

Community Policing Evaluation in Relation to Community Cohesion: The Case of Croatia

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Purpose

The paper explores the level of community policing implementation in relation to community cohesion in urban and rural communities in Croatia. A random sample of 1030 inhabitants from rural and urban Croatian areas are used for evaluation of the quality of contact with police, public perceptions of crime and disorder, personal fear of victimization and community cohesion.

Design/Methodology/Approach

The study used a questionnaire to evaluate the model of community policing called "The Community Policing Evaluation Survey" whose author is Adam J. McKee (2001). The instrument contains four subscale measures of public perceptions which are: (a) the quality of contact between the police and the local population, (b) the perception of the level of crime and disorder, (c) fear of victimization, and (d) the degree of community cohesion. The respondents voluntarily appraised their satisfaction with community policing using the Likert scale of values from 1 to 5. The data was analyzed by descriptive and multivariate statistical analysis.

Findings

Given results reveal the relation between the key community policing components (the quality of contact with police, public perceptions of crime and disorder, personal fear of victimization) and community cohesion. The findings show that the level of perceived community cohesion increases, the quality of contacts with the police and the perception of crime and the disorder also increases and the fear of victimization is being reduced.

Research limitations

The survey is limited to just three community policing components in relation to community cohesion, but we believe these components are crucial for community policing assessment from the citizens' point of view. This relation is observed independently on sociodemographic characteristics of surveyed citizens.

Originality/value

Although community policing efforts have been evident across the world for decades, its implementation and evaluation in different communities has received insufficient attention. The situation is particularly complex in post-socialist countries like Croatia, where community policing model is usually introduced without adequate resources and with not much focus on evaluation.

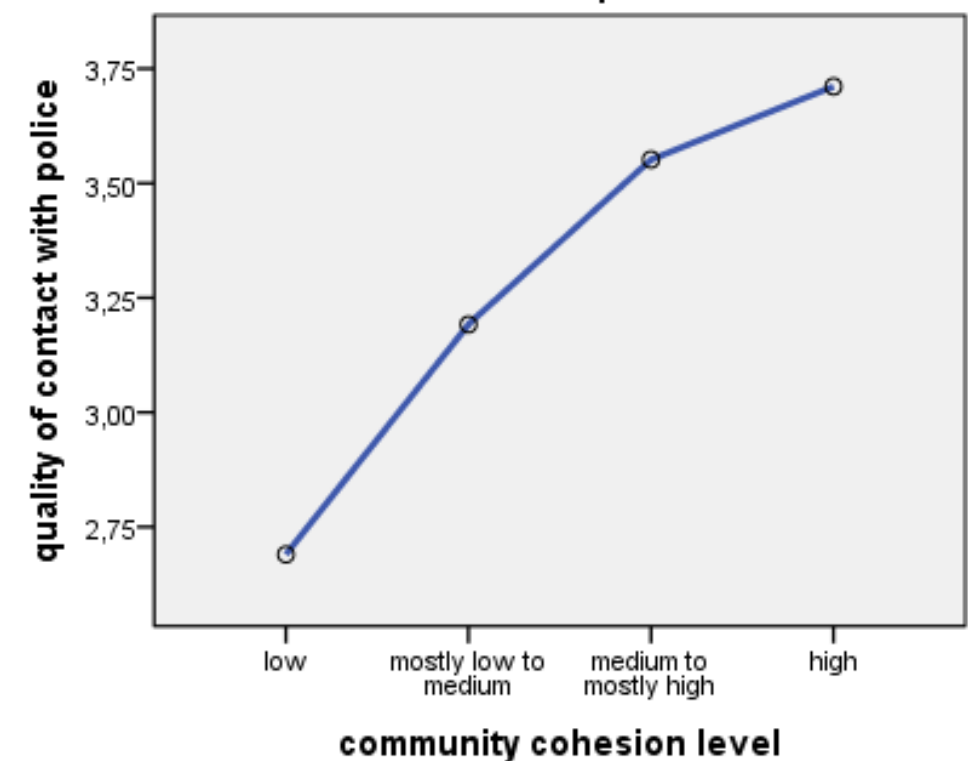
Perspectives for future research

The given relation between the key community policing components and social cohesion will be observed depending on three main sociodemographic characteristics of surveyed citizens: age, gender, and degree of education for the purpose of achieving a more comprehensive picture of community policing concerns.

