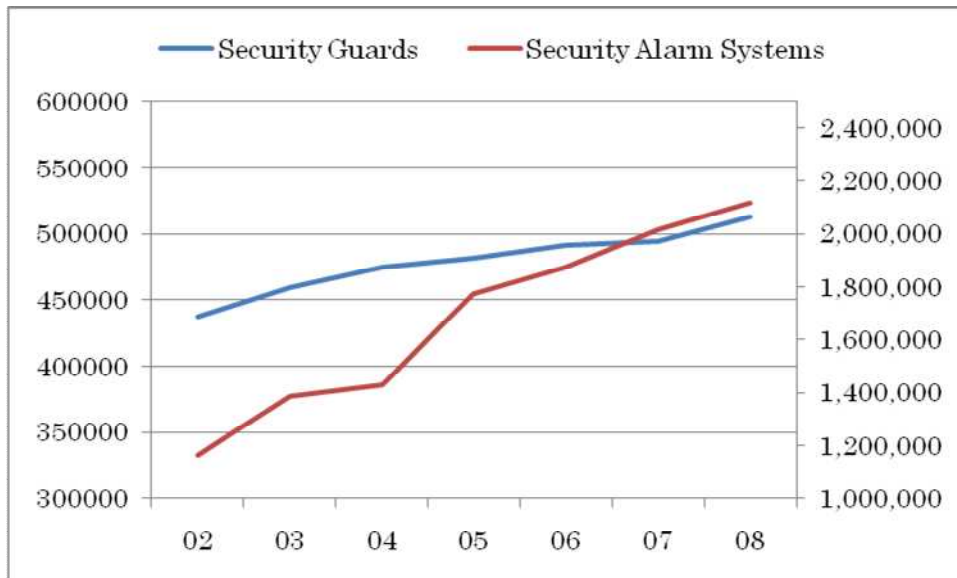
Figure 3: The number of volunteer groups involved in crime prevention (2003-2008)



Source: NPA

The number of private security guards increased from 436,810 in 2002 to 512,331 in 2008. Furthermore, the number of private houses or business facilities equipped with security alarm systems increased from 1,164,542 in 2002 to 2,115,380 in 2008; an increase of about one million over the course of six years (Figure 4).

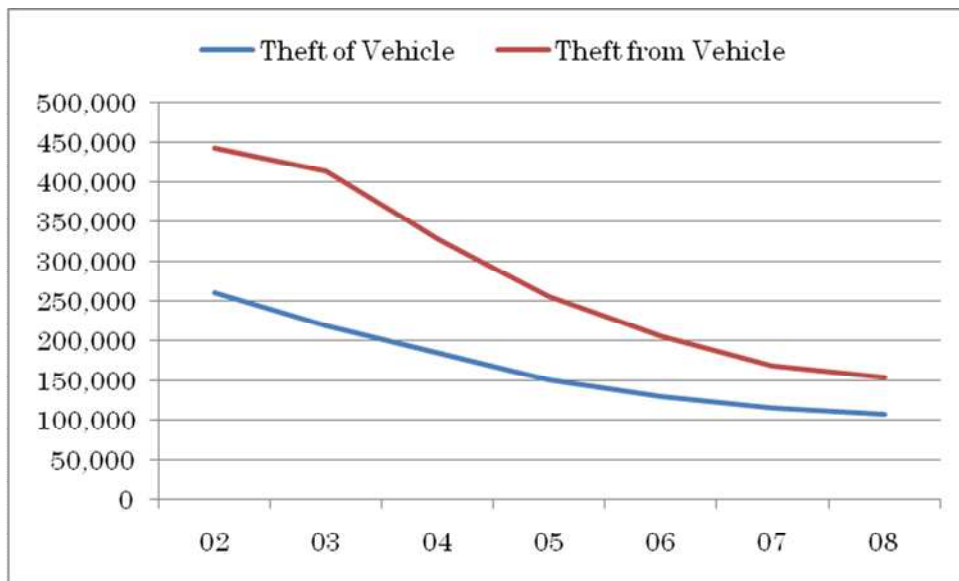
Figure 4: The Number of private security guards and alarm systems



Source:NPA

The major actions taken in the second sub-category include preventive measures to reduce the number of vehicle related crimes such as the distribution of car immobilizers and enhanced vehicle locks, strict controls on vehicle registration, and measures that help in the identification and arrest of persons involved in vehicular crimes such as the installation of automated license plate recognition cameras. These actions have borne significant results. Vehicle related theft has decreased dramatically (Figure 5).

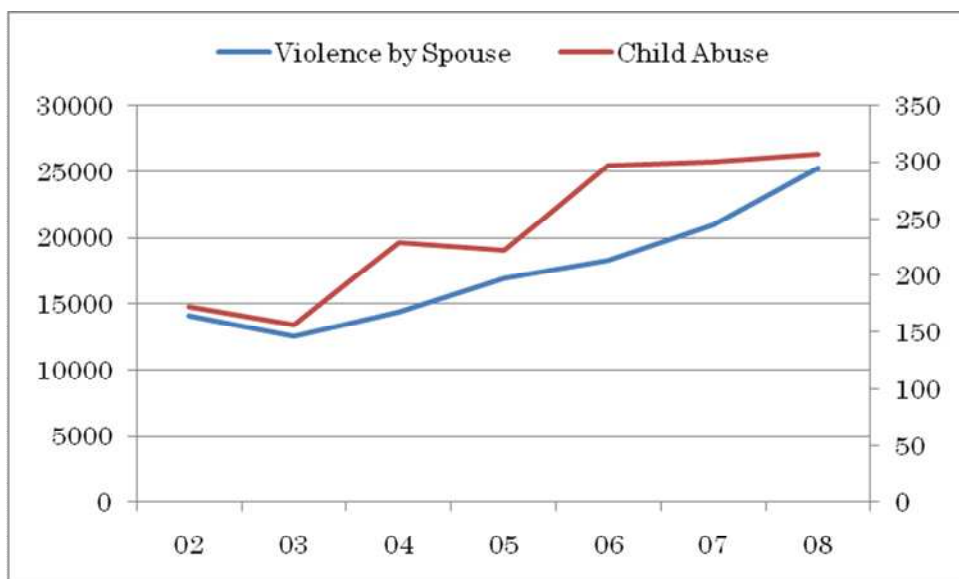
Figure 5: Vehicle related theft



Source: NPA

The third sub-category included measures that stressed the protection of women and children from domestic violence. Therefore, the police and related agencies enhanced mutual cooperation and protective activities, including the arrest of persons for spousal battery or child abuse (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Domestic violence (spousal battery and child abuse)



Source: NPA

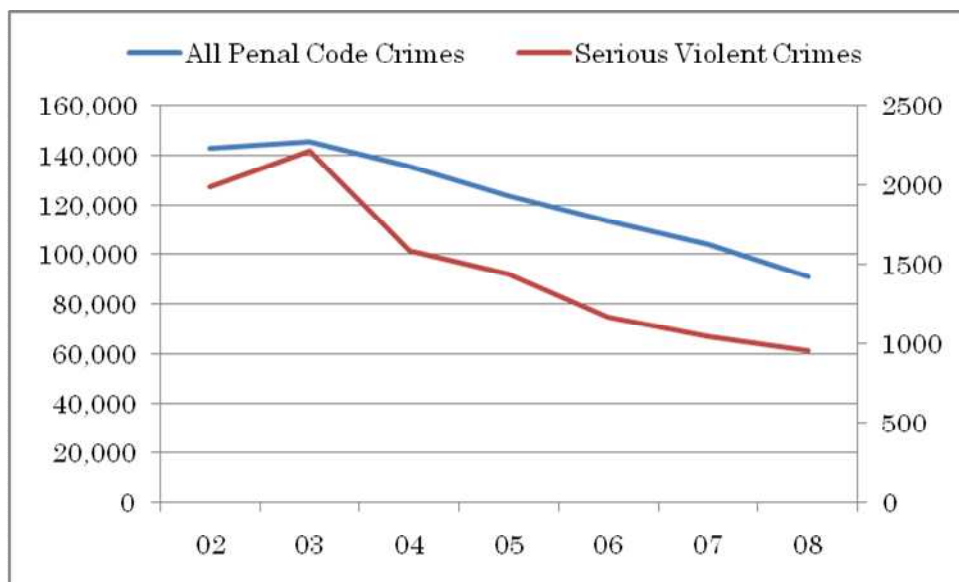
Community involvement in the prevention of juvenile crime

The second category is divided into three sub-categories: stricter enforcement in juvenile crime (6 measures), community involvement in the helping to prevent juvenile delinquency (14 measures), and multi-organizational support for juveniles (2 measures). These actions also bore significant results. For example, there was a more than 30% decrease in the number of arrests involving juvenile criminals.

