

CRIME & JUSTICE BULLETIN

3

CRIMES AGAINST VISITORS TO BARBADOS
1980-2000

NATIONAL TASK FORCE ON CRIME
PREVENTION
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

Foreward

This is the third in a series of publications designed to make information about crime and justice easily available to the people of Barbados.

The Task Force is very grateful to the Royal Barbados Police Force, the Barbados Tourism Authority, the Ministry of Tourism and the Safety and Security Committee of the Barbados Hotel Tourism Association for providing the basic data and their cooperation in preparing this bulletin.

Christopher Nuttall
Consultant

NATIONAL TASK FORCE ON CRIME PREVENTION

CRIMES AGAINST VISITORS TO BARBADOS 1980 - 2000

Tourism is a crucial part of the Barbados economy. It is far and away the biggest foreign exchange earner and on its own covers the balance of payments deficit on imported goods. There is no doubt that when tourism falls the economy suffers right across the board - from foreign exchange earnings to higher unemployment and reduced living standards. It is not surprising, therefore, that the possible negative effects of crime on tourism should be a matter of concern in Barbados.

This Bulletin deals with four topics.

- ◆ How visitor numbers have changed over the last 21 years.
- ◆ The levels and trends of recorded crime against visitors.
- ◆ How crime against visitors compares with crime against residents.
- ◆ The possible effect of crime rates on tourism.

Data

This Bulletin is based on numbers of crimes against visitors recorded by the police. These figures provide a useful picture of crime against visitors, and a rare one because Royal Barbados Police Force is one of the few police forces in the world which collect specific information on crime against visitors. Without this information this study could not be carried out.

It is important to remember, however, that recorded crime is rarely the same as actual crime and there are a number of factors which affect the relationship between the two, particularly in relation to visitors.

- Recorded crime figures almost always under-count actual crime because not all crime is reported to the police, and not all incidents reported to the police are recorded.
- Recorded crime against visitors can be particularly prone to under-reporting because visitors normally stay only a short time and it is known that people are

less likely to report crime if they think the police can do little about it.

- On the other hand, if visitors wish to make a claim on their insurance policy they have to get a police number. This will encourage them to report but may also, in some cases, lead to exaggerated or fraudulent reports.

This means that overall we would expect the number of recorded crimes against visitors to be lower than the number of actual crimes. We would expect the difference between actual and recorded crime to be lower, however, where insured property is involved and we should bear in mind that in some cases, probably a small proportion, the reporting may exceed the reality.

The best way to get information about actual crime against visitors is to carry out surveys. Small surveys have been done in the past and the results that there are, are used in this Bulletin. But we will have to wait for the results of much larger surveys - to be carried out over the next year - to get more accurate information.

Methodology

In this bulletin we will be using three terms frequently:

- **Visitors** are all the non-residents who visit the island.
- **Tourists** are visitors who stay at least 1 night. The average length of stay for a tourist is in fact 11 nights.
- **Cruise ship passengers** are visitors who do not stay over night on the island.

While we know that the majority of crime against visitors is carried out against tourists, the crime figures do not distinguish between crimes against tourists and against cruise ship passengers. This bulletin therefore contains analysis of the number of recorded crimes against visitors both in relation to overall visitor numbers and to tourist numbers only. The rate of crime against all visitors will be an accurate picture overall but will somewhat understate the risk for tourists. The rate for tourists will

slightly overstate the risk but be a little more accurate for that group.

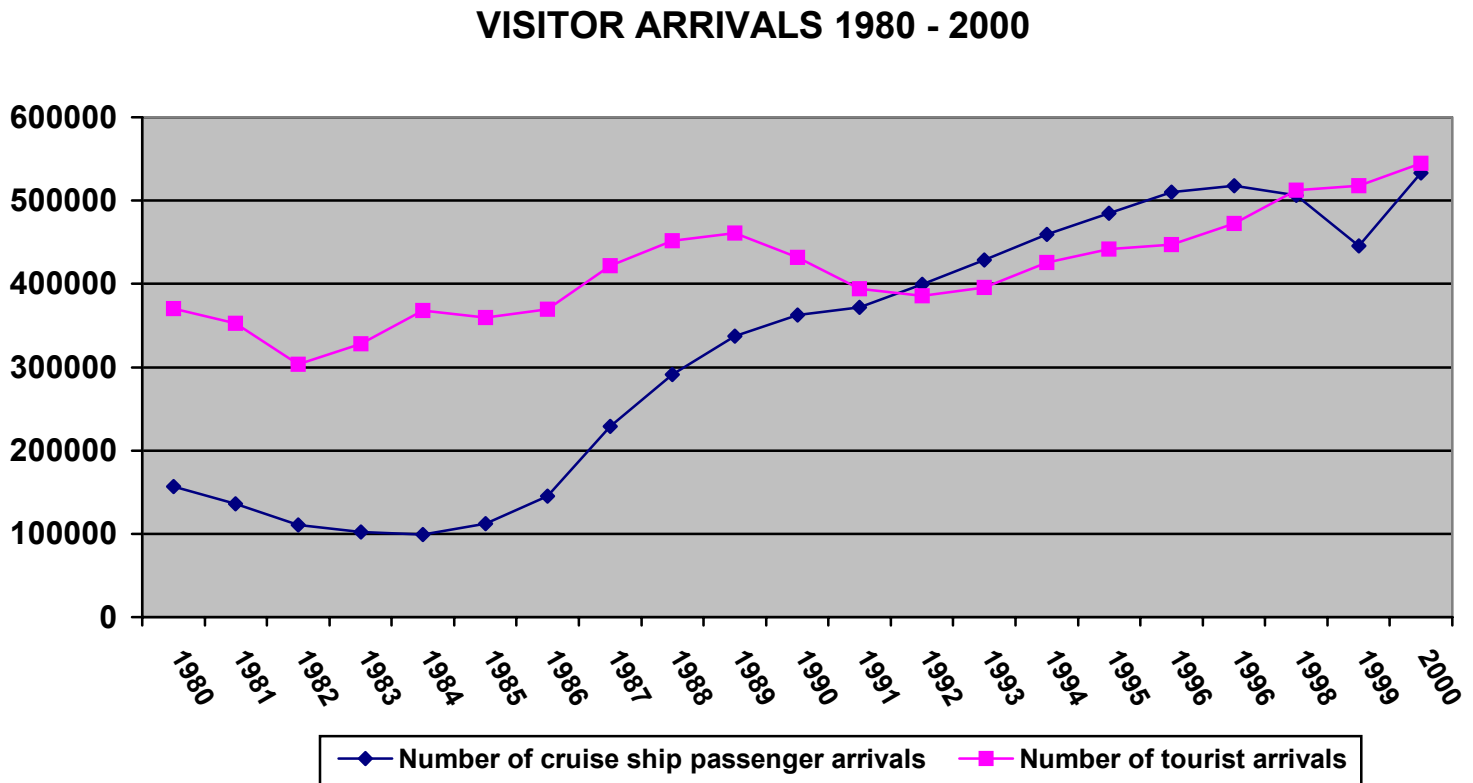
For individual offences, however, where it is clear that visitor crimes have been largely carried out against tourists – as in the case of burglary and theft – rates are shown for tourists specifically. Where cruise ship passengers may also have been victims – as in the case of robbery and wounding – rates are shown for all visitors.

Two key methods are used for examining crime against visitors/tourists; **crimes per number of visitor/tourist arrivals** and **crimes per average number of visitors on the island during the year**.

- **Crimes per number of visitor or tourist arrivals** shows the proportion of visitors to Barbados in any year who were the victim of a recorded crime. This tells us an individual visitor's chance of being victimized. It is not, however, directly comparable with a resident's chance of being victimized during that year because a resident is in Barbados for 365 days a year, while a tourist is here on average for 11.
- **Crimes per average number of visitors or tourists on the island during the year** tells us how crime against visitors as a group compares with crime against residents as a group. This looks at the average population of visitors on the island during the year and tells us whether on a single day a resident in Barbados was more or less likely to be a victim of crime than a visitor. It is explained more fully in section 3.

Section 1: Visitor Numbers

Figure 1



As can be seen from figure 1 the number of visitor arrivals has risen considerably over the last 21 years.

- ◆ Tourist numbers have risen from 370,000 in 1980 to 545,000 in 2000 - although the rise has not been uniform and, in particular, there was a fall in tourist arrivals in the early 1990s.
- ◆ Cruise ship passenger numbers rose very rapidly from just over 100,000 in the mid-eighties to 533,000 in 2000.

