



ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF INEQUALITIES ON RESIDENTS' PERCEPTION AND CRIME INCIDENTS IN URBAN AND PERI-URBAN NEIGHBOURHOODS

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought the issue of inequality to the forefront, exacerbating economic uncertainty and social injustice, which has led to widespread social disorder. This study examines the relationship between inequality and crime in urban and peri-urban neighborhoods in Penang; Moreover, an association between inequality and the incidence of crime will be investigated in two neighborhoods. Having considered the intricate relationship between social inequality and crime in previous studies, a quantitative approach was conducted to investigate how neighborhood locations impact the crime and inequality relationship. A face-to-face survey using a closed-ended questionnaire was conducted with 761 respondents, comprising 329 from Balik Pulau and 432 from Bayan Baru. The findings reveal that economic inequality significantly impacts crime rates in both Bayan Lepas and Balik Pulau, whereas social inequality only shows a negative significant effect in Bayan Lepas. Subsequently, results indicate income does not influence the fear of crime among respondents in Balik Pulau, but residents with higher income levels in Bayan Lepas exhibit a greater fear of crime. However, neighborhood locations do not distinctly affect criminal activity. These insights can help enhance crime prevention strategies, improve security, and foster balanced development in Penang.

Keywords: Inequality, Social disorganization theory, Neighborhood, Peri-Urban community

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INTRODUCTION

Inequality, according to Koh (2020), refers to the unequal and unfair distribution of resources or opportunities within certain communities. Inequality manifests in various dimensions, including political, economic, and social aspects. It encompasses several types, such as income inequality, educational inequality, and gender inequality. Among these, income inequality is particularly impactful as it often leads to reduced opportunities for achieving a better standard of living and hinders financial stability (Kopp, 2021). Income inequality is closely linked to wealth inequality, where wealth distribution across the population is uneven. Many researchers utilize the Gini Index to analyze the level of income inequality within a population. Additionally, social inequality exists where individuals lack equal access to essential resources, services, and societal positions (Doob, 2019). This form of inequality is often more extensive than income inequality as it includes aspects of discrimination and government support.

United Nations (2020) identifies multiple factors driving inequality, noting that income disparities are influenced not only by economic factors but also by gender, ethnicity, age, religion, and sexual orientation. Education and wages determined by the labor market also contribute significantly to income inequality. Unequal resource distribution negatively impacts social life, particularly in terms of access to essential services and opportunities. The relationship between inequality and crime is intricate and often captures the attention of scholars and policymakers. Inequality involves the unequal distribution of resources, opportunities, and wealth within a society, leading to various adverse outcomes such as poor health, lack of social cohesion, and higher crime rates (Goh & Law, 2023). In recent years, the issue of inequality has gained prominence due to widening economic gaps and social injustices, which have sparked widespread political unrest.

A large numbers of studies reveal a well-established link between crime and inequality, with individuals living in poverty and facing economic hardships more likely to engage in criminal behavior (Marzbali et al., 2020; Weaver, 2019). Extensive research consistently shows that higher levels of inequality are associated with higher crime rates (Usai, 2022). Malaysia is no exception, with significant economic and social disparities contributing to elevated crime levels. According to the Malaysian Crime Prevention Foundation report, over 11,000 cases of violent crime, including murder, rape, and assault, were reported in 2022 (DOSM, 2022). Property crimes such as theft and burglary also remain prevalent issues in Malaysia.

The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated existing economic and social inequalities in Malaysia, leading to a more pronounced divide between different socio-economic groups. Post-pandemic, many low-income families faced significant financial hardships due to job losses and reduced income. The

informal sector, which employs a substantial portion of the population, was particularly affected, leaving many without social safety nets. While government aid programs provided some relief, the support was often insufficient to cover all needs, resulting in increased poverty levels and heightened economic vulnerability among the most disadvantaged groups.

In contrast, prior to the pandemic in 2019, Malaysia had been making steady progress in reducing poverty and narrowing income inequality. Economic growth rates were robust, and the government's targeted social programs were beginning to show results in lifting many out of poverty. However, the benefits of growth were not evenly distributed, with wealth and opportunities concentrated in urban areas and among higher-income groups. Despite these disparities, the pre-pandemic period was marked by optimism and a general trend towards improved socio-economic conditions (Samat et al., 2021).

