

Restoring Public Order in Adachi City
Community Safety Administration Division
Community Safety Bureau
Tokyo Metropolitan Police Department

I. Summary

People would like to lead a safe and secure life in a town where they live, and strongly feel attached to it. Thus, once crime occurs in a familiar place in the town, they easily get worried about its safety. Some people might start to look for any vulnerable points to such crime in the town (including in their community).

The purpose of this paper is to present the result of the efforts made not only by police force but also by the police, administrative organ, and local residents that worked together for the restoration of once demoralized public order. In the efforts, the three identified and solved some locally-oriented issues and successfully got things for the better.

Adachi City is one of the 62 local municipalities and other entities in Tokyo and used to be ranked the worst crime city. The number of criminal offenses reported has been over 10,000 for three years since 2006.

To clean up such a tarnished image, the police formed a partnership with the administrative organ and launched the Strategic Council on Public Order with the aim of revitalizing the bonds within the city as well as the sense of respect for social norms which Japanese people have treasured for a long time. The officials

and local people identified the regional problems, strengthened the police activities, and developed community-based participatory approach for the sake of Adachi City

As a result of the efforts where the local residents participated in such public order activities, the year 2011 saw the number of criminal offenses reported in Adachi City dropped to less than 10,000, and the city finally managed to wipe out such a dishonorable name as the worst-ranked city.

It is observed that through this restoration process, the local residents gradually became aware of a very simple principle that they needed to protect their own town, and the outcome brought by their efforts still remain working. (See Appendix 1)

II. Identifying of the issues

1. High percentage of minor offenses that occupy all the criminal offences reported

In the wake of a joint effort made by the public and private sectors, the number of criminal offenses reported in 2002, the worst one ever recorded in postwar Japan has gradually dropped. The downward trend was observed in Adachi City too, but such decrease started to show some indications of slowing down. Then in 2009, the newly-elected mayor of Adachi City reinforced cooperation with local

police and tried to find what prevented the trend from going down and to identify specific problems based on the types of MOs.

(1) Bike thefts (See Appendix 2)

Riding on a bike is one of the most popular, daily means of transportation in Adachi City. The current train network system runs north south but less east west in the city. Under such circumstances, local residents tend to depend on the use of bikes.

The statistics show that in 2001, 3,928 bikes were reported stolen, occupying 23.3% of 16,843 criminal offences reported in the total. Though the number of bike thefts was slightly down to 3,633 in 2009, the total number of criminal offences reported dropped more to 11,115. As a result, the number of the 2009's bike thefts was relatively up to 32.6% on the whole.

2. The declining awareness by local residents

(1) Graffiti and littering (See Picture 1)

There were graffiti observed on many walls in the town and utility poles. Graffiti, once neglected, called for another graffiti widely in the area, resulting in the production of a vicious cycle.

The same went to littering. Litter on the street piled up too. Despite knowing such an issue, local residents turned a blind eye to it and said, “No matter how many times we rub the graffiti off or throw litter away. They’ll do it again. So, we neither clean up nor pick up them.” For this reason, the first thing we decided to address was how to enhance their awareness of the city’s appearance.

(2) The declining sense of respect for social norms

Lack of manners, such as street smoking, cigarette butt littering and dog fouling, were also apparent. Factors that demoralized the local residents were also able to be seen in the declining sense of their respect for social norms. Their mentality was “It’s just a small thing. As everyone does it, nobody notices it.” It is considered that if people continue to lose the sense of their respect for social norms, they may soon overlook minor offenses. This word was right in the case of Adachi City. There was no progress in reducing the number of even relatively minor offenses.

III. Analysis

1. Bike thefts

(1) Locking practice of bicyclists (See Appendix 3)

We carried out a survey in Adachi City on locking practice of cyclists who

had their bikes stolen.

Appendix 3 shows the results of the 2008 and 2009 surveys.

In order to perceive current circumstances, another survey was conducted on whether parked bicycles were locked or unlocked and what kind of locking devices were used.

Of the 8,384 bicycles surveyed, 600 bikes (seven percent) of them were found “unlocked.” In the areas where the survey was taken, 146 bikes were reported stolen from January to September in 2010. Seventy six bikes (52 percent) of them remained unlocked.

