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"BUSINESS (CRIME) AS USUAL" IN WARTIME CONDITIONS AMONG OFFENDERS IN ISRAEL

Yael Hassin* and Menachem Amir**

INTRODUCTION

For nineteen days, from October 6 to 24, 1973, Israel was engaged in the fifth defensive war since her establishment. On the home front many immediate changes took place, such as mobilization of the population, disruption of routines, and organizational activities (including those of social control agencies). A spirit of patriotism and volunteerism permeated the entire country, giving credence to the assertion: "The whole country is a battle-ground."

Aims of Study

The main purpose of the present research was to identify and differentiate several aspects of crime patterns during the war and to compare them with the same phenomena during an identical period during two control years preceding the war. In other words, the research sought to ascertain whether members of the criminal population decided that, despite the war, "business would be conducted as usual," or whether these criminals halted, or altered, their usual criminal activities.

The following hypotheses were formulated:

- (1) The total amount of crime declined during the war.
- (2) There were qualitative changes in the pattern of specific categories of crime during the war

Decision and Methodology

Previous literature dealing with war and crime presented the researchers with serious theoretical and methodological problems. The available literature was found to be unsuitable for purposes of comparison. Not only do we find that each war varies in duration, scope and consequences, but the phenomenon of crime (the dependent variable) also shows no consistency. This lack of uniform criminal behavior does not permit comparisons to be drawn to the Israeli scene as to rates of crimes, types of

offenders and offenses, source of data, or method of computation.

Sources and Collection of Data

The data for this research was derived from the daily reports on criminal offenses compiled by the police, rather than from official crime statistics. The latter have been considered unreliable by some scholars,¹ in addition to being less complete than police records.² Similar data covering a similar time span was also gathered for two control years (1969 and 1971). In order to examine trends in the patterns of crime immediately prior to the war the same reports were also checked for the two weeks preceding the war (September 22 to October 5, 1973). Tables (I-II) show the distribution of crimes (in percentages) for each of the periods examined.

Four types of crime were analyzed:

- (1) Crimes against the person;
- (2) Crimes against property;
- (3) Auto theft;
- (4) Miscellaneous (sexual, victimless, and financial crimes).³

FINDINGS

Hypothesis 1

Hypothesis 1, which states that the total amount of crime reported will decline during the war as compared with the two control years, is supported. There was a one-third decrease in the amount of crime reported during the war. This decrease is also

¹T. SELLIN & M. WOLFGANG, *THE MEASUREMENT OF DELINQUENCY* (1964); Sutherland, *War and Crime*, in *AMERICAN SOCIETY IN WARTIME* 185 (W. F. Ogburn ed. 1943).

²M. WOLFGANG & B. COHEN, *CRIME AND RACE* 18 (1970).

³This report does not include data on road accidents which rose well above the ordinary daily average. Nor, at this stage of the study, is there any discussion of fraud or other crimes of this sort including white collar crimes, nor is there any presentation of Black Market activities or profiteering, since complaints about such offenses in Israel are reported to the Price Control Authority in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

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reflected in the crime rates, *i.e.*, the ratio of the population increase by years to the number of crimes reported for each year.⁴

However, calculation of temporal patterns reveals that despite the already existing differences in the amount of crime, after the 6th day of the war there appears to be a marked increase in almost all categories of crime. This increase from the existing daily average appears to be largely due to the increase in auto-thefts. ($\chi^2 = 11.0350$; d.f. = 4; $p < .05$). However, the increase is also notable for other crimes. Several statistical tests were conducted to check the hypothesis that there was no increase in the number of offenses during the war period as compared to the same categories in 1971.⁵ Again, the result points to the fact that there was a significant increase of offenses during the war period as compared to the same period in 1971. In fact, comparing the average for the first five days of the war to that for the fourteen days before the war, there is a difference of 56.1 crimes per day, whereas from the fifth day of the war the difference is far smaller remaining at an average of 29.6 crimes per day. Although the increase is moderate, no such trend is apparent in the control periods.

Hypothesis 2

Analysis of the aforementioned categories of crime reveals the following:

Crimes Against the Person. An analysis of crimes within this category shows that 43.1 per cent of all such crimes during the war were cases of simple

⁴The rates for the population were estimated according to data in CENTRAL BUREAU OF STATISTICS, STATISTICAL ABSTRACTS OF ISRAEL, NOS. 21, 23, 24 (Jerusalem, Israel).

