

## POLICIJA I SMANJENJE STRAHA OD KRIMINALA

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Pregledni naučni rad

**Inspiracija za rad i problem(i) koji se radom oslovljava(ju):** Obezbjediti sigurnost građana i lokalnih zajednica je glavna funkcija moderne države. Policija je ključna organizacija koja je odgovorna za javnu bezbjednost i stoga je snažno povezana sa individualnim blagostanjem i blagostanjem lokalnih zajednica, pružajući preventivne, administrativne i kaznene usluge/mjere. Zbog toga, u velikoj mjeri s time je povezan osjećaj sigurnosti ili straha od kriminala među građanima. Posljednjih godina postoji debata o pitanju da li postoji potreba za primjenom novog zadatka za policiju - smanjenje straha od kriminala, uprkos brojnim zadacima koje oni već imaju! U tom smislu, ovaj rad će analizirati argumente za i protiv nametanja smanjenja straha od kriminala kao novog zadatka za policiju, kao i efekata različitih metoda rada policije radi smanjenja nivoa straha od kriminala.

**Ciljevi rada (naučni i/ili društveni):** Cilj rada je da predstavi argumente za i protiv smanjenja straha od kriminala kao novog zadatka policijskog rada. Analizirajući rezultate istraživanja za najbolje metode smanjenja straha od kriminala od strane policije, sigurno će uticati na policiju, posebno na policiju u Makedoniji da preduzmu neke od njih s ciljem postizanja boljeg osjećaja sigurnosti među građanima.

**Metodologija/dizajn:** Ovaj rad pruža pregled i analizu određenih naučnih radova i nalaza istraživanja i rezultata vezanih za napore policije u vezi sa smanjenjem straha od kriminala.

**Ograničenja rada/istraživanja:** Nedostatak javne i naučne analize straha od kriminala, kao i otpor policijskih radnika za preduzimanje mjera za smanjenje straha od kriminala među građanima u našoj zemlji.

**Rezultati:** Glavni nalazi se odnose na priznavanje policije za potrebom smanjenja straha od kriminala, te efekti i koristi od tradicionalnog policijskog rada, policije u zajednici, patrole i patrole u autu i problemom orijentisane politike na nivo straha od kriminala.

**Generalni zaključak:** U literaturi se mogu naći određene kritike o besmislenom utvrđivanju straha od kriminala kao jednog od zadataka i ciljeva rada policije. Postoje određena razmatranja kojima je strah od kriminala često sredstvo koje služi policiji da postigne neke od svojih ciljeva kroz manipulaciju javnim strahovima. Ali uprkos ovim kritikama, postoje određeni argumenti koji idu ka aktualizaciji smanjenja straha od kriminala kao nove i drugačije funkcije moderne policije.

**Opravdanost istraživanja/rada:** Treba nastaviti istraživanje o strahu od kriminala i naporima policije na tome da se smanji. Rezultati istraživanja će pomoći otkrivanju novih policijskih metoda i mjera za smanjenje straha od kriminala, jer je unapređenje osjećaja sigurnosti među građanima prioritet za svaku modernu policiju.

**Ključne riječi:** policija, strah od kriminala, smanjenje

## POLICE AND REDUCTION OF FEAR OF CRIME

### ABSTRACT

**Reason for writing and research problem(s):** Ensuring the security of citizens and local communities is a main function of the modern state. Police is a key organization that is responsible for public security and is therefore strongly linked to individual and local communities welfare, by providing preventive, administrative and penal services. Therefore strongly related to this is the feeling of safety or fear of crime among citizens. In recent years there is a debate about the question is there a need for applying a new task for police - reduction of fear of crime, despite numerous task that they already have! In this regard, this paper will analyze the arguments for and against imposition of reduction of fear of crime as a new task for police and also the effects of different methods of police work for reduction of the level of fear of crime.

**Aims of the paper (scientific and/or social):** The aim of the paper is to present the arguments for and against reduction of fear of crime as a new task of police work. Analyzing the research results for the best methods for reduction of fear of crime by police, will certainly influence on the police, especially on the police in Macedonia to undertake some of them with purpose to achieve better feeling of safety among citizens.

**Methodology/ Design:** This paper provides an overview and analysis of certain scientific papers and research findings and results related to police effort regarding reducing of fear of crime.