Strict and appropriate enforcement of laws aimed at juvenile criminals

The major steps taken in first sub-category entail strict and appropriate enforcement of laws aimed at juvenile criminals and reinforcement of treatment systems involved in helping troubled youths. As figure 7 shows, the number of serious crimes committed by juveniles decreased by 50% between 2003 and 2008, while total number of juvenile crimes decreased 36.8% in the same period.

Figure 7: Penal code crimes and serious/violent juvenile crimes.



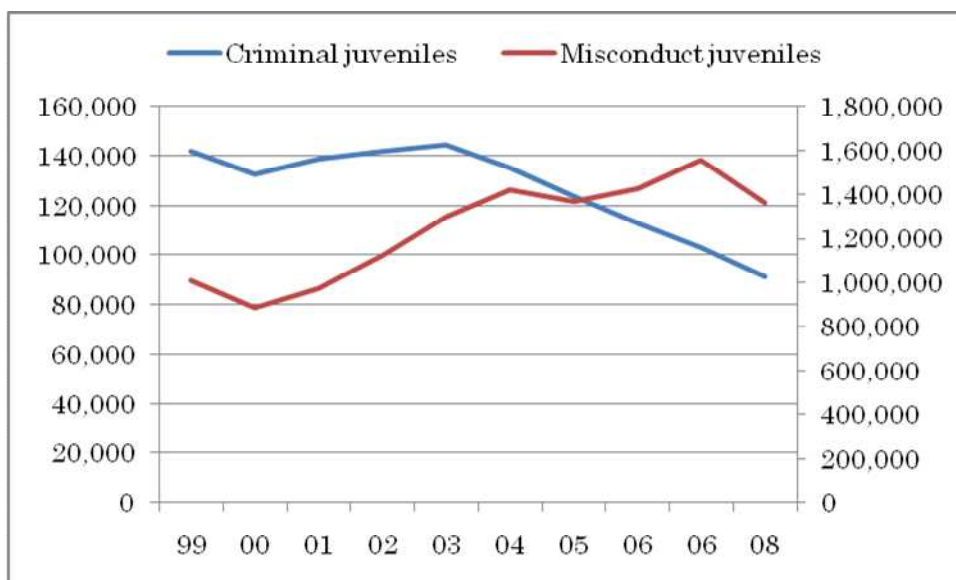
Serious/violent crimes: Murder, Robbery, Rape, Arson

Source: NPA

Community involvement in the prevention of juvenile delinquency

The major action taken in the second sub-category is the expansion of guidelines involving misconduct such as loitering late at night, running away from home, and underage drinking and smoking. After this approach was adopted, the number of guidance cases involving juvenile misconduct by the police increased, while the number of juveniles arrested for criminal activity decreased (Figure 8). We believe the enhancement of police activity that deals with juvenile misconduct has prevented the escalation of juvenile misconduct into more serious crimes.

Figure 8: The number of penal code criminal and misconduct cases involving juveniles (1999-2008)



Source: NPA

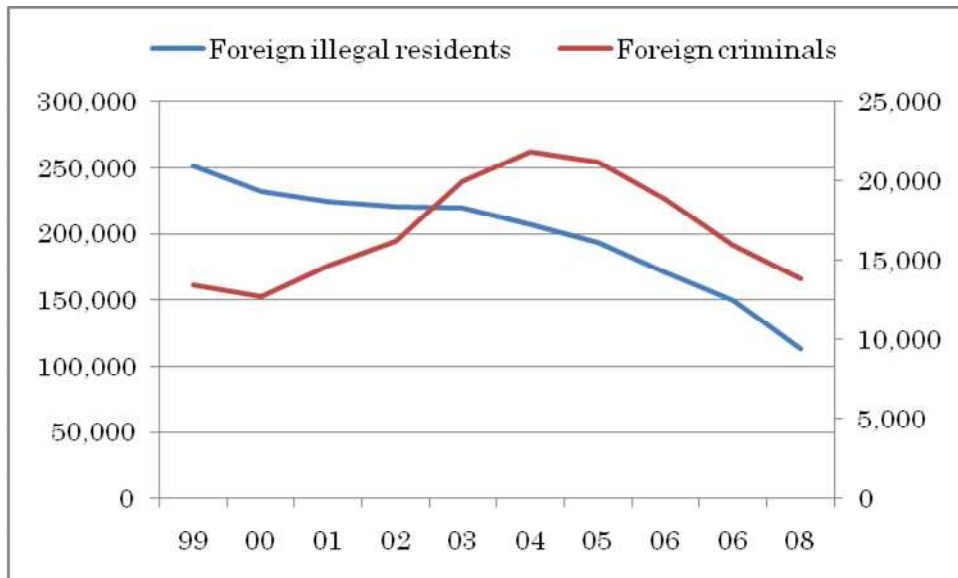
The major action in the third sub-category is multi-organizational intervention in cases involving juvenile delinquency. This multi-organizational body is called the Juvenile Support Team, which is composed of representatives from the police, schools, probation offices, municipalities, and community volunteer groups.

Implementation of measures to protect against transnational menace

The third category contains four sub-categories: reinforcement of border controls (9 measures), prevention of illegal entry and overstaying of visas (18 measures), strengthening the investigation of crimes committed by foreign nationals (2 measures), and enhancement of cooperation with foreign authorities (6 measures).

The outcomes of these actions are as follows. The number of illegal residents decreased from 219,000 in 2004 to 113,000 in 2008, and in addition, the number of arrested foreign visitors decreased from 21,842 in 2004 to 13,880 in 2008 (Figure9).

Figure 9: The number of illegal foreign residents and foreign nationals arrested or charged with crimes⁶ (1999-2008)

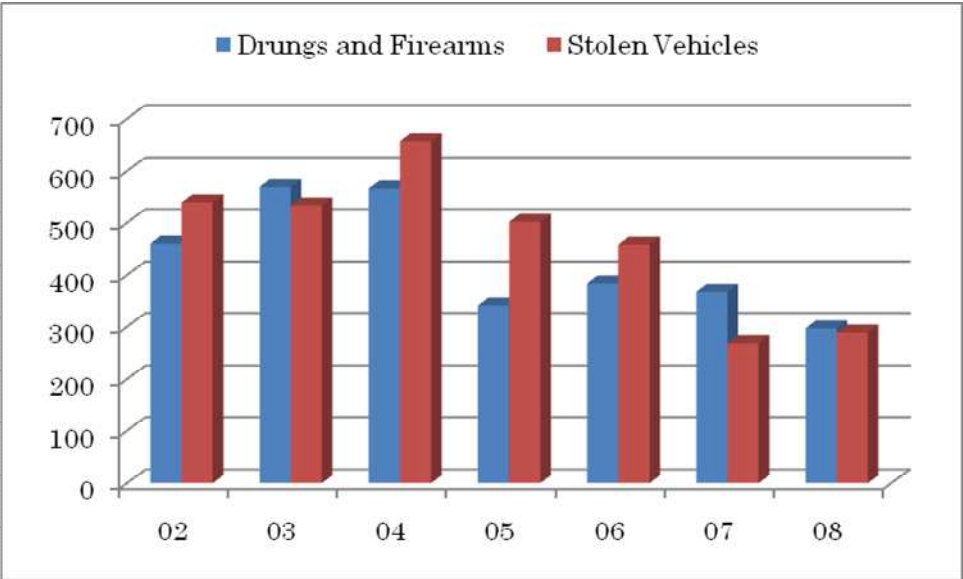


Source: NPA

Reinforcement of border controls

The major action taken in the first sub-category has been a crackdown on contraband and stolen vehicle trade at the borders. This has been done through the enhancement of cooperation among law enforcement authorities such as the police, the customs agency, and the maritime safety agency (Figure10).