The pandemic has thus widened the gap between the wealthy and the poor, reversing some of the gains made in the years leading up to 2019. High-income groups and those with secure jobs were better able to adapt to the economic disruptions caused by the pandemic, often benefiting from the shift to digital and remote work environments. Meanwhile, the lower-income population faced increased barriers to economic stability, such as lack of access to technology and healthcare, exacerbating pre-existing inequalities. The post-pandemic recovery phase requires focused policy interventions to address these deepened disparities and ensure more inclusive and equitable economic growth.

Given the intricate relationship between social inequality and crime explored in previous studies, and the lack of empirical research examining the impact of inequality post-COVID-19 on urban and peri-urban communities, this study investigates the relationship between inequality and crime in urban and peri-urban neighborhoods in Penang. Additionally, it addresses how neighborhood locations influence this relationship. The report indicated that the restrictions imposed during the COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted Penang's tourism industry, leading to numerous business closures and subsequent job losses among the local population. This ban has undoubtedly created a negative atmosphere within society, exacerbating economic and social inequalities (Sundaram JK, 2020). The research was conducted in two distinct locations: Bayan Baru and Balik Pulau. This choice was made because regional comparisons of inequality and crime are seldom performed. Additionally, both Bayan Baru and Balik Pulau experienced high numbers of COVID-19 infection cases (Ministry of Health Malaysia, 2024), making them pertinent areas for studying the pandemic's impact.

Bayan Baru is one of the cities in Penang, with a population of 85,321 people. The median income in Bayan Baru is RM 6,981, and a poverty incidence of 0.500. Conversely, Balik Pulau, another city in Penang, has a population of

approximately 132,344 people. It has a median income of RM 6,485, and a poverty incidence of 0.700.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Inequality and Criminal Behavior

The rise in post-pandemic crime has made the relationship between inequality and crime a key focus for sociologists, criminologists, and economists. Numerous studies have explored this relationship from various perspectives, offering insights into its complex dynamics. At the macro level, research examines the correlation between community-level inequality, such as income or wealth disparity, and crime rates, with mixed results. Some studies indicate a positive association, where higher inequality corresponds to higher crime rates (Clement & Piaser, 2021; Shah et al., 2020; Sugiharti et al., 2023). Conversely, other studies have found no significant relationship or even a negative correlation, suggesting that higher inequality could be linked to lower crime rates (Anser et al., 2020). At the individual level, research often focuses on the relationship between personal experiences of inequality, such as relative deprivation, and individual involvement in criminal activities. These studies typically explore various forms of crime, including property crimes, violent crimes, and white-collar crimes. The findings generally support the idea that individuals who perceive themselves as disadvantaged or unfairly treated are more likely to engage in criminal behavior (Sampson & Wilson, 2013; Wenger, 2019).

Several studies have investigated potential mediating factors that might explain the relationship between inequality and crime. Factors such as social unrest, lack of social cohesion, limited access to resources and opportunities, and strain theory have been explored as possible mediators (Dropplemann & Trajtenberg, 2021). These factors can exacerbate the effects of inequality, leading to increased crime rates in disadvantaged communities. The relationship between inequality and crime can also be influenced by contextual factors, such as cultural norms, neighborhood characteristics, and institutional factors. For instance, Song et al. (2020) found that the effects of inequality on crime vary across different cultural contexts or neighborhood types. Similarly, strong social institutions and effective social control mechanisms can mitigate the impact of inequality on crime rates.

Longitudinal studies, which examine changes in inequality and crime over time, have provided insights into the dynamic nature of this relationship. These studies reveal that changes in inequality, especially sudden shifts in economic conditions or social policies, can significantly impact crime rates. Periods of economic instability, characterized by rising inequality, often coincide with increases in crime rates. Conversely, social policies that address inequality and promote socio-economic mobility tend to reduce crime rates (Zhu & Li,

2017). Comparative studies across countries have also contributed to understanding the inequality-crime relationship. These studies consider differences in economic systems, social policies, cultural factors, and crime measurement methods. They generally find that countries with higher levels of income inequality tend to have higher crime rates, though this relationship can vary depending on other contextual factors (Widyastaman & Hartono, 2022).

In summary, past studies reveal a general consensus that inequality is positively associated with crime rates. Personal experiences of inequality, such as relative deprivation, mediating factors like social disorganization and limited opportunities, and contextual factors all contribute to the complex relationship between inequality and crime.

