

# Police Effectiveness as the Influencing Factor of the Community Policing Strategy on Citizens' Sense of Safety in Croatia

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The main goal of this paper is to determine the connection between the individual components of the Community Policing Strategy in Croatia with the sense of safety; the perception of fear of crime, perception of crime risk and frequency, as well as the perception of incivilities in Croatia. The research encompassed a total of 1,096 respondents over 18 years of age. The field research combined two quantitative methods: telephone interviews and face-to-face interviews in households. The results indicate that there is a complex relationship between community policing and citizens' affective and cognitive perceptions of safety. While certain extracted components positively influence the perception of safety, others are not significantly related or are related contrary to expectations. The result of the quasi-canonical correlation analysis speaks in favour of opinions on the police and perception of police effectiveness in preventing and detecting crime as factors of community policing having the greatest effect on the sense of safety. On the other hand, the perception of incivility is the main characteristic of the perception of safety that influences the perception of the police. To put it differently, all efforts of community policing that lead to strengthening citizens' confidence in the police and to building positive opinions, and that increase police visibility are key to achieving success in terms of increased perception of safety.

**Keywords:** community policing, sense of safety, police effectiveness, evaluation, Croatia

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## 1 Introduction

The fundamental task of the police in all societies is to provide safety, which is also one of the fundamental human needs (Maslow, 1970). However, in providing this, seeking the most effective ways to address the demands placed on the police, police organisations apply various approaches and concepts. By strengthening democracy, with a particular emphasis on the human rights of all community members, in particular the most vulnerable ones, community-oriented policing is developing, which is a shift from traditional policing. This means that it leads to changes in the functioning of the police in a way that the police, in addition to its traditional control function, have also acquired a protective role.

Care for citizens, and not only control over them, is taking on an ever greater meaning, which is basically promoted through community policing. Preventive police activities are gaining importance since they lead to care for citizens. Prevention, and not only repression, is becoming the fundamental police activity, since citizens consider the police to be more efficient if they prevent a criminal offence than if they solve it quickly and find the perpetrator.

Community policing can be considered one of the "most important trends in police history" (Rosenthal et al., 2003: 17), and has been developing for years, leading to new forms of policing and a new role of the police in society. Regardless of the widespread acceptance of this new approach to policing, it should be emphasised that policing based on cooperation with the community is not applicable in all cases in which police engagement is expected, such as undercover police work in criminal investigations, dealing with hostage situations, and the like. For this reason, community policing will not lead to abolishing special and specialized police units and traditional policing methods. However, this approach offers an alternative according to which the community, the police and other social control institutions will work together, legally and constructively in numerous cases, in particular in preventing crime and incivilities.

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## 2 Literature Review

There is no single definition of community policing that would please both researchers who investigate it, and practitioners who use it in the real world. The reason for this probably lies in the fact that it is practically impossible to find two identical community policing models, which shows that this approach is dependent on social, political, as well as organisational contexts. For instance, in countries in which police organisations are decentralised, such as the United States of America, different communities develop different projects within community policing. In countries with a centralised police organisation, such as Croatia, reform changes are identically implemented at the national level.

A survey of relevant literature has provided the following definitions:

– “Community policing is a philosophy of full service, personalised policing where the same officer patrols and works in the same area on a permanent basis from a decentralised place, working in a proactive partnership with citizens to identify and solve problems.” (Allender, 2004: 18–19);

– “Community policing is a police-community partnership in which the police and the community work hand-in-hand to resolve what the community identifies as problems. They [problems] may concern abandoned houses, overgrown lots, zoning ordinances, school issues and other urban problems that are more appropriately in the realm of other agencies.” (Findley & Taylor in Champion & Rush, 1997: 2);

– “Community policing emphasizes the establishment of working partnerships between police and communities to reduce crime and enhance security.” (Moore in Champion & Rush, 1997: 2);

– “Community policing [is] a working partnership between police and the law-abiding public to prevent crime, arrest offenders, find solutions to problems and enhance the quality of life.” (Brown in Champion & Rush, 1997: 2);

– “[Community policing is] a philosophy rather than a specific tactic... a proactive, decentralised approach, designed to reduce crime, disorder and fear of crime by intensely involving the same office in a community for a long term so that personal links are formed with residents.” (Trojanowicz & Carter in Champion & Rush, 1997: 2); and

– “Community policing offered a new philosophy of policing based on building an equal partnership with the community. Community policing changes the paradigm from one in which the police are the experts to a model in which the police and the community work together to identify, prioritize, and solve problems that affect the quality of life in the community.” (Trojanowicz & Bucqueroux, 1990: 5).

The Community Policing Strategy in Croatia<sup>4</sup> defines community policing as “a philosophy of policing that is aimed at citizens as service users, whose function is to enhance its efficiency and reliability by focusing on problem solving at the level of the local community” (Cajner Mraović, Faber & Volarević, 2003: 1). It can be concluded that community policing encompasses both law enforcement as well as crime prevention, whereby certain community members work with local law enforcement agencies, primarily with the police, by controlling crime through detecting and investigating crimes, identifying possible perpetrators and increasing communication and dialogue between community police representatives and community members.