Figure10: Drugs, firearms, and stolen vehicles seized by customs

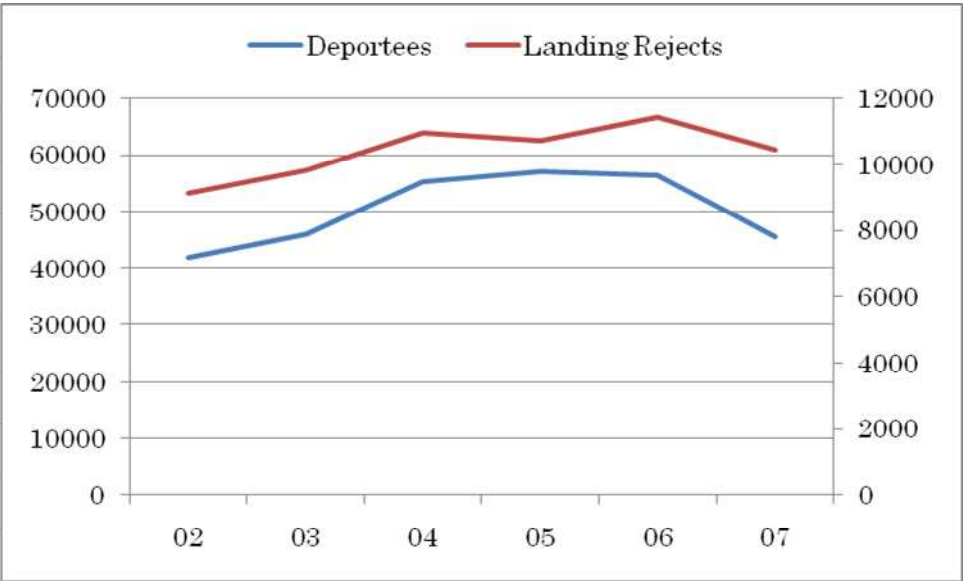


Source: Ministry of Finance

Prevention of illegal entry and overstay of visas

The second sub-category contains measures that enact strict immigration control and effective deportation of illegal foreign residents, as well as the promotion of assistance for legal foreign residents such as employment services and education in cooperation with communities (Figure11).

Figure11: The number of deportees and foreign nationals rejected entry

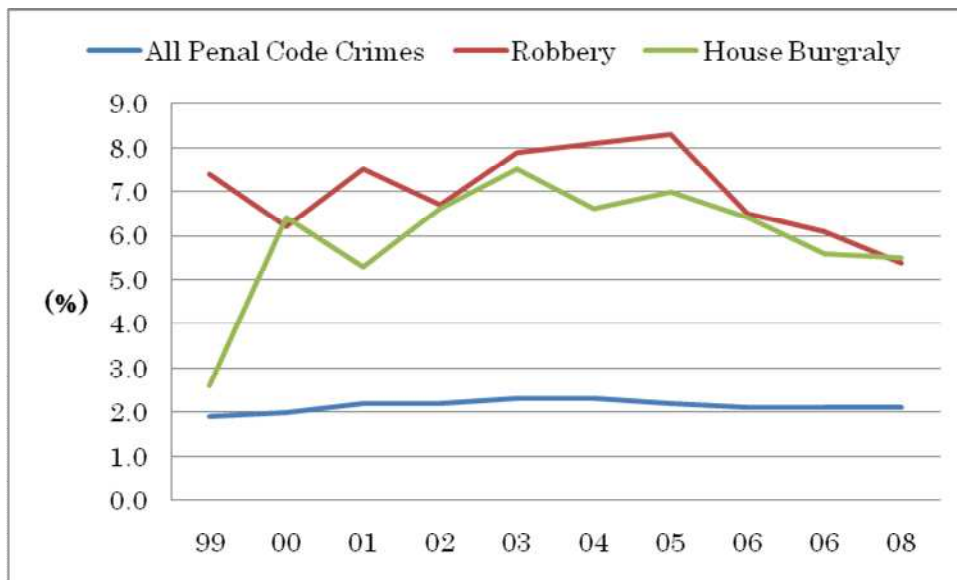


Source: Ministry of Justice

Strengthening the investigation of crimes committed by foreign nationals

As can be observed in figure12, the percentage of foreign nationals involved in criminal activity such as robbery and burglary is rather high. The percentage of foreign nationals in all arrestees charged in penal code crimes is about 2.0% and this number has remained relatively stable. On the other hand, the percentage of foreign nationals among all arrestees charged in cases involving robbery or burglary is quite a bit higher. Therefore, the police have shifted resources to address the problem of crime committed by foreign nationals.

Figure12: Percentage of foreign nationals among arrestees in Japan



Source: NPA

Enhancement of cooperation with foreign authorities

The third sub-category focuses on enhancement of cooperation with foreign law enforcement authorities through the conclusion of the Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty (MLAT). Coordination with authorities in Mainland China has been especially strengthened.

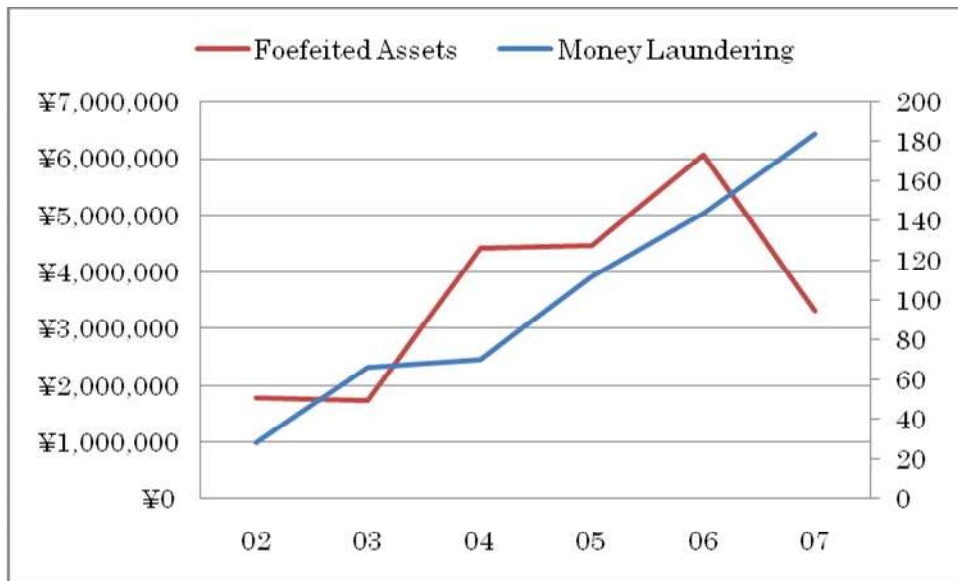
Protection of the economy and society from organized crime

The actions taken in the fourth category are divided into four sub-categories: taking action against organized crime groups including *boryokudan*⁷ (10 measures), building a society that is free from both illegal drugs and firearms (11 measures), taking action against crimes that threaten daily life and business (8 measures), and putting into practice initiatives designed to fight cyber crimes (6 measures).

Countermeasures against organized criminal groups including *boryokudan*

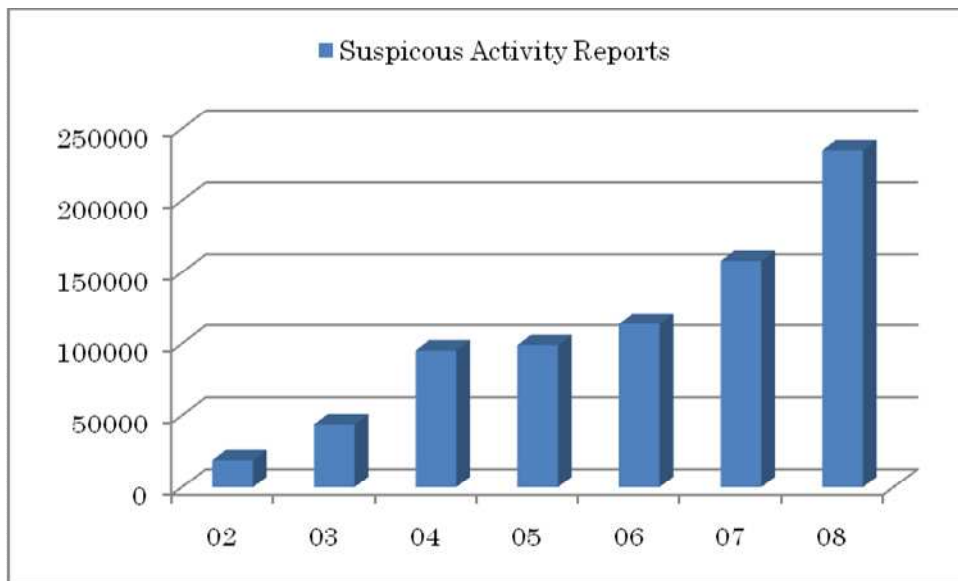
The first sub-category involves measures that prevent the funding of organized criminal groups. These include the exclusion of entities with links to organized crime from the market and the strengthening of money laundering investigations. Both activities have borne results as indicated below in figures 13 and 14.

