

A Deviant Case of Deviance

Singapore

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Attempts to understand the etiology of crime, delinquency, and other forms of deviance have approached these complex phenomena in a number of ways.¹ In terms of the unit under study, these methods can be summarized as follows: (1) delinquent gangs (see, for example, Thrasher, 1927; Yablonsky, 1959; and Short, 1968) or other deviant groups, for example the Mafia (Lewis, 1964; Allen, 1962); (2) particular deviants, like marijuana users (Becker, 1963) or thieves (Sutherland, 1963); (3) particular types of deviants over time, such as sociopathic delinquents (Robins, 1966); (4) delimited areas of a city compared to other areas on rates of delinquency, crime, or mental illness (Faris and Dunham, 1939; Shaw and McKay, 1942; McKay, 1967); and (5) comparisons of crime rates for cities (Ogburn, 1935; Schuessler and Slatin, 1964). Studies of the total pattern of deviance within a city are lacking.² Such a study, with the goal

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of determining the overall patterning or profile of the many forms of deviance, would seek to elucidate the interrelationship of the varying role patterns.

This research strategy brings with it certain advantages and disadvantages. Those segments of the problem with which the researcher himself feels most "comfortable" on the basis of interest, training, and specialization are not necessarily the limits that should be accepted for the advancement of knowledge in the etiology of deviance. It is, indeed, a somewhat dangerous task for the researcher-theorist who specializes in drug addiction or alcoholism or mental illness to attempt research which would encompass all of these forms of deviance and more within the unit of study of the city. Furthermore, such an approach necessitates some knowledge of the cultural, historical, and structural context of the city, as well as the limitations of local data collection.

Despite their limitations, total profile studies have certain advantages over investigations of more limited units. First, comparisons of cities allow the application of "controls" to these "natural laboratories." Control is possible in that cities could be compared by varying those factors related to the etiology of deviance—e.g., degree of urbanization, industrialization, population composition, mobility, and family structures. Multifactor analysis could utilize data readily available from U.S. census reports on "input" factors commonly thought to minimize crime, such as the size of investment in police, welfare, and education. Thus, building upon the city unit, intercity analysis should allow for control of such variables. Second, intracity analysis of changes over time, such as massive redistribution patterns of deviance, could be utilized.

A few of the kinds of questions raised by this strategy can be suggested. Colonial power in Singapore and a number of developing countries has been, or is being, withdrawn. This fact has meant the opening up of political power and careers to local populations. Have such broad-scale role movements been accompanied by decreases in deviant roles among those segments of the population which have moved into the vacuum? Are there cases of cities experiencing rapid change through urbanization, industrialization, and mobility which are not accompanied by increasing rates of deviance? Are there cases in which the presence of diverse cultures or subcultures have not been associated with high rates of deviance? In particular, the deviant cases—the cities where the expected, according to current notions of causation, is *not* happening—provide the opportunity for the refinement of theories unable to meet the test of cross-cultural comparison. Third, it is thought that a study of the total structure of deviance within a city may provide insight into the reasons why one form of deviance has and will take preference over another.

Although questions have been raised about the validity of crime offense data, there are few areas of human behavior (other than births and deaths) in which such survey data are so thoroughly collected. A recent report utilizing criminal offense data states:

It is striking, and perhaps ironic, that offense history, with all the errors in record keeping and official subjectivity . . . should have greater predictive value . . . than the several measures of background, peer influence, and personality characteristics which were used, especially since the latter two have received the greatest amount of attention from social scientists and clinicians [Lubeck and Empey, 1968: 254].

It is suggested here that offense data can be utilized, within limits, to identify gross intercity differences in deviance and intracity patterns. Limitations of police accounts should be the subject of specific inquiry to set limits to these data. Such usage can help to elicit hypotheses and set the stage for further research in new directions.

The purpose of this paper, then, is to explore the feasibility of determining the profile of deviance in a case history of one city, Singapore. Data for this report were secured largely from personal interviews of eighteen official representatives of agencies of social control in Singapore.³ Although these data are contained in official reports, they do not constitute data hitherto published.

Singapore is a multiracial city, populated by immigrants. Despite urbanization and signs of increasing industrialization, there are indications that this city does not experience delinquency and crime on the sizeable scale of many other cities, nor does it show the sharp crime rises so commonly associated with urbanization in other parts of the world.