The result thereby illustrates that good locking practice is highly significant for preventing bike thefts.

(2) Types of locking devices attached to stolen bicycles

On the other hand, other survey also reveals that a number of locked bikes were stolen. According to the results of analysis on what kind of locking devices were used, 3,925 bikes (47 percent) were equipped only with “ring locks (press type)”, and 472 bikes (six percent) only with “cable locks.”

The majority of these locking devices were found vulnerable to thefts.

(3) Victims

Teenagers, especially high school students, topped the number as bike theft victims. In Japan, parents usually buy their children bikes, and the children don't know quite well how much money their parents paid for the bikes. As a result, the children's awareness of crime prevention was not so high.

2. The declining awareness by local residents

(1) The deterioration in the appearance of the town clearly reflects how much people care about their town. As is proved by this word, we started to perceive the graffiti on the walls steadily increased. The irregularly-arranged graffiti created a bad impression of the town on passers-by and made them feel uncomfortable. (See Pictures 1 and 2)

(2) Litter and cigarette butt littering

The survey conducted in July 2009 revealed that 2,668 pieces (most of them were cigarette butts and chewing gums) of litter were gathered around the major four railway stations in the city. Of the 722 street smokers surveyed, most of them apparently threw away their butts.

IV. Strategy

1. Tackling of bike thefts

(1) Campaign for locking bikes

In order to increase the frequency of locking use, we wrote an article with detailed advice and good locking practice, and widely publicized it upon various occasions. Officials also participated in these events and called for the attention of local citizens to promote a good locking practice upon parking their bikes.

(2) Bike theft is a crime

Theft of a bike is larceny and is a criminal offense which is punishable by jail time or fine under the Japan's Penal Code of Offenses. Therefore, it was imperative that we address to people in Adachi City asking them to understand the theft is not a petty crime. This approach intended to prevent people from stealing bicycles on a whim.

We then exhibited "Bike theft is a crime" posters, aiming to raise awareness of social norms among the local residents.

(3) Switch to quality bike locks

Many bikes were found to be equipped with cheap, shoddy bike locks that might become easy targets for offenders. We recommended to local people that they should replace them with quality locks. Consequently,

3,427 bike locks were successfully switched by 2012.

(4) Student-oriented action plan for the prevention of bike thefts

Given that most of the victims were high school students, we came up with an idea of a student-oriented action plan to raise their awareness in crime prevention. We thought that our message on crime prevention, if disseminated among the same school students, would effectively make sense to them. Based on this idea, we formed a dedicated working group named the “Putting the Brakes on Bike Theft Team” that consisted mainly of high school students. They proactively worked for promoting some tips on bike theft prevention, and replaced cheap, shoddy bike locks at several high schools in Adachi City.

2. Working on the improvement in awareness of social norms

(1) Trading litter for flower seeds

A coordinated measure was taken to raise awareness of social norms within the community: cleaning up litter and rubbish that pollute the city; trading litter for flower seeds; and growing beautiful flowers all around the town. This is not only making the place “litter-free” but adding something extra for a better appearance of the city. Although it may not seem

connected to the recovery of such demoralized public order, we encouraged people to hold back on throwing litter and rubbish on the street for the sake of the flower beauty, and thus improve and maintain the environment.

(2) Improving the public manners

Greetings are extremely important to build good neighbor-to-neighbor relationships. Local residents in the city were encouraged to shape a new culture in the community to actively greet each other.

V. Assessment

1. The declining number of criminal offenses reported (Appendixes 1 and 3)

By conducting comprehensive measures for the improvement of public order in Adachi City, the number of criminal offenses reported in 2012 dropped by about 1,945 to 9,141 in comparison with that in 2009, the year we have executed this strategy. The number of criminal offenses reported fell below 10,000 for the first time in 34 years since 1973, and there was a substantial decrease especially in the following fields.

- Burglaries from 371 to 189.
- Cycle thefts from 3,634 to 2,828
- Motor cycle thefts from 586 to 344

- Vehicle load thefts from 702 to 507

The decrease in these crimes has largely contributed to the drop in the total number of criminal offenses reported on the whole, and therefore improved the confidence of Adachi City as a safe and secure place to live in.