Figure 13: Amount of forfeited assets and money laundering cases



Source: NPA

Figure 14: Number of suspicious activity reports

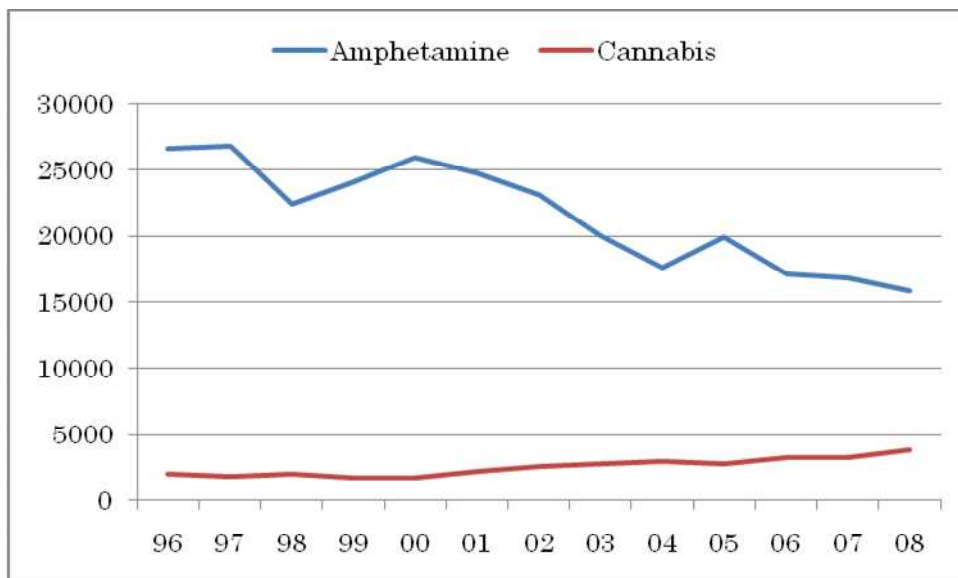


Source: NPA

Building a society that is free from both illegal drugs and firearms

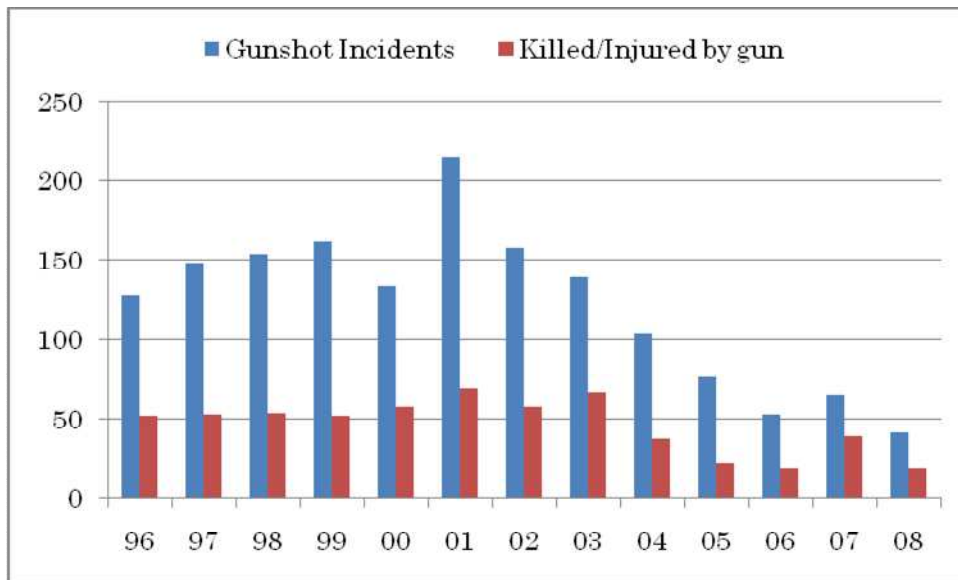
The actions taken in this sub-category emphasize both law enforcement activity and a national campaign against guns and illicit drugs. As figures 15 and 16 show, shooting incidents have declined, but illicit drugs still represent a serious problem.

Figure 15: Major illicit drug cases



Source: NPA

Figure 16: Shooting incidents



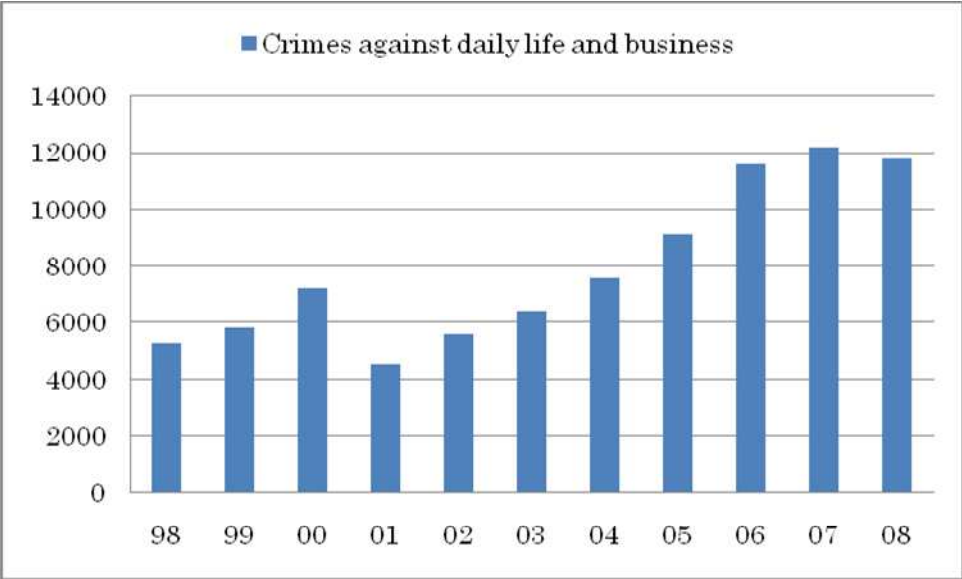
Source: NPA

Measures to protect the citizenry from crimes that threaten livelihoods and businesses

This sub-category includes measures aimed at preventing crimes that threaten livelihoods and business such as corporate fraud, loan sharking, and organized pirating of brand-name goods.

