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Police Efforts in the Reduction of Fear of Crime in Local Communities – Big Expectations and Questionable Effects

Abstract. *Making police officers approachable and visible is one of the most important factors in reducing fear of crime. However, the public also requires their effectiveness in crime fighting. Community policing relies on factors such as approachability and visibility of the police, but does not offer solutions for factors like neighbourhood decay. The role of police in the reduction of fear of crime is quite paradoxical – on the one hand their presence in neighbourhoods reassure citizens, while on the other hand their presence can be understood as a response to more crime and disorder.*

Keywords: *fear of crime, police, community policing, neighbourhoods.*

1. Introduction

Fear of crime is currently one of the most researched topics in international criminology. In the United Kingdom (UK) and United States (US), crime surveys have expanded rapidly since the late 1960s. For example, the British Crime Survey now biennially interviews approximately 10,000 residents of England and Wales regarding their views of crime and crime-related issues. This survey has shed light on attitudes toward policing, victimisation, perceptions of risk, and people's fear of crime. Crime surveys are conducted, not only in Western European countries and the US, but also in Central and Eastern European countries (Hatalak, del Frate & Zvekić, 1998; Zvekić, 1998; Kury, 2001) and South Africa (Mistry, 2004).

The findings of the UK and US research are now well known. A plethora of studies have concluded that fear of crime impinges upon the well-being of a large portion of the population. Some have even gone as far as to suggest that the fear of crime is now a larger problem than crime itself (Bennett, 1990; Hale, 1992; Warr, 1984). Chambers and Tombs (1984), reviewing the 1982 British Crime Survey (Scotland) reported that "more than half of the respondents (58%) said that at some time in the past they had been concerned about the possibility of being a victim of crime".

The interest in fear of crime is related to a historical process of sociological, demographic and psychological changes in western society. Boomkens (2004) claims that these three structural transformations of modern Western society have resulted in the creation of a new social and political climate in which safety has become a central issue. The global processes of individualisation [sic], flexibilisation [sic], informalisation [sic], the process of globalisation of economic and cultural relations, and the crisis of the public domain have all had disruptive effects on urban communities. These effects include the breakdown of traditional societies who previously had characteristics of social cohesion, predictable economic environments, and local specificity. These disruptive effects have resulted in a society in which feelings of insecurity and the search for fixed identities and safe communities have become permanent and defining characteristics.

Garland (2000) refers to a *cultural formation* in high crime societies. This cultural formation produces a series of psychological and social effects that exert an influence on politics and policy and "gives the experience of crime a settled institutional form" (p. 367). People become more crime conscious under these conditions and they get caught up in institutions and daily practices that require them to take on the identity of actual (or potential) crime victims, and to think, feel and act accordingly. In response, the focus of public policy has changed from offender-oriented policies (rehabilitation, etc.) into victim-oriented policies, which are primarily based on repressive and punitive measures (Roberts, Stalans, Indermaur & Hough, 2003).

The present article is constructed in three parts. The first part is an introduction to the factors that explain fear of crime including the socio-demographic and social-psychological model of Van der Wurff, Van Staalduinen, and Stringer (1989). The second part provides an outline of the paradoxes and inconsistencies in the literature about fear of crime and the role of the police in reducing fear of crime. Public, political, and media perceptions regarding the role of the police and the implications of these perceptions for possible ways the police may enhance feelings of safety are also described. Finally, measures that may reduce fear of crime are discussed.

2. Factors of fear of crime and the social-psychological model of Van der Wurff

As well as receiving much attention on an empirical level, many researchers have attempted to explain fear of crime theoretically. These efforts have tended to be dominated by researchers influenced by sociological insights. Thus, demographic variables such as age, gender, household income, friendship networks, length of residence, earlier victimization experiences, and so on have been suggested as key factors in explaining fear of crime. This approach is

also called the *socio-demographic model* of fear of crime. Such models have been found to be useful in explaining fear of crime. However, by concentrating on sociological variables, researchers have largely ignored social-psychological and psychological factors that may be important in explaining the fear of crime (Van der Wurff et al., 1989; Farrall, Ditton, Bannister, & Gilchrist, 2000). The domination in the literature by sociologically informed theorising has ignored important processes that may be occurring at the individual level.

One example of an attempt to combine socio-demographic and social-psychological characteristics is the *Crime Reduction Toolkit*. According to the Crime Reduction Toolkit, there are three main models that explain levels of fear of crime (European Communities, 2004). The first model is the *victimisation model* where high crime levels (a socio-demographic factor) lead to higher numbers of victims, resulting in higher levels of fear due to anticipation of becoming a victim (a social-psychological factor). The *vulnerability model* proposes that personal characteristics, another social-psychological factor, contribute to people's fear of crime. Social and/or physical vulnerability is one of the main explanations for fear of crime under this model. The *social control model* proposes that a lack of social control, a socio-demographic factor, is the source of fear: Incivility, disorder, and neighbourhood decline lead to actual or symbolic threats which enhance fear of crime. The three

models show that there are different kinds of socio-demographic and psychological factors that may contribute to fear of crime. Socio-demographic factors like age, gender, health, and poverty may be related to social and physical vulnerability under the vulnerability model. The environment and media are two important psychological factors in the social control model. These three explanatory models take socio-demographic and social-psychological factors into account. In other words, both demographic concerns and individual levels of fear of crime are used to explain fear of crime in general.