Figure 2

POPULATION OF VISITORS 1980-2000

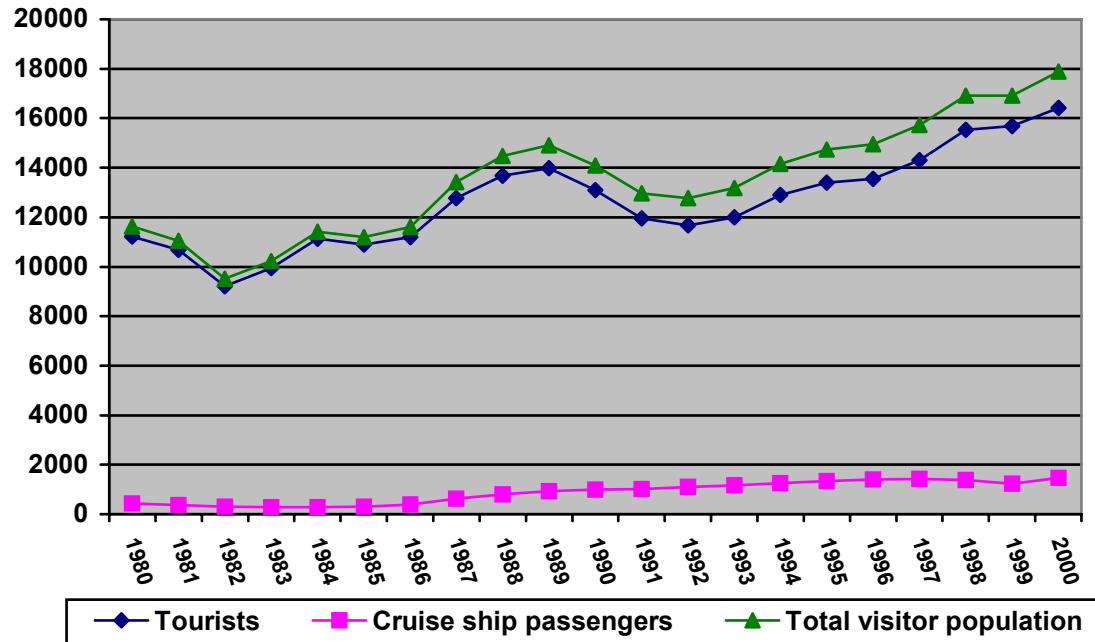


Figure 2 shows how visitors affect the number of people on Barbados. It shows, for example, that on any one day in 2000 the average number of visitors on the island was 17,877 of whom 16,416 were tourists and 1,461 were cruise ship passengers. In 1980 the comparable numbers were 11,638, 11,209 and 429.

Section 2: Trends in Recorded Crime Against Visitors

Overall Trends.

Figure 3

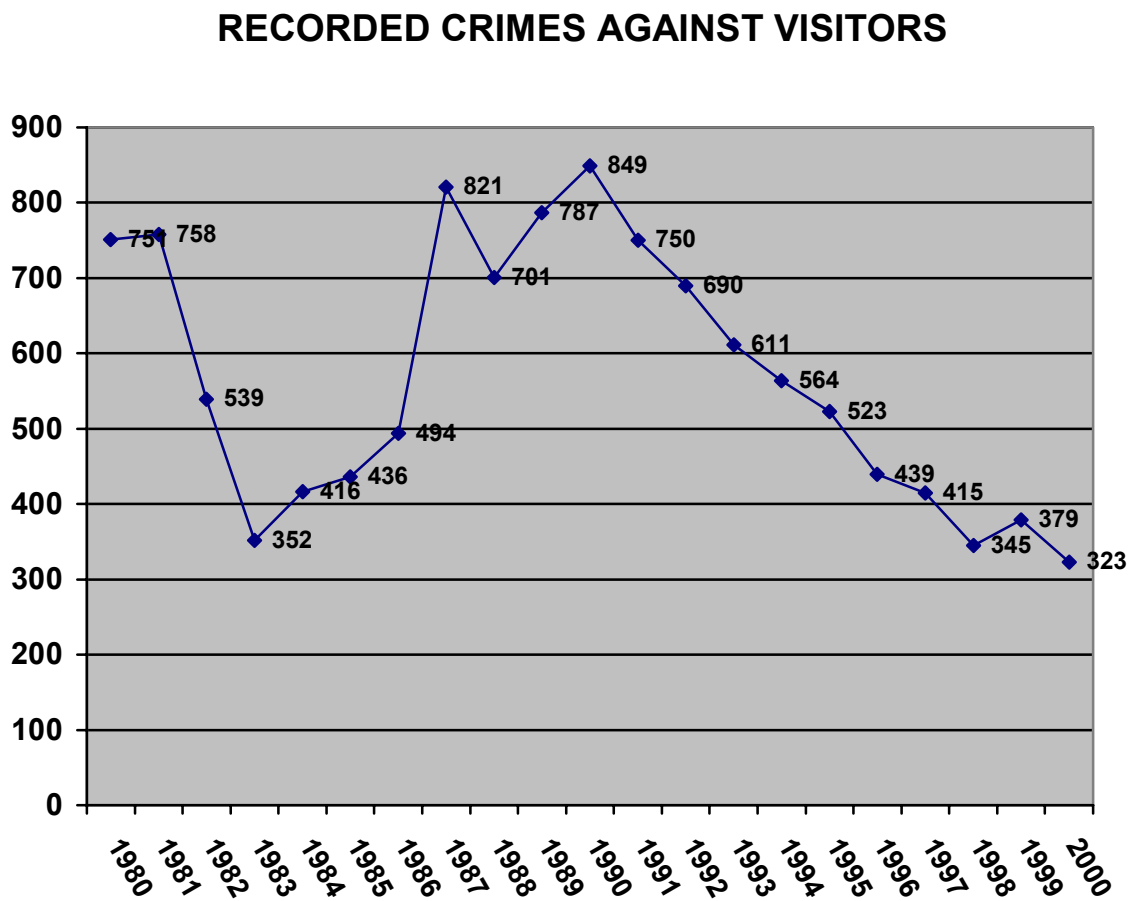


Figure 3 shows the number of crimes against visitors recorded by the police from 1980 to 2000

- ◆ The number fell in the early 1980s,
- ◆ rose to a peak of 849 in 1990,
- ◆ and then fell steadily throughout the nineties, reaching 323 in 2000.

Figure 3 gives the actual numbers of crimes against visitors since 1980. During

most of the last decade, however, while actual numbers of recorded crimes have been falling, numbers of visitors have been rising. To understand how the chance of an individual visitor being a victim of crime has changed, therefore, we need to look at changes in the crime rate - i.e. the number of recorded crimes per 100,000 visitor arrivals. Figure 4 shows that the risk of any individual visitor being a victim was highest in 1981 - when there were 155 crimes per 100,000 visitors and lowest in 2000 with only 30. (We will deal with crimes against visitors as a group in section 3).

Figure 4

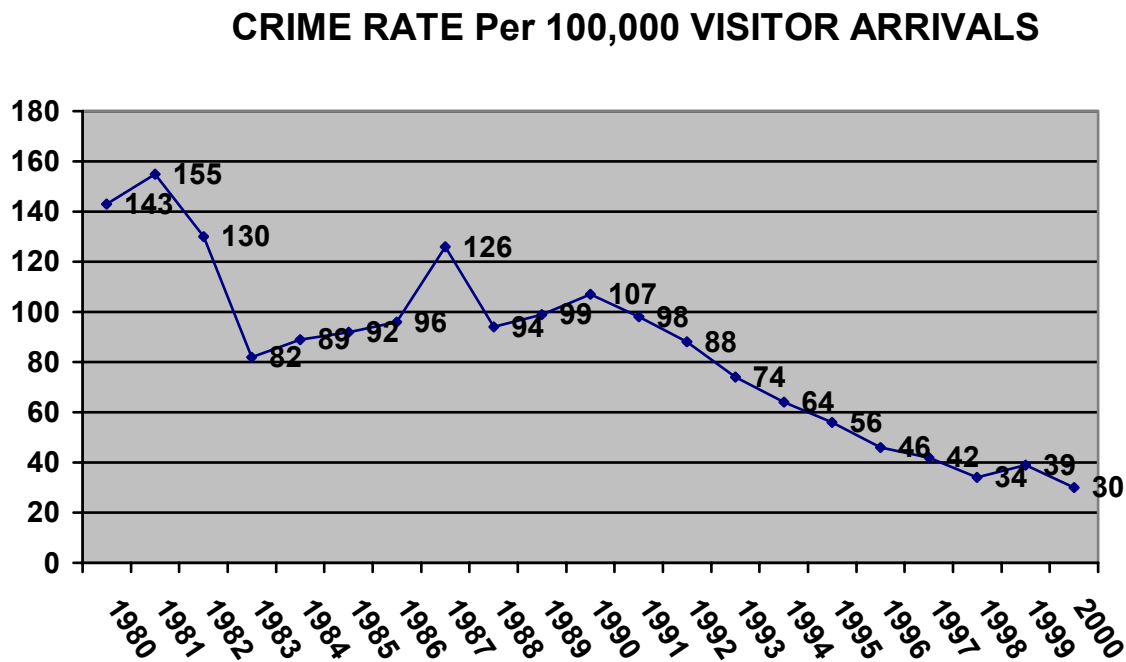
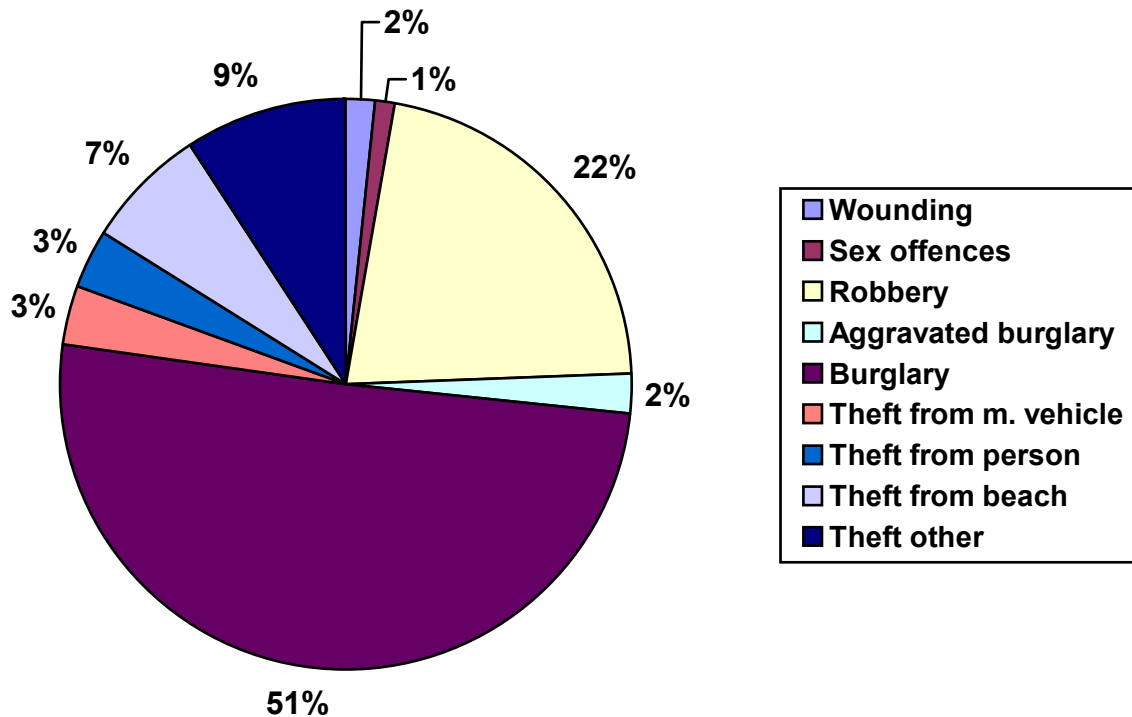


Figure 5

DISTRIBUTION OF RECORDED CRIME AGAINST VISITORS



In 2000 just over half of all recorded crimes against visitors were burglary and over 20% robbery. Only 2% (excluding robbery) were violent. There were no homicides and only 1 serious wounding.