While the number of penal code crimes is decreasing overall, the above types of criminal activity are increasing, as shown in figure 17

Figure 17: Crimes such as corporate fraud, loan sharking, pirating of brand goods

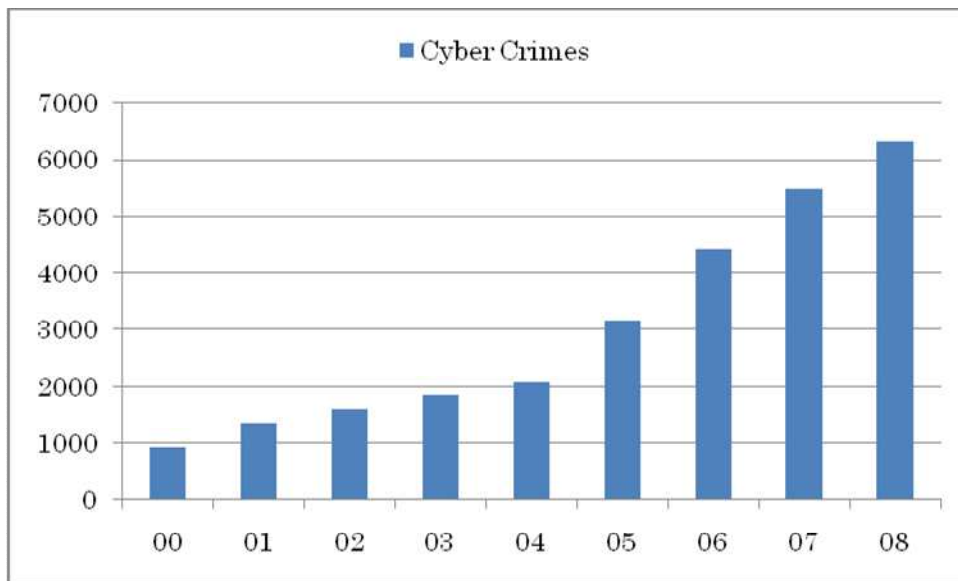


Source: NPA

Measures to protect against cyber crime

As computer networks have rapidly expanded, so has the number of cyber crimes (Figure 18). This sub-category’s major initiatives are a campaign to warn computer users about various modus operandi used by cyber criminals and the reinforcement of network systems security.

Figure 18: Number of cyber crimes



Development of fundamentals for public safety

The major steps taken in the fifth category include various measures aimed at increasing public safety. They include an increase in the number of law enforcement officers, the introduction of new border control systems, such as a biological identification system, and an expansion of prisons.

APCCS Supplemental program 1: National program to promote safe community building

Overview

The Japanese government created the program to promote safe community building nationwide as a program supplemental to the APCCS, which was adopted at the ministerial meeting on June 28, 2005. The program contains three major elements: promoting a national campaign for building safe communities, securing safety in these communities for children and residents, and the rebuilding of sound and attractive urban centers such as downtowns and entertainment districts.

Promotion of national campaign for building safe communities

Safe Community Building Day

The ministerial meeting decided to designate October 11 as Safe Community Building Day. Currently, the government holds various events on this day including a ceremony in which a member of the public is selected as having made an excellent contribution to building safe communities and is honored with an award from the Prime Minister.

Assistance to volunteer groups involved in community safety

There are five major factors that help support volunteer groups involved in community safety: information, training, enhancing partnerships, financial support, and equipment. First of all, with respect to information, the Japanese police, mainly through police stations and kobans, have long provided public information on suspected criminal activity. This information is distributed through such items as bulletins and community papers in order to promote community-based crime prevention activities. In addition, the police currently provide information to the public through websites and text messages. Members of the community can view geographic information systems (GIS), which show sites where crimes have occurred on maps. If members of the public subscribe to a text information service provided by the police on their cell phones, they can be notified immediately of general information regarding crimes, accidents, or police alerts.

Secondly, with respect to training, the police, in conjunction with local governments, provide training that includes advice on creating maps, leadership training, driving safety skills, and a vast array of additional activities that address crime prevention by the general public. The police supported training for 15,433 volunteer groups in 2008.

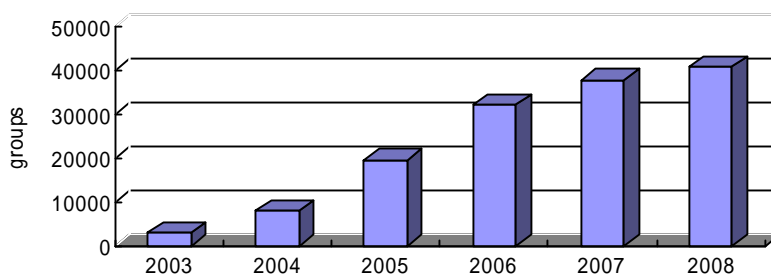
Thirdly, partnerships between volunteer groups and the police are promoted in various combined activities. In 2008, these activities have included patrols and seminars.

Fourthly, with regard to financial support, the NPA has taken a lead in establishing a financial support system for volunteer groups aimed at crime prevention. The police and local governments provide subsidies for office supplies, flashlights, caps, armbands, insurance, etc. The amount of support and the type of support given to these volunteer groups depends on the area in which they are located.

And fifthly, equipment is available for NGO use, as the police and local governments lend these organizations cars and office space for their activities.

In sum, these various types of support have helped the growth of volunteer groups enormously. Indeed, the number of these organizations had increased to 40,538 at the end of 2008, a tenfold increase over the number in 2004 (Figure 19).

Figure 19: The number of volunteer groups involved in crime prevention (2003-2008)



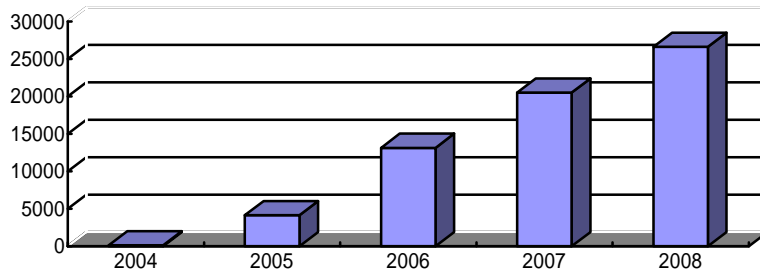
Source: NPA

Blue warning lights on volunteer patrol cars

In 2006, The NPA and the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport established a system in which volunteer patrol cars are allowed to use flashing blue lights. Volunteers wanted to use blue lights in a manner similar to police lights for their patrol cars. In Japan, emergency vehicles such as police cars and fire engines use flashing red lights.

As of December 2004, there were 120 volunteer patrol cars with blue warning lights. The number increased sharply after that and it reached 26,622 at the end of 2008, which is indeed more than 200 times the number in 2004 (Figure20).

Figure20: The number of volunteer patrol cars equipped with blue warning lights (2004-2008)



Source: NPA

Secure and safe communities for residents and children

This part of the program has been expanded into another independent program named the National Program to Protect Children from Crime. The details are presented in the following section: APCCS Supplemental program 2: National Program to Protect Children from Crime.

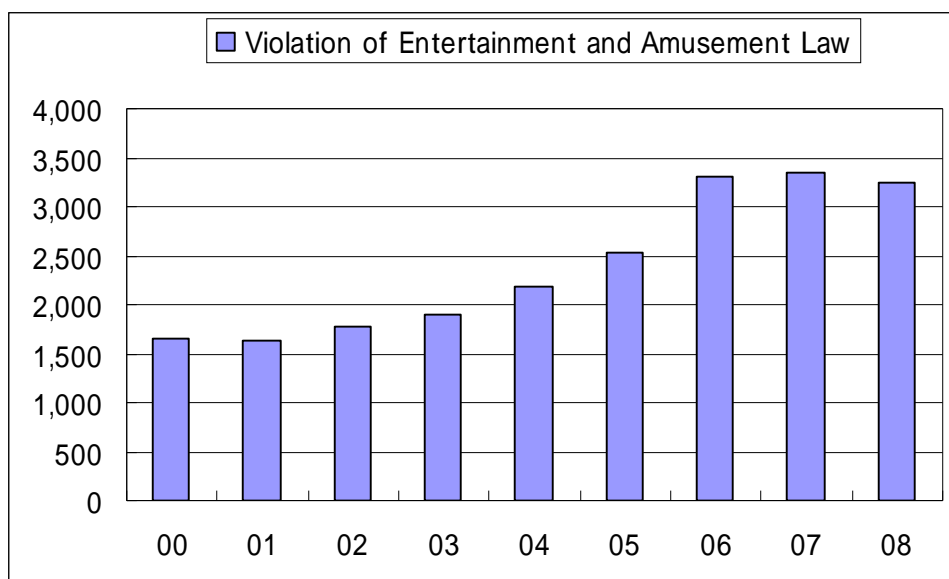
Rebuilding of sound and attractive urban centers such as downtowns and entertainment districts

Strict enforcement of laws designed to crack down on illegal adult-entertainment establishments, organized criminal groups, and illegal foreign workers

Illegal adult-entertainment establishments are a major root cause of aggravation in areas surrounding entertainment districts. They provide jobs for illegal foreign residents, and are a base for various entertainment related crimes such as prostitution, illegal pornography, gambling etc. Furthermore, organized criminal groups conduct fundraising by running these businesses or collecting protection money from the owners. More serious crimes occur in the course of turf battles among organized crime factions.