A number of signs of modernization, bureaucratization, and urbanization are evident in Singapore. Agriculture and related occupations constitute only 7% of the labor force; manufacturing, commerce, and service industries account for larger shares of the labor force (Seng, 1967: 91). With a population of just under 2,000,000, Singapore is one of the few Southeast Asian countries to voluntarily limit its birth rate. Rates declined from about 43 per 1,000 population in 1957 to 29 in 1966. Physical movement, along with a declining death rate, have played a role in Singapore's population growth from 938,100 in 1947 to 1,929,700 in 1966. This movement has been both among the major race-sex-age components of the population and between Singapore and West Malaysia (Seng, 1967: 59-61). Universal, free education brings attendance rates of persons aged 15 to 19 in schools up to 40 to 45%. "These compare well even against developed countries" (Seng, 1967: 95). Like many other cities in the world, Singapore is troubled with problems of youth unemployment, and it has high proportions of youth in its population. Youth constitute 40% of the total unemployment rate of 10.5% for the city. Those under 20 years represent 44% of the total population (Seng, 1967: 95-96), as compared to 40.8% in the United States 21 years old or younger (Thompson and Lewis, 1965). Low-cost government high-rise apartments house 30% of the population (Seng, 1967: 94).

The free port of Singapore, whose history began in 1819 with Sir Stamford Raffles, is composed of 78% Chinese and 12% Malay. Most of the remaining 10% are Indians and Pakistanis (Seng, 1967: 94). Out of these diverse immigrant

racess, it is the purpose of the government to create and give birth to “a congregation of culture,” “a national community”:

the communal isolations of the past will be overcome and will be replaced by a congregation of culture, in the sense that men and women will aim to be appreciative of creations of more than one of our cultural streams, and that the inter-fusion and adaptation of cultures which will reflect the pattern of Singapore will be accepted, encouraged and enjoyed . . . if, in Singapore, people of all races can live and work and play together in all intimacies of a national community, it has proved it possible [Thomson, 1967: 22].

The English, no doubt, have left a lasting imprint upon this recently independent city-state, but probably not decidedly upon the forms which deviance takes. For example, English law, English bureaucracy, and the English language remain in Singapore. The last, the language, may in an unanticipated way facilitate eventually a common culture which would otherwise be separated by diverse languages.

JUVENILE DELINQUENCY AND CRIME IN SINGAPORE

Data from official Singapore reports are subject to the same kinds of qualification as official reports in other countries. Changes take place over time in police arrest policies, the size and efficiency of the police force, recording practices, citizen responses to crime, and the like.

In general, it appears that there is more stability in the definition and police prosecution of “serious” or “major” crimes than for “minor” crimes. In the United States, “Class I” or “serious” offenses include homicide, forcible rape, robbery, assault, burglary, larceny over \$50, and auto theft. Police arrest policies are less likely to vary on these offenses than for drunkenness, gambling, prostitution, and other nonvictim crimes. Both in Singapore and in the United States, for example, public opinion hardly supports laws which could technically jail every person found making a bet (in many states) on the outcome of a game of cards in this country and on “English cards” and varied forms of dominoes in Singapore. Examples of changing definitions of crime in Singapore include “gaming” or gambling, drug use, and hawking. The last, selling of wares on the streets, has been very much part of the Singapore street scene for some time. Hawking has recently been eliminated as a crime. Other “opportunities” for crime may be “caused” by technological changes. Police in Singapore report that recent imports of bicycles and scooters in large quantities from Japan have meant sizeable increases in theft. The size of the police force has remained fairly stable over time in Singapore, although some changes are now envisaged.

Although the Singapore population has doubled in the last 20 years and youth constitute 44% of the total population, the number of juvenile⁴ arrests

shows relatively small fluctuations with a stable or slightly downward trend. This can be seen for the 18-year period 1950 to 1967 in Table 1. In 1957, the ratio of juveniles aged 7 to 15 years who were convicted (96% of those arrested) was reported to be only 1.18 per 1,000 for those under 16 years of age (Mohan, 1965-1966: 13). This compares to 20 per 1,000 appearing in juvenile courts in the United States, 18.5 per 1,000 in London, and 26.9 per 1,000 in Western Australia (see Monahan, 1960; and Middendorf, 1960). The problem of juvenile delinquency in Singapore, thus, appears to have considerably less magnitude than in other areas of the world.

