

# **BUILT ENVIRONMENT AND CRIME: Defensible Space – Housing in Malaysia.**



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## **Preface**

The initial approved proposed research topic was entitled “ Built Environment and Crime: Defensible Space – Public housing in Malaysia”. After conducting a pilot study on a few areas within Shah Alam, it was realized that the main criminal issue of public housing - mainly high rise housing involved motorcycle thefts on the ground level.

In anticipating that a richer data would be obtained by widening the attention to housing in general. This involved various housing types such as bungalows, semi-detached, and terrace houses. As such the present study was retitled “ Built Environment and Crime: Defensible Space –Housing in Malaysia”.

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## **Abstract**

**Keywords:** *Housebreaking; Defensible Space; Safety; Security; Crime prevention;*

This study is about crime trends with focus on housebreaking which occurred in Malaysia nationwide between the years 1994-2004. The purpose being to trace the trend and identify the pattern, manner and factors involved with housebreaking so that preventive measures could be suggested.

The methodology conducted for the study involved obtaining permission and the release of confidential data from the Royal Malaysian Police, before distributing questionnaires at the crime-prone areas of major towns / cities, and conducting site visits and analysis at the exact locations identified nationwide.

Data obtained made possible the investigation on housebreaking trends between 1994-2004 and on the items identified which could have influenced occurrences of housebreaking. Analysis was based on the Defensible Space theory wherever applicable. The items were categorized as either non-built environment which involved 2,853 samples and seven items or built environment factor which involved 1,254 samples and ten items.

Findings nationwide over the ten-year period revealed while vehicle thefts and violent crime had increased, housebreaking trends however had improved, and that night time occurrences tripled day time occurrences. Commonalities, peculiarities and extremities in relation to housebreaking trends were revealed in both the non-built environment and built environment factors. The Defensible Space theory was not fully supported nationwide.