**Research/ Paper limitation:** Lack of public and scientific analyzes of fear of crime, as well as resistance of police workers for undertaking a measures for reduction of fear of crime among citizens in our country.

**Results/ Findings:** Main findings refer to the recognition of the need for reduction of fear of crime by police and the effects and benefits from traditional police working, community policing, foot patrol and automobile patrols and problem-oriented policing on the level of fear of crime.

**General Conclusion:** In the literature can be found some criticism about purposeless of determining the fear of crime as one of the tasks and goals of policing. There are certain considerations that fear of crime is often a tool for the police that serves them to achieve some of their goals through the manipulation of public fears. But despite these criticisms, there are certain arguments that go towards the actualization of reducing the fear of crime as a new and different function of the modern police.

**Research/ Paper Validity:** Research about fear of crime and police efforts for it reduction should continue. The research results will help in discovering a new police methods and measures for reduction of fear of crime, because improving the feeling of safety among citizens is priority for every modern police.

**Keywords:** police, fear of crime, reduction

## Introduction

Ensuring the safety of citizens and local communities is the basic function of the modern state. Hence, police as an organization is crucial and responsible for public safety and therefore is important for the well-being of individuals and local communities by providing preventive, administrative and penal services. (Caparini & Marenin, 2005) In the last few decades, there is an idea for imposing the reducing of the fear of crime (as indicator for feeling of safety of the citizens) as an another police function despite the traditional services provided by the police. Therefore here raises the question does the police as an authority should be burdened with an additional function, apart from those who she currently has?! And if so, what can be expected from the police related to reduction of the fear of crime among the citizens.

## Reduction of fear of crime – new function of the police- pros and cons

In the literature, certain arguments can be found indicating the ineffectiveness of the targeting of the fear of crime by police, as well as reducing the fear of crime as one of the goals of the police work. (In the sense reducing the fear of crime should not be a priority for their work).

In general, the arguments for limiting of new functions for police are usually justified because of the financial consequences that can emerge. Every introduction of a new function and tasks of the police raises the question of financing the new activities for performing the function. This also applies to the reduction of the fear of crime by the police. It is considered that with such an additional function of the police, ie reducing the fear of crime, a lot of human resources and finances will be spent, which would also mean engaging from the limited number of police officers dealing with crime, and which is considered to be more serious problem than fear of crime. The inefficiency of reducing fear of crime as a priority of police work stems from the fact that the fear of crime is a reflection of criminality, so that the fear among the citizens will be reduced through the reduction of criminality. However, despite this argument in the literature, it must be emphasized that the reduction of criminality is only one of the ways to reduce the fear of crime, but the studies show that not always the reduction of crime also reduces the fear among the citizens.

Often it is argued that the fear of crime is a too short, vague concept and an untouchable problem to deserve the attention of the police (Gilling, 1997: 123) It is also considered that the reduction of fear of crime is risky because that can cause people to feel safer, and consequently to engage in risky behaviors that will make them more vulnerable to crime.

In addition to all the criticisms, there are several arguments that support the reduction of fear of crime as a new function in police work. Normally, reducing fear of crime will not always be the sole priority of the police, because the fear of crime may be a more serious problem in some local communities than in others, and based on this, the reduction of fear of crime may be a greater priority of some police stations than to others. (Cordner, 2010: 5)

The opponents for the idea of a new function of the police often give an argument that through reducing the level of real crime will also be reduced the level of the fear of crime. But this can be criticized because the data from the surveys indicate that not always the reduction of criminality also reduces fear, or the approaches to reducing crime also reduce citizens' fears.<sup>1</sup> Thus it is necessary to be found methods and ways that are more effective in reducing the fear of the public.

Fear of crime, although it is an unspecified and obscure concept, has behavioral and tangible consequences that can be measured. Often the consequences caused by fear can be much more serious than the crime itself. Thus, if the police really care about the safety of citizens, it is necessary to take care of reducing it. But efforts to reduce the fear of crime will be purposeless if they are not synchronized with the real risk of victimization and the real criminality. The police, in collaboration with other entities, should find ways to address the problems that affect the occurrence / creation of fear or insecurity. This requires research at local level, although there are other methods for its targeting. Municipal meetings, key individuals, environmental controls, and routine contacts with the public can also serve as very useful resources for collecting information about the concerns of local residents. (Cordner, 2010) When the police already have some information about the fear of crime in the community, they can use them to identify the demographic groups and neighborhoods who have highest level of fear. When she is armed with such comprehensive data and analysis for the fear of crime, police can begin to focus their attention on reducing it.