During the period 1950 to 1967, the number of juvenile arrests in Singapore remained at a fairly static level, fluctuating from around 550 to 640 per year. This contrasts markedly with the gains for many American cities. Juvenile arrests for Class I crimes in the United States as a whole trebled (over and above the rise in population of youth aged 10 to 17) during the period 1960 to 1967 (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1968: 1). The peak years of juvenile arrests⁵ in Singapore were 1954 and 1955, reaching over 900 each year. Singapore officials see this rise as the result of May demonstrations and riots of Communist Chinese students, which were followed by security legislation and numerous arrests. About a hundred students, for example, were found illegally pasting posters. The students were "detained," according to official police reports. Another less

TABLE 1
NUMBER OF YOUTH ARRESTS IN SINGAPORE, 1950-1967

Year	Number
1950	544
1951	583
1952	573
1953	596
1954	955
1955	924
1956	583
1957	435
1958	343
1959	471
1960	640
1961	534
1962	558
1963	548
1964	471
1965	554
1966	640
1967	552

SOURCE: Annual Reports, Department of Social Welfare, Singapore.

notorious rise (640 arrests) took place in 1966. Officials attribute this fact to the rise of seven "loosely formed" Indian groups in one area of the city in which thefts and housebreaking take place. The development of such groups is at odds with the general impression held by officials of both the Welfare and the Police Departments of Singapore that juvenile crime is generally committed by individuals rather than by groups. Such a finding, if valid, deserves investigation, insofar as many American sociologists emphasize delinquent groups rather than delinquent individuals. There is, however, one major exception. Well-organized Secret Societies (SS) came with the Chinese to Singapore. The SS are involved in crimes such as extortion, major theft, and burglary. The great majority of offenses are reported for boys 13, 14, and 15 years of age (Mohan, 1965-1966). This contrasts with the more common frequency of 16- and 17-year-old juvenile offenders in the United States (Merton and Nisbet, 1966: 93). These age differences, no doubt, reflect differences in school attendance requirements. Singapore, in contrast with the United States, has not yet adopted compulsory school attendance requirements. Youth who have dropped out of school and who are unemployed contribute heavily to delinquency in both countries.

Recent trends in "major crimes" in Singapore are shown in Table 2. The category "major crime" is more inclusive than the category Class I or "serious crime" of the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation. Drug laws, for example, are similar in both countries, but such offenses are included in the count for the Singapore category and excluded from the U.S. definition. Neither country, on the other hand, includes arrests for drunkenness, the single most frequent

TABLE 2
CRIMINAL OFFENSES BY CATEGORY IN
SINGAPORE, 1963-1967

	1963	1964	1965	1966	1967
Offenses against persons	855	806	770	703	769
Offenses against property	3,123	3,152	3,423	3,056	3,303
Offenses against property without violence	9,439	9,440	10,460	10,337	10,953
Malicious injuries to property	55	118	40	29	34
Forgery and offenses against currency	6	2	2	2	2
Other sizeable offenses against penal codes	309	572	561	648	855
Other sizeable offenses against other laws	4,402	3,563	5,499	5,740	6,352
Totals	18,189	17,653	20,755	20,515	22,268

SOURCE: Crime in Singapore, Annual Reports (unpublished), issued by the Assistant Commissioner, Central Intelligence Department.

offense in the United States. Nor does either country include illegal gaming or gambling offenses. Minor offenses in Singapore are largely nonvictim offenses, including soliciting in public for immoral purposes, riotous or indecent behavior, abusive language, spitting in public, disposing of a dead body, and so on.

The number of "major" offenses in Singapore is 22,268 for 1967. The Baltimore (Maryland) and Washington, D.C., metropolitan areas have roughly the same population as Singapore. The number of Class I offenses (a less inclusive category than "major crimes" in Singapore) for these cities in 1967 is 79,830 and 76,327 respectively (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1968: 80-93). In other words, more than three times as many "serious" crimes occur in each of these American cities than in Singapore. Singapore seems to have relatively small proportions of "major" crimes. An American city (the size of Singapore) which exhibits a relatively low crime rate is Philadelphia (Pennsylvania). The crime rate per 100,000 population for Philadelphia is less than one-half that of the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area and about 35% that of the New York metropolitan area (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1968: 80-93). The number of Class I offenses in Philadelphia in 1967 was 30,371 (unpublished FBI data).

"Major" offenses in Singapore show a rise from 18,180 in 1963 to 22,268 in 1967, an increase of about 4.4% per year. For 50 selected small cities with populations in excess of 250,000, the average yearly percentage increase was 6.5; for 5 cities with a population between 750,000 and 1,000,000, the increase was 7.0 (President's Commission on Crime, 1966: 109). Baltimore shows an average yearly increase of 10.3; San Francisco, 10.6; and Milwaukee, 11.9% (President's Commission on Crime, 1966: 106-108). Thus, the rate of increase per year of major or serious crimes in recent years appears to be considerably smaller in Singapore than in a number of American cities.