⁵The tests used were: (a) the Bartolomeo Test which was conducted on four groups of days (N 19) when the number of offenses assume a Poisson distribution. The Statistical Value was 11.039 and the Critical Value on the level of 0.05 was about 9.411; (b) The Bartolomeo B. Test. In this test the last three days in the period examined were omitted since they pull the trend upward. The S.V. was 11.92 and the C.V. on the level of 0.05 was 9.065; (c) Another Bartolomeo B. Test (with different divisions of the 19 days). The S.V. was 10.133 and the C.V. on the level of 0.05 was 9.574. In all of the above three tests the Ho hypothesis is rejected, *i.e.*, there is a significant increase in the number of crimes during the war period as compared to the same period in the comparative year of 1971; (d) The Mann-Whitney Test. The S.V. was 3.2347 and the C.R. of the distribution of a significant level of ½ per cent was 2.575. Again the results point to the fact that there was a significant increase of offenses during the war period, as compared to the same period in the comparative year of 1971.

physical violence, with no use or threat of firearms. This type of behavior also appeared most frequently in the control years (1969—59.3 per cent; 1971—59.5 per cent; 1973, before the war—57.6 per cent). Offenses with the use of weapons comprised the second most frequent category during the war, as well as during all three control periods (1969—11.2 per cent; 1971—13.5 per cent; 1973, before the war—14.1 per cent; 1973, war-time—17.2 per cent). No consistent picture was seen in the other sub-categories of this type of crime, such as the use of firearms, kidnapping, etc., for the periods examined.

There are no reports of threats, assaults, or acts of violence against the Arab minorities within the borders of the State, although it may well be that if such crimes did occur, they were not reported to the police. The analysis thus shows that while there is a decrease in the volume of crimes against the person, no changes in the patterns of crime were found.

Crimes Against Property. There was an increase in crimes against property from the sixth day of the war. The majority of crimes against property were burglaries: burglaries constituted 55.6 per cent of all crimes in 1969 while other crimes against property constituted only 7.7 per cent. In 1971, 55.8 per cent of all crimes against property were burglaries and 10.2 per cent consisted of other crimes against property. In 1973 during the prewar period, burglaries comprised 53.8 per cent of all crimes, while other crimes against property constituted 16.9 per cent. Finally, during the war in 1973 burglaries were 42.1 per cent. Thus, there was a significant drop in the total number of crimes against property during the war, which may be explained by the sharp decrease in burglaries.

Three different types of burglary were considered: (1) home, (2) business offices and other institutions and, (3) stores and building sites. Analysis of inter-categorical differentiation shows a variance in the pattern observed in 1971 and 1973 (before the war) as compared with the war period. In the two former periods, most of the burglaries were of private homes (1971—50.8 per cent of all burglaries; in 1973 before the war—50.0 per cent of all burglaries), while during the war only 37.1 per cent of all burglaries were of homes.

Burglaries from institutions and business establishments took second place during the control years (1971—45.1 per cent; 1973, before the war—35.8 per cent); while this type of burglary was the most frequent during the war (48.9 per cent; $X^2 =$

145.5868; d.f. = 4; $p < .001$). The third subcategory of burglaries (from stores and building sites) remained in third place during all periods examined. Burglaries during the war were mostly thefts of small items (jewelry, transistor radios, groceries, cigarettes, etc.), or small amounts of money. There were almost no reports of thefts of building materials, specifically cement, which had been extremely scarce in Israel before the war and which had been the main target of burglaries from stores and building sites prior to the war in 1973. Informal police information indicates that any thefts of building material during the war were committed by Arabs, whose vehicles were not taken by the army. Therefore, in the category of crimes against property, there was a decrease in the volume, as well as changes in the pattern.

Auto Thefts. Police reports show that most of the stolen vehicles were private passenger cars, which were later recovered unharmed. While in all other subcategories of crime there was a numerical decrease of about 30.0 to 50.0 per cent, auto theft is the exception. In 1969 auto thefts constituted 23.9 per cent of all crimes, in 1971—23.0 per cent, in 1973 (pre-war)—16.0 per cent. During the war, they rose to 34.9 per cent of all crimes, a unique increase when compared with other categories of crime. The in-

crease in volume and changes in patterns of this offense will be discussed later.

Miscellaneous Offenses. The "miscellaneous" category was divided into offenses against morality, victimless crimes, financial offenses, and crimes against public order. Table I indicates that comparison with the control periods shows no significant difference.