The key to enhancing the suppression of these activities is multi agency cooperation including information sharing and enforcement of any applicable laws that may be related to the adult-entertainment business. In practice, joint teams of the police, fire department officials and building code inspectors conduct intensive entries to check for suspected adult-entertainment establishments and enforce applicable laws and building code statutes. Those operations have steadily demonstrated positive results (Figure21).

Figure21: Violations of entertainment and amusement laws



Source: NPA

Elimination of criminal infrastructures

The purpose of this program is to prevent the formation of new illegal adult-entertainment businesses and organized criminal groups. The first step in this process is the proper management of tenants in commercial buildings. After any illegal adult-entertainment facility has been shut down, public authorities should assist building owners or management companies in order to avoid future use of their premises for this type of illegal business.

Secondly, strict enforcement of laws aimed at crimes committed by *boryokudan* groups. These activities include racketeering and real estate fraud in which offices or entertainment facilities are used for illicit purposes. The government and the association of real estate agencies recommend that building owners to provide a clause in any lease that allows the leaseholder to cancel the contract in cases where the involvement of organized crime has been exposed.

Thirdly, the police are currently sharing information regarding organized crime and illegal adult-entertainment businesses with related sectors in order to coordinate activities to reduce this type of crime in entertainment districts.

Steps taken to improve the environment in entertainment districts and surrounding areas, and the prevention of disorderly conduct

In cooperation with communities, authorities are conducting improvement initiatives in entertainment districts and surrounding areas such as the elimination of graffiti, prevention of illegal parking, removal of posters or stickers that advertise illicit businesses, and the organization of night patrols.

Based on an application of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED), the government has repaired roads to reduce illegal parking and put power lines underground in order to remove utility poles, thus cutting down on the amount of posters and stickers promoting illicit establishments and services. It has also installed closed circuit television monitoring systems and brighter street lamps, and provided subsidies to commercial facilities in order to help them construct graffiti-resistant walls.

From 2004 to 2008, the Tokyo metropolitan police department shut down more than one thousand illegal adult-entertainment establishments in four entertainment districts, which included 280 massage shops, 640 adult-video shops and 110 gambling halls.

APCCS Supplemental program 2: National program to protect children from crime

Overview

Along with the increase in the crime rate, the number of child victims has also unfortunately increased. In 2005, a series of cases which involved the murder of children⁸ shocked the people of Japan. Some of these victims were children kidnapped on the way home from the school.

Gravely concerned about the situation, people established volunteer groups nationwide to set up safety patrols for school children, and the national and local governments also took various measures aimed at protecting children from crime. The subject of children's safety was touched upon in the national program to promote safe community building and was then expanded into the National Program to Protect Children from Crime, which was created by the inter-ministerial committee for child safety (NPPCC) and endorsed at the ministerial meeting against crime on December 20, 2005.

The NPPCC focuses on school zone safety through comprehensive measures such as the establishment of a multi-agency committee for school safety, safety patrols and other volunteers, and practical education about safety issues for school children. These measures were seen as especially important because most public elementary schools are located within walking distance of students' homes and therefore most Japanese children walk to school.

Volunteers and public employees for school safety

The Ministry of Education created a "School Guard Project" comprised of volunteers who act as safety monitors for children on the way to and from school. Many community organizations, such as the PTA and the Senior Club, participate in the school guard project. About 205,000 volunteers have completed the school guard training course.

Schools and the police have special staff positions for school safety, namely, school guard leaders, who are employed by an educational committee, and school

supporters, who work part-time at local police stations. At the end of 2008, there were 2880 school guard leaders, and some municipalities inform these volunteers of the times when children are returning home from school through a public radio broadcast system.

110 house for children

The police have been promoting the “110 house for children project.” A 110 house is volunteer’s residence or a shop that displays a sign reading “110 house for children” and is available as a place where children can seek help in the case of an emergency. For example, if a child feels that he or she is being pursued by a suspicious person, this child can enter a 110 house and ask the residents for assistance. 110 is the emergency number in Japan, and it is similar to the number 911 in the U.S. in that it is an easily recognizable symbol. By the end of 2004, about 1.9 million houses had registered as 110 houses for children.

Safety education for children

Teachers, school guard leaders and police officers are all involved in providing safety education to children. One of the most effective elements of this education is the safety map program. In this program children draw maps that outline their neighborhood and their commute to and from school, this allows children to check areas that could be dangerous and learn to avoid potential threats. Children are given instructions on how to draw the maps by participants in this program who are knowledgeable about the community.

Legislations and guidelines for crime reduction

For the implementation of APPCS, necessary legislation and guidelines have been established. Major legislation and guidelines are as follows.

Local Ordinance for Safe Community Building

The first Local Ordinances for Safe Community Building (LOSCB) were enacted in Osaka prefecture in 2002. Osaka is second largest city in Japan and the rapid worsening of the crime situation pushed citizens and local assembly members into action. The goals of LOSCB are to prevent crimes and to rebuild community ties. LOSCB include long-term, comprehensive plans for crime prevention and clarifies the responsibilities of actors including local government, the police, the private sector and local residents. They support and promote crime prevention activities by these groups. LOSCB have been introduced gradually throughout Japan, and of the 47 prefectures in the country, 44 have enacted these types of ordinances as of February 2009.

Similar ordinances have been established in other municipalities such as cities and towns. These municipalities actively support activities by residents to prevent crime and participate in safe community building.

Table 3: The number and rate of municipalities that have established safe community building ordinances.

	2006	2008
Number of municipalities in which ordinances have been established	1020	1412
Rate of established ordinances (%)	65.3	78.0

Source: NPA

Safe community building guidelines for public facilities

Following the rapid increase in street crime and burglaries, the Cabinet Secretariat, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport and the NPA established the Inter-ministerial Conference for Building of Crime-resistant Towns (ICBCT). Previous to this, the NPA had coordinated an effort called CPTED with the concerned ministries and this effort evolved into a conference on the worsening crime situation. In 2003, the conference formed guidelines for local administrations, schools, the police and residents aimed at the development of safe public facilities including parks, public lavatories, streets, and parking areas.

The guidelines are summarized below.

1. Keeping public areas open to observation by installing bright streetlights and creating open sightlines in public spaces.
2. Making sidewalks, streets, and parking areas less open to criminal activity.
3. Enhancing the sense of community among local residents by encouraging volunteer activities such as cleaning up parks and public spaces.

Lock-picking Tools Prohibition Law

A sharp increase in the rate of burglaries was accompanied by a new modus operandi, namely lock-picking. Lock-picking is a way to open locks with various thin tools such as a long needle and it is much quieter than other ways of breaking and entering, such as smashing a window or prying a door with a crowbar.

To prevent burglars from using lock-picking equipment, the Japanese Government created the Lock-picking Tools Prohibition Law in 2003. This law prohibits the possession and carrying of tools designed for picking and tampering with locks. Additionally, it includes regulations on selling and supplying these materials and carries penalties for anyone who does so with criminal intent.

Certification system for crime-proof locks and related materials

The lock-picking tools prohibition law also includes a measure that promotes crime-proof locks by authorizing information sharing between the NPA and lock makers concerning crime prevention, and by obliging makers to show the ability of their products to prevent break-ins.

Analyses of home and office burglaries revealed that the main ways of breaking and entering residences and offices were to break locks or parts of entrance doors and windows – or to use unlocked doors or windows. Therefore, it is critically important to improve locks on doors and windows, as well as those on windows themselves, in order to prevent these types of burglaries.

The NPA led an effort to establish a conference of related organizations, both public and private, to begin an evaluation system for locks from the standpoint of crime prevention. If a lock is able to withstand a burglar's efforts to pick it or break it for more than five minutes, it is allowed to use the "CP" logo, which stands for "Crime Prevention." More than one hundred and forty thousand CP locks were made in 2008. A complete list of CP locks can be seen on the NPA website.

Crime prevention standards for convenience stores and supermarkets

In 2003, after a sharp increase in nighttime robberies occurring at convenience stores and supermarkets, the NPA, in conjunction with related ministries and the private sector, established standards for these stores designed to prevent such crimes. These standards recommend crime prevention measures such as requiring that more than two clerks be on duty during the night shift, recommendations and requirements for handling cash at stores, and building codes covering the structure and design of stores.