"Offenses against property without violence" include theft and burglary, which are generally frequent types of offenses. "Crimes against property" in the United States as a whole show an increase of 91% during this period (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1968: 2). As may be seen in Table 2, such offenses did not show decisive increases in Singapore from year to year. Some 12,562 offenses are recorded for 1963 and 14,256 for 1967; this constitutes an increase per year of less than 3% in Singapore. Crimes against property increased 13% per year in the United States as a whole, an increase of more than four times that of Singapore during the same period.

"Offenses against persons" tend to show a rise in American cities and a decrease in Singapore for the period. Such crimes in the Southeast Asian city include "greivous [sic] hurt," consisting of rape at one extreme and "outrage of modesty" at the other. The latter offense may consist of jostling or pinching others in the street. Decreases are recorded for murder, kidnapping, and abduction.

Included in "other sizeable offenses against other laws," in Singapore record-keeping is infringement of the Dangerous Drug Ordinance. As in the United States, arrests are made for possession or peddling of drugs. Singapore is reported to have a relatively high arrest rate for offenses involving drugs; still its rate is lower than that for many other Southeast Asian countries (Gibbens and Ahrenfeldt, 1966: 91). There were 884 drug arrests in 1965 and 1,328 in 1968 in Singapore. This compares with 896 and 1,871 (unpublished FBI data) for Philadelphia. The most frequent form of drug addiction in Singapore is clearly that of opium.

Accurate data on drug addiction are difficult to obtain for any country. In 1954, the Customs and Excise Department estimated that there were 15,000 opium addicts in Singapore (Huat, 1957). In 1968, the Singapore Commissioner of Police reported 8,000 opium addicts. In addition, there are 2,000 addicts on morphine and 1,500 on ganja.

The habit of opium smoking once reached that of "almost a social custom" of hospitality, ritual, and elaborate equipment associated with wealth and status of the Chinese male. Its use takes on a folklore for the poor as well, with salutary effects for everything from sexual potency to relaxation, medication, and release from monotonous and grueling labor (Huat, 1957). In 1945 opium smoking was declared illegal by British proclamation. Opium use is reported to be dying out among the younger generations.

Current police reports include details on raids of opium dens and arrests. Lamps, pipes, and other equipment are seized. Relatively few arrests are made for the use of Indian hemp or morphine. Indian hemp (akin to marijuana) is reported to be used primarily by the Indian (often of low socioeconomic status) segment of the population and, to a lesser degree, by the Malay. Officials report surprisingly little use of marijuana or heroin. Considering that other elements of Western culture have been imported, they are at a loss to explain this phenomenon. Possibly the association of opium use with high socioeconomic status of the Chinese and of marijuana with the relatively low status of many Indians helps to account for this lag. Reacting to potential vulnerability to these drugs, the Singapore government is reported in mid-1970 to have banned imports of Western records which extol the Western drug culture, notably *Hair* and the music of the Beatles. Use of opium, of course, cuts across socioeconomic class lines. The same logic of association with status is often used to explain consumption of tobacco and alcohol in the United States by adolescents. These substances are here associated with adult status. Mauritius, in another part of the world, is also reported to have once confined use of hashish and marijuana to Indians. These drugs spread to other cultural groups at the time of French withdrawal from the country, with attendant increased political status of the Indian population (Gibbens and Ahrenfeldt, 1966: 123).

Alcoholism, on the other hand, is so infrequent in Singapore that it is not necessary to build even one ward in a hospital for the special care of heavy drinkers. Table 3 below shows diagnoses of various kinds of mental illness, including alcoholism, as reported by six outpatient clinics in the general hospitals of Singapore. Only three referrals for alcoholism were made during the year 1967.

In contrast to the association of high status with more widespread opium use, low status appears to be associated with the less frequent problem of heavy alcohol use. That segment of the Indian population once of the indentured labor class appears to be associated with drunkenness in the popular mind. The most readily available inexpensive drink is "toddy," manufactured from coconuts. Inconspicuous street shops with simple furnishings, frequented mainly by Indian adult males, are devoted to the sale of toddy. The government runs such outlets; the lack of private enterprise and profit motive in this sales system may account to some extent for minimal use of alcohol. Additional investigation, however, would be necessary to substantiate this line of inquiry.