This is very different from the overall distribution of recorded crime in Barbados. In 2000 35% of all recorded crimes in Barbados were burglary and 5% robbery. 8% of recorded crimes were violent (excluding robbery). There were 20 homicides and 275 serious woundings. (See Bulletin 1 for more details).

Specific offences

Violence

As has been described in Bulletin 1 crimes of violence (excluding robbery) against visitors are extremely rare.

- ◆ The last homicide was in 1988
- ◆ There was 1 serious wounding in 2000 and an average of less than 2 a year over the last 5 years
- ◆ There were 2 recorded rapes in 2000 and an average of 1.5 over the last 5 years

It is worth repeating the point made in Bulletin 1 that visitors are significantly less likely to be victims of serious violence and rape in Barbados than in their home countries - especially if they come from North America.

Robbery

Figure 6

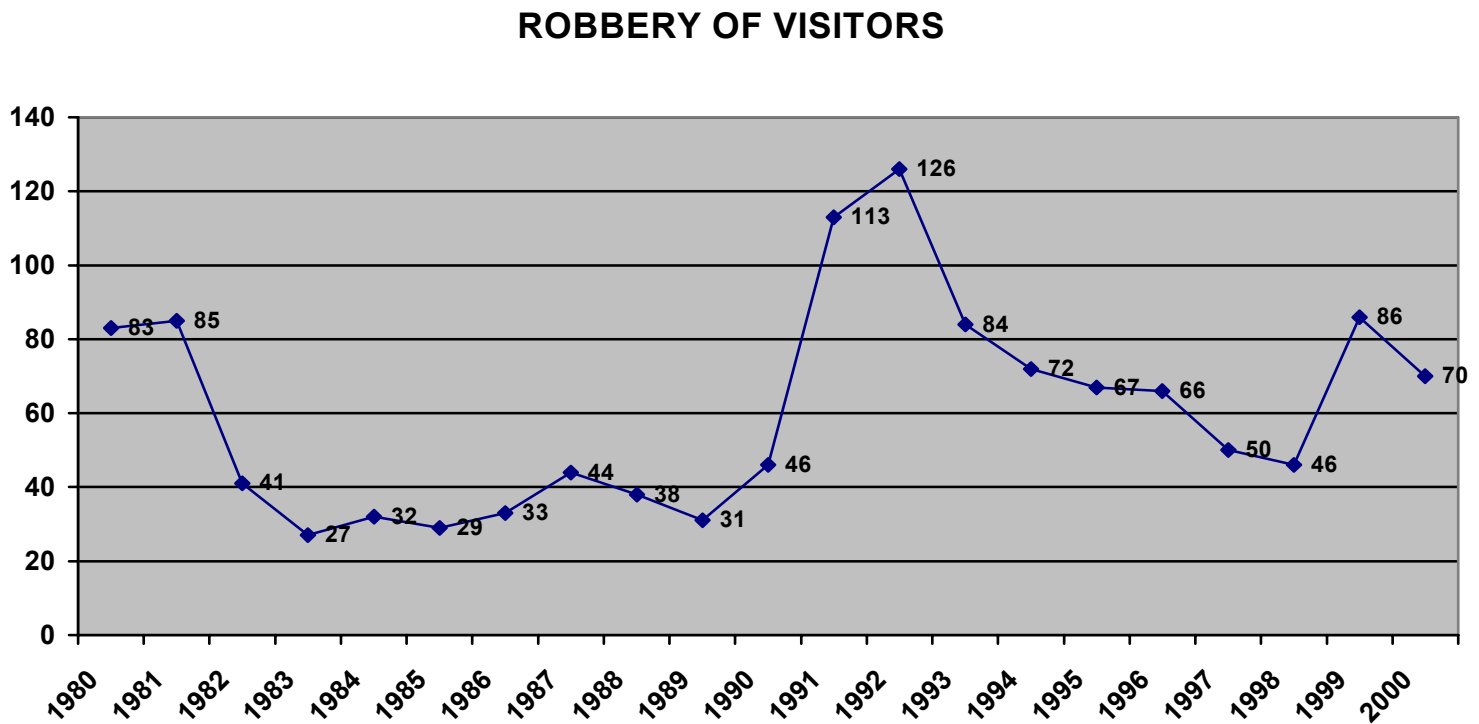


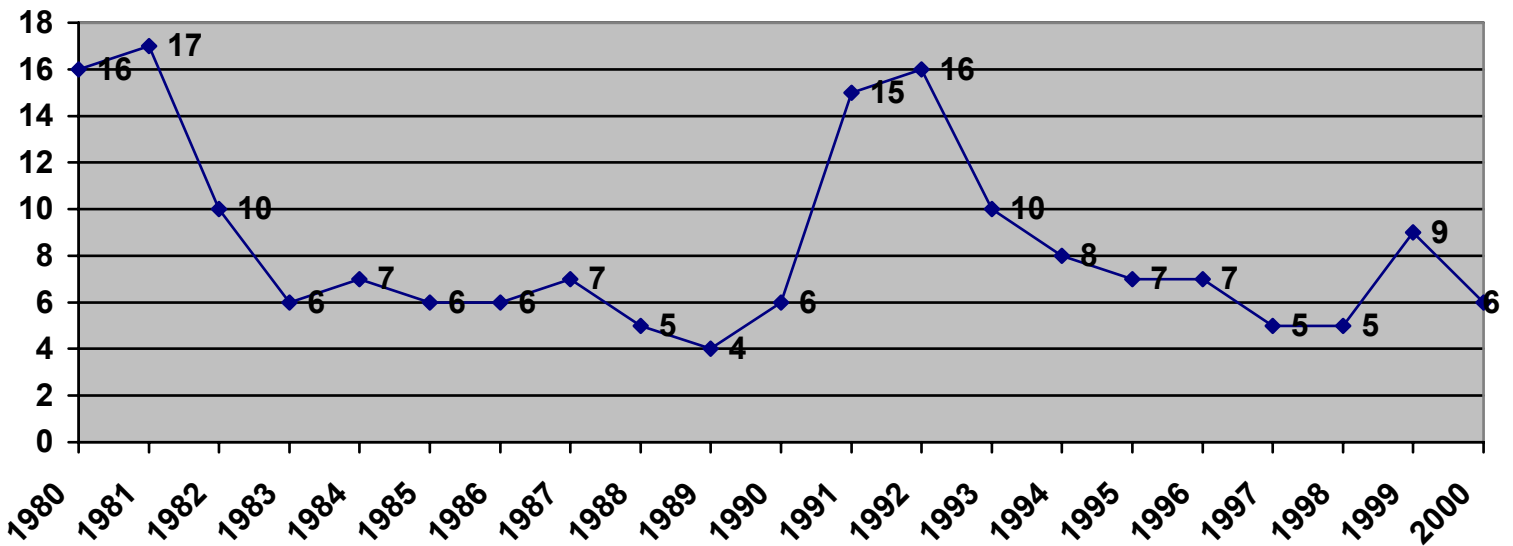
Figure 6 shows the number of robberies of visitors between 1980 and 2000. In 2000 there were 70 compared with 83 in 1980. The peak in the early 1990s was almost certainly related to the downturn in the Barbadian economy at that time. The average

number each year in the 1990s was about twice the number in the 1980s.

However, as figure 7 shows, while the number of robberies in 2000 was higher than during most of the 1980s, the increase in the number of visitors means that the individual visitor's chance of being robbed has not risen and remains very low at 6 per 100,000.