Quality of contact with police - descriptive statistics

Mean= 3.4877; Std. Deviation= .81612; N= 1019

Relation between community cohesion level and quality of contact with police

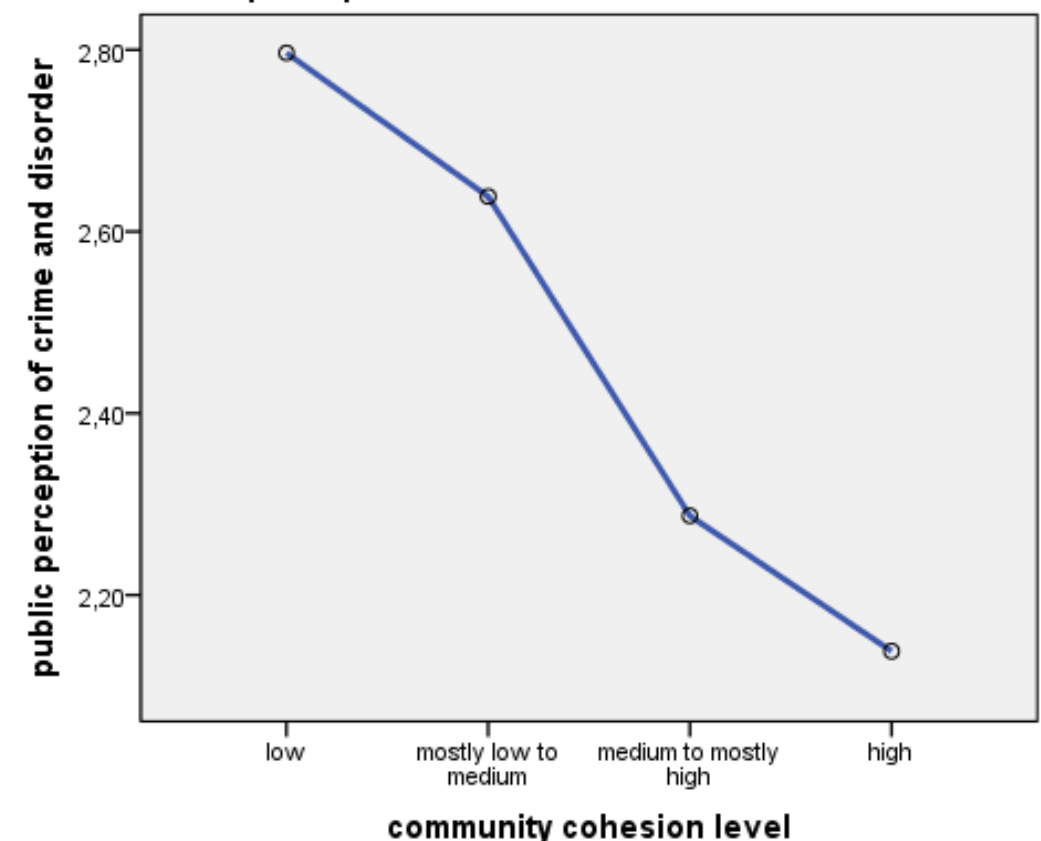


df1=3; df2=1015; F=42.543; Sig.=0.000; Partial Eta Sq.=0.111

Public perception of crime and disorder - Descriptive statistics

Mean= 2.3313; Std. Deviation= .89056; N= 1030

Relation between community cohesion level and public perception of crime and disorder

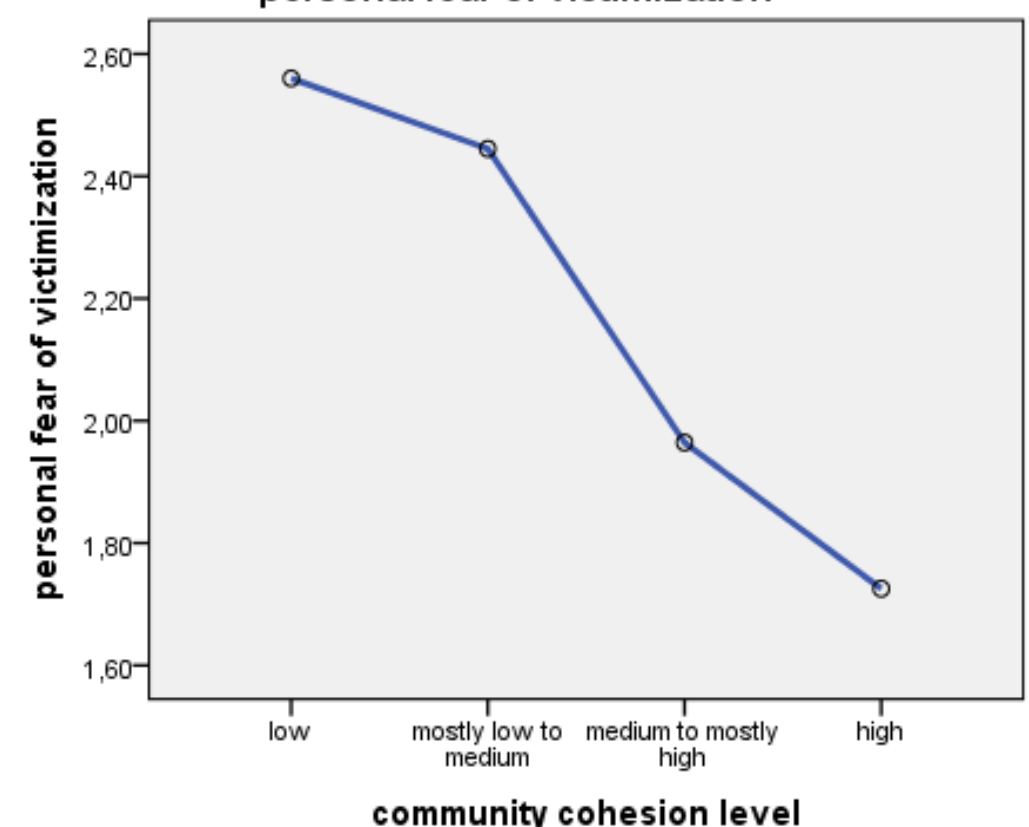


df1=3; df2=1026; F=20.594; Sig.=0.000; Partial Eta Sq.=0.057

Personal fear of victimization - descriptive Statistics

Mean= 2.0080; Std. Deviation= .83888; N= 1020

Relation between community cohesion level and personal fear of victimization



df1=3; df2=1016; F=46.577; Sig.=0.000; Partial Eta Sq.=0.121