Certification system for apartment buildings with crime preventive functions

The Japanese police and the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport set up a system to insure that certified apartment buildings have crime-preventive functions and structures and can serve as “model crime-resistant buildings.” A public service foundation is charged with the certification of model crime-resistant apartment buildings. This foundation checks applicant apartment buildings to ascertain if they conform to guidelines that stipulate the design and structure of main entrances, areas for mailboxes, elevator halls, elevators, corridors, ladders, parking lots, front and backyard areas, security cameras and so on. The system was developed in December 2008, and since that time it has been implemented in 15 prefectures.

Statistical evaluation of APCCS

Relationship between crime and economic trend (unemployment rate)

As has been demonstrated by a number of investigations, the unemployment rate and the crime rate are positively correlated. Bushway & Reuter (2008) either suggested that a low employment rate increases the property crime rate. Lin (2008) found that a 1 percent increase in unemployment increases the property crime rate by 4 percent, without a corresponding relationship with the violent crime rate. Similar findings have been reported in Greece by Saridakis et al. (2009) and in Sweden by Öster et al. (2007). As can be seen in Figure 22, unemployment rate and the number of crimes in Japan are also highly correlated. Furthermore, it has been shown that the jobless⁹ rate of arrestees is also related to the unemployment rate.

Figure 22 Crimes and Unemployment Rate in Japan (1993-2008)

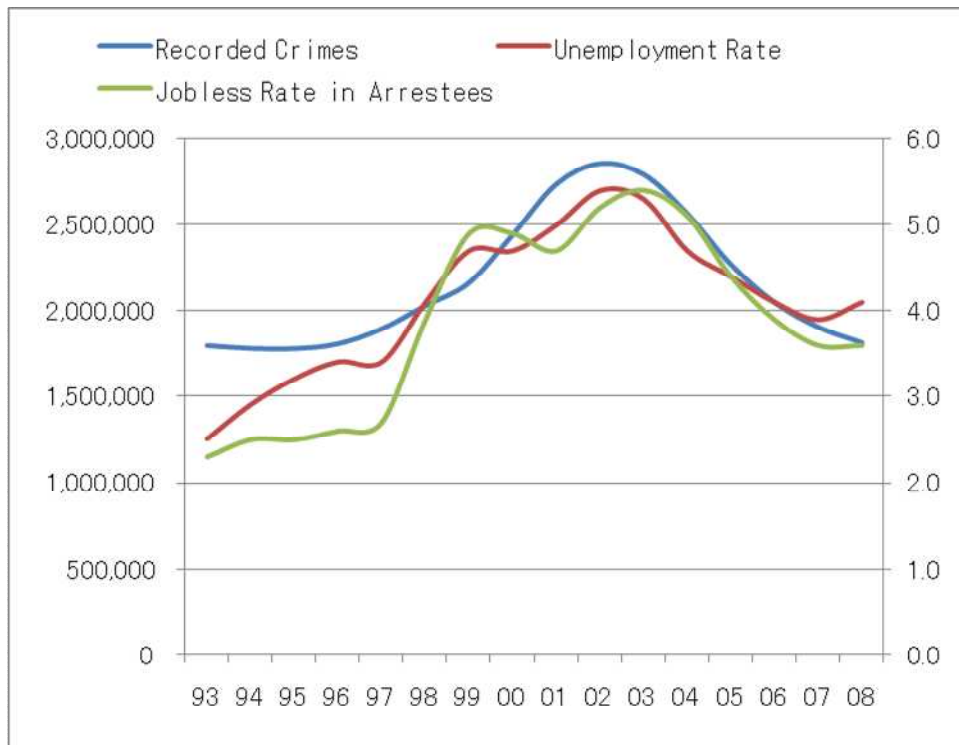


Table 4: Crimes and Unemployment Rate in Japan (1996-2008)

Year	96	97	98	99	00	01	
Recorded Crimes	1,812,119	1,899,564	2,033,546	2,165,626	2,443,470	2,735,612	
Unemployment Rate	3.4	3.4	4.1	4.7	4.7	5.0	
Year	02	03	04	05	06	07	08
Recorded Crimes	2,853,738	2,790,136	2,562,809	2,269,537	2,051,113	1,908,836	1,818,283
Unemployment Rate	5.4	5.3	4.7	4.4	4.1	3.9	4.0

Source: NPA and Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare

Governmental actions and decrease in crime

As mentioned above, faced with the sharp increase in crime, in 2003, the Japanese government began to promote a comprehensive program to reduce crime. As can be seen in Figure 22, the number of recorded penal code crimes decreased from 2003, just when the unemployment rate began to decrease. As it is known that economic performance is correlated with the crime rate, would it be possible to explain the decrease in the crime rate after 2002 as being caused by the increasingly strong economic performance? Or, was the government sponsored APCCS responsible for the drop in the crime rate? It is difficult to estimate exactly how much APCCS contributed to the decrease in crime. However, as can be seen from Table 4, from 1996 to 2002, crime rate increased by approximately 1.04 million cases and the unemployment rate increased by 2 percentage points. On the other hand, from 2002 to 2008, the crime rate decreased by approximately 1.04 million cases and the unemployment rate decreased by only 1.4 percentage points. If it can be assumed that the contribution of an increasing unemployment rate to an increasing crime rate is identical to the contribution of a decreasing unemployment rate to a decreasing crime rate, then some variable other than unemployment, that is equal to the effect of 0.6 percentage points of the unemployment rate might have worked to decrease the crime rate by 1.04 cases against a background of only a 1.4 percentage point drop in unemployment. Moreover, from 2003 to 2007 the unemployment rate continued to improve by 0.3 points a year on average, whereas the crime rate decreased yearly by 7.6 points per year on average. In 2008, unemployment rate increased by 0.1 points, however, the number of recorded penal code crimes decreased by 4.7 %. These discrepancies between the unemployment and the crime rate provide some evidence that the APCCS was successful in overcoming the negative effects of the economy on crime.

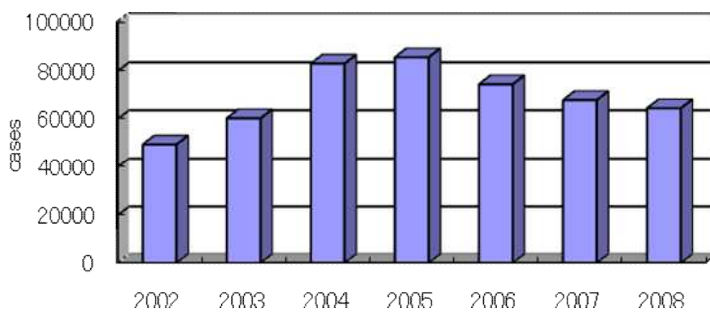
For the revival of the safest country in the world

A new threat against the society

During the 5 years term, the number of reported crimes decreased in every area except fraud. Fraud increased from 49,482 in 2002 to 67,787 in 2007. The reason for this was the rise of new modus operandi of fraud namely “*furikome*” – a type of fraud involving bank transfers. Furikome is to mainly aim at cheating the elderly out of their money by telephone conversation. Con-artists, pretending to be family members, call elderly residents and have them send money by ATM to a bank account created by these criminals (Appendix).

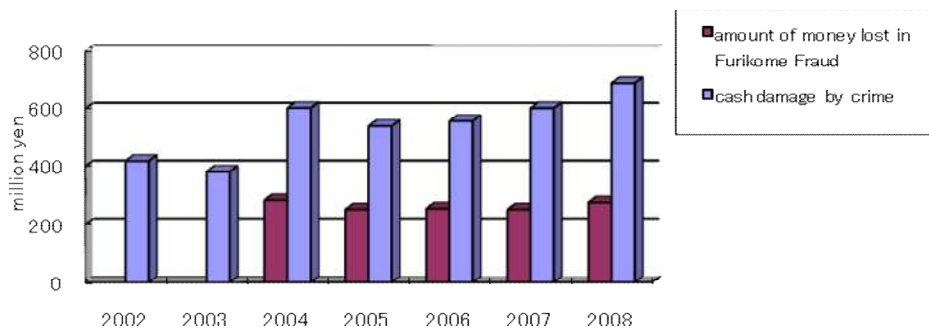
The seriousness of furikome is evident in the large amount of monetary loss that has been attributed to this crime. The average amount of money lost in this type of fraud was more than one million yen; about ten thousand US dollars. Furthermore, most of furikome crimes were committed by organized crime groups. Because they usually use mobile phones and bank accounts registered under false names, finding these criminals is rather difficult (Figure 23 and 24).