Recent research by Xu, Fiedler, and Flaming (2005) utilized factors similar to the Crime Reduction Toolkit in order to explain the relations between crime and incivilities and the role of community policing, Xu et al. used Wilson and Kelling's (1982) broken windows theory to explain fear of crime. The broken windows theory emphasizes the prioritisation of order maintenance in relation to community policing as a starting point for reduction of fear of crime. If no one cares about the condition of a building/ neighbourhood there will be no collective willingness on the part of the citizens to intervene for the common good and inhibit disorder and, in the end, crime and/or fear of crime will increase. Xu et al.'s results showed that citizens' fear of crime is significantly predicted by citizens' perceptions of police commitment to their community, disorder, and serious crime rates. The same results may be found in Covington and Taylor (1991),

Hope and Hough (1988), McGarrel, Giaco-mazzi and Thurman (1997) and Taylor and Harral (1996). According to all these studies, community policing has a comprehensive, community-oriented goal, targeting both disorder and crime, and emphasizing both organizational and community measures in police evaluation. The results show that community policing reduces crime indirectly and also has a major positive impact on citizens' perceptions of fear of crime.

3. Explaining fear of crime: paradoxes and inconsistencies

Efforts to reduce fear of crime should be embedded in the perceptions people have of the role of the police and crime issues due to politics and media presentations of crime problems, including crime control. In addition, attempts to control the situations and persons that frighten people need to be addressed along with changing certain factors in neighbourhoods that may have a negative influence on the social structure of a neighbourhood.

In contemporary society, fear of crime is thought to be a result of increasing crime in neighbourhoods and in society in general. In reality, in the US, crime rates are actually decreasing (*National crime victimization survey*, 2003) while fear of crime remains steady or may be increasing (Haynie, 1998; Warr, 1984). In South Africa, on the other hand, both crime rates and fear of crime are increasing (Mistry, 2004). In addition, despite the unlikelihood of being a victim,

women show greater fear of crime than men (Haynie, 1998; Ferraro, 1996; Warr, 1984). In this section, some theoretical aspects that are related to levels and kinds of fear of crime will be presented and discussed.

3.1 Paradoxes and paradigms in fear of crime

According to Van der Vijver (2004) the public debate on insecurity is full of paradoxes and inconsistencies. The first paradox is the *differential perception of crime* (Van der Vijver, 1993). People tend to consider rising crime rates to be a (relatively) small problem in their own neighbourhood, a bigger problem in the city, and a great problem in the country at large. When people talk about crime at the level of society, it is related to murder, rape, armed robberies and other kinds of serious crime. When people talk about crime within their neighbourhood, they mention problems that are related to signs of neighbourhood decay: vandalism, pollution, youngsters on the street and so on. The analyses of feeling unsafe in Van der Wurff's (1992) model do not distinguish between national or local levels; it is only meant to apply to the fear people experience on local levels.

The second paradox is the *fear of crime paradox* (Van der Vijver, 1993). Feelings of insecurity are not logically linked to risk, danger, or victimization: there exists a discrepancy between the 'real' problem (insecurity as it is 'objectively measured' by the number of crimes) and the 'perception' of the problem (insecurity as it is perceived

by citizens). The overestimation of fear relative to the likelihood of victimization for Germany and the UK shows this discrepancy (Farrall et al., 1997; Kury et al., 2004), as does research in the US (Haynie, 1998; Ferraro, 1996; Warr, 1984). The research of Van der Wurff showed that people who were victims of a crime did not feel more unsafe than non-victims and elderly people and women reported relatively high feelings of being unsafe but were relatively seldom victims. Van der Wurff (1992) and Tulloch et al. (1999) note that older people often adopt lifestyles that protect them from risk. Thus vulnerability and controllability are the main explanations for this fear of crime in older men and women.

The third paradox is the *rising crime phenomenon* (Van der Vijver, 1993). Crime is usually presented as a phenomenon that is getting worse but the results of public surveys from 1980 until now show that fear of crime in the Netherlands in people's own neighbourhood has remained more or the less the same (Van der Vijver, 1993). In addition, as stated earlier, in the US, crime rates are falling while fear of crime remains steady or is increasing. This paradox implies that the levels and kinds of crime are not directly related to the fear of crime. If we want to reduce the fear of crime, fighting crime is not sufficient.