Gambling is reported to be deeply rooted in Chinese culture. As in the United States, it is referred to as the "poor man's deviance." Chinese domino games are inexpensive and convenient to use on the household scene. Gaming legislation in 1936 made gambling an offense in Singapore. Chinese games played for stakes include Pai Kow, Mahjong, and See Sek, and the English legacy of "English cards." In 1965, arrests for these offenses numbered 2,873 and in 1967, 2,503 (unpublished data, Commissioner of Police). This compares with 8,554 arrests

TABLE 3
DISTRIBUTION OF MENTAL ILLNESSES IN THE
REFERRAL CLINICS OF GENERAL HOSPITALS IN
SINGAPORE IN 1967

Type of Illness	Percentage	Number
Neurosis	32.3	246
Schizophrenia	21.7	165
Manic depressive and involuntional melancholia	28.3	215
Organic dementia	3.8	29
Epilepsy	1.7	13
Mental deficiency	1.5	11
Personality disorder	.9	7
Alcoholism	.4	3
Homosexuality	.1	1
Other	9.3	71
Total	100.0	761

SOURCE: Unpublished records, Woodbridge Mental Hospital, Singapore.

for gambling in 1965 in Philadelphia and 6,827 in 1968 (unpublished FBI data). Enforcement problems in Singapore are probably similar to those in American cities. A bet on a bridge, poker, or domino game is not uncommon; arrests could not possibly keep up with practice in either country. Further, syndicates in the United States and the Secret Societies in Singapore capitalize on the distance between law and custom. In these situations, local police officers can neglect to enforce weak laws, or even cooperate with illegal groups.

Many aspects of Chinese culture may find a "naturally" compatible outlet in the form of gambling. Legalized forms of gambling reported to be "extremely popular among all races" include horse racing, the National Sweepstakes, and Toto. Space limits detail on the important role of Secret Societies in organized crime and delinquency in Singapore. One indication of the continued importance of these some 200 groups in Singapore is the fact that every local police station has attached to it a specialist in Secret Society activities. Monthly records of the Police Department give some indication of the nature of these activities in reported raids and arrests of occupants of gaming houses (lotteries and horse-betting), opium dens, and brothels. Various business enterprises are also controlled, as reputedly the collection of "swill" or garbage. Extortion of business is frequent.

Earlier in the history of Singapore, Secret Societies served as welfare agencies for new immigrants, helping members in times of distress and need (Comber, 1961). Since World War II, the racial character of membership is reported to have changed somewhat. The Chinese "stream" (Chinese language used by Chinese in the school system) is reported to have less heavy participation in the SS and relatively greater involvement in politics since the withdrawal of the British. The "English stream," of English-speaking Chinese youth, are reported to be more heavily involved in Secret Society activity in recent years. Some Malay and Indian members are also reported. Additional research would be necessary to verify the changing roles of various socioeconomic and racial groups in Singapore and to evaluate them as results of differential group response to wide-scale opening up of structured opportunities for legitimate political and power roles in Singapore society. The repercussions of these changes on access to organized illegitimate opportunities for others also requires further research.

In summary, data on the city-state of Singapore exhibit contrasts in size, increase, and patterning of crimes as compared to some American cities. Rates and increases in crime appear to be relatively low in spite of urbanization, mobility, and a multiracial situation. Crimes of property and of person appear to be minimal; they do not show the decisive increases of many American cities in recent years. In the area of "minor" crime, there is evidence that gambling (dominoes) is frequent, whereas drinking is minimal. Opium addiction, although a favored form of deviance in the past, does not appear to be on the increase.

MENTAL ILLNESS

There is one public mental hospital in Singapore. Table 4 below shows the number of patient admissions, discharges, and total number of patients hospitalized as of December 31 each year, for the period 1955 to 1967. Gradual increases in admission are shown beginning with 1,433 admissions and ending with 2,990 admissions in 1967, showing a total population in December of 2,671. Rough approximations for purposes of comparison with readily available data indicate that Singapore has minimal rates of mental illness. The rate of hospitalized mental patients per 100,000 population in the early 1960s is about 100 per 100,000 for Singapore. This compares with a rate in midtown Manhattan of 664 for the lower class, 442 for the middle class, and 202 for the upper class (Srole et al., 1962: 241-243).