All Crimes

Table II displays the frequency pattern of these offenses.

In sum, while the general pattern of all four categories of crime remains the same throughout the periods studied, it appears that there are changes in the relation between the various crimes. During the war there was a pronounced decrease in crimes against property, while there was a marked increase in auto thefts. Further comparison of the distribution of crimes during the control periods shows meaningful and significant differences; the greatest contribution to the difference comes from the changes in the amount of auto theft. Examination of χ^2 (simultaneously) for the three years (including auto thefts) presents us with: $\chi^2 = 112.7884$; d.f. = 6; $p < .001$. Although the picture changes slightly when auto thefts are isolated, even then the differences between

TABLE I
DISTRIBUTION OF THE MISCELLANEOUS CATEGORY BY SUBCATEGORY AND YEAR (Percentages)

Year	Crimes				Total
	Morality	Victimless Crimes	Financial Offences	Against Public Order	
1969	17.5	24.5	1.6	56.4	100.0
1971	23.6	28.5	3.5	44.4	100.0
1973 (war)	17.5	25.3	5.8	51.3	100.0

$$\chi^2 = 11.3539; \text{d.f.} = 6 \text{ (N.S.)}$$

TABLE II
DISTRIBUTION OF ALL CRIMES FOR EACH OF THE YEARS EXAMINED BY CATEGORY (Percentages)

Year	Crimes				Total
	Against Property	Auto Theft	Misc.	Against the Person	
1969	63.3	23.9	9.1	3.7	100.0
1971	66.0	23.0	8.4	2.6	100.0
1973 (pre-war)	70.7	16.0	9.6	3.7	100.0
1973 (war)	53.3	34.9	9.2	2.6	100.0

the three years remain significant: $\chi^2 = 12.4823$; d.f. = 4; $p < 0.5$ (see Table III).

DISCUSSION

While acknowledging that recorded crimes differ in amount and nature from crimes actually committed, there still was a significant decrease in the amount of crimes reported. The statistical analysis of the daily crime average (actual and expected), the calculation of rates,⁶ the relation between the rise in population and the evident decrease in criminality during the war, and also the examination of differences using the χ^2 test verify the first hypothesis. This decrease in the amount of crime can be explained by possible changes in the "opportunity structure" for crime and in the criminal population; and also by changes in the operations of law enforcement and the system of social control.⁷ Although trends cannot yet be confirmed until information is available regarding arrests or the results of the judicial processes for those who committed crimes during the war, it seems plausible that the amount of "hidden criminality" is larger in wartime than in peacetime. This is due both to the above-mentioned reasons, and to possible changes in complaint patterns by the public.

It was found that the actual decrease in the amount of crime in the early days of the war reversed itself after the sixth day of the war. The preliminary results of a victimization survey indicate that it is unlikely that this increase is a result either of an increased awareness on the part of the public or of changes in police enforcement policies from the sixth day of the war.⁸ Furthermore, recidivists are not enlisted in Israel. Thus, it would appear that the increase in reported offences from the sixth day of the war was caused by a transition by the criminal sector from a period of organization to an adaptation to the new conditions and opportunities for criminality created by the war.⁹ Since there was an

⁶For the period of the War of the Day of Atonement 300,000 males were subtracted from the Israeli population. Since the number of reserves is in fact kept secret, we used the information given in NEWSWEEK, Nov. 5, 1973, at 9, which gives this general figure for the number of reserves at the time of the war. From the general population those under sixteen and over sixty-five years of age were subtracted; also subtracted was the total population of Arab women living within the 1948 borders of Israel.

⁷Taken from POLICE WEEKLY 242 (1973) (Israel Police Organization Publication).

⁸The victimization survey was part of a daily public opinion survey conducted for the government by the Applied Social Science Institution and the Institute of Communication of the Hebrew University.

⁹H. VON HENTIG, CRIME: CAUSES AND CONDITIONS, (1947).

TABLE III
EXAMINATION OF SIGNIFICANCE OF PAIRS OF YEARS
WITHOUT AUTO THEFT

1973	1971	1969	
not sig. $p < .05$	not sig. $p < .001$	not sig. $p < .001$	1969 1971 1973
			<i>With auto theft</i>

increase in those crimes which require specialization or professional expertise (burglary and property thefts), it may be suggested that the same criminals who were in operation before the war, minus those who were enlisted, renewed their activity, even above their normal "quota," after the war began. It seems that more crimes were committed, then, by fewer criminals.

