

Crime in shenzhen
china criminology
essay



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Shenzhen, China has been recognized as a township for a little over thirty years. The earliest known records that carried the name of Shenzhen date from 1410 during the Ming Dynasty. The drains in the paddy fields were known to the locals as a “ Zhen”; zhen meaning “ deep drains” (Wikipedia, nd). Deng came into power in 1976 after Mao’s death; under Deng’s reign, Shenzhen was transformed from a sleepy border town to a “ reform laboratory” living up to its nickname “ Window to the outside world” (Pearl River Delta, p. 3, nd). Shenzhen was recognized as a township and later was divided into two districts, Xin’an and Bao’ an. Today Shenzhen is part of the Guangdong province and is known as one of the world’s largest Producing cities; it borders Hong Kong and is divided into six administrative districts, Bao’an is the northwestern part, Longgang is in the Northeast, Nanshan is the southwest region, and Yantian, Futian, and Luohu are all located directly south of the Longgang district. Shenzhen has become known as Shenzhen SEZ (special Economic Zone, ND). This zone only includes four of the six districts: Futian, Luohu, Nanshan, and Yantian. Those districts along with Boa’an and Longgang make up the whole city of Shenzhen.

In 1979 Deng Xiapong designated Shenzhen as one of the country’s first Special Economic Zones, offering foreign country’s the opportunity to prosper there. Eager to take advantage of the countries low labor costs, many foreign companies rushed into the SEZ. This resulted in decades of a booming economy expanding at a rate of 28 percent annually until 2004 (Schuman, P. 3, 2006). As of 2007 Shenzhen had a population of about 12 million people; 1. 87 million people were permanent residents and 10. 58 million were immigrants. This town was filled with people, factories, offices,

and apartments (Pearl River Delta, p. 3, nd). Shenzhen's volatile crime rates are a product of the city's social stratification; the wayward, poorer districts, subjugated by hokou cards that delineate social status, and inflamed by an influx of immigration, and the illegal control over children, are the centrifugal point from which Shenzhen's crime emanates.

Criminals in Shenzhen are convicted for committing crimes ranging from purse snatching to murder. There is an unusual amount of petty crime occurring in Shenzhen, including pick pockets, purse snatchers, thieves, and prostitution. Tourists are recommended to be very cautious when traveling in this area. Thieves tend to be more rampant in bus and train stations. Many children have been taught to hang out around these areas and attack innocent people in effort to rob them of anything that has any value (Brooks, p. 2, 2009).

80 percent of these crimes are committed by immigrants (Brooks, 2009). Crime rates are increasing in Shenzhen annually; 90 percent of Shenzhen's inhabitants are from elsewhere. there is a pattern throughout history of people emigrating from the rural areas of China to the urban areas for work. When the residents from rural areas in China began to experience the opportunities available in the city, " Shenzhen became one of the ' Mecca' destinations for these people" (Zhong, p. 14). Western critics of Shenzhen are appalled at what they see: dangerous and degrading factory conditions, environmental damage, sexual exploitation, and widespread corruption (Nourishing the Spirit, p. 3, 2003). The transgression rate tripled between 1984 and 2004; the total number of criminal cases rose 13 percent to 2. 2 million between 1998 and 1999. In 2004 there were more than a million

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serious crimes; in 2006 there was a rise in the number of major criminal cases including explosions, kidnappings, and homicides (Hays, 2010). Due to the difficulty of obtaining firearms in China, many murders are committed with poisons and explosives because they are easily accessible. In July of 2007, eighteen children aged seven and below along with their teacher, were injured when a mentally ill man entered a kindergarten classroom with a wrench; in 2008, a former student broke into a school in the Guangdong province, he killed two students, and then took his own life by leaping off a five story school building. The criminal was later identified as a dropout (Hays, 2010).