Community policing promotes:

– Cooperation between the community, government, state administration and the police,

– Above all, proactive problem-solving and prevention, and

– Engagement of the community aimed at causes of crime, fear of crime and other community problems (Miller & Hess, 2008).

The development of community policing can be divided into three generations: innovation, diffusion and institutionalisation (Oliver, 2000).

– The innovation of community policing was primarily defined by a smaller number of isolated experiments conducted in several larger American metropolises. Tested in these experiments were specific community policing methods, which were mostly carried out in a smaller number of urban neighbourhoods.

– Diffusion of community policing. After the community policing experiments had proven successful, the concept and the philosophy of community policing started to spread among police organisations.

Through institutionalisation, community policing has been implemented extensively, becoming a common form of organising policing.

– According to Fridell (2004: 4), “the goals of community policing are to reduce crime and disorder, promote citizens’ quality of life in communities, reduce fear of crime, and im-

<sup>4</sup> The Community Policing Strategy in Croatia is a comprehensive process of changes in policing, whose implementation started in 2003. The strategy is the result of the work of experts from the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Croatia, who, by taking into consideration international experience in contemporary policing, developed a concept for transforming Croatian police from the traditional model to community policing.

prove the police-citizen relations”, discusses three key factors that contribute to achieving these goals: community engagement, problem solving and organisational transformation.

Community engagement should be achieved by stimulating and encouraging citizens to prevent crime and incivilities. Problem-solving should be based on real concerns for those issues that citizens, not the police, emphasised as priorities. Organisational changes include decentralisation of the police, closer relationships between police officers and the community they serve, as well as various forms of joint work (joint meetings, education, counselling and concrete activities). When problems in the community require an intervention, informal social control is the first choice and reaction to the problem. In other words, police officers encourage citizens to solve their problems and to voluntarily help the community, encouraging citizens to mobilise all community resources, instead of leaving all safety issues solely to the police.

As there is no single definition of community policing that would satisfy all parties involved, there is no single method in which community policing in practice can be defined. The core of contemporary policing is viewed differently by different authors. For instance, Bratton (in Miller & Hess, 2008) considers the “3Ps” – partnership, problem solving and prevention as being key determinants of community policing, while Rohe, et al. (in Miller & Hess, 2008) use three dimensions, differentiating community policing from the traditional role of the police: shared responsibility, prevention and increased discretion of police officers. Roth and Johnson (in Miller & Hess, 2008) use four dimensions: problem solving, building partnerships with communities, preventive interventions and organisational changes, while Maguire, et al. (in Miller & Hess, 2008) used the three-dimensional model of community policing: adaptation, problem solving, as well as partnerships and community involvement. What is common to all of the above is prevention and partnership with the community.

By surveying the extensive literature on the topic, the following community policing goals can be emphasised:

- Increased police visibility (Bureau of Justice, 1994; Chalom in Chalom, 2003; Holmberg, 2004; Jensen, 1998; Labrunye, 2007; Mouhanna, 2007; Rix, Joshua, Maguire, & Morton, 2009);
- Increased citizens' feeling of safety, that is, reduced fear of crime (Bureau of Justice, 1994; Ciocoiu, 2007; Jensen, 1998; Schorer, 2007);
- Police service at a higher level (Jensen, 1998; Cajner Mraović et al., 2003);
- Increased prevention efforts (Ciocoiu, 2007; Faber & Cajner Mraović, 2003; Jensen, 1998; Normandeau, 1993; Schorer, 2007);

– Increased police effectiveness (Bureau of Justice, 1994; Dowler, 2003; Jensen, 1998; Rix et al., 2009); and

– Increased emphasis on policing within the community and building partnerships (Bureau of Justice, 1994; Cajner Mraović et al., 2003; Chalom, in Chalom, 2003; Ciocoiu, 2007; Holmberg, 2004; Fress, 2007; Fritzhelmer, 2007; Jensen, 1998; Normandeau, 1993; Rix et al., 2009; Rogers, 2000; Schorer, 2007).

In other words, compared to the traditional policing model, it can be concluded that in community policing, the priorities of key policing tasks – crime control, maintaining order and providing service – have remained almost unchanged. However, the fundamental difference lies in the fact that the police no longer strive to achieve them on their own, but rather by encouraging cooperation with citizens as well as through criteria for evaluating police effectiveness in achieving those tasks.

### 3 Conceptualisation of and Measuring of Police Effectiveness

The answer to the question: *Are the police effective?* is significantly different due to the different understanding of these terms in various approaches to policing and is, therefore, dependent on the understanding of the role of the police in society. Within the traditional model, the most important task of the police is crime control, and police effectiveness is measured accordingly. In addition, an equally important question is: *Who is entitled to evaluate police effectiveness and work?*, that is, whether it is an internal or external evaluation. Within the traditional model, the evaluation of police work was most often carried out by political leaders based on indicators produced by the police themselves. Three indicators used most were (Cajner Mraović et al., 2003):

- crime rate,<sup>5</sup>
- solved crime rate,<sup>6</sup>
- subsequently solved crime rate.<sup>7</sup>

Due to the lack of democratic control mechanisms, such a display of police effectiveness is prone to manipulation misuse of these indicators. The evaluation of police work according to the mentioned indicators is likely to cause citizen frustration since they are often told that safety is much better than they

<sup>5</sup> Number of crimes per one hundred thousand citizens.