Figure 7

ROBBERY RATE per 100,000 VISITOR ARRIVALS

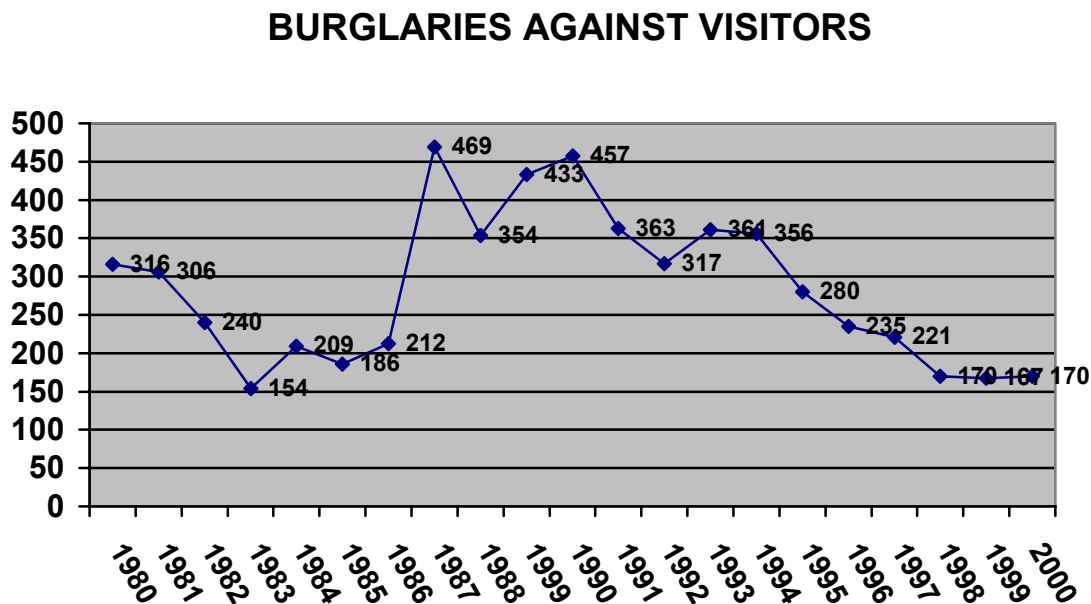


- ◆ The robbery rate was at its highest in 1981 even though the number of robberies (85) was a lot lower than in 1992 (126) (because there were fewer visitors in 1981)
- ◆ The robbery rates for individual years were roughly the same for much of the 1990s as the 1980s
- ◆ 6 out of every 100,000 visitors to Barbados in 2000 were robbery victims.

Burglary

In recent years burglary (including aggravated burglary) has made up about a half of all recorded crimes against visitors.

Figure 8 shows the number of visitor burglaries recorded between 1980 and 2000.



- ◆ The peak year was 1987 (469)
- ◆ The trend since 1990 has been downward
- ◆ The number recorded in 1998, 1999 and 2000 were virtually identical (170, 167, 170).

There is unfortunately, however, no way of knowing on the basis of current records whether the burglaries have been from hotels, apartments or private houses as all burglaries with a visitor victim are counted as a single group. [An estimate by the Barbados Hotel Tourism Association suggests that about half of burglaries are from registered hotels].

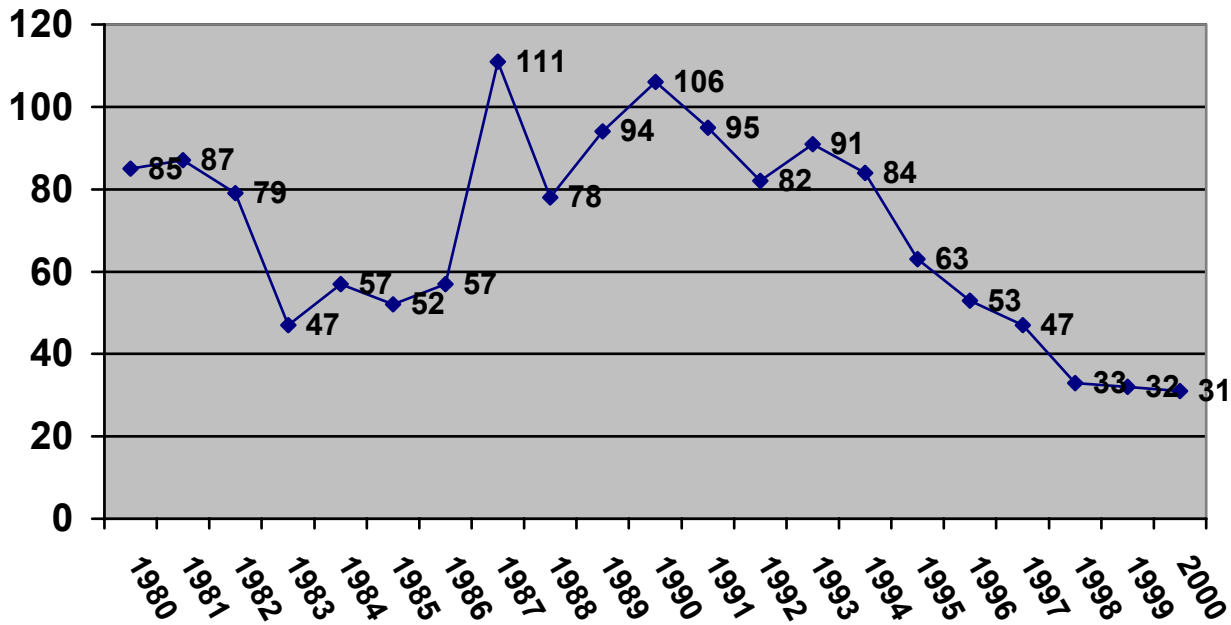
We do know, however, that almost all these burglaries were against tourists because cruise ship passengers do not stay on the island. Figure 9 therefore shows the rate of burglary per 100,000 tourist arrivals. It shows that:

- ◆ The burglary rate in 2000 was at its lowest ever.
- ◆ For the last three years the rate has been two thirds of the lowest years of the 1980s.
- ◆ The burglary rate in 2000 was just over a third of the rate in 1980.

Figure 9

Theft

BURGLARY RATE per 100,000 TOURIST ARRIVALS



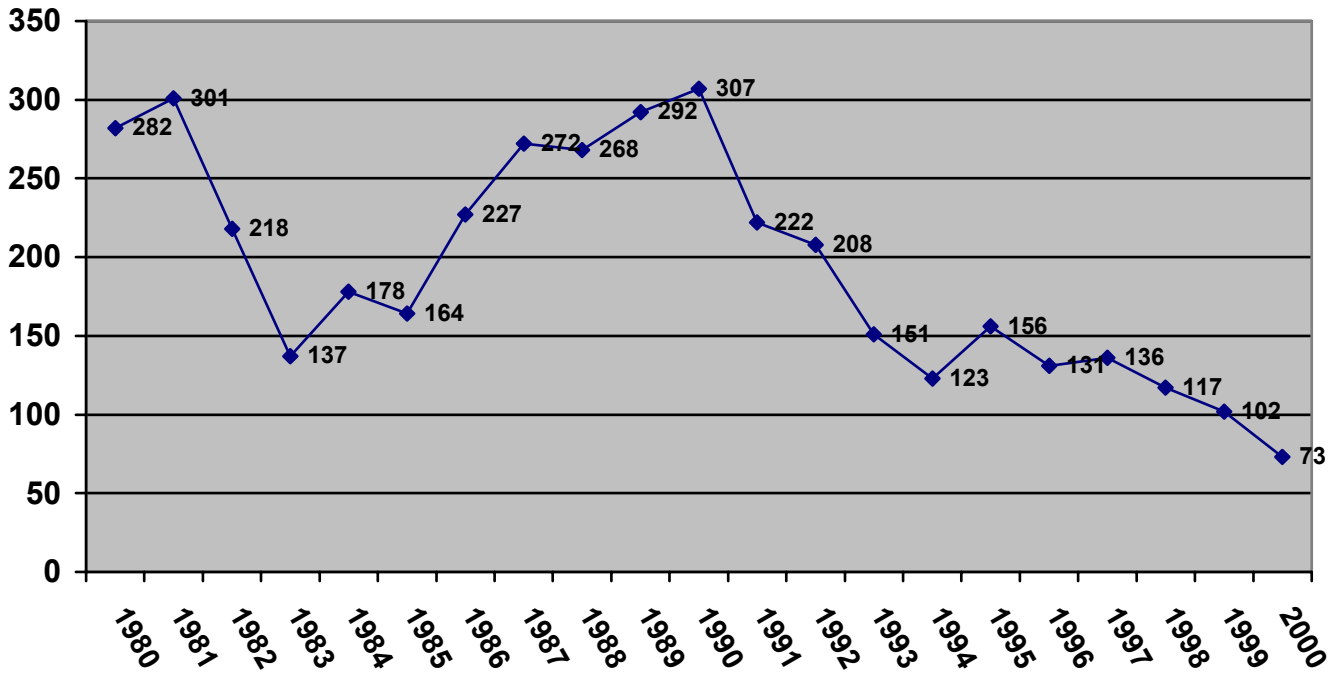
The category of theft from visitors includes:

- Theft from motor vehicles;
- Theft from the person;
- Theft from beaches;
- Other theft.

The numbers in each group are quite small so we have put them all into one grouping as theft.

Figure 10 gives the actual numbers.