There is a rise in crime not only in the city, but in the countryside of Shenzhen as well; due to the lawlessness of the countryside many innocent people are being caught in the middle of rival village wars, while the police stand by and watch. " Many people blame the lack of enforcement on the breakdown of the Maoist discipline and the rise of cutthroat capitalist competition and links between police and criminal gangs. Often power is in the hands of the local leaders and clan chiefs, corrupt police or gangsters" (Hays, 2010).

Child slave labor is a huge problem in China as well. " The International Labor Organization has estimated that of the 250 million children between the ages of five and fourteen working in developing countries, 61 percent are in Asia"(Grau, pg. 1, 2005). Most of these children work in sweatshops. " Sweatshops are a workplace where the workers are subjected to extreme exploitation, including the lack of a living wage," which is not enough to support them or their families for that matter (Grau, p. 1, 2005). They do not

make enough money to save for their future, therefore they are ultimately stuck working in inhumane sweatshops. " They do not receive any medical benefits or vacation time." Sweatshops are extremely unsanitary and are tremendously dangerous. These workers or children often receive cruel punishment. There are not any determined guidelines for punishments; " discipline ranges from verbal warning to brutal beatings, " depending on how their superior is feeling at the moment. Officials are uncertain of the exact number of children working in these sweatshops; the Chinese Government does not allow this information to be published, due the fact that they are primarily Communist, and do not want the rest of the world to know how excruciatingly these businesses treat their workers. This information will give them a bad reputation, and that is the last thing they want. " Experts claim that child labor is increasing, particularly in areas around Hong Kong"; considering Shenzhen is just across the border it can be generalized that child labor is increasing in this city as well. Much of the proof that child labor exists in China is taken from data observed in Shenzhen and the dropout rate of children in school. The dropout rate is increasing tremendously, and experts have seen a trend that kids are dropping out in order to support their family or because their parents are forcing them to. " In this Special Economic Zone children between the ages of 10 to 16 are working up to 14 hours a day in factories throughout. It was also concluded that young girls work in awful conditions for 13 to 14 hours a day; if they are lucky, they may get one or two hour breaks" (Grau, p. 1, 2005). The China Youth News claimed that 44 of the 206 foreign owned companies in Shenzhen employ children younger than 16 years of age, ignoring the fact that the legal working age in China is 16 years old (Barboza, p. 1, 2008). There have been

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many accidents and injuries to workers that are working in these treacherous environments including serious injuries such as broken bones, blindness, and ultimately death. " Some children in Shenzhen as well as the rest of China are working with pyrotechnics. The United States imports of pyrotechnics and explosives are approaching 1 billion dollars"; Thus the United States plays a big role in Child Labor. Not only have there been numerous mistakes leading to deaths and serious injuries involved with these dangerous substances, workers are being lied to about their compensation. Many are being told that they will earn more than what they are actually are bringing home (Grau, p. 1, 2005).

Children are also working in the garment, textile, toy, sporting equipment, and game factories as well. " Around the holiday season, children (the majority being female) work one or two 24 hour shifts a month. The average North American toy manufacturer gets paid 11 dollars an hour; in China the average toy maker makes about 30 cents an hour." Child labor is hard to abolish, because the children obtain fake ID cards which claim that they are old enough to be employed. Residence cards are the main source of identification which allows authorities to obtain and identify Criminals. Education in China is required up until age 16, but there is a rising increase of drop-outs and it is assumed that these drop-outs are doing so because many are being forced to join the labor force. " The Chinese Press reports that drop-out rates of children between the ages of twelve and fifteen exceed nine percent; the usual rate is about 2 percent" (Grau, p. 2, 2005).