<sup>6</sup> Ratio between recorded criminal offences and solved criminal offences in a certain period of time.

<sup>7</sup> Ratio between subsequently solved criminal offences through own activities and the total number of recorded criminal offences by unknown perpetrators in a certain period of time.

perceive it to be. Namely, only indicators of objective safety (registered crimes), and not subjective safety were taken into consideration, expressed by perceptions and feelings of citizens. For that particular reason, many police reforms that were undertaken in order to introduce positive changes did not receive a positive response from citizens. This was because citizens/the public could not appreciate the value of those changes in terms of the better every day functioning of the police as a service that, not only controls crime, but also serves citizens and the community (Cajner Mraović et al., 2003).

It is not an easy task to define effectiveness criteria. They depend primarily on goals that the police set, activities that they conduct and, finally, on the outcomes of such activities in terms of accomplishing goals. On the other hand, problems that the police deal with cannot easily be eliminated or fully solved. The complex issue of police effectiveness has to be examined in the context of the police solving problems present in specific communities (Skogan, 1996), since this is one of the fundamental characteristics and goals of community policing.

Five different outcomes of problem solving of police influence on a certain problem can be defined (Cajner Mraović et al., 2003):

1. Complete elimination of the problem;
2. Reduction in the number of incidents caused by the problem;
3. Reduction of the gravity, that is, the harmfulness of the consequences of the incidents caused by the problem;
4. Creating methods for better incident management; and
5. Removing the problem from the focus of police dealing.

The highest police effectiveness is reflected at the first level, whereas the fifth level is actually undesirable until some other institution or service takes over effective problem solving.

Taking into account the presented insufficiencies in evaluating police effectiveness exclusively based on police statistics, it must be concluded that part of the evaluation of police effectiveness should be left to the community/citizens. In this case, the principle of “police effectiveness depends on the public perception of the police” is applicable (Cajner Mraović et al., 2003: 30). Among other things, it is important to citizens as taxpayers to know whether their money has helped achieve the set goals (Bonvin, 2007); therefore, they are entitled to an important role in evaluating police work. Namely, evaluation is one of the powerful tools necessary for the police to learn something permanently. For this reason, what has been invested in police work and how, as well as the outcomes of new measures, must be analysed (Christe-Zeyse,

2007). Both evaluation and monitoring of police effectiveness are key for community policing because it is not a “cure-all” and not an “ideal solution for all times”, but rather it has to be constantly adjusted to communities, prone to changes, which is impossible without evaluation.

Police effectiveness is an important aspect of public opinion relating to crime and criminal law (Dowler, 2002, 2003) since, on the one hand, positive or negative opinions on this issue can influence the formation of policing strategies and, on the other hand, they can influence citizens’ decisions on reporting crime and cooperating with the police. Therefore, it is almost impossible to imagine evaluating police effectiveness without surveying public opinion. It is worth noting that surveying public opinion includes surveying subjective safety, that is, fear of crime, perception of police effectiveness in accomplishing the goals set, citizens’ satisfaction with police service, especially the victims of crime, as well as attitudes on the police, estimation of citizens’ readiness to cooperate with the police, availability of the police, participation level of the community in preventive efforts and the like. As every evaluation has to be carried out in accordance with the strict methodology of an independent evaluator, it is important to use valid measurement instruments (questionnaires, checklists and so on).

In addition, the cooperation of scholars is desirable. Over the past thirty-five years, criminologists have been conducting such surveys in a large number of countries, with the first national crime survey, which included the evaluation of police work, being conducted in the United States of America in 1972 (Van Dijk, 1992). National annual and bi-annual surveys have also been used in the Netherlands since 1974, Great Britain since 1982, followed by Canada, Australia, France, Switzerland, Spain and others. In 1989, fifteen countries participated in the fully standardised International Crime Survey, which enabled comparative analyses among different countries. In addition to national and international surveys, numerous surveys at the regional, city and smaller community levels followed (for more read Van Dijk, 1992). Significant efforts have been placed into standardising the survey methodology and encouraging surveys (Sessar, 2008). Accordingly, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime issued the *Manual on Victimization Surveys* (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2009) with instructions on how to conduct them. Although for the objective assessment of police effectiveness, in addition to the collected crime data, research on citizens’ perception of safety as well on quality and effectiveness of police performance is necessary. Such research is extremely rare and only a few studies were conducted in Croatia (Franc, Ivčić, & Šakić, 2007; Galić, Ljubotina, Matić, Matešković, & Ninić, 2009).

#### 4 Research Problem and Goal

Croatian citizens perceive crime, as well as safety in general, as one of the most important concerns of the present day, estimating that the local communities are less safe as compared to some twenty years ago. Although there has been a trend of decreasing crime in the Republic of Croatia over the past few years, crime is seen as the most prominent problem by 16.8% of citizens at the national level, and 11.1% at the local level (Franc, et al., 2007). The explanation for citizens' concern can be sought, on the one hand, in the media, which excessively and tendentiously depicts violence and crime, and on the other hand, in the legacy of war, as well as the presence of organised and other types of crime.

The Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Croatia and the United Nations Development Programme have been cooperating on citizens' safety projects since 2006. Large quantities of illegal weapons, ammunition and explosive devices were collected as a result of this cooperation. In addition, efforts were made in order to increase citizens' perception of safety, as well as to enhance communication between local communities and the police. In 2008, the third year of successful cooperation, the Destruction for Development Project Agreement was signed between Ministry of Interior and the United Nations Development Programme. It encompasses three main goals: weapons' control, prevention of violence, and community safety. Being aware of the fact that citizens' perception of safety is an essential starting point for establishing and sustaining effective policing or policing strategy, based on the above-mentioned agreement, and as a result of the joint cooperation, conducted was the first large National Public Opinion Survey on Citizens' Perception of Safety, Police Dealings and Cooperation between the Police and the Local Community. Such an approach is suit-

able for analysing problems that appear in everyday policing, as well as to obtain data, which are preconditions for creating and conducting effective fact-based public policies, including both crime prevention policies, as well as raising the quality of life in local communities.

The research problem lies in the fact that the police are regularly held responsible by the general public, not only for solving crime and incivilities, but also for managing citizens' feeling unsafe, and that the police accepts this, announcing and promising an improvement of safety in all of the above-mentioned segments. It is questionable how and to what extent the police can truly fulfil these promises. This is of particular interest to us in the context of implementation of the Community Policing Strategy in Croatia, which is important to clearly examine the scope and limitations of this policing model.

In accordance with the previously identified problem, the goal of this paper is to determine the connection between individual components of the Community Policing Strategy in Croatia with the sense of safety, perceptions of fear of crime, perceptions of crime risk and frequency, as well as perception of incivilities in Croatia.

#### 5 Methods

##### 5.1 Sample

The research included a total of 1,096 respondents over 18 years of age, and the sample was representative according to county, settlement size, gender and age. Figure 1 depicts the sample structure according to the most important demographic variables.

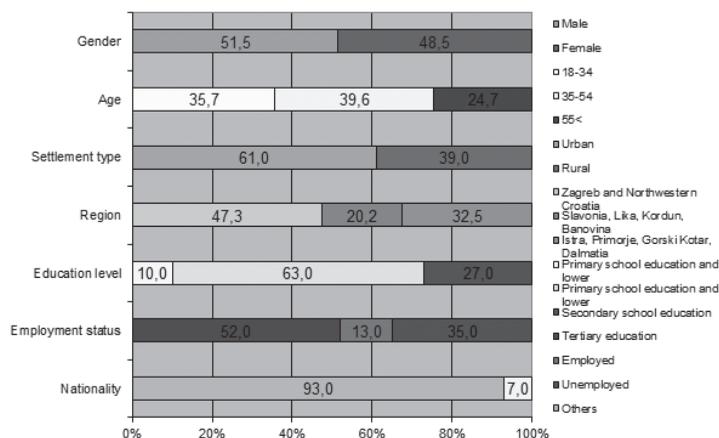


Figure 1: Structure of respondents according to the most important demographic variables

### 5.2 Data Collection Methods

The survey, as one of the most commonly used procedures in polling public opinion regarding the attitudes and opinions of the public, was used in the research. The questionnaire was compiled by a group of experts from the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Croatia and the UNDP on the basis of a multidimensional fear of crime concept (Gabriel & Greve, 2003), which uses emotional/affective, cognitive and behavioural components to measure dispositional fear of crime.

In addition to variables used to measure fear of crime, the questionnaire addressed demographic characteristics, police visibility, cooperation between the police and citizens, informedness of the police, estimation of crime frequency and public disorder, incivilities, police effectiveness, problems present in the police, confidence level in institutions, prior victimisation and personal vulnerability. The variables used in the questionnaire are based on the previously described theoretical models on fear of crime.

The statistical processing of data was conducted on the data collected in the part of the questionnaire related to the sense of safety, policing and the cooperation between the police and the local community, as well as on the data related to the sociodemographic characteristics of respondents (88 questions or statements), while the data on prior victimisation and confidence in institutions were not used.

Using factor analysis, it was determined that it is a valid measurement instrument for surveying safety, police dealings and cooperation between the police and the local community, and is reasonable, interpretable and in accordance with the theoretical concepts of fear of crime and community policing. The questionnaire covers two areas: sense of safety, on the one hand, and components of community policing, on the other.

It is important to highlight that the metric characteristics of the overall results of the questionnaire for surveying safety, police dealings and cooperation between the police and the local community, according to the estimation of the citizens of the Republic of Croatia, are very good. The Cronbach-Kaiser-Caffrey  $\alpha$  reliability coefficient was 0.965 (Borovec, 2013: 150).

Table 1 depicts the research areas, result indicators and sources of information used to obtain the results.

The field research combined two quantitative methods: telephone interviews and face-to-face interviews in households.

Computer-assisted telephone interviewing was used for 2000 questionnaires, while face-to-face interviews were used for an additional 2,500. Both samples were multi-stratified according to the following variables: county, settlement size, gender and age. This means that there were quotas set for each county in relation to the settlement size, and then within a certain settlement size, according to age and gender.