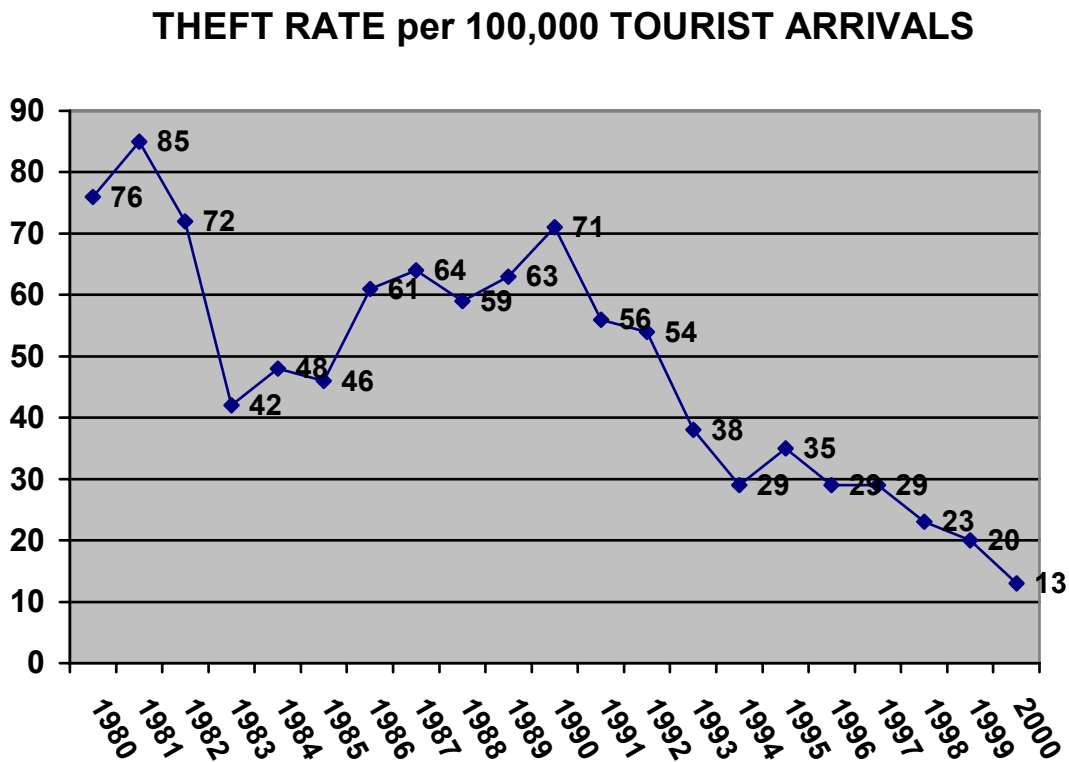
TOTAL THEFT FROM VISITORS



- ◆ In 2000 there were 73 recorded thefts compared with 301 in 1981 and 307 in 1990 (the peak year).
- ◆ The number of recorded thefts has dropped steadily since 1995.
- ◆ The annual average number in the 1980s was higher than in the 1990s.

Figure 11 shows the rate of theft per 100,000 tourist arrivals. (Cruise ship passengers are at risk of having property stolen but not to the extent of visitors who spend evenings on the island.)

Figure 11



- ◆ The recorded theft rate has dropped dramatically since 1980. In 1980 it was 76 per 100,000 arrivals and in 2000 it was 13.
- ◆ There was a second peak in the early 1990s, coinciding with the downturn in the economy.
- ◆ Over the last five years the theft rate has halved.

We believe, however, that these theft figures should be treated with some caution. It is, of course, possible that the figures reflect actual crime rates but there are two other possibilities;

- ◆ that visitors are reporting a smaller proportion of thefts to the police;
- ◆ that the police are recording a smaller proportion of thefts reported to them by visitors.

Once a regular crime survey is established in Barbados, it will become clear which of these factors is causing changes in recorded crime. For the moment, however, we do know that the clear-up rate for thefts from visitors is extremely low (4%). This level will neither encourage victims to report to the police nor the police to record an alleged offence.

Clear-up Rates

Clear-up rates for crimes against visitors are extremely low. The recent clear-up rates for residents is nearly 25% but it is only 6% for crimes against visitors.

The one offence of serious violence in 2000 was cleared up but the robbery clear-up rate was 7%, the burglary rate 5% and the theft rate 4%. For residents, by contrast, the robbery clear-up rate was 28%, the burglary rate 10% and the theft rate 26%.

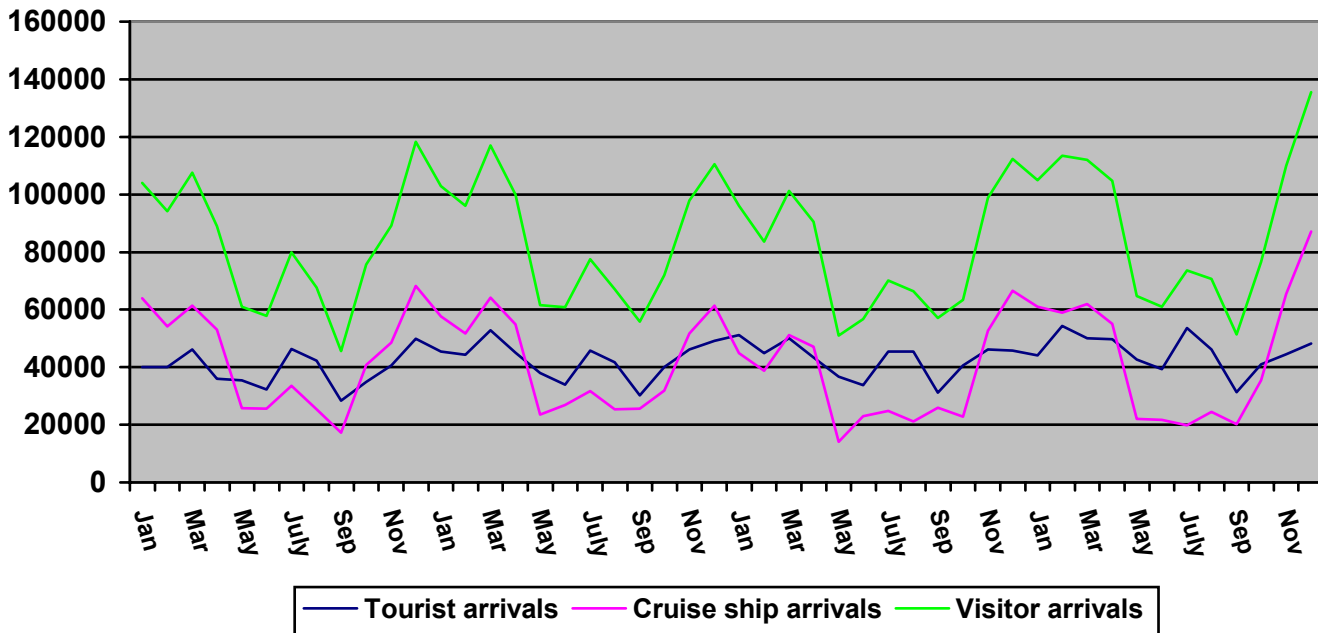
Seasonal Fluctuations in Crimes against Visitors

As is well known there are fairly clear seasonal variations in the number of visitors to Barbados each year.

Figure 12 shows the total number of visitor arrivals over the period January 1997 to December 2000.

Figure 12

VISITOR ARRIVALS 1997-2000



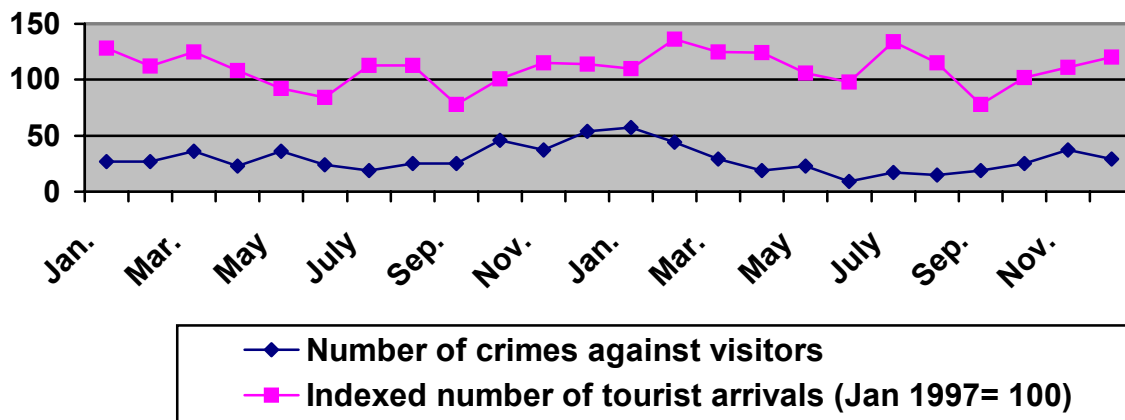
Cruise ship passenger arrivals in particular are very strongly seasonal - most being in the period November to April.

Tourist arrivals are not anything like as seasonal but there are two clearly popular seasons - October to April and July and August. The July/August period is different from the winter season because it includes a significant proportion of nationals and other Caribbean residents visiting family and coming for Cropover. The overall arrival line in Figure 12 shows these patterns clearly.

Are there, then, also seasonal fluctuations in the numbers of recorded crimes against visitors? Figure 13 shows that there is no significant correlation between monthly changes in visitor or tourist arrivals and changes in the rate of crimes against visitors. This is interesting because we might have expected to see more crimes against visitors when there were more visitors available to victimise.

Figure 13

TOURIST ARRIVALS AND CRIME, 1999 - 2000



In the American Sociological Review in 1979 Cohen and Felson famously postulated that crime requires three things: motivated offenders, suitable targets and a lack of capable guardians. The lack of relationship between visitor numbers

and visitor crime suggests that in this case the increase in suitable targets is virtually irrelevant. This may be because there are so many suitable targets even in the slowest months that the number of potential offenders is nowhere near large enough to take advantage of the increased numbers in the busy months.

If this interpretation of the evidence is correct, it means that we would not expect to see future levels of crime against visitors rising in proportion to increased number of visitors. This is good news if arrivals increase because crime rates will drop. On the other hand it also means that if visitor numbers fall, crime will fall more slowly or not at all and crime rates will therefore rise.

We also looked for any correlation between individual offences and seasonal changes in visitor arrivals. For burglary there was no correlation with visitor arrivals but there was a weak correlation with the hotel occupancy rate. (The hotel occupancy rate measures the proportion of hotel rooms which are occupied each month). For robbery, however, the opposite was true. There was no correlation with hotel occupancy but a weak relationship with visitor arrival numbers.