Table 5 gives numbers and percentages of admissions by race to Woodbridge Hospital for the period 1962 through 1967. It should be noted that there is some imbalance in racial representation. Chinese constitute 74.4% of the total population and 76.8% of the hospital admissions. Indians, however, constitute 8.2% of the population and 15% of the hospital admissions, almost double the numbers to be expected on the basis of population. Malays, on the other hand,

TABLE 4
ADMISSIONS AND DISCHARGES, WOODBRIDGE
HOSPITAL, SINGAPORE^a

Year	Admissions During the Year	Discharges During the Year	Patients Remaining in Hospital as of December 31, excluding Patients on Leave
1955	1,433	1,251	1,954
1956	1,738	1,538	2,066
1957	1,853	1,540	2,269
1958	1,552	2,100	1,643
1959	2,043	1,828	1,811
1960	2,376	2,095	2,032
1961	2,558	2,186	2,092
1962	2,799	2,092	2,136
1963	2,710	2,235	2,289
1964	2,681	2,138	2,481
1965	2,744	2,847	2,411
1966	2,984	2,664	2,442
1967	2,990	2,610	2,671

SOURCE: Woodbridge Hospital, Singapore.

a. Lower numbers in 1958 and 1959 were due to the then prevailing "hard line" policy of forceful discharge of patients.

TABLE 5
DISTRIBUTIONS BY RACE FOR WOODBRIDGE
HOSPITAL ADMISSIONS, 1962-1967

Year	Race							
	Chinese		Malay/Indonesian		Indian/Pakistani		Other	
	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)
1962	77.7	2,172	6.2	175	14.1	394	2.0	54
1963	77.2	2,091	6.9	188	14.2	384	1.7	47
1964	76.2	2,054	7.6	204	14.2	381	1.6	42
1965	76.5	2,101	6.8	186	14.6	403	2.1	54
1966	75.4	2,248	7.6	244	15.0	455	2.0	57
1967	76.8	2,299	7.6	226	14.0	419	1.6	46

SOURCE: Woodbridge Hospital, Singapore.

constitute 14.5% of the total population and only 6.5% of admissions. Roughly the same ratios are found for the psychiatric clinic populations. The report of Woodbridge Hospital suggests that the disproportionate number of Indian-Pakistani admissions is "probably due to social stress, e.g., less family cohesion and more unstable population. Lower Malay/Indonesian percentage . . . is probably due to less faith in western methods of psychiatric care. They are also less in general hospitals" (unpublished report, Woodbridge Hospital, Singapore). A report by Murphy, an American psychiatrist, however, concluded (1954: 302-303) that the Malaysians in Singapore "do genuinely have a low rate of mental disorder." Murphy's report indicates that Indian rates of juvenile delinquency are three to four times those of the other two groups, and that the Indian suicide rate in Singapore is "unusually high." This study of Singapore reports: "The categories which show the least mental disorder are clearly those not associated with wealth and prestige . . . but those associated with least effort and least initiative" (Murphy, 1954: 306-307). The author's interpretation of the low rates of mental illness for the Malays is as follows: "Their special attitude toward material success and attainment (they are *not* achievement-oriented) may be a more important factor in that culture than attachment to rural village life" (Murphy, 1954: 309). In other words, the Singapore Malay appear to maintain a set of values and goals outside the general culture, thus, perhaps, minimizing the "necessity" of deviance when societal goals are not attainable. These authors have highlighted a difference in patterns of mental illness in Singapore, as compared to those of the United States. In the United States, the poorer socioeconomic classes have shown relatively high rates of psychoses (Hollingshead and Redlich, 1958).

SUMMARY AND HYPOTHESES

Official data on crime, delinquency, and mental illness for Singapore indicate that—in comparison with selected cities in the United States—these problems are of relatively limited proportions in the Southeast Asian city-state. Furthermore, crime does not show substantial increases over time in Singapore.

The case of deviance in Singapore poses a number of theoretical dilemmas. It is a land of recent immigrants, of relatively high internal and external mobility, yet it appears to have “contained” deviance. It is a city of strong racial and socioeconomic cultures, yet it does not appear to produce deviant subcultures, with the notable exception of Secret Societies. It has low per capita income as compared with the West, yet it has relatively low rates of crime, delinquency, and mental illness. The music, dance, and costume styles of Western youth have been diffused to Singapore, but not the heavy use of heroin, marijuana, and alcohol.

What hypotheses can be formulated to explain the apparent containment of deviance in Singapore?