2. Improvement in people's perceptions of demoralized public order

The survey of public order in Adachi City illustrates the improvement in people's confidence in response to public order of the city. As opposed to 26.9% of respondents who answered "I feel safe in Adachi City" in 2010, 41.0% in 2012. The aforementioned result suggests that many local residents gained a sense of accomplishment through the work of anti-crime volunteering and litter clean-ups, thus correctly recognizing the trends in crime within their community.

Based on the government's anti-crime measures called the "Action Plan to Create a Crime-Resistant Society 2008," it appears that we played a vital role in order to restore the public order before any other municipalities and entities; here it states:

"In order to realize a safe and secure society to live in, it is necessary to not

only lower the number of cases of crime as a whole, but also to make a society in which people can trust each other. In the local community, these are good opportunities to consider each other's actions. Through that, the bond of the local community will be strengthened, and the trust between its members can be further developed. As such, we believe that by striving for development of mutual trust through comprehensive implementation of various kinds of enforcement policies, the safety and security of the society will greatly improve.”

The improvement of once demoralized public order in Adachi City is not the result by the police efforts but by the combined efforts by the police, the administrative organ and regional community groups, or local residents. They all worked together by striving for development of mutual trust. We believe that our concerted efforts significantly contributed to the advancement of the safety and security of Adachi City.

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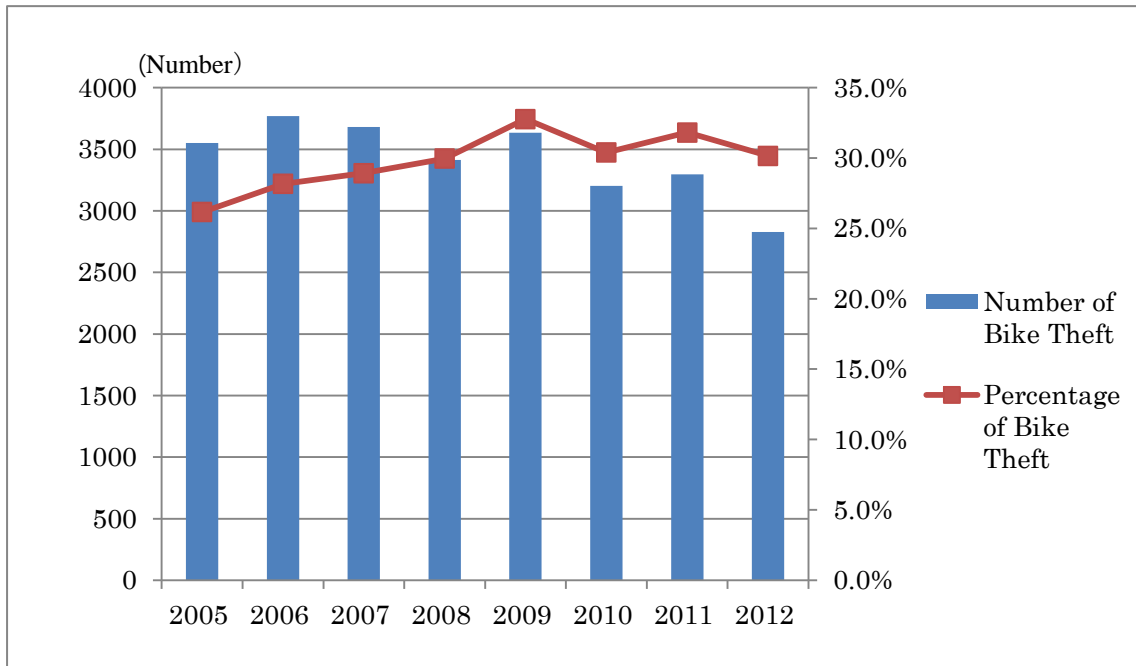
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Appendix