Settlements, as well as persons, were randomly selected. During the telephone interviewing, a large quantity of telephone numbers were entered into a computer, which randomly chose the numbers to be used. During the face-to-face interviewing in households, 207 settlements were randomly selected. Settlement size in the sample is also representative, meaning that for each county, a number of points (settlements) were selected based on the share of inhabitants in each settlement size category. The following settlement size categorisation was used: up to 2000 inhabitants, from 2001 to 10,000 inhabitants, from 10,001 to 100,000 inhabitants, and those with over 100,001 inhabitants. In each sampling point (settlements), no more than 15 respondents were interviewed.

**Table 1:** Research areas, result indicators and sources of information

| RESEARCH AREAS         | RESULT INDICATORS   | SOURCES OF INFORMATION                 |
|------------------------|---|--|
| SENSE OF SAFETY        | Citizens' feeling of safety:<br>- at home,<br>- in the neighbourhood.<br>Perception of victimisation risk.<br>Perception of crime frequency.<br>Perception of incivilities. | Public opinion polling – questionnaire |
| PERCEPTION OF POLICING | Opinions on the police<br>Police effectiveness in detecting and preventing crime<br>Police visibility<br>Cooperation between citizens and the police                        | Public opinion polling – questionnaire |

Each interviewer received quotas for each sampling point consisting of the exact number of respondents according to age and gender. In addition, interviewers received a randomly selected street name for each sampling point, from where they started interviewing. Then, according to GfK's standard rule, they sought respondents in the given settlements. After the field research and data processing, respondents who answered all of the questions, as well as the respondents who did not answer a single question with "I don't know", were removed from the sample. In this manner, a final sample consisting of 1,096 respondents was obtained, and proven to be representative according to all sociodemographic characteristics.

### 5.3 Data Processing Methods

In order to test the relationship between sets of variables that define perceptions of policing and sense of safety (fear of crime, perception of crime risk and frequency, perception of incivilities), quasi-canonical correlation analysis was utilized (Momirović, Dobrić, & Karaman, 1983, 1984) as an alternative method that is less sensitive to respondent samples described by category variables than the "classic" canonical correlation analysis. Canonical analysis is a complex statistical procedure, whose result is the canonical correlation that represents the maximum correlation between two sets of variables. This correlation is calculated between sets of linear combinations of variables in both sets of variables. However, when data of "lower quality" are used, as is the case in this research, it is more suitable to use canonical covariance analysis or quasi-canonical correlation analysis (Momirović in Mejovšek, 2008). Canonical covariance analysis is a robust method that can be adapted for data at the level of nominal and ordinal scales, and is comprised of maximising covariances of linear composites on two sets of variables. Furthermore, a normal distribution of data is not a condition. Mejovšek (2008) emphasises that the method is not sensitive to higher levels of relationships between variables from two different sets. In addition, the method also allows for a non-orthogonal relationship of latent dimensions and, along with the structure of quasi-canonical factors (orthogonal projections of variables on quasi-canonical factors, which are actually correlations of variables and quasi-canonical factors), there is also a pattern of quasi-canonical factors (parallel projection of variables on quasi-canonical factors).

In accordance with the research goal and based on the results of similar types of research conducted abroad, the affirmative hypothesis was established.

H: There is a statistically significant relationship between the components of the Community Policing Strategy and the variables that are related to the sense of safety: fear of crime,

perception of crime risk and frequency, as well as perception of incivilities in the manner that respondents who perceive the police as being more effective and visible, cooperate more intensively with it, are better informed on its work and have more favourable opinions on it, are less afraid of crime, and perceive crime risk and frequency, as well as incivilities as being at a lower level.

## 6 Results

The relationship between sets of variables that consist of components of the Community Policing Strategy in Croatia was tested on the one hand, and on the other, sets of variables, fear of crime, perception of crime risk and frequency, as well as incivilities related to various deviances and risk groups that together form the sense of safety.

In order to determine the relationship between the components of the Community Policing Strategy in Croatia and the sense of safety, a spectral decomposition of square matrix of covariances between the mentioned set of variables was conducted. (see Table 2)

**Table 2:** Eigenvalues of the covariance matrix of the Community Policing Strategy in Croatia and the sense of safety

|    | Eigenvalues | Cumulative variance | % of common variance |
|----|-------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| 1. | 0.63080     | 0.63080             | 15.78                |
| 2. | 0.02519     | 0.65600             | 16.40                |
| 3. | 0.00142     | 0.65742             | 16.43                |
| 4. | 0.00009     | 0.65751             | 16.44                |

The results show that a significant quasi-canonical component was extracted, whose covariance amounts to 0.63. It is a medium correlation, and the results indicate that the first pair of quasi-canonical factors of the two sets of variables, which points to what is important for their relationship, explains 15.8 per cent of the common variance. The quasi-canonical correlations were calculated for the significant quasi-canonical component. The results of the testing of the significance of the quasi-canonical correlations are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3:** Testing of the significance of the quasi-canonical coefficients of the Community Policing Strategy in Croatia and the sense of safety

| Component | Quasi-canonical correlation | Quasi-canonical covariance | HI**2  | DF | Significance P |
|-----------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|--------|----|----------------|
| 1.        | 0.40                        | 0.63                       | 189.65 | 15 | 0.000          |

The correlation of the significant quasi-canonical component amounts to 0.40, while the quasi-canonical correlation (0.63) is statistically significant ( $p < 0.01$ ), which is visible in Table 3. Therefore, the analysis of the structure of the quasi-canonical variable can be conducted. It can be claimed that there is a relationship between the components of the Community Policing Strategy in Croatia and the sense of safety over one significant quasi-canonical component.