The government and officials are putting in as much effort as they can to deter this high rate of crime. Immigration has also been an issue present in <https://assignbuster.com/crime-in-shenzhen-china-criminology-essay/>

Shenzhen for a while. “ There are barbed wire fences separating the districts to prevent immigrants from crossing the borders” (Zhong, p. 14, 2008). In order for officials to distinguish between immigrants and permanent residents, it is required for one to obtain hukou status before they are considered a permanent resident. The hukou system is the historic technique used in Shenzhen allowing people to claim residency; it was put into effect due to the high crime rate this city faces. This card recognizes home ownership, land purchases, and other personal information that would confirm residency. Residence permits have been around for a while; there have been numerous amendments to the system. In 1984, the state council issued a directive permitting peasants to settle in towns after obtaining a new kind of non-agricultural hukou status, known as the zii kouliang chezhen hukou, meaning “ urban hukou for those with self supplied grain” (Zhong, p. 14, 2008). About 11 years later the government issued another form of residency permits. They were known as the temporary residence permit. “ This allowed residents older than 16 to migrate to the city with the obligation to receive a documentation stating that they can travel to another district, and they must get the permission from the local public security bureau.” This permit did not allow temporary residents to receive ration cards, housing allocation, and ultimately their kids were not allowed to enroll in the local schools. This caused many families to live separate lifestyles. The mother or father, and sometimes both would travel to the city from their rural homes to work. Many of these people were forced to stay in the city for periods of time, because it wasn't affordable or logical to travel back and forth. “ These temporary permits were issued with validity up to a year depending on the work load” (Zhong, p. 15, 2008).

In the late 1980's counties began selling blue hukou cards. These cards are referred to as local urban household registration cards, and were premised on property buying. The 2 districts, Bao'an and Longgang that were involved are outside the Shenzhen SEZ, locally known as the "second border"; migrants without proper documentation are not allowed to cross (Zhong, p. 15, 2008). Eventually blue hukou cards were issued to people who invested in homes throughout the districts of Bao'an and Longgang. From November 1998, 18,022 households which is equivalent to 48,207 people, were granted blue card hukou and 6,534 households (18,679 people) were granted the transfer from blue card hukou to permanent hukou in the two districts of Bao'an and Longgang (Zhong, p. 15, 2007). Since 1993 policies regarding immigration have lightened a little bit. Officials are trying to focus on better management rather than exclusion and segregation.

"In 2003, police recorded over 106,797 criminal cases in Shenzhen, 9.6 percent more than the previous year. Altogether 30,019 cases were cleared, an increase of 57.2 percent over 2002." The effort that these policemen and woman are contributing seem to helping. "In efforts to fight crime, the city hired 3,000 more police officers in 2003. One third of them were assigned to the Bao'an district." They have also made an effort to transport more police officers "that are on the road, and in the office, to the streets." (Mass Patrols, 2004). "Besides organized crime, pick pockets on buses will be targeted. Majority of the city buses will be equipped with cameras and police officers will be deployed on city busses' as well" (Shenzhen Targets Organized Crime, Shenzhen Daily, 2006).

City officials are putting in a tremendous amount of effort in order to prevent crime in Shenzhen. They want tourists to come to China and feel comfortable; they don't want them to have to watch over their shoulder every time they go out. At least 20, 000 surveillance cameras have been inserted around Shenzhen in order to deter crime. These devices are supposed to be able to put a name to faces displayed on a screen, and detect unusual activities occurring. This is only one of the few techniques they are using. This will without a doubt make people think twice before they commit a crime (Bradsher, 2007). Police are also issuing residency cards to everyone residing in Shenzhen. The Global Positioning system received a contract in 2008, in order to produce these cards; this was known as phase I of the project. These cards will have a chip inside of them that obtains "personal information, not just the citizen's name and address but also work history, educational background, religion, ethnicity, police record, house renting information, medical insurance status, the person's location and landlord's phone number" (Bradsher, 2007). It will allow the Municipal Government to have access to that information. Due to the great success of Phase 1, Phase II of this project began in August of 2008; this phase expanded the information database capacity to about five million people. The current plan is to support approximately 12 million residence card holders (China Information Security, nd). Eventually they are trying to have credit reports and bus station payments on this card. These residence cards will be optional. There is a twist on this option; only the people who obtain these cards will have access to certain luxuries. For example, anyone who has a card will receive numerous free services throughout the city, including low-cost housing and free education for their children. Migrant workers will

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need to obtain a card in order to receive any type of rental homes. Some people feel that this is a violation to their privacy, but with the amount of crime that takes place in Shenzhen, this seems to be the most logical idea to deter the violence. “ Experts believe this system will be a model for many other major cities in the world” (China Information Security, nd).