3.2 Coping with fear of crime

Van der Vijver (1993) used Lerner's (1980) theory of the 'Belief in the Just World' to understand how people deal with potentially threatening situations. The just world theory asserts that human beings want and have to believe that they live in a world where people get what they deserve and deserve what they get, so that they can go about their daily lives with a sense of trust, hope, and confidence in their future. In a just world there is no place for innocent victims, but, at the same time, we are all aware that there are innocent victims. The judiciary is used to uphold our image of the just world because it is a symbol for both the protection of the 'good' and eliminating the threat of crime by fighting the 'evil'. But if someone has become the victim of a crime which incites outrage, the perception of the just world has been violated and that perception must be reinstated. That has more to do with the battle against unjustness that has been experienced than arresting the perpetrator. This is why victims and the public want to know that the police and the justice department are doing their very best to solve the case (Lasthuizen, van Eeuwijk, & Huberts, 2005).

Lerner's theory of 'Belief in the Just World' is, however, problematic in many ways. The press and television give a presentation of a world where every single person, good or bad, can be a victim. It does not explain why a lot of people feel unsafe although, according to this theory, most people believe that they are good citizens, and therefore implicitly protected from bad things, including crime. We therefore have

to find other explanations to understand how people deal with potentially threatening situations. Although this theory is somewhat ambivalent, it explains that people want to have the feeling that they live in a world where evil is punished and good is rewarded. In contemporary society, politicians translate this theory into repressive and punitiveness policies to fight evil in order to reward good citizens with safety (Lasthuizen et al., 2005).

Different people use different strategies to compensate for the inherent contradiction between a belief in a just world and the knowledge that bad things can and do happen to good people. For example, Sherwood, Singh, & Singh (1994) and Tweksbury & Mustaine (2003) listed several different methods that people may use to defend themselves against being victims of crime. They may carry mace, whistles, knives, guns, or other defensive weapons; they may try increasing the number of household members over the age of 16; people may also decrease the frequency of nighttime activity away from home or install burglar alarms in response to their fear of crime. In a survey of college students, Tweksbury and Mustaine found that those students who were more fearful were more likely to use self-protective measures. Ironically, however, they found that students who feel safer in their homes were actually more likely to use these self-protective measures than those who feel unsafe. The direction of this relationship is not transparent; it may be

that having these self-protective measures is what makes them feel safer rather than the other way around. In addition, students living near fast food restaurants and those who spend more time with strangers were found to be less likely to use these measures. Tweksbury and Mustaine hypothesized that this latter finding may be due to the fact that people who are frequently exposed to strangers are less afraid of them and therefore find it less necessary to defend themselves from them.

3.3 The special case of fear of crime in women and the elderly

One of the main issues regarding fear of crime is the higher level of fear expressed by women than men. Research on fear of crime shows that women's fear is often related to controllability and vulnerability (Michau, 2005) and women disclose fear on account those two factors (Stanko, 1995). But vulnerability can also lead to irrational responses even to an objectively lower crime threat. Those responses are a consequence of higher levels of fear expressed by women and have an impact on their well-being. There are differences between women's and men's fear levels, and that is the reason why reducing this fear might require different approaches. When women speak of feelings of unsafety, they also express a high awareness of risk. They feel they have less control over their personal and public spaces (Gilchrist, Bannister, Ditton, & Farrall, 1998) and often see themselves

as an "easy target" for crime (Pain, 1995). That is why we have to understand women's fear of crime and what causes it (Plan It Safe). Pain showed that women are more afraid of public places than private spaces, despite the fact that private spaces are the locations of most attacks. Pain also pointed out that a higher level of fear is expressed by younger women than by older women. The more powerless women feel, the greater their fear of crime (Plan It Safe).

There are several factors associated with fear of crime that may contribute to feelings of usafety (Plan It Safe). Women are most fearful of crimes where the perpetrator is usually a man, like sexual harassment or sexual assault. Sexual crimes against a person induce grater fear than a robbery because they are much more horrfying (Plan It Safe). In fact, Ferraro (1996) claims that rape may act as a sort of "master crime" overshadowing all other crimes. In his analysis, when he controlled for fear of rape, the differences in fear of crime for women and men disappeared. Another factor associated with fear of crime is women's experience of harassment. Harrassment in any form often happens in public places. Harassment can be intimidating and that is the reason for feelings of powerlessness and unsafety. That is why victims of harassement report higher levels of fear of crime (Haynie, 1998). They are usually more physically vulnerable and that almost always leads to sexual assault (Haynie). In addition, past experience of physical violence may increase women's fear

of crime. Women report higher levels of fear if they have experienced domestic violence relative to those who have not (Plan It Safe). Another issue is the lack of understanding about violence against women. When being emotionally or physically abused women often do not report crime, especially when it happens in their own homes. They do not see domestic violence as a crime. If they do report domestic violence or harassment they usually receive a poor response from the police. Violence can take many forms and in order to help, service providers for women have to understand violence. Lack of understanding can also be a consequence of lack of information and may result in no action being taken when it should be. Violence like sexual harassment and sexual assault are two criminal offences that women fear most. Finally, women assess their own risk of victimization based on information from the media. How media report on crime can mislead women into thinking that crimes rates are much higher than they really are and may increase women's fear (Haynie, 1998).

