# QUALITY OF LIFE AND COMMUNITY POLICING: BETWEEN THEORY AND THE REALISTIC NEEDS OF THE CITIZENS[1]

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**Abstract:** The quality of life is an immediate *sustainability manifestation,* which refers to the capability of the place or the local community to meet the current needs of the citizens without jeopardizing the possibility for the future generation to meet their needs to the full extent. The quality of life is the identification of the key domains of human well-being in the community, i.e. the identification of the existing needs of its citizens. The needs of the citizens of one local community synthetize everything that the citizens recognize as a difference between the current and desirable situation. The need can be formulated also as a wish to improve the current situation or to correct the defect. Systems (services, institutions, agencies) for providing services to the citizens in the functional communities base their activities on defined priorities of the local community, they reduce the potential risks for the citizens, put their focus on outcomes (changes among citizens) rather than the processes themselves, maintain the existing and establish new social networks of help and support to individuals, while respecting their individual rights, include citizens (service users) in decision-making agencies, and others. Whenever various forms of community action and action are realized, it must take into account the specificities of the target groups and the characteristics of the community whose needs or deficits must be met. It is on these principles that a modern police organization bases its activities within community policing, dealing primarily with the security needs of citizens. The analytical approach in this paper deals with the implementation of a problem-solving strategy with the goal to reduce the fear of crime and the rate of crime, that is, with the measures and activities by which the police influences the quality of life of citizens in the local community.

**Keywords:** *quality of life, needs of the citizens, crime, community policing*

# INTRODUCTION: QUALITY OF LIFE AS A MEASURE OF SUSTAINABILITY OF LOCAL COMMUNITY

The research of any phenomenon, problem or event in the local community, the analysis of the functioning of institutions and agencies of the local community, and the perception of cause-effect relationships, correlations between occurrences in the community, directly or indirectly aim to improve the quality of life in the local community. Quality of life is more a direct manifestation of sustainability, which refers to the ability of a city or local community to meet the present needs of citizens without jeopardizing the ability of future generations to meet their complete needs (Committee on Identifying Data Needs for Place-Based Decision Making et al., 2002: 23).

Due to different conceptual approaches, quality of life has been the subject of numerous studies in various fields of research, such as economics, sociology, political science, psychology, philosophy and medicine. The first approach sees the quality of life through the means and goods available to the individual – quality of life is based on objective resources that allow people to exist. This approach began to be applied in Sweden, during the 1960s, as the so-called *level of access to life* (Erikson, 1974, 1993; Erikson & Uusitalo, 1987). The approach implies the ability of an individual to control resources such as money, property, knowledge, mental and physical energy, social relations and security, on the basis of which he or she can consciously direct his or her living conditions**.**

The second, alternative approach to the study of quality of life, relies on the notion of subjective well-being (Poggi et al., 2011). The concept of quality of life corresponds to the concept of a good feeling, that is, a subjective condition in terms of happiness and satisfaction. This approach is rooted in the tradition of American social psychology, developed in the 1960s and deals with the quality of life in terms of meeting needs. The quality of life according to this concept should be defined based on the observed results achieved during an individual's life rather than the availability of social and material resources (Frey & Stutzer, 2000).

The third conceptual direction was founded by Sen (Nussbaum & Sen, 1993). The quality of life can be understood in terms of "individual ability to achieve different valuable functionalities". The quality of life does not rely solely on the availability of resources, although this issue has been recognized as a key element for achieving well-being in several domains. On the contrary, quality of life should be related to achieving real freedom, which allows people to achieve their goals, as far as possible, and choose a way of life through which they will prove themselves in all domains.

The age of the recession and the global crisis have put in the focus the problems of poverty, unemployment, social differences, personal security, food security, health and social security, and so on. These changes assume the transition from the conceptualization of the quality of life as a result of the inevitable progress of civilization on to the idea of quality of life as a common and balanced pro-

cess (Poggi et al., 2011). A new understanding of the quality of life as "prosperity" implies the development of this concept based on meeting the needs of citizens of local communities.