Police have also initialized citywide checks of nightclubs, massage parlors, and rented homes throughout the city neighborhoods. They hope this will lower the rate of prostitution and blackmailing. The rule in Shenzhen is “ those who don’t have money will do a lot to get it.” (Bai, 2008). This has led to a high rate of prostitution and mistresses. There is quite a disparity regarding income, between men and women. Due to these differences women feel the need to make a living and do what they have to do.

Nightclubs are full of crime; clubs are a prime spot for thieves to get what they want. It is a dark and crowded area where people are bumping into each other nonstop; when people are being ripped off they assume it is just another person bumping into them. The owners are usually a part of these scams; they train their employees to steal for them. People are greeted by beautiful women at the door, who seem really nice and innocent, but little do they know, these women have been trained to steal. Night clubs are not a very welcoming place for foreigners to go. Tourists are targeted, because the thieves believe they will be easy to rip off; the thieves target women too.

Women are not safe at these nightclubs. Experts warn visitors and women to never pay with a credit card, because you will be overcharged. It isn’t worth the time to try to get the club security or employees to help, because no one cares. Officials claim that if it is possible people should go to the “

neighboring city, Hong Kong to enjoy the night life” (Shenzhen Luo-wu Bars, 2005).

Shenzhen is the fastest growing city in China at this time. This city has had some hurdles to jump before they reach the status of an international city, “but it is predicted to be there one day within the next 50 years” (Zhong, 2008, p. 59-62). They have three times the amount of police today than they did ten years ago, and the residence cards have really helped them out in identifying criminals, and ultimately finding them. They have seen a decrease in crime since they implemented the cards, and hopefully the crime rate keeps falling. Shenzhen’s municipality is playing a tough battle against crime, and is taking drastic measures to abolish it. They have made more effort than any other city, in hopes that one day, tourists and women will be able to have and enjoy the freedom that men do, whether it is night or day. Lena Y. Zhong visited Shenzhen and had the opportunity to conduct a field study and experience the social life as a local resident. He awakened early in the morning to get out into the streets and communicate with the local residents and just take it all in. His observations gave him a better understanding of the lifestyle practiced in a model city. He showed much appreciation for the organized lifestyle of this prestigious region of the city. He had a concern; he wasn’t sure if the presence of an observer would change the actions and culture of the citizens being studied. For this reason he tried to be as subtle as possible. He would nonchalantly start a conversation with someone at the convenience store, or ask someone if he could join their activity. This gave him hope that they would not treat him as

a journalist or observer. “ China has the reputation of being well aware of who is a native and who is not” (Zhong, 2008, pgs 59-62).

China has a major problem with crime and officials are trying to come up with methods to deter the violence. So far, their techniques have not proven to prevent crime or to make a difference. The trend is like a teeter totter; from one year to the next the crime rate will decrease, but then from that year to the next the crime rate will rise. Officials have a major task on their hands, because no matter what rules and techniques are applied, it seems as though perpetrators come up with ways to get around them. The new residency cards that are being considered will have the best chances of deterring crime, because it will be hard to hide when they contain a G. P. S chip, and pretty much all the personal information there is to know about a human being. Many people feel that this violates their rights, but if they have nothing to worry about or hide then they shouldn't be worried about officials having possession of their information. Perhaps with these new techniques and ideas, crime in Shenzhen will decrease.