The correlations are too weak to support any firm conclusions but are consistent with what we would expect to find about the victims of these two crimes. They suggest that burglary against visitors tends to be committed against those staying in hotels rather than with friends or relatives but that robbery is committed against both.

Section 3: A Comparison of Crimes against Visitors and against Residents

In the second section we have used the notion of a 'rate' mainly in relation to visitor or tourist arrivals. For example in 2000 there were over a million visitor arrivals in Barbados and 70 visitors were robbery victims; this is a rate of 6 per 100,000 arrivals. This describes the risk of being a victim of crime as experienced by an individual visitor.

In this section, however, we want to compare the chance of visitors as a group being crime victims with the chances of residents of Barbados being victims. This means that we have to allow for the fact that tourists only stay an average of 11 days a year and cruise passengers 1 day, compared with residents who are here for the whole year. In order to do this we have to compare the rate of crime against the average population of visitors in a year with that against residents.

The average population of visitors is worked out by dividing the total number of days spent in Barbados by visitors in any one year by 365, to give the average here on one day. In 2000, for example, there were just over 547,000 tourists staying on average nearly 11 days – a total of 6,017,000 “visitor days”. The average population (i.e. the average number in Barbados on any one day) was, therefore $6,017,000 \div 365$ or roughly 16,500.

There were also just over 533,000 cruise ship passengers. As they stay only a day the average population of cruise ship passengers is $533,000 \div 365$. This is roughly 1450.

Using the average population we can then compare the rate of crime against the visitor or tourist population with the rate of crime against the resident population.

In 2000 for example, the average visitor population of Barbados was 17,950 and the number of crimes committed against them was 323. This means that there were 0.018 crimes per person – or 1,800 per 100,000 people. This compares with a resident population of 267,900 who were victims of 8,391 number of crimes giving a rate of 3,132 crimes per 100,000 people. This tells us that on any given day in 2000 a resident in Barbados was more likely than a visitor to be a victim of crime.

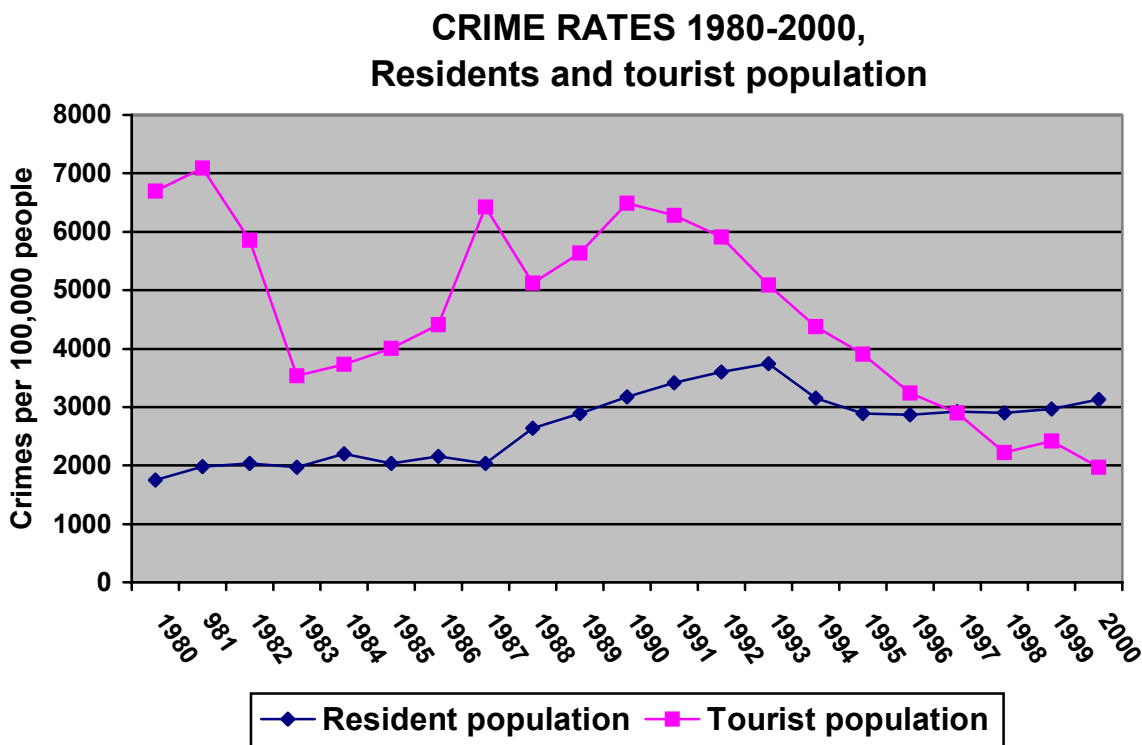
The calculations which follow look at the rates of general crime, burglary and theft against tourists specifically. Burglary and theft are committed very largely

against tourists and because burglary in particular makes up half of crime against visitors, most visitor crime is therefore also committed against tourists. Cruise ship passengers are, however, included in the analyses of robbery and wounding since they may be victims of these crimes, although their risk will still be lower.

Crime in General

Figure 14 compares the crime victimisation rate of tourists as a whole and residents.

Figure 14



The graph shows

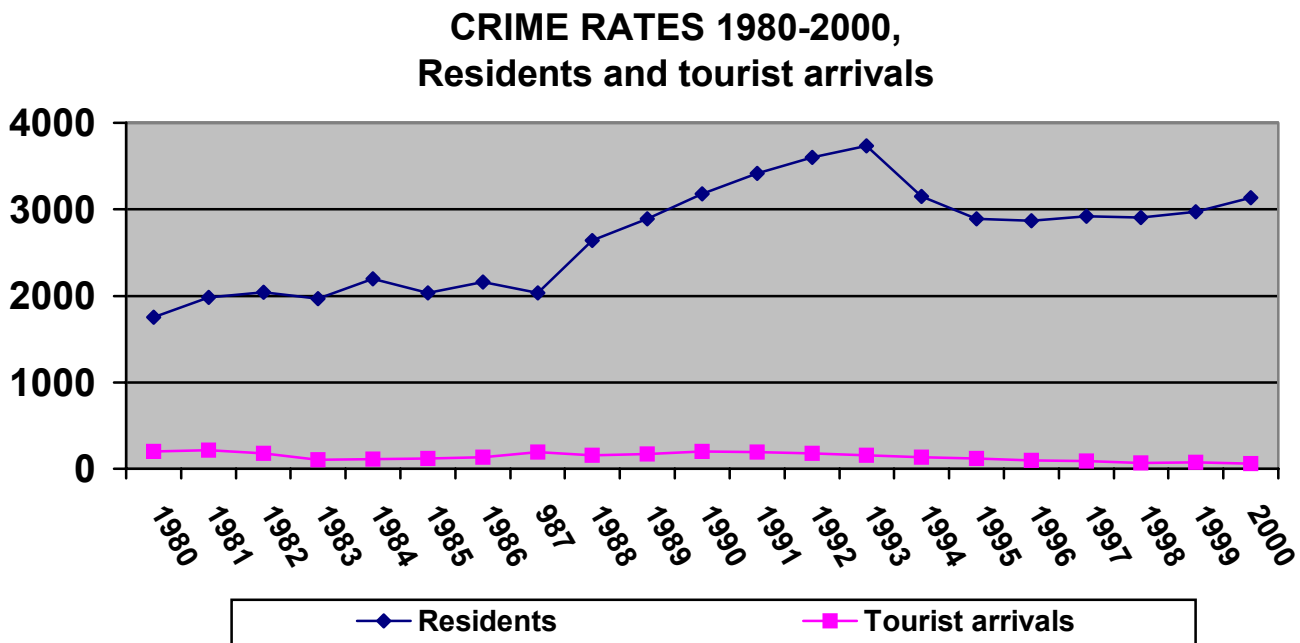
- ◆ In 1980 the overall victimisation rate for the tourist population was nearly four times that of residents i.e. tourists in general had a victimisation rate of 6,700 per

100,000 compared with 1,755 per 100,000 residents.

- ◆ By 1990 the difference between the rates had narrowed. Tourists were twice as likely to be victims.
 - ◆ In 1997 the crime rates against both groups was identical (2900 / 100,000).
 - ◆ In 2000 residents were more likely to be victims than tourists - 3132/100,000 compared with 1968 for tourists.
-
- ◆ Crime against residents has risen over the 21 years but the turnaround has largely been the result of a huge fall in the recorded crime rate of crime against tourists - from over 7000/100,000 in 1981 to 1968/100,000 in 2000.

We must, however, remember that tourists do not see themselves as a group they see what happens to them as an individual. Figure 15 shows how individual tourists experience crime in Barbados.

Figure 15



This shows that in 1980 203 out of each 100,000 visitors arriving in the island were victims of crime compared with 1755 out of every 100,000 residents. In 2000 the respective rates were 59 and 3132. Tourists authorities in Barbados may rightly worry about crime but visitors are experiencing less and less of it. And exit polls of tourists confirm this. In the first quarter of 2000 94% of tourists said they felt safe in Barbados.