Table 4 presents parallel projections and correlations of variables (matrices of pattern and structure are identical and therefore not shown separately) that define the components of the Community Policing Strategy in Croatia on the quasi-canonical component extracted from that set of variables and from the other set of variables (sense of safety).

**Table 4:** Matrices of pattern/structure of the first set of variables – Community Policing Strategy in Croatia

| Variables   | Parallel projections and correlations of variables of the first set on components extracted from set 1 | Parallel projections and correlations of variables of the first set on components extracted from set 2 |
|---|--|--|
| Perception of police effectiveness in detecting and preventing crime                  | -0.88  | -0.35  |
| Informing citizens  | 0.11   | 0.03   |
| Opinions on the police  | -0.91  | -0.39  |
| Cooperation between citizens and the police   | 0.44   | 0.09   |
| Police visibility   | 0.09   | -0.05  |
| Perception of police effectiveness in detecting and preventing bribery and corruption | -0.45  | -0.04  |

Based on the results presented in Table 4, it is possible to determine those variables belonging to the Community Policing Strategy in Croatia that are responsible for the relationship with the sense of safety set of variables. The first among them is “opinions on the police”, whose parallel projection on the component extracted from the sense of safety is -0.39, and the correlation also amounts to -0.39. The next variable is “perception of police effectiveness in detecting and preventing crime”, whose parallel projection and correlation on the first component was found to be -0.35. The other variables (informing citizens, cooperation between citizens and the police, police visibility, and perception of police effectiveness in detecting and preventing bribery and corruption) have lower parallel projections and correlations on the first component extracted from the set of variables that describe the sense of safety. In other words, the result shows that citizens’ opinions on the police and the perception of police effectiveness in detecting and preventing crime are the most significant for connecting the components of the Community Policing Strategy in Croatia with the sense of safety (fear of crime, perception of crime risk and frequency, and incivilities related to various deviances and risk groups).

Furthermore, we assessed which sense of safety variables most significantly create the quasi-canonical component. Table 5 presents the parallel projections and correlations of variables that define the sense of safety on the quasi-canonical component extracted from that set of variables and from the other set of variables (the Community Policing Strategy in Croatia).

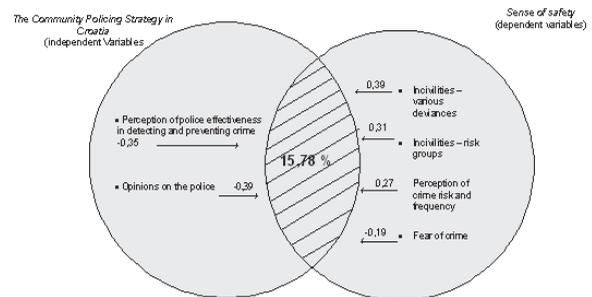
**Table 5:** Matrices of pattern/structure of the first set of variables – sense of safety

| Variables                                 | Parallel projections and correlations of variables of the second set on components extracted from set 2 | Parallel projections and correlations of variables of the second set on components extracted from set 1 |
|---|---|---|
| Incivilities related to various deviances | 0.87  | 0.39  |
| Fear of crime                             | -0.52   | -0.19   |
| Perception of crime risk and frequency    | 0.73  | 0.27  |
| Incivilities related to risk groups       | 0.81  | 0.31  |

By examining Table 5, which represents the matrix pattern and the matrix structure of the second set of variables, it is possible to determine those sense of safety variables that are responsible for the relationship with the set of variables that describe the components of the Community Policing Strategy in Croatia. The first is “incivilities related to various deviances”, whose parallel projection and correlation on the first component amounts to 0.39. It is followed by the variable “incivilities related to risk groups”, whose parallel projection and correlation on the first component is 0.31. In contrast to the variables describing incivilities, others (fear of crime and perception of crime risk and frequency) have lower parallel projections and correlations on the first component extracted from the set of variables that describe the components of the Community Policing Strategy in Croatia. This result means that incivilities (related to various deviances and risk groups) are the most significant for connecting the sense of safety with the components of the Community Policing Strategy in Croatia (police effectiveness, opinions on the police, cooperation between citizens and the police, police visibility and informing citizens).

In conclusion, the first pair of quasi-canonical factors in the Community Policing Strategy in Croatia defines variables that refer to opinions on the police and the perception of police effectiveness in detecting and preventing crime, and, in the sense of safety, variables that refer to incivilities related to risk groups and incivilities related to various deviances. These results show that the perception of lower police effectiveness and unfavourable opinions on the police are related to a high-

er sense of unsafety, that is, to the perception of incivilities related to various deviances and risk groups, as well as to the higher level of fear of crime. This is clearly visible in Figure 2.