Based on the above mentioned arguments and numerous consequences that can be caused by the fear of crime, there are reasonably reasons that are in favor of imposing a new function of the police as well as on other bodies, organizations, individuals who should be synchronized in combating with the high level of fear of crime as one of the indicators of feeling of security. A key step is formally to be confirmed that the reduction of fear of crime is part of the functions of police work. Accordingly, the reduction of fear of crime should be the responsibility of the commanders of the police in certain areas and they should know that the actions and undertaking of activities in order to increase the safety of their inhabitants is one of their functions and one of the criteria on which they will be evaluated.

### **Police methods for reducing fear of crime**

Given that in the real world there is no magical way for reducing the level of fear of crime, it is necessary to evaluate the police approaches related to that. (Warr, 2000: 461) In the literature and practice of the police, a number of primary methods of policing can be identified that may have a certain effect on reducing the fear of crime. Various surveys show different effects of individual police approaches.

<sup>1</sup> While in Great Britain since 1990, crime rates have dropped up to 20%, research in that period has shown an increase in the degree of fear of crime

### 1. Traditional methods for reducing crime as a method of reducing fear of crime

For a certain period, there was a reflection that the reduction of criminality would also reduce the fear of crime. There is certainly a basic link between the size of crime and the level of fear of crime that should not be denied. However, often increases and falls in crime rates from year to year do not overlap with the dynamics or tendency (increases and falls) of the level of fear of crime. (Pate, Wycoff, Skogan & Sherman, 1986). If the crime rate is decreasing and the level of fear of crime is not, is something else necessary! Similarly, some individuals and groups with a high level of fear of crime have a low level of victimization. If there is still fear in these groups of people, something else is needed.

Preventive measures are designed to prevent criminality, but whether they reduce the fear of crime also, is an important issue without many answers. It is quite clear that fear of crime motivates residents to use preventive measures such as locks, alarms, dogs or weapons, but whether these measures make people more secure is still debatable (Cordner, 2010)

As part of the traditional police work, one of the assumptions is that the reduction of criminality can be achieved by increasing the number of uniformed police officers (Pate et al, 1986) (usually in general and unconfirmed) for their prompt and reactive response. Perhaps this also has a definite effect on the fear of crime, given that citizens see that the police are not passive in terms of their problems, but the reduction in the level of fear of crime is not necessarily the result of a reduction in criminality in a society.

Within the traditional work of the police, **foot patrol, motor patrol police activity** of the police often are considered to be able to reduce both criminality and the fear of crime. But here arise the question which of these activities would be most appropriate for reducing the fear of crime and increasing the individual feeling of security among citizens. Considering that in the last thirty years the police was generally composed of three operational components: motor patrol, a quick response for help calls and a retroactive crime investigation, the primary goal was to resolve criminal events rather than to reduce fear of crime. This assumption consisted in the fact that if the level of victimization can be reduced, the fear will also be reduced. (Moore & Trojanowicz, 1988)

Certain foreign studies show that the variation in the level of police motor patrols has no affect on crime or public perceptions of citizens. According to the The Police Executive Research Forum, it was found that rapid response rarely has some effects in finding perpetrators or satisfying citizens (Braga, 2008). Such results are also confirmed in a well-known study in Kansas City in 1972/1973 where was carried out an experiment for a preventive patrol that showed that the variation in the number of patrols between no motor patrol and 2-3 motor patrol units had no effect on the public's fear of crime, but also it did not have effect on the rate of crime. Most notably, Kansas City residents did not notice the variation in the level of patrols nor were aware of any changes in police work, nor the level of fear of crime was increased because the num-

ber of patrols was decreasing. ( Moore & Trojanowicz, 1988). In analyzing the results of Kansas City, James Wilson also noted insignificant impact of the number of motor patrol on the fear of crime and citizen satisfaction, but noted that other types of patrol like pedestrian or patrols in unmarked automobiles can also reduce crime and fear of crime. (Hoffman, 2000)