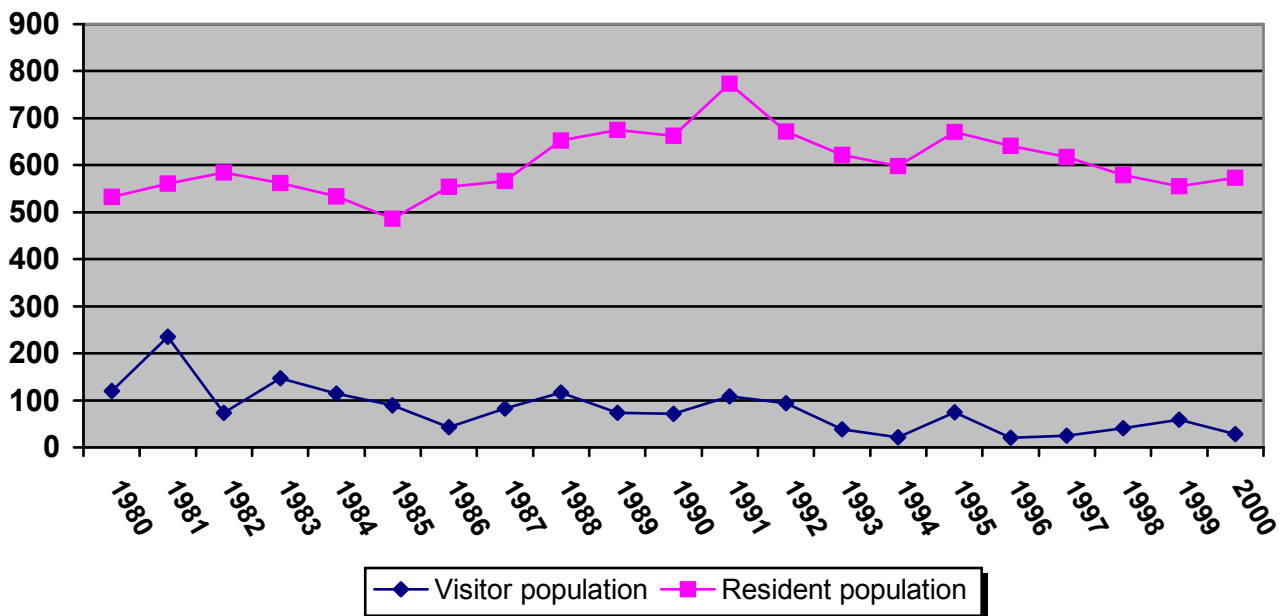
Violence

Whichever way we analyse the figures visitors to Barbados are less at risk from violence (excluding robbery) than residents.

Bulletin 1 has made the point that only 2 visitors have been homicide victims since 1980. Figure 16 shows the total recorded wounding rates against the tourist population and the resident population.

Figure 16

ALL WOUNDINGS, RATE per 100,000 PEOPLE



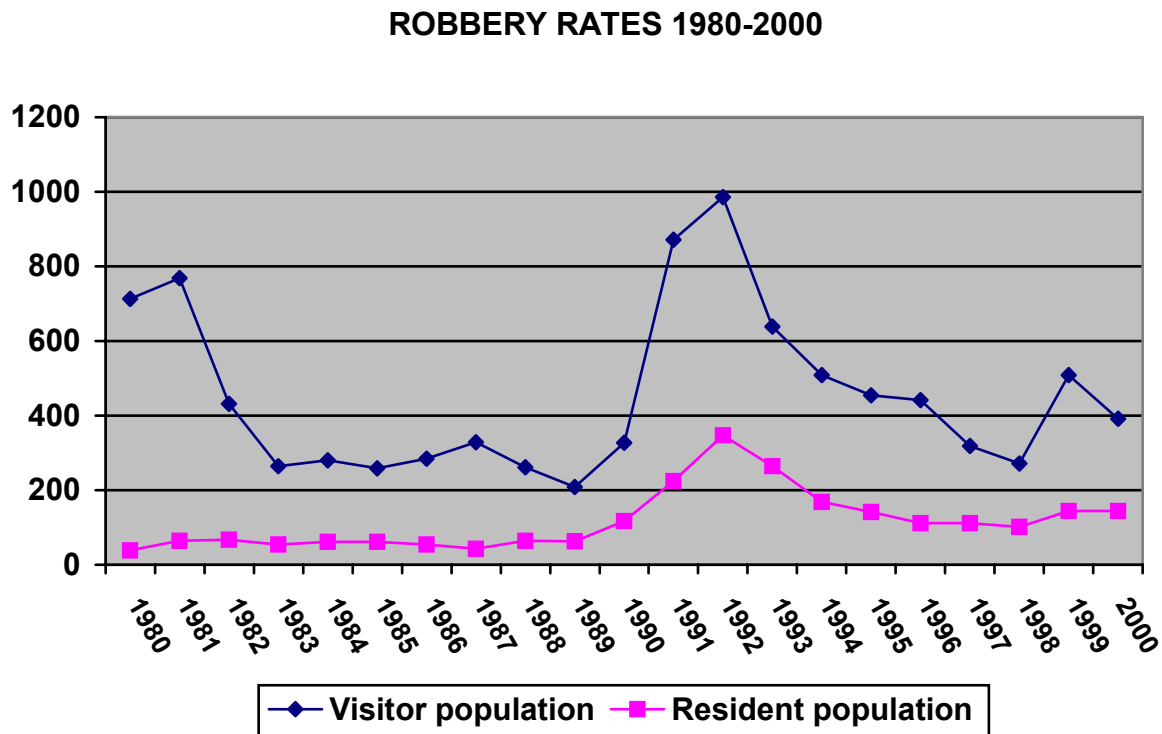
- ◆ In 1980 residents were four times more likely to be a victim of violence than a visitor
- ◆ In 2000 residents were almost twenty times as likely to be a victim of violence as a visitor.

At the individual level the chance of a visitor being a wounding victim is minute. In six of the last 10 years the chance of a visitor being such a victim has been less than 1 per 100,000.

Robbery

Robbery, however, is a different story. Robbery is a violent offence with a pecuniary motive. Figure 17 shows the relative risk rates for visitors and residents.

Figure 17



- ◆ In 1980 visitors were 12 times more likely to be robbery victims than residents.
- ◆ For most of the 1980s, the ratio was about 4 to 1.
- ◆ In 1993 the difference was down to about 2.5 to 1.
- ◆ In 2000 visitors were nearly three times as likely to be robbery victims as residents.

The different risks of robbery should not be surprising.

- ◆ Visitors are normally believed to be relatively wealthy.
- ◆ Burglary of hotel rooms is more difficult and risky than mugging in the street.
- ◆ Being on holiday tends to involve putting yourself in risky situations. Visitors
 - go out after dark
 - visit pubs and clubs
 - often drink and can become careless
 - carry relatively large amounts of cash
- ◆ Visitors tend to be young and younger people are more at risk of robbery than older ones.
- ◆ In an island as small as Barbados robbers might be wary of being recognised by a resident.

However even though visitors are still more likely to be robbery victims than residents, the gap is getting smaller. And it is getting smaller because the increase in robberies since 1980 has been greater for residents than visitors.

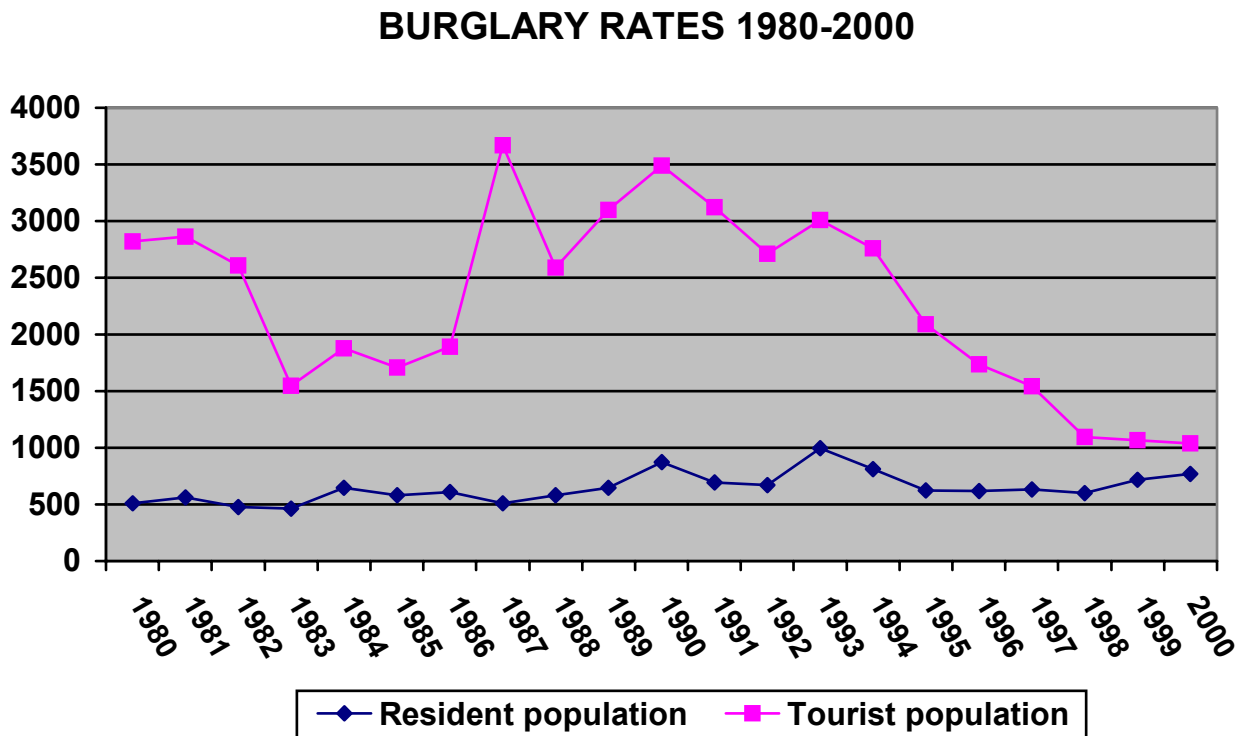
- ◆ In 2000 the robbery rate for visitors was nearly half that of 1980.
- ◆ For residents the robbery rate had increased nearly 4 times.