Society needs to find solutions to deal with these specific issues with regard to women's fear of crime. For example, neighbourhoods may be designed without "hiding places" for a potential perpetrator (designing crime out). Strategies have to be developed in order to reduce women's fear of public places and must be primarily included in community safety plans. That way women will feel safer in a neighbourhood they live in (Plan It Safe). Creating safer

environments can help to reduce women's fear of crime. Safer communities help women to participate in public life because they reduce their feelings of unsafety and increase the amount of time they spend in their communities and their participation in public life (Plan It Safe).

Until now, solutions to decrease women's fear of crime included creating women-friendly areas by redesigning cities. But we also have to take into account states where inequalities between men and women still exist. Long-held attitudes, roles that women are able to play in their society, and beliefs about the value of women are reasons for violent behaviour of intimate partners. States and civil society must develop preventive approaches that promote protection of women's human rights and their social equality (Michau, 2005). Various factors on different levels can play a role in the way men treat women: violent behaviour grows out of a complex of individual, relational, communal, and societal dynamics. Solutions have to meet these different stages of individual change and community mobilization; raising awareness is not enough.

Creating confidence and role models may also play an important role in reducing fear of crime for women. More women in the police force could be one solution to this problem. Another possible positive side effect of more women in the police is that they, in general, have more patience and flexibility in solving problems than men. Past research shows that women have these

abilities. However there are difficulties for women in entering police organizations, mostly as a result of the negative attitudes of men (Price, 1996). Women police rely more on communication skills than men. Also their work style is different so the public accepts them differently, and that can contribute to positive police-community communication and cultural changes (Stanko, 1995). Aggressive police styles among male police officers may lead to police-community conflicts which may reduce public trust in police institutions and increase fear of crime (Brereton, 1999).

It is also necessary to take in consideration the role of the police in reduction of fear of crime of the elderly. Meško (2000) found out that in addition to women, the elderly of both genders tend to be more fearful in his study conducted in Slovenia. Their perception of possible dangers in their living environments is more expressed than in the young people. The capability of the elderly to cope with everyday problems as well as with potential offenders is reduced. Oh (2003) discussed social bonds among the elderly based on the length of residence, crime victimization and perceived disorder. It is assumed that factors contributing to people's bonding to a living environment are related to the time they have lived in a certain area and how their social networks (keeping in touch with neighbours and other residents) are built up and developed in this area. Victimology perspective assumes that people who have been victimised

suffer of problems such as lowering their morale, and keeping distance with other members of their families, neighbours and friends (Oh 2003: 495). These research findings of Hu show that the elderly have less local friends than young people and victimisation has no influence on neighbourhood friendship. An interesting finding is related to criminal victimisation which reinforces neighbourhood bonds and supportive behaviour in avoiding further victimisations. The elderly are equally sensitive to physical disorder and social disorder in relation to their understanding of social cohesion and trust as other age groups but the perceived social and physical disorder in the elderly lessens their ability to participate in stabilisation of their neighbourhoods (Oh, 2003:503). Therefore, the elderly need more attention and reassurance from the police.

4. Perceptions of the role of the police: more paradoxes and inconsistencies

One of the most central paradoxes with regard to how the public views the police has to do with the police role (Van der Vijver, 1993). This paradox is closely related to the paradox of differential perception of crime. In general, people regard the police role primarily as 'repressive crime-fighters'. But when asked what people expect from the police in their own neighbourhood, fighting crime turns out to be relatively unimportant (Van der Vijver). At the local level there are two sets of priorities in citizens' opinion: Police should rapidly and adequately respond to emergencies and they should to be available, accessible, visible, and approachable: citizens want a police station in the area, they want to know the officers by name and they prefer to have 'their own officer' in the neighbourhood, preferably by foot and in touch with the residents (Van der Vijver, 2004; Me ko, 2000; McConville & Shepherd, 1992). Still the mechanism behind foot patrol and a linked reduction in fear of crime are unknown (Salmi, Gronroos, & Keskinen, 2004).