**Figure 2:** Results of the quasi-canonical correlation analysis

In other words, as Salmi, Gronroos, and Keskinen (2004) proved and which was additionally confirmed by this research, the perception of policing is significant for the sense of safety. If citizens consider police dealings to be effective, and that the police are competent and professional, their sense of safety will be more favourable. On the other hand, when citizens believe that the police in their community do not control crime successfully, they will feel less safe. In other words, the perception of police effectiveness and opinions on the police are the key determinants that should be worked on in order to enhance the sense of safety.

## 7 Discussion and Conclusion

The results indicate that there is a complex relationship between community policing and citizens' affective and cognitive perceptions of safety. While certain extracted components positively influence the perception of safety, others are not significantly related or are related contrary to expectations. The result of the quasi-canonical correlation analysis speaks in favour of opinions on the police and perception of police effectiveness in preventing and detecting crime as factors of community policing having the greatest effect on the sense of safety. On the other hand, the perception of incivilities is the main characteristic of the perception of safety that influences the perception of the police. To put it differently, all efforts of community policing that lead to strengthening citizens' confidence in the police and to building positive opinions and that increase police visibility, are key to achieving success in terms of increased perceptions of safety. Although some authors (e.g., Scarborough, Like-Haislip, Novak, Lucas, & Alarid, 2010) have claimed that there is no direct relationship between citizens' opinions on the police and fear of crime, this research

refutes this claim because it indicates that there is a direct and inversely proportional relationship. However, efforts to increase citizen satisfaction with the police and to improve their opinions should not be viewed only in the context of the fear of crime, but also in order to recognise other benefits, such as increased willingness of citizens to cooperate with the police and to inform the police on what they know about crime and perpetrators. It is likely that citizens' satisfaction with the police will encourage partnerships with the police, and these relationships can encourage preventive efforts based in the community. All of these will make policing even more effective.

It is important to remember that the sense of safety is based on perception, as well as the estimation of the police and their effectiveness. It should, therefore, be emphasised that all police efforts to reduce fear of crime or perceptions of crime risk and frequency and perception of incivilities will only be successful if citizens notice them. Police success in preventing and solving crimes are mostly stable categories without larger oscillations in relation to present trends, and the police cannot significantly influence these trends, particularly at the national level. What the police can influence is crime at the local level through preventive interventions and projects that address local causes of crime, and through enhancing the publicity and presentation of the results of their work. For that particular reason, the public relations component is important. By being open towards the public, policing and its effectiveness must be demystified and objectively presented through the media or direct communication with target groups (neighbourhood meetings, presentations for key figures in local communities and so on). Therefore, the decision to pay particular attention to public relations within the Community Policing Strategy in Croatia can be considered fully justified.

In addition to public relations, direct contact between the police and citizens is crucial for the perception of police effectiveness and for forming positive opinions on the police. Excluding word of mouth, citizens can obtain information on the police, their work and successes in two ways: *indirectly*, through the media, and *directly* in everyday contact with police officers. The latter still offers unused potential, including greater respect for citizens by police officers, drawing police attention not only to current problems, but also to citizens' perception of these problems, as well as better feedback to citizens who asked for police assistance or intervention.

Although the result showed that there is no direct, statistically significant relationship between informing citizens and the perception of safety, the indirect relationship cannot be questioned. As previously mentioned, without quality reporting, either directly from the police officer in the field, or indirectly through the public relations department and the media,

it is nearly impossible to make police effectiveness visible to citizens. However, in contrast to informing, which is often one-sided communication and mere transfer of information, cooperation between citizens and the police is significantly related to the fear of crime, as well as to incivilities related to risk groups, which belongs to the cognitive sense of safety. It means that policing strategies that encourage cooperation with citizens, as well as establishing various coalitions, which, in their work, include citizens themselves, have a positive effect on perceptions of safety. Forms of cooperation can vary in terms of content and duration, and it is important that they include partnerships, cooperation between the police and citizens, as well as citizens' awareness that they are contributing to resolving problems. Apart from the direct relationship with fear of crime, cooperation between citizens and the police has an indirect influence on the perceptions of safety. Namely, it can be assumed that quality cooperation contributes to forming favourable opinions on the police, and enables increased visibility of police effectiveness.

On the basis of the previous discussion, the significance of direct contact between the police and citizens confirms how important it is to educate and train police officers and police officials in applying the community policing model. Therefore, the Croatian police definitely needed a reform in this area as well.

All tested indicators of citizen perceptions of the police and the cooperation between the police and the local community, were certainly influenced by the level and quality of the implementation of the community policing model in Croatia. Neither has the community policing model reached the same level of implementation in all areas of the Republic of Croatia nor are all of the determinants of the Community Policing Strategy in Croatia equally developed and implemented. The lack of sufficient resources and inadequate management of change (Kinnunen, in Holmberg, 2004) often brings into question the quality and level of implementation of the community policing model, which was also the case with the Croatian police.