Contrary to the research on motor patrol in Kansas City, two other studies examined the effect of increasing or decreasing the foot patrol in terms of whether residents were aware of the increase or decrease and whether it had an impact on fear among citizens. The efficiency of having foot patrols has been marked in many reports (The Newark Foot Patrol Experiment) "... A significant reduction in the severity of the problems associated with crime is noticed among persons who live in areas where foot patrols are visible." Similarly, the report of the experiment in Flint, Michigan found that almost 70% of residents- respondents claimed that during the last year of the survey they felt more confident because of the implementation of the Program of foot patrol. Moreover, many of the respondents said they felt especially confident when a foot patrolling officer was well known and visible. (Trojanowicz, 1982) This positive effect of a foot patrol on fear of crime has attracted the attention of police strategists, especially since previous research on motor patrol and rapid responses by police has shown disappointing data. (Cordner, 2010)

Foot patrols are set up to include more active police officers in local communities and for establishing direct interaction with citizens. It is assumed that when the police officers will move in their areas, are getting to know the inhabitants and their problems, are becoming more visible to the citizens. The visibility of the police officers have influence on the perception of the citizens that they will be protected when needed which lead to better feeling of security in the local community and a reduced level of fear of crime. The visibility of a foot patrol is also considered to reflect the symbolic function of the police working and creating a perception of social order in the local community.(Wakefield, 2007) It is thought that foot patrol police officers are part of the community, they identify problems and provide long-term solutions, organize citizen initiatives, give a reports to the appropriate social institutions and involve residents in crime prevention. Compared to the motor patrol, foot patrols are more connected with better feeling of safety and low level of fear of crime among citizens.

Close related to the foot patrol are the bicycle patrols, that are existing long time in some countries (Menton, 2006), but the effects on the fear of crime and, more broadly speaking on feeling of security should be analyzed in future.

### **Community policing as method for reducing fear of crime**

In the framework of police work, a new concept of work is being established, which is based on different principles and bases from those established in traditional policing. This concept of "community policing" is an old new one because it has existed for a long time, but the beginning of research of the concept of community policing in

practice has been linked to the 80's in Wilson, Kelling and Goldstein's works, especially through the theory of broken windows and the concept of problem-oriented police work. These theories contributed to the idea that the police have to rely more on co-operation with the citizens and on that basis to try to solve their problems.

There is evidence that communities that enjoy good neighborhood, social cohesion and collective efficiency have a lower level of fear of crime (Taylor, 2002; Xu, Fiedler, and Flaming, 2005) in (Cordner, 2010). Accordingly, the central assumption of community policing is the involvement and participation of the local community in increasing security and resolving the crime that is most dominant in the local community. In order to achieve such a partnership, the police must be better integrated into the local community and strengthen their legitimacy by improving public engagement.

Within the basic components of community policing, most frequently occur: the increase in police-citizen contacts, more personalized policing, more opportunities for community involvement, exchange of information between the police and the public, police-community partnerships and systematic multiorganisational cooperation in supporting for community safety. Within these components, an important element is the foot patrol that is assumed to affect the safety of local community residents (Cordner, 2005). This patrolling method was largely reduced in most of the police organizations at the end of the 70's and the focus of police work was shifted to rapid response, coverage of larger areas through motor patrols. However, studies have shown that motor patrols and rapid response are not really effective (Cordner, 2010), and based on the results, the foot patrol becomes a basic element within community policing, as well as the introduction of bicycle patrols, mini police stations, beat teams, specialized community police officers and other alternatives to routine motor patrols in some countries.

When it comes to the impact that the concept of community policing might have on the fear of crime, it is emphasized that research suggests that it does not reduce crime, but has proven effective in reducing fear of crime and increasing trust between the police and the local community. (Committee to Review Research 2004; Weisburd & Eck, 2004) cited in (Weisburd & Braga, 2006). The research generally supports the view that community policing (not just a foot patrol) makes citizens more secure. Based on a review of surveys it has been found that while an increase in police presence reduces the fear of crime in 50 surveys, an integrative proactive and community-based approach has even a higher chance of reducing the degree of fear of crime (74%) (Zhao, Scheider, and Thurman, 2002). Increased police contact with the public, whether through a foot patrol, whether the police will visit them in their homes or establish a contact with formal meetings, seems to reduce the fear of crime directly or indirectly through a mechanism for improving public opinion about police (Dalgleish and Myhill, 2004; Pate, Wycoff, Skogan, and Sherman, 1986; Roh and Oliver, 2005; Scheider, Rowell, and Bezdikian, 2003; Williams and Pate, 1987) cited in (Cordner, 2010). When community policing efforts become too diffuse and un-focused, their effects on the fear of crime and on other results will weaken. (Braga, 2008)