Another paradox related to the public's opinion about fear of crime is that many believe that having more police officers is the solution to fear of crime and crime rates (Bayley, 1994). There are two aspects to this belief. First, more police officers does not necessarily mean that there will be more officers on the street. Most of the work of police officers (around 70%) consists of reporting and administrative tasks (Bayley). Second, more visible police officers could have the opposite effect on the fear of crime. The public could get the feeling that there is something wrong or the neighbourhood has become more unsafe. More police officers as a solution to reducing fear of crime is probably too simple. It is only a short term psychological solution. As soon as people get used to the number of police officers, they may want to have more police officers because they still fear crime because other features (e.g., health or financial situations) still exist

or they feel even more fearful because too many police officers on the street could mean that 'something bad is going on'.

Lasthuizen et al. (2005) showed that a negative public opinion (based on the lack of police action) concerning the actions of the police has a significant impact on feelings of insecurity. Yet a survey of adults and teens conducted in Finland (Salmi et al., 2004) showed that people who saw police more often on foot patrols, chatting with citizens or providing information, were less afraid of crimes against property than those who saw police in car patrols. This relation existed in both groups in the survey, but it was stronger for adults than for teenagers. For the teenagers, seeing the police more often during foot patrols was related to less fear of crime against persons than property. A similar kind of effect was also found in the adult group, but the difference was not statistically significant. In both groups, seeing the police more often in patrol car-related activities was linked to greater fear of crime against both persons and property. Both visibility dimensions (foot and car patrol) were predictors of the two fear dimensions (person and property). In a previous study (Salmi et al., 2000 as cited in Salmi et al., 2004), citizens who saw the police more often on foot had a positive image of the police: these citizens considered the police both closer and friendlier. On the other hand, seeing the police more often in cars had a negative effect on the police image. Closer and more accessible policing also seems to

have advantages with regard to citizens' fear of the crime context. Close contact between police and citizens appears to be a key factor in reducing fear of crime. The conclusion of Salmi et al. is that residents in areas with foot patrols are more satisfied with police services than residents in areas with motorized patrols.

Another problem with defining police roles is that there are differing levels of fear of crime in rural and urban areas. People living in rural areas are less likely to report fear of crime than people living in urban areas (European communities, 2004). Due to a different degree of community feeling (social cohesion) between the rural and urban areas, expectations of the public towards the police are different. Rural areas have more 'communitarian societies', meaning a dense network of individual interdependencies with strong cultural commitments to mutuality of obligations. Crimes in smaller towns and villages may have a major impact on the feelings of unsafety in the community. The need for an approachable, visible, available and accessible police officer who knows everybody and everything seems to be most urgent in rural areas.

Urban areas are characterized by weak ties between residents and high residential mobility (Hope, 1995). Residents possess little information about each other because of a strategy of social avoidance or moral minimalism. The life of urban residents does not focus on their residential area, but is spread over the whole town (work,

friends, etc.). In this view, privacy is a more important aspect of life than communalism and could preserve the order of the residential surrounding of citizens. The focus is not on the area, but on problems in general. For this reason residents are not interested in a police force that protects a certain neighbourhood or certain people but want the police to solve the problems that are somewhat more visible in the city: youth hanging around, immigrants, petty crimes, etc.

How to define policing and police is a difficult issue. Besides different views of the public on policing, police officers themselves have different views on policing. Often these different views are contradictory and make it difficult to manage police organizations. In the police organisation, police officers need a degree of freedom in their work to be able to deal with all kinds of security situations. This freedom means that police officers have the opportunity to operate in a way that fits with their personal view of policing. Van der Torre (1993) distinguishes four different contradictory police styles that reflect these different views of policing: the pragmatist (using exclusive police competencies to perform quickly and effectively as the main task, recognizing time pressures), the pessimist (police do not have a lot of influence on problems), the retainer of order (remain resolute in the name of justice) and the social worker (human dimension). We have to take into account that the approach to reducing

fear of crime can differ per officer and that they will operate in the style that suits them. These different styles of policing are often hard to combine in one police force because goals, measurement, and targets differ (Xu et al., 2005).

5. The role of politics and media in people's fear of crime

Fear of crime is a very important concept as it has a strong influence on political decisions. We find punitiveness increasing in western countries in recent years (Roberts et al., 2003), often based on a victim-oriented approach. Fear of crime is such an important element of penal populism that politicians recognise and use expressed fear of crime generated by the media, well-publicised cases, and changes in some legal norms (often without sufficient expert consultation and under pressure of so-called moral entrepreneurs) for their own ends (Kury et al., 2004). According to Me ko (2004) political elites have been overlooking the fact that society is not only a victim but also a cause of crime. In order to fight crime and guarantee security, politicians are placed in a dilemma of 'freedom and security'. Political elites seem to sacrifice freedom for security. Their declared goal is citizens' protection from victimization but the hidden goal is quite frequently political gain (i.e., getting re-elected).

Nowadays crime is a normal fact of our society and like most other problems (e.g., unemployment), it is treated by politicians as a

solvable problem. It seems that contemporary society wants to eliminate all evil in society so that the 'good citizen' can live in freedom without feeling fear (justifying a belief in a just world). This perspective on reducing crime and reducing fear of crime raises high expectations of citizens about being good and accepted and not being a victim.