The second hypothesis is based on the assumption that the changes in the opportunity structure caused by the war will inevitably cause qualitative alterations in the crime pattern.

The findings show a numerical decrease in crimes against the person and miscellaneous crimes, but no qualitative changes. The same sub-categories which were prevalent during the control periods remained so during the war. By analyzing crimes against property it was found that during the war the percentage of burglaries from private homes decreased by about one-third compared to the control periods. These facts may be explained by the limitations on civilian movement due to the war. The evident increase during the war of burglaries from commercial establishments and offices appears to be directly connected with people staying home, the decrease in frequency of street policing and control, and perhaps with the ability of the criminals to predict, after only a few days of war, the patterns of police surveillance. A further qualitative difference is found in changes in the choice of targets for the burglaries and thefts, from supplies and materials, which require large vehicles for transportation (which were almost entirely absent from the home front), to smaller items, which can be carried in private vehicles or on foot.

A large increase was disclosed in the number of reported car thefts. There is already some evidence that at least some of the thefts of private vehicles were committed by soldiers either in a hurry to reach their units, or to get home because of a short leave from duty. Support for this assumption is found in the fact that a large part of the "joy-riding" population was enlisted, and further the closing of most of the garages prevented operations normally carried out by car thieves and car strippers.

"Business (Crime) as Usual"

It was noted that an atmosphere of volunteerism, patriotism and solidarity swept over Israel during the war. However, if we distinguish between the law-abiding citizen and the criminal, distinct differences are evident in their behavior. While most of the population worked in order to make a contribution to the nation, it appears that the criminal sector, and new elements who joined it during the war, acted in a contrary fashion. The findings of this study, although tentative, support this conclusion. The increase in crime beginning on the sixth day of the war reflects renewed organization of criminal activity, and the decrease in the reported crimes at the beginning of the war suggests that the criminals who were not enlisted "worked" even harder in their exploitation of "differential organization." Furthermore, the crime rates which were calculated for the entire period of the war were especially influenced by the rates for the first few days of the war, a time which could be viewed as a period of adaptation and exploration of the new opportunities for crime. The third point in support of the conclusion that the criminal sector acted according to the dictum "business as usual," is revealed in the increase in burglary. These are crimes which require the planning, organization, and skill of professionals who are able to adapt quickly and exploit changing circumstances, including those brought about by the war. For these people the blackout is not a defense against bombs, but a cover to avoid detection. Further strong evidence is provided by the testimony of the National Chief of Police who notes that while the emergency situation continues, the activities of the criminal underworld gradually approach the level that existed before the war.¹⁰

CONCLUSIONS

Our two frameworks, crime and societal reactions, called "differential organization" by Sutherland, constitute a theoretical concept which connects war

¹⁰As reported on December 11, 1973, at a meeting between public officials and police officers at Police Headquarters.

and crime, and explains the official picture of crime and delinquency during the war. The disturbance of the balance between elements of crime commission and control, which together comprise the system of "differential organization," is responsible for the differences in the official crime rates (but not in amount). Of course, the description of the changes which occur in the "differential organization," and the rates which are thus affected, should also include: (1) an explanation of their characteristics during the various stages of the war; and, (2) criminogenic variables which are suitable to the description and analysis of crime and reactions to crime during peacetime. In other words, it should identify and analyze the changes which are observed in the offense rates and patterns of crime which do not arise merely due to the war but also as a result of factors which operated before the war or factors which arose independently, but coincidentally, with the war.

The research on the history of the previous wars in Israel has neglected the criminological aspect, while the criminologists, like other social scientists, can in fact exploit the opportunity offered by the war to examine their theoretical explanations regarding social factors and their relationship to the phenomena of crime.¹¹ The prolonged influences of war on crime should be of interest and provide a source for further studies. There should be an examination of the difference between the number of crimes committed and the number and type of complaints to the police, by means of a victim-survey, as part of the crime commission patterns.

In the light of the changes which took place in the activities of the police during the war and the consequent small number of arrests, there is a need for further research on the extent and type of changes which occur in crime and in the composition of the criminal population on both the arrest and conviction level, in order to test the changes which take place in the official reactions of the judicial administration.

¹¹See D. R. CRESSEY, *Some Obstacles to Generalizing in Criminology*, in *DELINQUENCY, CRIME AND DIFFERENTIAL ASSOCIATION* chs. II & III (1964); Sutherland, *supra* note 1.