Although a unidimensional theory of a complex situation may facilitate empirical testing, a one-sided theoretical explanation of the relatively low incidence of deviance in Singapore would slight the several factors at work and would be premature at this point. Research to determine the relative importance and relationship of the various factors remains to be done.

The propositions presented below represent the view of the writer. Opinions of those interviewed on the scene will be stated as such.

(1) Segregation of cultures, although fraught with many other costs, is hypothesized to minimize deviance in Singapore. Only fragmentary evidence is available on this point for Singapore and other cities. It is government policy in this city-state to mix cultural groups in public housing estates. One report on problems of teen-age girls in Singapore notes increased “insecurity” in these estates. The phenomenon is attributed to lack of gradual assimilation of varied cultures (Maria Stella School, 1965). Similarly, experience in Israel in fostering active cultural integration brings about “widespread social maladjustment” (Gibbens and Ahrenfeldt, 1966: 163; see also Sallenburger, 1968). A Honolulu study notes low rates of delinquency in concentrated areas of Japanese population as contrasted with higher rates in mixed areas (Gibbens and Ahrenfeldt, 1966: 147). Savitz arrived at the conclusion that “it may be that the negative features generally attributed to immigration come into play only when the . . . creation of some ghetto-like neighborhood is not permitted the migrant population” (Wolfgang et al., 1962: 204). It is obvious, however, that not all segregated communities minimize deviance. What is it about particular ghettos that does?

(2) It may be recalled that the Chinese constitute over 75% of the population of Singapore. Low delinquency rates among the Chinese elsewhere are attributed to cultural patterns which emphasize "strong and stable family settings" organized on a hierarchical basis, extended family structure, and extremely tolerant and affectionate attitudes of Chinese mothers toward their babies (Gibbens, and Ahrenfeldt, 1966: 146). Others characterize the Chinese family in Singapore as having a "pervading sense of responsibility [to family] . . . restricted . . . emotional relationships and expressions . . . loyalty . . . is at the core," and emphasize "respect for tradition," "owing everything to one's family," and the conviction that "man is made for work" (Maria Stella School, 1965: 135-138). Such factors as family solidarity, controlled rationality, and clearly defined norms may be some of the dimensions at work which facilitate socialization and tend to minimize deviance.

(3) Discontent with economic opportunities is hypothesized to maximize deviance, not in terms of absolute levels, but levels relative to expectations. The yearly per capita income of Singapore citizens in 1965 is estimated at \$500 (in U.S. dollars) as reported by the United Nations (Simpson, 1968: 30-31). Compared to the figure of \$2,893 for the United States, this is low. However, it is high in comparison to Mainland China with \$147 per capita yearly income; Malaysia, \$257; India, \$86; and Pakistan, \$89. Singapore constitutes a city-state of immigrants from these latter countries. Perhaps memories of the past and accounts of the present make it obvious to Singapore citizens that they, in comparison with their Southeast Asian neighbors, are well off economically.

City officials are acutely aware of the necessity to maintain Singapore's economic advantages and to continue to open up the opportunity structure to citizens if the state is to maintain its tiny viability in an area of national giants. The government gives high priority to increased access to education and technical training, and to the encouragement of new industry and trade which, it is hoped, will yield additional jobs.

(4) Observers on the scene emphasize the heavy increase in services offered by a socialist state to its citizens as a factor in minimizing delinquency. Numerous schools, community centers, and high-rise public housing units have been built. The last aims especially at replacement of slums in high-density, high-crime areas. It appears, however, that such efforts on the part of governments in recent times may be a mixed blessing, insofar as unplanned aspects of these developments may be associated with increased deviance, as has been shown. Additional data on this point should be collected and compared with other cities.

Some 187 community centers are scattered throughout the city. A few official observers think such centers function as recreational and community neighborhood gathering places, minimizing deviance by providing alternative activities for youth and by fostering neighborhood cohesion. Other, more caustic

observers look upon these centers as a source of political control in a one-party democratic political system.

(5) Universal military training (“giving our youth a home, a uniform, and hard discipline”) is required of youth in a society which describes itself as “rugged.” This, plus the guarantee to returning youth of a job, would appear to promise, in theory at least, a role in society for that large number of male adolescent youth who find themselves unwanted, unneeded, and powerless in so many cities today.