Fear of crime issues are a political matter because of politicians who abuse fear of immigrants, the poor, southerners, easterners and other marginalised and stigmatised social groups and attribute criminality to them in order to increase fear of crime and their credibility with a trusting public. Media's influence on one's understanding of attribution of criminality to specific individuals, circumstances, and possible victimisation deserves additional research. Media are often seen as one of the main causes of fear of crime; fear of crime is fuelled in part by heavy exposure to violent dramatic programming on prime time television. For example, research by Romer, Jamieson, and Aday (2003) indicates that watching local television news is related to increased fear and concern about crime. Lasthuizen et al. (2005) showed that one single incident of violence which receives extensive media coverage can be enough to influence the feelings of insecurity of the public. The impact of media focus is apparently therefore significant.

6. Methods of reducing fear of crime

Fear of crime became an internationally discussed and researched topic in the 1990s. Until recently, the European Union was especially focused on prevention and investigation of different kinds of crimes (including organized crime), but, over time, has become aware of the importance of fear of crime as a quality of life issue. Reduction of fear of crime is now one of the priorities of the European Crime Prevention Network (EUCPN). Several measures and good practices to reduce fear of crime are discussed in a review written by the EUCPN (2004) regarding their effectiveness in reducing fear of crime. Although the research on fear of crime is based on three indicators of the International Crime Victim Surveys (ICVS), the EUCPN discusses the implications of certain methods of reducing fear of crime. These methods, discussed below, are often related to crime prevention and not specifically to fear of crime.

6.1 Designing Crime Out

One of the main situational preventive measures used to reduce fear of crime is *designing crime out*. Certain environments can foster crime and therefore fear of crime. For example, subways and some designs of housing estates may increase fear of crime. Designing crime out is a way to decrease crime in order to reassure people that it is safe in their area. In this case, 'environmental cues' for crime like litter, broken windows, signs of vandalism and graffiti, etc. are removed. Open visible spaces, natural surveillance, more street lighting and the physical

appearance of an area can have an impact on crime levels as well as fear of crime. The quantity of street lighting is believed to be related to fear of crime. However, the results of a study on the influence of street lighting by the Home Office in the UK showed that there was no general increase in feelings of safety with increased lighting, except for women who felt safer after dark (Atkins, Husain, & Storey, 1991; European Communities, 2004). Certain aspects of residential buildings can also affect residents' fear of crime more than they affect the risk of crime: the larger the building, the higher the level of residents' fear (European Communities, 2004; Newman & Franck, 1980).

One problem with designing crime out is it is often seen as an attack on public spaces because reducing physical opportunities to commit a crime may have the unintended consequence of making a city feel less inviting. Ridding a city of open toilets and benches on which the homeless might sleep may decrease crime, but were interpreted by citizens as making cities look more like a fortress than an open, inviting, safe urban amusement park (Van der Vijver & Terpstra, 2004). Another problem with designing crime out of one area is that the problem may be moved from one place to other places within a city. Or the kind of crimes may change, perhaps, from public spaces to non-public spaces, for example, increased house burglaries.

6.2 The Social Approach to Crime Prevention

Besides designing crime out, there is a more social approach to crime prevention and reducing fear of crime. This approach emphasises the social and economic causes of crime, the need to address the motivational factors that encourage criminality, and the use of people as key agents of social control (Crawford, 2004). This approach results in decentralised and neighbourhood-oriented perspectives and policies that consist of two main strategies (Van den Broeck, 2004). The first strategy is more control on the street and better protection of public and private property. What is wanted is visible and approachable police officers who are friendly and strict in their approach in addition to more responsibility of residents to be alert to crime. There are different examples of this strategy: projects like 'neighbourhood watchers' that are recruited to intensify social control, neighbourhood foot patrol programs which are aimed at the provision of reassurance and security to the community (European Communities, 2004). The second neighbourhood-oriented strategy is better integration of groups considered 'at risk' like the young, unemployed, and ethnic minorities (Van den Broeck, 2004).

Both strategies focus primarily on local arrangements (local problems require local solutions) and a partnership approach: drawing together a variety of organizations

and stakeholders, in horizontal networks incorporating local municipal authorities, major public services, voluntary and business sectors as well as relevant community groups and associations. Nearly all Dutch municipalities are developing area-oriented strategies to implement their social and safety policies. The reason for these area-oriented strategies is the assumption that because the problems occur within the neighbourhood, the causes of and the solutions for these problems are located within the same area (Duyvendak, 2004). Especially in those areas where the composition of the population has changed rapidly, there is often a great need for interventions by professionals (Duyvendak). In these dynamic neighbourhoods, the lives of residents vary widely and the social ties are often weak. The willingness to make a change may be very low because there are no stimulating factors within the neighbourhood.

