

CHAPTER 2 THE CRIME SITUATION IN JAPAN

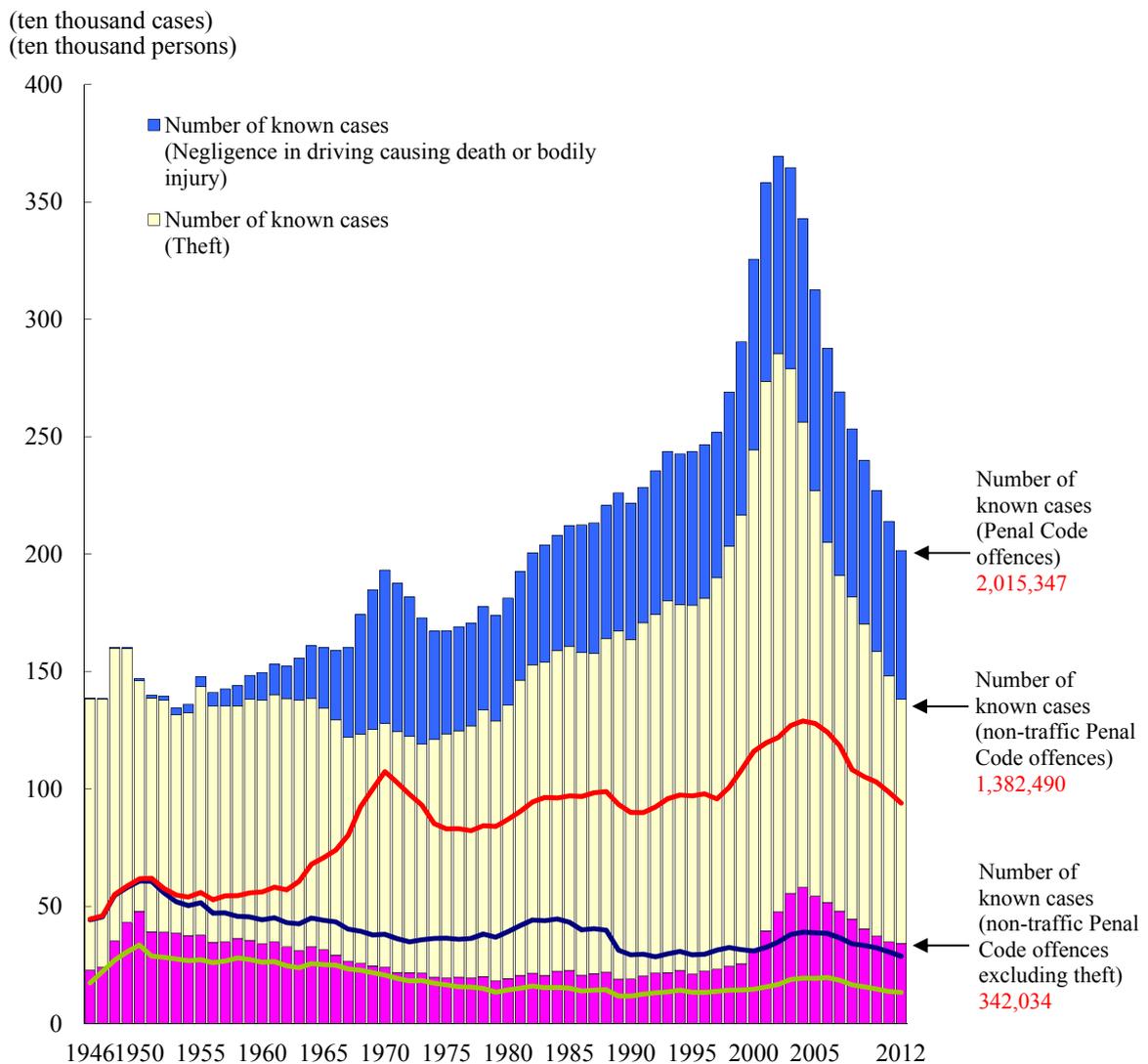
I. PENAL CODE OFFENCES

A. Trends in Penal Code Offences

Figure 1 shows the number of Penal Code offences known to the police, and the number of Penal Code offenders cleared by the police (the number of Penal Code offenders detected or identified by the police) from 1946 to 2012.

The number of Penal Code offences known to the police increased every year from 1996, marking a new post-World War II high each year, and peaked in 2002, when the number reached 3,693,928. However, from 2003, there was a continuous decrease and, in 2012, the number of Penal Code offences known to the police totalled 2,015,347, a 5.8 percent drop from the previous year.

Fig. 1 Number of known cases and persons cleared of Penal Code offences (1946-2012)



Note: 1. Until 1955, illegal behaviour by persons under 14 years of age is included.

2. Non-traffic Penal Code offences until 1965 mean Penal Code offences excluding negligence in the pursuit of social activities.