The premise of the importance of incivilities is in accordance with community policing in Croatia because the focus of policing is not exclusively crime, but also other problems in the local community that represent less severe criminal offences, including public disorder in neighbourhoods. By resolving issues that concern the local community, the police contribute to the sense of safety, while on the other hand, citizens that are rarely confronted with incivilities have a better perception of the police. This is extremely important for any police organisation, especially those applying the community policing model. This is also confirmed by the results observed here, which show that incivilities are most significant for connecting the

sense of safety with community policing, that is, the perception of police in general. Clearly, the frequent resolving of incivilities exceeds police competences in many respects, which is the reason why cooperation with other institutions, the local authorities and the community itself is of utmost importance. The acceptance of becoming involved in resolving such issues through partnerships and cooperation is also characteristic of community policing. The results seen here, which show the importance of incivilities for both the sense of safety and the perception of police, support the community policing model. In addition to crime control, it is the obligation of the police to address other issues that burden local communities.

It can be argued that by testing the relationship between perceptions of the police and fear of crime, the foundations of the theory of social control or the disorder model were confirmed, which highlight the significance of the perception of the local surroundings, the physical and social disorders present in neighbourhoods, as well as the perception of social control mechanisms. In addition to informal control achieved by citizen cohesion in local communities, policing is the most important determinant of formal social control. Namely, no other institution has such a wide range of authority as do the police, nor is, to such an extent, present in local communities. The police are always available (24 hours a day) and in all areas of the community.

Although the research has not shown a strong relationship between community policing and the sense of safety, this relationship is, nevertheless, statistically significant. This alerts us to the fact that expectations that community policing will lead to achieving much better results in improving subjective safety is unrealistic. Other factors must be taken into account that sometimes do not belong to police competences which also affect subjective safety, such as the sense of safety and the importance of individual and sociodemographic characteristics of citizens. However, based on the research results it can be concluded that, in contrast to the traditional policing model, community policing has a much wider range of characteristics related to the reduction in the fear of crime:

- traditional approach
  - crime reduction → reduction in fear;
- community policing
  - positive opinions on the police → reduction in fear
  - police effectiveness → reduction in fear
  - cooperation between citizens and the police → reduction in fear
  - police visibility → reduction in fear.

In other words, when we attempt to answer the question that was the starting problem of this research on the basis of

the results received, we can conclude that the community policing model can live up to one of its fundamental promises – to reduce fear of crime and to raise the perception of overall safety to a higher level. However, it should be noted that these expectations must be unrealistic, keeping in mind the clearly expressed insight that the police cannot be fully successful. Namely, although there is a statistically significant and positive relationship between community policing and the sense of safety, we must also consider that it is also influenced by a whole range of factors that were not the topic of this research. If promises given to citizens lead to unrealistic expectations, the efforts of the police could be unsuccessful, that is, the perception of police effectiveness could be unrealistic because it is based on false expectations and criteria. Clearly, achieving this goal is not straightforward, and since policing, including community policing, depends on the social context, it is important to carefully plan and monitor changes that take place in various communities under the influence of the police.

In accordance with the research goals and hypothesis that *there is a statistically significant relationship between the components of the Community Policing Strategy and the variables that are related to the sense of safety: fear of crime, perception of crime risk and frequency, as well as perception of incivilities*, it can be concluded that the hypothesis is confirmed. For this relationship the most significant variables are: citizens' attitudes towards police and citizens' perception of police effectiveness. Finally, Community Policing in Croatia is significantly related to citizens' feeling of safety, and further developments in this field should be based on strategies and police tactics that promote positive attitudes about the police and making police effectiveness visible to the public.

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## **Učinkovitost policije kot dejavnik strategije policijskega dela v skupnosti, ki vpliva na občutek varnosti hrvaških državljanov**

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Glavni cilj prispevka je ugotoviti povezavo med posameznimi elementi strategije policijskega dela v skupnosti na Hrvaškem v povezavi z občutkom varnosti, in sicer zaznavanje strahu pred kriminaliteto, zaznavanje tveganja in pogostosti kaznivih dejanj, kakor tudi zaznavanje nereda na Hrvaškem. Raziskava je obsegala skupno 1.096 anketirancev, starejših od 18 let. Raziskovalno področje je združilo dve kvantitativni metodi: intervjuje po telefonu in osebne intervjuje v gospodinjstvih. Rezultati raziskave kažejo, da gre za kompleksen odnos med policijskim delom v skupnosti ter emocionalnim in kognitivnim zaznavanjem varnosti pri državljanih. Medtem ko nekateri dejavniki pozitivno vplivajo na zaznavanje varnosti, drugi niso bistveno povezani oz. so povezani v nasprotju s pričakovanji. Rezultat kvazi-kanonične korelacijske analize govori v prid mnenjem o policiji in zaznavanju učinkovitosti policije pri preprečevanju in odkrivanju kriminalitete kot dejavnik policijskega dela v skupnosti, ki ima največji vpliv na občutek varnosti. Na drugi strani je zaznavanje nereda glavna značilnost zaznavanja varnosti, ki vpliva na zaznavanje policije. Povedano drugače, vsa prizadevanja policijskega dela v skupnosti, ki vodijo h krepitvi zaupanja državljanov v policijo in k izgradnji pozitivnih mnenj ter povečujejo vidnost policije, so ključ do uspeha v smislu povečane zaznave varnosti.

**Ključne besede:** policijsko delo v skupnosti, občutek varnosti, učinkovitost policije, ocenjevanje, Hrvaška

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