All these measures contain elements that dominate the preferences and desires of local governments with regard to the police: there should be sufficient numbers of police officers locally available – every police officer can step out of his or her car every now and then, and take a walk. No extra financial resources are needed, just the motivation to do so (Salmi et al., 2004). Additional factors include more attention of the police to specific local problems (e.g., disorderly groups of youth, disorder near pubs or due to specific groups), regular surveillance in the public domain in a way

that is clear to the citizens, and police should be more approachable for local citizens (Terpstra, 2004). The main problem is that these issues often conflict with a lack of resources within police organizations and/ or with national or local police objectives. Considerations of efficiency and risk-management will become more important to the extent the police can and will operate in the preferable way.

7. Community policing and fear of crime

Most earlier attempts to reduce crime and problems in neighbourhoods with the intent of reducing fear were implemented on national or local levels with only the police having the most important role. In the past, solutions were primarily focused on the national level, like programmes for re-schooling unemployed people, focusing on the police as a crime fighting organisation that fights evil and protects the innocent, and pro-active prevention like camera surveillance. In more recent policies, there has been more attention to solutions on the local level. Politicians have begun to focus on modes of informal social control within neighbourhoods where police, social services, and residents work together. This method is called *community policing*.

Van der Wurff (1992) and Xu et al. (2005) show that a neighbourhood approach is a partial answer to the problems of fear of crime. The neighbourhood seems to be the place to act on problems that cause

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fear and gives opportunities to show and communicate that fear in the area is not necessary. Duyvendak (2004) provides two major reasons for concentrating on the neighbourhood regarding improving the public's feelings of safety. The first reason is that the neighbourhood is the logical place for improving social cohesion. People are no longer tied to a place by history or tradition and choose the place where they live and work more seriously and carefully. Local ties become more important because other ties with society have disappeared. Second, the local environment seems the most obvious place for reducing various kinds of social problems, such as crime and insecurity. The assumption is that because problems occur within the neighbourhood, the causes of and the solutions for these problems are located within the same area (Duyvendak).

According to Duyvendak (2004), there are two competing perspectives regarding the possibility of neighbourhoods as a solution to fear of crime. The first one sees the neighbourhood as a breeding ground for congregation of criminal elements where problems concentrate and fester. According to this perspective, the neighbourhoods themselves are the cause of criminal behaviour and public insecurity, and therefore rigorous physical and social changes are needed to reduce fear of crime. The second perspective sees the neighbourhood as an attractive, hospitable, healthy and even healing place that allows for the recovery of those who are socially weak or excluded.

In this case, the neighbourhood approach can contribute to solving safety problems. The two perspectives share the idea of Xu et al. (2005) that the 'disorganisation' of the neighbourhood is the main cause of problems with social safety. The conclusion reached by Duyvendak and Xu et al., however, is different. Duyvendak concludes that increasing collective efficacy (i.e., reinforcing social networks, social cohesion, and shared expectations in a social network) will resolve many problems while Xu et al. conclude that collective efficacy plays a less important role in controlling disorder, crime, and fear than community policing. Although the role of collective efficacy plays a less significant role in Xu et al.'s theory, it does not mean it is not important. Community policing is based on the idea of the co-operation of the community. Strengthening the social relations between the residents of a neighbourhood can improve the co-operation with the police and, at the same time, improve informal social control.

Different studies on fear of crime show that higher levels of wealth, health, and quality of life are related to less fear of crime. Care for people's basic needs and quality of life (especially health) are issues closely related to the reduction of all kinds of fear including fear of crime. Fear of crime may manifest in feeling that one's well-being is endangered. These issues are, generally speaking, related to the issues of contemporary thoughts on safety and security in our communities. Meško (2004) found that

representatives of local communities in Slovenia attributed importance to the following factors of crime prevention, which supposedly should solve their crime and fear of crime problems: (1) *social prevention* (training for parents, solving social problems, student friendly schools, competent school teachers, leisure activities available, responsibility of business owners), (2) *self-protective measures* (availability of information on crime prevention), (3) *formal social control* (policing and punishment of criminals) and (4) *private social control* (private security guards at school, private security industry).

8. Concluding remarks

Community policing is currently one of the most central concepts in prevention of crime and reduction of fear of crime. In traditional policing, the goal is fighting crime while, for community policing, it is enhancing the quality of life for citizens. The measurement of outcomes in traditional policing are crime statistics and for community policing, citizens' fear and quality of life. Crime statistics fail to involve the necessary external validation of police and action because they do not involve the community. Crime is often not the basis of citizens' judgments in assessing the police. What citizens are most often concerned with are the situations they confront daily: broader conditions of disorder, which are addressed more by community policing than traditional policing. Thus, the primary difference in

the targets of the two policing approaches is crime versus disorder. Traditional policing is incident oriented, meaning that community problems that cause or explain incidents will never be addressed and will continue or may even increase. Reducing fear of crime is increasingly considered to be a police task in its own right within community policing (Winkel, 1986, as cited in Salmi et al., 2004), which is preventive orientated by improving or restoring order in the neighbourhood. Because disorder elicits fear more than crime does, this task is of high importance in reducing fear of crime.