Inequality in Malaysia

research on the link between inequality and crime in Malaysia is limited, but existing studies indicate a positive correlation between income inequality and property crime rates. Higher-income inequality is associated with increased theft and burglary (Harun et al., 2021). Economic disparities and limited opportunities in disadvantaged communities drive these crimes. Rapid urbanization and socio-economic changes have also been linked to higher crime rates, especially in urban areas with greater inequality and inadequate infrastructure. Concentrated wealth and resources in central cities exacerbate feelings of relative deprivation and frustration, potentially leading to criminal behavior (Banna et al., 2020). Cultural norms and values further influence this relationship (Harun et al., 2021).

Research has also explored the relationship between socioeconomic factors, such as education and unemployment rates, and violent crime in Malaysia. Higher levels of unemployment and lower levels of educational attainment are associated with higher rates of violent crime (Ridzuan et al., 2021). These factors are closely related to inequality and can contribute to social unrest, tension, and limited opportunities that increase the likelihood of violent criminal behavior. Malaysia exhibits regional inequality in terms of development, infrastructure, and economic opportunities. Regions with higher levels of inequality and fewer economic prospects may experience higher crime rates due to uneven resource distribution, varying levels of economic development, and differential access to social services (Abrekov, 2020).

The literature on the relationship between inequality and crime in Malaysia is limited, necessitating further research for a comprehensive understanding. Existing studies indicate that income inequality and urbanization contribute to higher crime rates, particularly property crimes. Socioeconomic factors, cultural norms, and regional disparities also influence this relationship. Ethnicity and religion play significant roles as well (Lee & Khalid, 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated existing inequalities, disproportionately

affecting vulnerable groups like low-income individuals and foreign workers (Al Muzaini, 2022).

Crime profoundly impacts individuals and communities, causing physical and emotional trauma, financial issues, and loss of community trust. Affected areas may face social chaos, declining property values, and reduced quality of life. Addressing crime involves prevention programs, community policing, and criminal justice reform (Hagan & Daigle, 2023). Studies on the pandemic, inequality, and crime suggest that COVID-19 has intensified social and economic disparities, leading to more criminal activity (Estévez-Soto, 2021). However, economic closures have decreased some crime types such as money laundering while increasing domestic violence and cybercrime.

In Malaysia, the pandemic has also affected crime patterns and levels of inequality. For instance, a study by Jamil et al. (2022) found that COVID-19 led to an increase in cybercrime and online fraud, as well as theft of medical supplies and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). Ridzuan et al. (2021) highlights the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on vulnerable communities in Malaysia, such as foreign workers and the urban poor. To date, there are no comparative regional studies specifically addressing inequality and crime in Malaysia, but existing research generally examines the relationship within the country. The reviewed literature suggests a positive association between inequality and crime, indicating that regions with higher income inequality tend to have higher crime rates. Factors such as relative deprivation, social chaos, limited opportunities, and cultural norms have been identified as mediating and contextual factors shaping this relationship. Moreover, the studies indicate that cultural, socioeconomic, and regional differences between urban and peri-urban areas may interact with inequality to influence crime rates in various ways. Overall, this literature review lays a solid foundation for understanding the link between inequality and crime. The next section explores the theoretical background, presenting elements and variables that elucidate how inequality influences crime in different communities.

Theoretical Background

The social disorganization theory, originating in the early 20th century and notably associated with scholars like Clifford Shaw and Henry McKay, posits that crime and delinquency stem from social disorganization within communities rather than individual pathology. At its core, this theory suggests that certain neighborhoods or communities experience breakdowns in social cohesion, informal social control mechanisms, and access to legitimate opportunities due to factors such as poverty, unemployment, and educational disparities (Bellair, 2017). These conditions foster an environment conducive to criminal behavior.

Central to the theory is the notion of 'concentrated disadvantage,' which describes the clustering of multiple forms of deprivation within specific geographic areas. In these disadvantaged neighborhoods, high crime rates often prevail as residents grapple with limited resources and opportunities, leading to feelings of frustration and alienation.

Economic and educational disparities can further hinder individuals' access to legal avenues for success and social mobility. Especially within disadvantaged communities, individuals may resort to illicit activities as alternative means to achieve their goals or alleviate socioeconomic hardships. The scarcity of legitimate opportunities heightens the likelihood of individuals turning to crime for survival or material gain. Moreover, inequality can cultivate feelings of frustration and tension among individuals who perceive the gap between their aspirations and their actual social and economic status. This tension, stemming from a relative lack of resources, can escalate feelings of resentment and a sense of injustice (Kubrin et al., 2022). In some instances, these negative emotions may prompt individuals to engage in criminal behavior as a coping mechanism or as a means to express their frustration.