Again, however, we must make the same point as before. For individual visitors the chance of robbery is much less than for residents because the exposure to risk is much less. 6 per 100,000 individual visitors were robbed in 2000 compared with 144 per 100,000 residents.

Burglary

Tourists as a group are more likely to be the victim of a burglary than a resident- although the difference has almost disappeared. Figure 18 shows this.

Figure 18



- ◆ In 1980 the ratio of tourist burglaries to residents was over 5 to 1 i.e. tourists were over 5 times as likely to be burgled as residents.
- ◆ In 1987 the ratio went up to over 7 to 1.
- ◆ Since 1987 the difference has narrowed
- ◆ In 1990 it was 4 to 1.
In 1996 it was 2.8 to 1.

In 2000 it was 1.3 to 1. i.e. tourists were only a little more likely to be victims of burglary than residents.

The reason for this change may be the result of:

- ◆ A reduction of the amount of informal social control on the island
- ◆ The fact that Barbadians have become better off and have more to steal
- ◆ An improvement in security in hotels.

This last one is probably the main reason because although burglary rates against residents have gone up 1.5 times it is the fall of 3 times in the tourist rate which has been most instrumental in reducing the difference in risk.

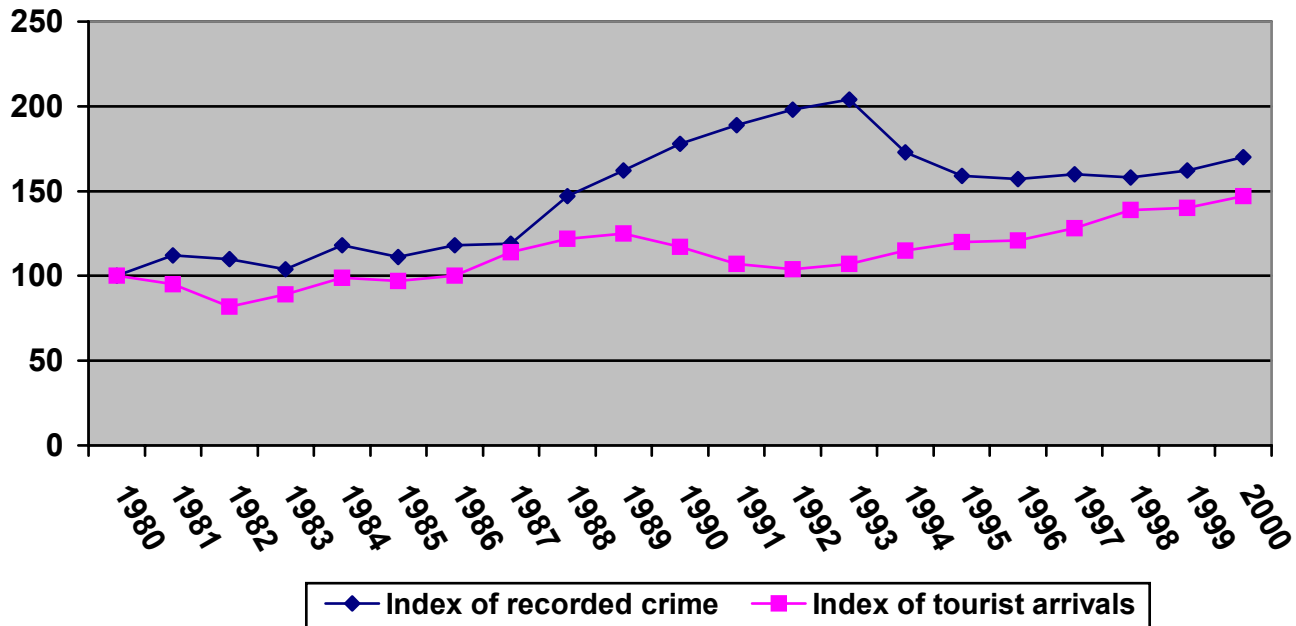
This section has shown that visitors are much less likely to be victims of violence than residents but that, as a group, they are more likely to be victims of the most serious acquisitive offences - robbery and burglary. We have also shown, however that the differences are reducing sharply and that the greater tourist risk will probably disappear soon.

Section 4: The Effect of Crime on Tourism

The evidence from Barbados' recorded crime figures over the last 21 years is that the changes that have taken place in the general level of crime have had no effect on tourism.

Figure 19

CRIME AND TOURISTS - INDEXED CHANGES



In figure 19 the total number of recorded crimes and the number of tourist arrivals have both been indexed at 100 in 1980 in order to be able to see relative changes more clearly. Thus the graphs show percentage changes in the number of tourists and crimes.

Figure 19 is very revealing

- ◆ In the last few years even though recorded crime has been rising the number of tourists has been rising even more quickly.
- ◆ In the late eighties and early nineties crime rose and numbers of visitors fell.
- ◆ In the middle nineties crime fell and the number of tourists rose.

Does these last two points mean, then, that rising crime discourages visitors? The answer for Barbados over the last 20 years is almost certainly no.

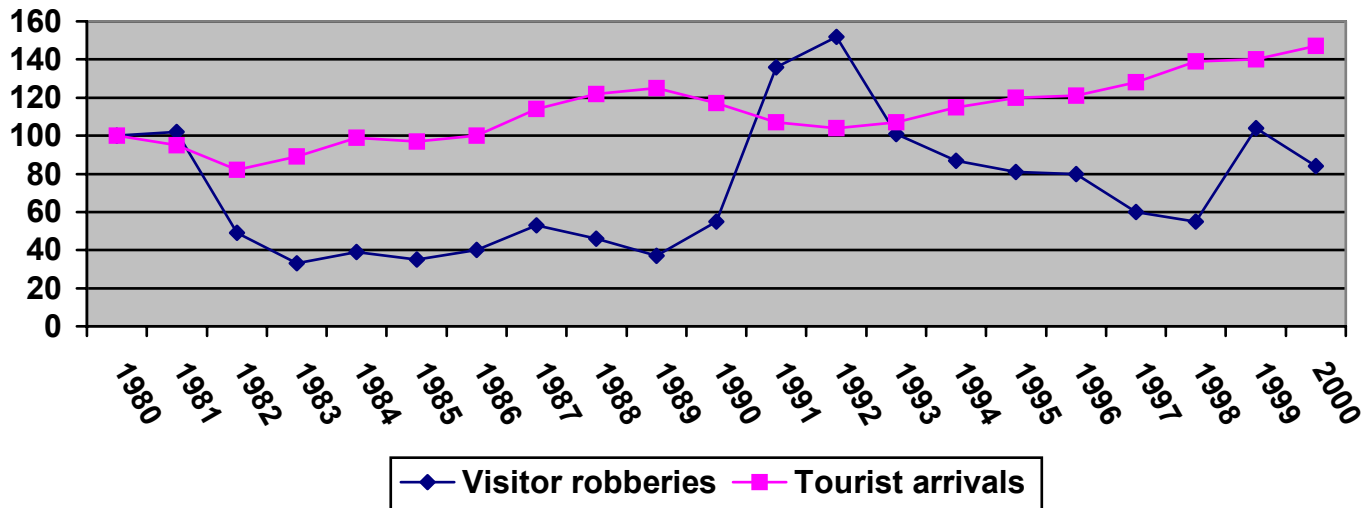
The number of tourists fell in the early nineties because of recession in their home countries. Money became tight and the numbers of tourists travelling to the Caribbean, as to other holiday destinations, suffered as a result. Partly as a result in the drop in tourist numbers unemployment rates rose, and for some crime will have been a means of making up the short-fall of income. So it is much more likely that the rise in crime was due to the fall in the number of tourists than the other way round.

Even though changes in the overall levels of crime do not appear to have affected tourism it is possible that changes in the levels of crime which affect tourists directly have an effect on tourism. The evidence, however, does not support this.

Figure 20 shows the relationship between changes in the robbery rate of visitors and changes in the number of tourists.

Figure 20

TOURIST ARRIVALS AND VISITOR ROBBERIES: INDEX



This shows even more clearly than figure 19 the relationship between tourist numbers and crime.

- ◆ The depth of the recession in the United Kingdom (Barbados' principal source of tourists) coincided with the lowest number of tourist arrivals since 1985 and the largest number of visitor robberies.
- ◆ As the United Kingdom economy improved the number of tourists rose and the robbery rate of visitors fell.

This does not, of course, mean that crime in Barbados will never have an effect on tourism. Notorious individual crimes which get into the media of the countries from which visitors come can have an effect, as the "Fountain Valley Massacre" in the U.S. Virgin Islands in 1972 showed. St. Croix's tourism industry took 10 years to recover. And Jamaica, Barbuda and St. Thomas have all suffered because of publicised violence.

This exploratory look in this section at the possible effects of crime on tourism shows what a complex issue it is. More research needs to be done so that we may have a better understanding of the effect crime has on tourism and the health of the Barbadian economy.

Summary

The main findings of this report are:

- ◆ generally speaking recorded crimes against visitors have been falling over the last twenty years;
- ◆ there is almost no effect of seasonal changes in visitor numbers on the number of crimes against visitors;
- ◆ that the chance of a visitor being a victim of personal violence is very low indeed;
- ◆ that visitors are more likely than residents to be victims of robbery;
- ◆ that crime rates, either in general or against visitors, have had no measurable effect on tourism to Barbados over the last 20 years;
- ◆ that falling tourist numbers may result in more crime in Barbados;
- ◆ that surveys of visitors should be undertaken to discover the level of unrecorded crime against visitors.