Unfortunately, community policing cannot keep up with the demands of the public and is only a solution to certain problems that are related to fear of crime (i.e., visibility, approachability of the police) and the reduction of it in residential surroundings. The police do not adopt these special strategies in order to reduce fear of crime (Salmi et al., 2004). In their survey, Salmi et al. concluded that while foot patrols decreased fear of crime, they are costly, the response time for emergencies is slow and motorized officers expressed resentment towards what they felt were special arrangements that foot officers have with citizens, complaining that the job is more like social work, not ''regular police work''. Motorized officers felt themselves running from call to call handling serious problems while foot patrol officers spent their days chatting with residents.

Community policing is consistent with and complements the differential perception

of crime. It takes into account that people have different needs and creates a situation where most of these needs are served. When people talk about problems in their own neighbourhood, the problems discussed are small in comparison to the serious crimes of the city at large. Community policing is also part of the answer to the fear of crime of elderly citizens. Because the elderly are often home, visibility of police officers in their neighbourhood is important to make them feel safer or make them more confident of going outside their homes. But community policing is often not an answer to women's fear of crime. Women are more afraid of serious crime (e.g., rape), while the community police officer is often characterized as solving little problems of the neighbourhood instead of as a fighter of rape and other serious crimes. Therefore, women especially will need another approach for reducing fear of crime.

Nowadays, a new approach to cope with real crime rates and fear of crime involves more responsibility of the public in reducing crime and fear of crime and a partnership approach between the police, the public, and other professionals. Professionals in different fields are aware that fear of crime is not only provoked by crime rates but by a lot of different social problems on local and national levels. This new approach offers more opportunities to reduce the fear of crime because it is a multidisciplinary approach: solving socio-demographic problems (e.g., neighbourhoods with a lot

of immigrants, bad housing, vandalism, low socio-economic standards) and social-psychological problems (e.g., fear of crime in heart and mind).

Fear of crime is a major aspect in quality of life. Fear of crime is not only influenced by police but also by politics and media. This paper shows that the police is just a part of the chain in reducing fear of crime. Fear of crime is often provoked by the media and politics. Fear of crime is an important element of penal populism in the way that politicians use expressed fear of crime generated by the media, well-publicised cases, and changes it in some legal norms (often without sufficient expert consultation but under pressure of so called moral entrepreneurs; Kury et al., 2004). Their declared goal is citizens' protection from victimization – ''this can happen to me again or this will happen to me'' (Salmi et al., 2004), but the hidden goal is quite frequently political gain (i.e., getting re-elected). In a situation were politicians and the media create more fear and people are not satisfied with the work of the police, people may take over the control of their own safety. Me ko (2004) showed that people feel responsible for their own safety and are willing to protect themselves by self-protective measures and private social control in addition to using services provided by the state government.

Although the police is just one part of a chain, it has its own responsibilities and opportunities to reduce fear of crime. Education and career opportunities for women in the or-

ganisation are a major concern for the future. These measures can have a major impact on the organisation of the police as well as on its way of functioning. Education of new police officers in the field of feelings of unsafety and more women in the force may provide for a better balance between kindness and effectiveness. In addition, it may improve the quality of life for women, especially in countries where women and men are not socially equal and domestic violence is considered a normal fact of life. Of course, solutions for domestic violence crimes include awareness of the whole society.

Van der Wurff (1992) and other worldwide research on fear of crime (Farrall, et al., 1997, 2000) show that fear of crime is partially related to neighbourhoods. Research in Slovenia and Bosnia-Herzegovina implies that other aspects, like post-war problems such as unemployment and level of crime influence the fear of crime (Meško, Petrovec, Muratbegović, Areh, & Rep, 2006). These kinds of problems are not easily solved by neighbourhood approaches, although neighbourhood approaches can contribute to their solution. The image of crime the media present (it can happen to everybody, uncontrollability, etc.) is another (inter) national problem that cannot be solved on a local level. Independent media are one of the important pillars in our democratic society. Because of this, media create some difficulties in reducing fear of crime. The images from media can lead to the legitimisation of harsher policies on reducing crime

(e.g., zero-tolerance policing). However, these policies are not necessarily related to decreases in crime or fear of crime.

Although reduction of fear of crime theoretically seems possible, we should be aware that fear of crime is a human reaction/emotion which makes us more alert in uncertain situations. More research on fear and insecurity is necessary if we want to understand this contradictory phenomenon.

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