Social disorganization theory underscores the significance of community-level factors in comprehending crime and deviance. It underscores the role of structural forces, such as socioeconomic inequality and institutional neglect, in shaping patterns of criminal behavior.

Kornhauser's Social Disorganization theory expands upon traditional social disorganization theories by introducing additional components and factors that influence levels of crime and deviance within a community. As shown in Figure 1, Kornhauser's Social Disorganization theory identifies several factors that contribute to the breakdown of social cohesion and the proliferation of crime and deviance within a community. These factors help to explain why some communities experience higher levels of social disorganization than others. Here are the key factors:

Economic Disadvantage: Economic disadvantage refers to the lack of financial resources and opportunities within a community. Poverty, unemployment, and income inequality are all manifestations of economic disadvantage. Communities with high levels of economic disadvantage often face significant challenges in providing basic necessities and opportunities for residents, leading to increased vulnerability to crime and social disorganization.

Residential Instability: Residential instability refers to the frequent turnover of residents within a community, often due to factors such as eviction, foreclosure, or migration. High rates of residential instability can disrupt social networks, weaken social bonds, and undermine community cohesion. Transient populations may have less investment in the community and fewer opportunities to develop social ties, making them more susceptible to crime and disorder.

Ethnic Heterogeneity: Ethnic heterogeneity refers to the presence of diverse racial and ethnic groups within a community. While diversity can enrich a community's social fabric, it can also pose challenges to social cohesion and collective action. Ethnic tensions, cultural differences, and language barriers may hinder communication and cooperation among residents, leading to social fragmentation and conflict. In some cases, ethnic heterogeneity may exacerbate social disorganization and contribute to higher crime rates.

Institutional Decay: Institutional decay refers to the deterioration of social institutions and community organizations within a neighborhood. This may include the decline of schools, churches, civic associations, and other institutions that traditionally fostered social integration and collective efficacy. When essential institutions fail to fulfill their roles or become ineffective, residents may lack access to vital resources and support networks, leaving them vulnerable to crime and social disorganization.

External Threats: External threats refer to factors outside the community that exert negative influences on its social fabric and stability. These threats may include environmental hazards, economic downturns, political unrest, or criminal enterprises operating in neighboring areas. External threats can undermine community resilience, disrupt social cohesion, and exacerbate existing social problems, contributing to higher levels of crime and disorder.

Overall, Kornhauser's Social Disorganization theory offers a more comprehensive and dynamic framework for understanding the complex relationship between social disorganization and crime. By incorporating collective efficacy, social change, and institutional decay into the analysis, Kornhauser provides a richer understanding of the factors that shape community life and influence crime rates.

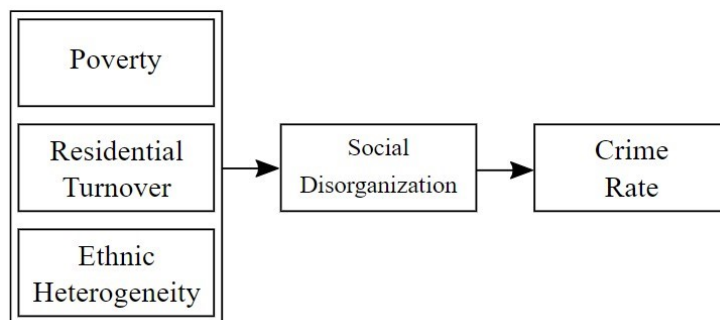


Figure 1: Kornhauser's Social Disorganization Theory
Source: Kornhauser (2017)

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study is applied research using a survey method. The population comprised adults living in two neighborhoods in Penang, namely Bayan Lepas and Balik Pulau. Primary data were collected through a questionnaire survey, while secondary data were sourced from publications, books, and official reports. The study is quantitative, with households as the sampling units.

Data were gathered using a simple random sampling method of adults aged 18 and over in the study area during the first quarter of 2023. Five teams conducted a face-to-face questionnaire survey, achieving an approximate response rate of 58%. Out of 800 collected questionnaires, 761 were deemed valid after data cleaning. The valid responses included 329 from Balik Pulau and 432 from Bayan Baru.

Through the questionnaire survey, participants provided demographic information and responded to 26 statements reflecting their perceptions of social cohesion and trust, residential instability, family disruption, pedestrian safety, and overall perceived safety. These variables were measured using a seven-point Likert scale to assess respondents' perceptions of crime and disorder in their residential area. Before starting the main survey fieldwork, three academic lecturers specializing in the study area reviewed the questionnaire. They assessed the relevance of the selected items in measuring the underlying variables and evaluated the overall content validity of the survey instruments. Based on their suggestions, several changes were made to improve the clarity of certain statements for the respondents. Consequently, the validity of the questionnaire was established by these three faculty members and experts in the field.