(6) Military and political emergencies form a backdrop to a systematic clampdown on both Secret Society and Communist activities. The former is provided for in security legislation known as the Criminal Law (Temporary Provision) Ordinance of 1965. This law allows for the detainment of suspects in those cases with sufficient evidence, as defined by the arresters. Confidential statements of witnesses are used. Such procedures have been reported to “contain” the problem of SS influence. No one believes, however, that the problem of Secret Societies is likely to be eliminated. Communist subversion of juveniles, especially in the Chinese-speaking schools, is estimated to have decreased. Those adults suspected of being Communists are detained in prisons. Youth so identified are dismissed from school. Some social workers feel that the latter policy may add to, rather than subtract from, the size of the delinquency problem.

(7) The goals and values present among the low-economic-status Malay tend to be at variance from those of the larger Chinese element of the society. This tendency provides separate avenues of achievement. Thus, the lack of attainment of Chinese goals does not appear to lead to excessive stress or deviance among the Malay.

(8) Is the peculiar distribution of crime in Singapore—the minimal amount of alcoholism and “serious crime” and the predominance of drug addiction and gambling—a factor which has repercussions on crime distribution? For example, does widespread popular acceptance of minor forms of gambling (dominoes, in this instance) help to minimize release of stress through more serious forms of property and personal crime? This is a line of inquiry that further city comparisons could elucidate. Police enforcement practices would be an important variable in such an analysis.

This discussion, then, points to a combination of factors which contribute to the containment of deviance in Singapore: (1) the internal strength of the cultures; (2) strong family structures, which help to bring about socialization; (3) a tenuous balance of increasing educational and economic opportunities; (4) the sound economic position of Singapore as compared to that of other Southeast Asian countries; (5) provision of positive roles for a large youthful population; (6) the application of stringent external controls upon groups suspected of fostering deviance, mainly Secret Societies and Communists; and (7) the existence of

values and goals varying from those of the larger society among a minority racial group which does not share in high socioeconomic status.

This paper asks "Why do particular peoples show particular patterns of deviance?" Individuals and groups are obviously biased and stylized even in their choice of deviance. City-by-city studies of the profiles of deviance can help to yield insight into the elusive question of why deviance takes its particular form, a question about which social science currently has little to say. This research points to the spread of those forms which have been historically associated with high status.

It is recommended that further studies be made of the total shape and patterning of deviance in other cities. Such a research strategy can contribute to the clarification of competing theories of deviance through a macro-view of cities and can furnish fresh problems and directions for research. Although comparisons must be made with caution, this strategy can point up differences in gross orders of magnitude of deviance and of internal differences in city profiles of deviance.

Finally, it is suggested that deviance should be viewed in terms of systems of interacting legitimate and illegitimate⁶ roles of the larger society. A city can be looked upon, in line with Parsons' (1951) view, as a system, an organization of social roles bound together through regular interaction and interdependence. This system is mediated by culture. To more fully understand deviance and, perhaps, to be in a better position to predict changing styles of deviance, it appears necessary to take into consideration these interacting aspects of roles and the impact of changing patterns upon deviance distribution. This article represents only a small beginning, insofar as it raises questions and suggests some of the kinds of interactions seen in Singapore.

NOTES

1. This paper suggests that deviance may be conceptualized as an interactive system of role opportunities within the city. The present investigation focuses on Singapore, a city with comparatively low indices of deviance. Data on deviance in Singapore, their hypothetical bases, and their implications for sociological theory are discussed.

2. An early study of patterns of crime and delinquency in New York City is contained in Halpern et al. (1934). An early study utilizing crime rates for comparative purposes is that of Ogburn (1935). A more recent study, similar in scope, which utilizes major offense rates for comparative purposes is Schuessler and Slatin (1964).

3. Representatives of the following government agencies were interviewed: Central Intelligence Department, the Commissioner of Police, Probation Department of the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Homes and Women Sections of the Social Welfare Department, the Gimson School for Boys, Boys' Town, the Mt. Emily School for Girls, Toa Payoh Girls' Home, Marymount School for Girls, Woodbridge Mental Hospital, and the Opium Addiction Center at St. John's Island.

4. A juvenile is defined under Section 2 of the Young Persons Ordinance as "a male or female person who in the opinion of the court is seven years of age or upwards and under the age of 16 years." The increase in the juvenile population between the years 1947 and 1957 is reported to be 57.1% (see Mohan, 1965-1966).

5. Women and girls in "moral danger" are not included in juvenile arrests. They come under special jurisdiction of the Girls and Women Section in the Labor Department. Boys, however, constitute almost 98% of convicted juveniles in Singapore.

6. For a full discussion of other aspects of the relation of illegitimate opportunities to legitimate ones, see Cloward and Ohlin (1970).

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