Source: Criminal Statistics by National Police Agency, White Paper on Crime 2013

Table 1 shows the number of Penal Code offences known to the police, the number of Penal Code offences and offenders cleared by the police, and the clearance rate of major offences in 2012. Of the Penal Code offences known in 2012, theft was the most prevalent, with 1,040,447 offences known, constituting 51.6 percent of the total. The second most prevalent offence was negligence in driving causing death or bodily injury, with 632,857 offences known, constituting 31.4 percent of the total. These two offences together accounted for approximately 83.0 percent of the total number of known Penal Code offences in 2012.

The number of cleared Penal Code offenders, crossing the 1,000,000 mark in 1998, increased every year from 1999, marking a new post-World War II high each year, and peaked in 2004, when the number reached 1,289,416. However, the number of cleared Penal Code offenders has decreased every year since 2005, totaling 939,826 in 2012, a 4.7 percent drop from the previous year.

As for the age distribution of offenders cleared of non-traffic Penal Code offences (Penal Code offences excluding negligence in driving causing death or bodily injury etc.), those aged 60 or over accounted for 5.7 percent in 1993, but rose to 23.8 percent in 2012. Also, those aged 65 or over accounted for 16.9 percent in 2012.

With regard to the gender of offenders cleared of non-traffic Penal Code offences, male offenders numbered 226,925, composing 79.0 percent of the total, while female offenders numbered 60,431, composing 21.0 percent of the total in 2012.

Table 1. Number of Known and Cleared Penal Code Offences and Cleared Offenders and Clearance Rate of Major Offences (2012)

Offence	Known Penal Code Offences	Cleared Penal Code Offences	Cleared Penal Code Offenders	Clearance Rate	Balance over the Previous Year	
					Known Penal Code Offenders	Cleared Penal Code Offenders
Total	2,015,347	1,070,838	939,826	53.1%	Δ 124,378 (Δ5.8%)	84,770 (8.6%)
Murder	1,030	963	899	93.5%	Δ 21 (Δ2.0%)	Δ 8 (Δ0.8%)
Robbery	3,568	2,486	2,430	69.7%	Δ 105 (Δ2.9%)	55 (2.3%)
Theft	1,040,447	286,638	153,864	27.5%	Δ 92,680 (Δ8.2%)	118,124 (70.1%)
Fraud	34,678	20,264	10,977	58.4%	76 0.2%	9695 (91.7%)
Embezzlement	41,433	38,129	37,545	92.0%	Δ 8,935 (Δ17.7%)	Δ 8,158 (Δ17.6%)
Negligence in driving causing death or bodily	632,857	632,857	652,440	100.0%	Δ 25,770 (Δ3.9%)	Δ 47,260 (Δ6.9%)
Others	261,334	89,501	81,671	34.2%	3,057	12,322

Notes: 1. Figures in parentheses show the rate of increase or decrease. Δ indicates a decrease.
2. Figures in parentheses show percent change.

Source: Crime Statistics provided by the National Police Agency.

The clearance rate of Penal Code offences, which used to be about 70 percent, showed a marked declining tendency from 1988. In 2001, the clearance rate was the lowest since World War II: 38.8 percent for all Penal Code offences and 19.8 percent for non-traffic Penal Code offences. However, the situation has improved since 2002 and in 2012 it reached 53.0 percent for all Penal Code offences and 31.7 percent for non-traffic Penal Code offences.

B. Trends in Some Major Crimes

The number of murders known to the police, having been generally flat in recent years, was 1,030 in 2012. The clearance rate of murders remains steadily high and was 93.5 percent in 2012.

Known cases of robbery reached 7,664 in 2003, the highest on record since 1951. Since then the number decreased, with the exception of 2009. The number of known robberies was 3,569 in 2012, and the clearance rate was 69.7 percent.

With regard to theft, the number of known cases showed an increasing tendency and, in 2002, reached 2,377,488, the worst post war record. The clearance rate also decreased and, in 2001, declined to 15.7 percent which was the lowest in the post-war period. However, both the number of known offences and the clearance rate have improved, with offences totalling 1,040,447 in 2012 and a clearance rate of 27.5 percent for the same year.

Concerning fraud, the number of known cases has increased significantly since 2002, reaching a record high of 85,596 in 2005, the highest total since 1960. However, since 2006 it has decreased every year and was 34,678 in 2012 (0.2 percent down over the previous year). The clearance rate reduced sharply from 1997 and recorded a post-war low of 32.1 percent in 2004. But the rate showed a recovery from 2005 and was 58.4 percent in 2012. In recent years, a major modus operandi in fraud cases has been "*Furikome Fraud*" – confidence tricks designed to induce bank transfers.

II. SPECIAL LAW OFFENCES

Recently, the total number of Special Law offenders newly received by the public prosecutors offices has generally been on a declining trend, and in 2012 totalled 491,278, which was a 5.0 percent decrease over the previous year. Of that number, Road Traffic Act violators accounted for 392,435 offenders (79.7 %), followed by violators of the Stimulants Control Act, who numbered 19,008 (3.9 %). The third largest group of offenders was violators of the Minor Offences Act, who numbered 10,387 (2.1 %).