Out of 761 completed questionnaires, 758 respondents were Malaysian, with 432 individuals (43%) from Bayan Lepas and 329 individuals (57%) from Balik Pulau. The ethnic composition showed that the majority were Malays (61.10%), followed by Chinese (29%) and Indians (8.40%). The gender distribution was fairly balanced, with 48.23% male and 51.77% female.

Regarding household income, 18.85% and 29.4% of respondents were in the M40 category, while 63.4% and 54.4% were in the B40 category in Bayan Lepas and Balik Pulau, respectively. The income bracket of RM 1001 to RM 2000 had the highest frequency with 233 respondents, whereas the income bracket of RM 4001 and above had the lowest frequency, with 80 respondents. Additionally, 131 participants did not provide information about their income.

Study Area

Penang, an island situated in the southwestern region of Malaysia, spans approximately 293 km² of land and is nestled in the Straits of Malacca. Connected to the mainland via two bridges, Penang comprises two primary regions: the eastern sector, characterized by urban and industrial areas such as Bayan Lepas,

and the southwestern sector, known for its agricultural and rural landscapes including Balik Pulau. Renowned as a vibrant tourism destination, Penang boasts a rich heritage, diverse culture, delectable cuisine, and picturesque beaches. It is also home to a multicultural populace, blending Chinese, Malay, Indian, and European influences.

Balik Pulau, located in the southwestern region of Penang Island, is renowned for its rural landscapes, agricultural traditions, and rich cultural heritage and has a population of 43,465 people and 10,108 households. This district hosts a diverse population but grapples with significant socio-economic disparities. With a mix of urban and rural areas, Balik Pulau exhibits disparities in infrastructure, service accessibility, and job opportunities. Income inequality is a pressing concern, with pockets of poverty and limited access to essential services like education and healthcare. Recent years have seen a rise in crime rates, including theft, drug-related incidents, and interpersonal violence, prompting this study to delve into the social factors driving these trends.

Meanwhile, Bayan Lepas with a population of 188,603 people and 42,286 households, situated in the southeastern part of Penang Island, serves as a major industrial and residential hub. Known for its electronics manufacturing industry and strategic location near the Penang International Airport, it presents a diverse socio-economic landscape. While it boasts high-tech industrial zones and affluent neighborhoods, it also harbors lower-income communities and informal settlements. Employment opportunities are primarily concentrated in manufacturing, but disparities exist in residents' access to these opportunities. Bayan Lepas faces distinct crime challenges stemming from rapid urbanization and demographic diversity.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Fear of Crime

Table 1 presents the results of a correlation analysis conducted to examine the relationship between income and fear of crime in two areas: Bayan Lepas and Balik Pulau. The analysis used Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) to measure the strength and direction of the relationships, and significance was determined by p -values. The analysis revealed distinct differences between the two areas. In Bayan Lepas, there were low but significant positive correlations between income and various aspects of fear of crime, indicating that as income increases, so does the fear of crime in specific scenarios. In contrast, in Balik Pulau, there were no significant relationships between income and fear of crime, suggesting that income does not influence the fear of crime in this area. All relationships shown in the table have positive correlations, regardless of significance.

Inequality and Crime

This study utilized Spearman's correlation analysis to examine the relationship between inequalities (both social and economic) and crime in two areas: Bayan Lepas and Balik Pulau. The analysis aimed to address the primary objective of the study by comparing the correlations in these two distinct regions. Using Spearman's correlation analysis, the correlations between social inequality, economic inequality, and crime rates were tested, and the strength and direction of these relationships were identified in both Bayan Lepas and Balik Pulau. As shown in Table 2, in Bayan Lepas, there is a low but statistically significant negative relationship between social inequality and crime ($r = -0.107$, $p < 0.05$). This suggests that as social inequality increases, the crime rate tends to decrease slightly. Meanwhile, the data shows a low but statistically significant positive relationship between economic inequality and crime ($r = 0.367$, $p < 0.05$) in Bayan Lepas. This indicates that as economic inequality increases, the crime rate also tends to increase.