(Appendix 1) Number of Criminal Offences Reported in Tokyo, 2005-2012

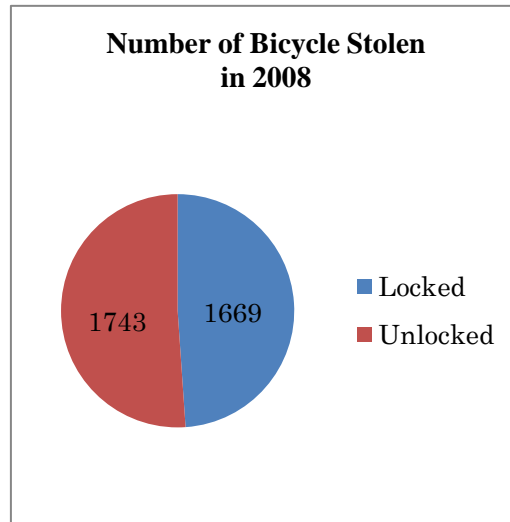
	1	2	3	4	5
2005	Setagaya City	Adachi City	Edogawa City	Nerima City	Shinjuku City
	14,674	13,576	13,436	11,263	11,252
2006	Adachi City	Setagaya City	Edogawa City	Shinjuku City	Nerima City
	13,382	13,284	12,479	11,487	11,444
2007	Adachi City	Setagaya City	Shinjuku City	Edogawa City	Nerima City
	12,721	11,845	11,153	10,904	10,723
2008	Adachi City	Shinjuku City	Setagaya City	Edogawa City	Nerima City
	11,390	10,834	10,628	10,308	9,690
2009	Adachi City	Shinjuku City	Edogawa City	Setagaya City	Ota City
	11,086	10,968	10,218	10,174	9,185
2010	Shinjuku City	Adachi City	Edogawa City	Setagaya City	Ota City
	10,537	10,355	9,685	9,590	9,085
2011	Adachi City	Edogawa City	Shinjuku City	Setagaya City	Nerima City
	10,363	9,666	9,521	9,341	8,128
2012	Shinjuku City	Adachi City	Edogawa City	Setagaya City	Ota City
	9,377	9,141	8,675	8,569	7,602

The percentage of Bike Theft of the Total Reported Criminal Offenses (Appendix 2)

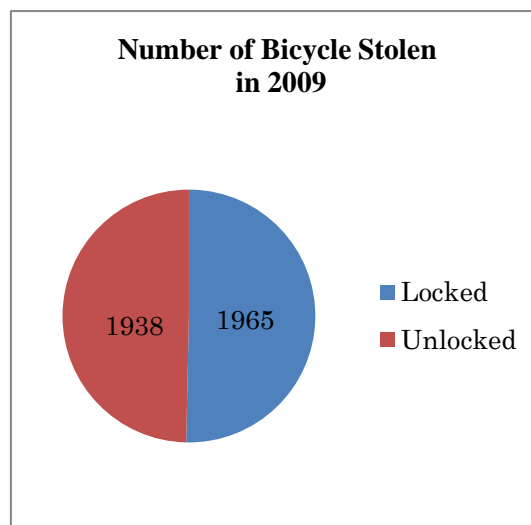


Number of Stolen Bicycle and their Locking Practices

(Appendix 3)

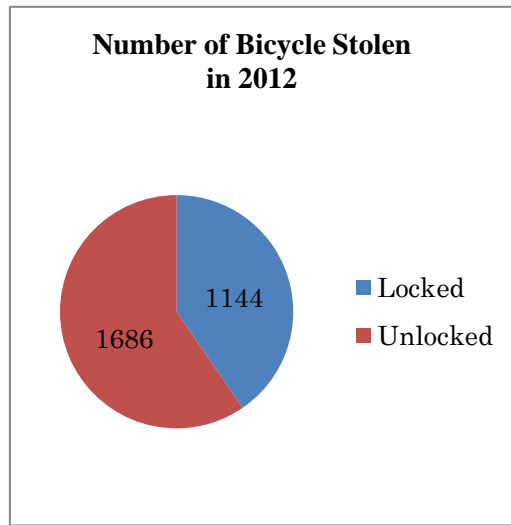


In total, 3,412 bicycles were reported stolen in 2008.



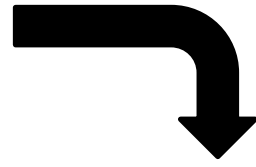
In total, 3,633 bicycles were reported stolen in 2009.

(Appendix 4)



In total, 2,830 bicycles were reported stolen in 2012.

Graffiti on the wall in the park (Picture 1)



Rubbed out the graffiti (Picture 2)



Planting beautiful flowers in the town (Picture 3)