*Problem oriented policing and reducing the fear of crime*

The work of community policing is based on the two most important components: partnership between the police and the community and the problem-oriented work of the police. For the first time, this method or strategy of work is introduced by American criminologist Goldstein who defined the problem-oriented work of the police in the following way "... the basis of this approach is the research of the problems of a particular community, that careful analysis of specific problems facing a local area and analysis of the specific expectations that citizens have from the police and based on that analysis to determine the means and methods for an adequate response to the identified problems "(Никач, 2009)

It is considered that the police must develop and implement a problem-oriented approach in terms of reducing the fear of crime by carefully identifying and analyzing the responsibilities for fear of crime-related issues before they are resolving and it is very important to include solutions that will be consistent with current problems related to fear of crime, (through scanning and analysis). For example:

1. Fear can be caused by the high rate of criminality - in that case, the focus should be to reduce crime.
2. Fear can be caused by the inefficiency of the police to prove the responsibility of the perpetrators - in that case it should concentrate on the investigation and prosecution.
3. Fear can be caused by late response by the police - in that case the response should be improved, especially in emergencies.
4. Fear can be caused by poor visibility of the police - in that case the visibility should be increased - greater presence of the police and more communication with the citizens.
5. Fear can be caused by a lack of confidence in the police - in that case it is necessary to improve relations with the local community through certain methods.
6. Fear can be caused by deviant behaviors and disorders in the local community that are related both to the physical environment and to the behavior of people - in that case, the focus should be on those relatively minor incidents.
7. and most importantly, the fear of crime can be caused by 101 (or more) other things, from a neighboring gang, to immigrants in the community, etc.

It is essential to identify and analyze the problem and then implement an appropriate solution based on the real problem determined through scanning and analysis. It should always be remembered that the fear of crime is based on perception, and in some cases it may be enough to improve the perception of the public about the crime or victimization rate or their perception whether the criminals have managed to escape or whether the police reaction is prompt as it should be. (Braga, 2008) Sometimes, a problem-oriented approach in policing can possibly have a greater potential in reducing fear of crime than wider-based community policing. (Cordner, 2010)



Within the program-oriented policing, there are many programs that serve to prevent and reduce criminality and fear of crime, among which the well-known SARA process (Scanning, Analysis, Response, Assessment). Based on this process, the police will locate the local problems and will work with residents and other subjects in the direction of their solving. (Mason, 2007) The SARA process as the operationalization of problem-oriented policing shows quite positive effects in terms of reducing fear of crime compared to other programs. The fact that this is a process based on empirical data, information and analysis, is a positive step in dealing with the problems of the citizens in the community. However, it must be noted that the success of the process will largely depend on whether the police managed to choose the right answers/actions/interventions for that kind of problem in coordination with other entities. That is why we have the final stage of assessment which should give indicators of efficiency but also about wrong methods and answers to certain problems in order to be changed and improved.

### **Conclusion**

Fear of crime with all its consequences is an important issue that deserves to be part of the police work. However, what remains to the literature, but above all to the researchers is to find the best police methods for reducing the fear of crime among citizens. Daily communication of police officers with the residents of the local community and increasing confidence in the attitude of a police officer-citizen is crucial in improving feeling of safety and reducing irrational fear of crime. Strengthening these ties can improve citizen cooperation with the police and at the same time improve informal social control, given the fact that citizens share responsibility in the efforts for more secure environments in which they live.

Some studies have found that good health, well-being and quality of life are associated with a lower level of fear of crime. Accordingly, the care for the basic needs of the citizens and the provision of quality life is something that should be achieved. But for achieving positive results, there is a need for a systematic approach that will include coordinated and synchronized activities and measures undertaken by the police, local communities and citizens by themselves, other organizations and bodies in order to improve the quality of life and to create healthier and more secure Local communities and the society as a whole.

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