Figure 2. Study Areas in Penang: (a) Balik Pulau and (b) Bayan Lepas



Source: authors

Table 1: Correlations between Residents' income and fear of crime in two study areas

Aspect of Fear of Crime	Area	Coefficient (r)	Significance (p)
Burglary (When No One is Home)	Bayan Lepas	0.166	< 0.001
	Balik Pulau	0.031	> 0.05
Theft (Items Left Outside Overnight)	Bayan Lepas	0.243	< 0.001
	Balik Pulau	0.040	> 0.05
Robbery (When Outside the Neighborhood)	Bayan Lepas	0.188	< 0.001
	Balik Pulau	0.095	> 0.05
Vehicle Theft	Bayan Lepas	0.164	< 0.001
	Balik Pulau	0.031	> 0.05
Physical Attack (When Outside the House)	Bayan Lepas	0.185	< 0.001
	Balik Pulau	0.044	> 0.05

Table 2: Correlations between inequality and crime in two study areas

Area	Variable Pair	Spearman's r	Significance (p)
Bayan Lepas	Social Inequality and Crime	-0.107	< 0.05
	Economic Inequality and Crime	0.367	< 0.05
Balik Pulau	Social Inequality and Crime	-0.083	> 0.05
	Economic Inequality and Crime	0.298	< 0.05

In Balik Pulau, the relationship between social inequality and crime is not statistically significant ($r = -0.083$, $p > 0.05$). This suggests that social inequality does not have a significant impact on the crime rate in this area. Similar to Bayan Lepas, there is a statistically significant positive relationship between economic inequality and crime in Balik Pulau ($r = 0.298$, $p < 0.05$). This indicates that as economic inequality increases, the crime rate also tends to increase.

In comparison between the two areas, the relationship between social inequality and crime is significant and negative in Bayan Lepas but not significant in Balik Pulau. This indicates that social inequality may play a role in reducing crime in Bayan Lepas but does not have a significant impact in Balik Pulau. Similarly, both areas show a significant positive relationship between economic inequality and crime, although the correlation is slightly stronger in Bayan Lepas ($r = 0.367$) compared to Balik Pulau ($r = 0.298$). This suggests that economic inequality is a consistent factor in increasing crime rates in both areas.

The study's findings demonstrate that economic inequality significantly influences crime rates in both Bayan Lepas and Balik Pulau, while social inequality has a significant impact only in Bayan Lepas. Consequently, there is a positive significant relationship between inequality and crime for economic inequality in both areas. Given the unusual trend in findings from Bayan Lepas, social inequality is negatively linked to crime rates, contrary to common literature (Hagan & Daigle, 2023; Sampson & Wilson, 2013). This could be due to strong community support and cultural norms that mitigate inequality's impact on crime.

Malaysia's social policies and local dynamics, like effective community programs, may also play a role. Residents in these areas might feel less marginalized due to robust social networks, potentially leading to lower crime rates despite inequality. Interestingly, economic inequality shows a positive relationship with crime, suggesting it's a more significant factor here.

Overall, the unique social dynamics and local policies explain the unexpected relationship between inequality and crime in Bayan Lepas. Moreover, the study conducted by Anser et al. (2020) presents findings that contradict this study. They explain that income inequality and the unemployment rate increase crime rates, while trade openness supports reducing the crime rate. Crime rates significantly increase with income inequality, while health expenditures reduce the poverty rate. Per capita income is affected by the incidence of high poverty, while health expenditure and trade factors both increase per capita income across countries. However, the respondents' income level in this study is still categorized as low, with most belonging to the low-income group (B40). Therefore, there is no significant difference in the relationship between economic inequality and criminal activities in both urban and peri-urban areas.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated the relationship between inequality and crime incidences in urban and peri-urban areas. The findings reveal that Bayan Lepas and Balik Pulau areas are not considered high-risk for crime, but there are notable differences in residents' fear of crime. Interestingly, while income does not influence the fear of crime among respondents in Balik Pulau, residents with higher income levels in Bayan Lepas exhibit a greater fear of crime. Moreover, the results indicate that economic inequality significantly impacts crime rates in both Bayan Lepas and Balik Pulau, whereas social inequality only shows a negative significant effect in Bayan Lepas.

These findings emphasize the importance of addressing economic disparities as a means to reduce crime in both regions. Furthermore, they suggest the need to tackle social inequality specifically in Bayan Lepas to further mitigate crime rates. Future research could delve into why social inequality does not exert a significant impact on crime in Balik Pulau and explore other factors influencing crime rates in this area. By understanding these factors and their interplay, policymakers, practitioners, and community members can develop targeted interventions to address the root causes of social disorganization and promote community well-being.

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