Figure 23 The number of fraud (2002-2008)



Source: NPA

Figure 24: The amount of money lost in furikome fraud and cash damage by crime (2002-2008)



Source: NPA

Gravely concerned, due to the seriousness of furikome, the Japan Police and other public and private sectors have been introducing various preventive measures. For example, an anti-furikome campaign, has reduced the limit on the amount of

money that can be transferred via ATM; it has instituted a warning signal at ATM windows that illuminates when people use the ATM to transfer money,; and finally, stricter regulations have been applied prevent to opening accounts and/or purchases of mobile phone purchase under a false name.

Revision of APCCS

Based on follow -up reports from each ministry regarding their implementation of APCCS and new criminal activities (e.g., rise of Furikome fraud), the ministerial meeting against crime revised their original action plan to create a crime-resistant society in December 2008.

The revised APCCS (APCCS2008) maintains the three viewpoints described in the former APCCS (APCCS2003), with reference to the remark of Frantz Von Liszt “A good social is the best and most effective criminal policy.” the 2008 ministerial meeting focused more on the background and social conditions that lead to crime in that it aimed to promote a wider range of, and a more continuous policy on crime deterrence. Therefore, the description of items changed from measures taken against crime and criminals to items that were more focused on society and potential victims of crime.

APCCS2008 is divided into 7 categories that include 172 actions. New categories refer to measures designed to protect against cyber crime and measures to protect against the threat of terror. Measures against cyber -crime were listed in APCCS2003 under the fourth category of, “Protection of economy and society from organized crimes,” but considering the current serious threat of cyber crime, this part has been expanded into a major category. Another new category, involving terror, was picked up because many of measures to protect against terrorism overlap with those that are aimed common crimes such as organized crime. The 7 categories are as follows:

- 1 Building of a society resistant to crimes which threaten daily life.
- 2 Building of a society which does not create criminals.

- 3 Coping with internationalization.
- 4 Protecting society from groups such as those involved in organized crime.
- 5 Building of safe cyber-space.
- 6 Protecting against terror threats.
- 7 Developing fundamentals to that can restore public safety.

In accordance with the shift in focus mentioned above, some new items were incorporated in ACCPS2008.

Thus, the first category now includes consumer protection from tainted food products – especially those obtained through fraudulent trade. The second category promotes social involvement for youths and the elderly and the third category promotes efforts to improve cohabitation with foreign residents, These last two categories are in reality social policy, but this inclusion of sectors of the public who are more at risk for potential criminal activity or to become the victims of crime is aimed at having preventives effects.

Conclusion

As stated above, APCCS2003 was a comprehensive plan for crime reduction that focused on suppressive and preventive measures. On the other hand, the more recent expansion of this into APCCS 2008 includes more fundamental policies for building a sound society. Although at first glance, these polices may seem more indirect, their purpose remains crime reduction and creation of a safe society and a sense of security for its citizens. Thus, it can be said that APCCS has developed from a policy plan focusing on crime prevention into a general social policy plan.

So far, in the field of social policy, employment or welfare policy have been major topics of interest, but recently policies focusing on crime and crime prevention have been recognized as an important factor in social development.

In conclusion, I would like to return to the famous quote from Frantz Von Liszt, “A good social policy is the best and most effective criminal policy”¹⁰. Because society and the modern world have become much more complicated than was true in the Liszt era, it is obvious that traditional criminal policies and criminal justice organizations alone cannot provide total solutions for crime problems. It is only with comprehensively crafted social policies and multi-agency efforts can we solve these problems.

Notes

¹ Offences provided in the Penal Code and recorded by the police except injury or death caused by negligent driving.

² Major street crimes: Street robberies and Purse-snatchings. Rapes, Indecent Assaults, Abduction Offences, Assaults and Extortion occurring in public places. Automobile theft, Motorcycle theft, Bicycle theft, Vehicle load theft, Vehicle parts theft and Vending machine theft.

Major break-in crimes: Burglaries and Breaking and entering robbery.

³ Major street crimes: Street Robberies and Purse-Snatchings. Rapes, Indecent Assaults, Abduction Offences, Assaults and Extortion occurring in public place. Automobile Theft, Motorcycle Theft, Bicycle Theft, Vehicle Load Theft, Vehicle Parts Theft and Vending Machine Theft.

⁴ Major break-in crime: Burglary, Break-in robberies and Trespassing.

⁵ *koban*: a police box is a base for community police officers. (Bayley 1976)

⁶ Defined as foreign nationals arrested or charged by the police not including foreigners who have permanent resident status and US military personnel.

⁷ The general word for Japanese organized crime groups, literally translated as ‘violence groups.’

⁸ At the end of 2005, three elementary school girls were killed in separate incidents. These crimes occurred in Hiroshima on Nov.22nd, in Tochigi on Dec.1st and in Kyoto Dec.10.

⁹ Jobless people include unemployed and homeless people based on the arrestees’ statement.

¹⁰ Jobless people include unemployed and homeless people based on the arrestees’ statement.

¹¹ Liszt, Franz von: Das Verbrechen als sozial-pathologische Erscheinung, in : von Liszt : Strafrechtliche Aufsätze und Vorträge, Bd.2, Berlin 1905,230, 246.

References

Bayley, David. H. (1976). *Force of order: Police behavior in Japan and the United States*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Bushway, Shawn D., Reuter, Peter (2002), "Labor markets and crime risk factors" Evidence based crime prevention. L.W.Sherman et al London: Routledge

Clarke, R.V. (1992). *Situational Crime Prevention Successful Case Studies*. Albany, NY: Harrow and Heston.

Kawai, Kiyoshi. (2009). *Hanzai ni tsuyoi shakai no jitsugen no tameno koudoukeikaku 2008 no suishin* [The Implementation of the 'Action Plan for the Realization of a Society Resistant to Crime 2008']. *Security Science Review*, 11.

Lin, Ming-Jen(2008), "Does unemployment increase crime?: Evidence from US data 1974-2000," *Journal of Human Resources* 43(2)

National Police Agency. (2008). *Keisatsu hakusho 2008* [White Paper on Police 2008]. Tokyo: Gyosei.

Öster et al.(2007), "Crime and unemployment in turbulent times," *Journal of European Economic Association*,5(4)

Saridakis, George, Spengler, Hannes(2009) "Crime deterrence and unemployment in Greece: A panel data approach," German Institute for Economic Research

Appendix. Typical *furikome* telephone conversation

(a conversation occurring in the afternoon)

[Mrs. Goodheart] Hello.

[Criminal] Hello, it's me, Mom.

[Mrs.G] Hi, John, How are you doing, well? Sounds like you caught a cold?

[C.] I caught a cold last week and I still have a sore throat. I just called to let you know my new mobile phone number. I lost my old phone last week. My new number is 090-123-4567.

[Mrs.G] OK. It's on my phone – I'll make a note of it.

[C.] Okay Mom Bye for now.

[Mrs.G] Bye, son.

(A couple of days later – 2:30 in the afternoon)

[Mrs.G] Hello,

[C.] It's me. John

[Mrs.G] Hi John, Are you getting better?

[C.] Yes, I think I'm almost over my cold. (in a serious tone) But...uh...Mom.

[Mrs.G] What happened son? Tell me.

[C.] Yeah, yes, I was in a car accident last month – it was my fault and I have to pay 2,780,000 yen by today. But I don't have all the money. If I can't pay today, they will sue me. Mom - can I borrow 1,000,000 yen?

[Mrs.G] Sure, son. I will send it to you right away.

[C.] Thank you very much, Mom. Today is the last day I can pay and the banks will close soon. So please send the money directly to the account of Mr. X, he's the man I owe money to. The account number is ABC bank xxxxxx.

[Mrs.G] OK. OK. Don't worry. I'm going to send it now.