Systems (services, institutions, agencies) for providing services to citizens in communities base their activities on defined community priorities, reduce the possibility of risk for citizens, put the focus of their work on outcomes (changes among citizens) rather than the processes themselves, maintain the existing ones and establish new social networks of help and support to individuals, include citizens (service users) in decision-making agencies, and others. In doing so, whenever various forms of community activity and social work are realized, account must be taken of the specificities of the target groups and the characteristics of the community in the community whose needs or deficits must be met (Ife & Fiske, 2006). It is on these principles that a police organization bases its activities within the concept of work in the local community.

## THE NEEDS OF CITIZENS AS A PROJECTION OF QUALITY OF LIFE IN A COMMUNITY

Each assessment of needs or their identification begins from the basic Maslow's hierarchy of human needs, a psychological theory, first published by Abraham Maslow, an American psychologist in 1943, in *A Theory of Human Motivation*. Maslow's hierarchy emphasizes that human needs can be sorted into groups and that there is a clear hierarchy between these groups. The needs of lower level of hierarchy must be satisfied before the demands of higher levels are activated. Maslow's hierarchy of human needs consists of five sets of needs, which are, from the lowest to the highest: physiological needs, the needs for security, the needs for belonging, the needs for appreciation and the needs for self-realization (Figure 1.)
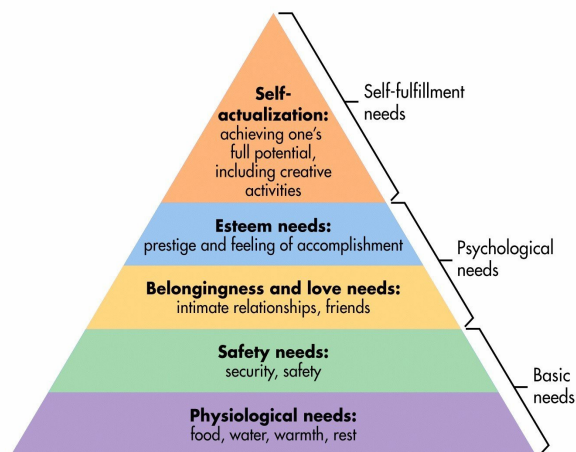


**Figure 1.** *Hierarchy of human needs*

For Maslow's theory it is assumed that it is based on the cultural values of America. In Denmark, Sweden and Norway, social needs are more powerful than self-realization and self-respect. In China, Japan and Korea, where collectivism and collaborative work are valued more than individual achievements, belonging and security are more important than meeting the needs of growth. Therefore, although the needs identified by Maslow may be a universal, logical or hierarchical order differs from culture to culture (Jovanović et al., 2003). However, in every culture, in the order of necessity, immediately after basic, physical needs, there are people's security needs, that is, the protection of basic human values (life, bodies, etc.).

The founder and creator of the needs assessment model, Roger Kaufman, defined the need as a "gap in results". According to him, in order to conduct an assessment of needs with high quality, it should first define the current state (result); then the desired result is articulated, where the distance between these two results represents a real need. Kaufman's model identifies gaps - needs at the community level (Kaufman et al., 1993: 8). Kaufman identified 13 indicators of social well-being, which can lead to loss of life, a decrease in the level of well-being, possibility of survival and quality of life in general: 1) war, insurgency or terrorism; 2) lack of shelter; 3) unplanned, people-induced changes in the living environment or sources of energy; 4) murder, rape, crime or violence, robbery, or destruction of property; 5) violent behaviour; 6) disease; 7) pollution; 8) hunger or nourishment; 9) abuse of children; 10) partner, marriage or abuse of the elderly; 11) destructive behaviour towards children, partner, spouse, elderly people; 12) discrimination based on different criteria, including skin colour, race, religion, gender, nationality, age or place of origin; 13) poverty. This means that the prerequisite for the quality of life, that is, for social welfare, is the protection of citizens from these forms of endangerment of their security.

In general, as the main areas in which intervention of community institutions is required, or as phenomena that jeopardize the functionality of the community, in the so far conducted research (Singletary & Powell, 2003; Glashan & Malinak, 2010; Marcusson, 2011) were recognized: the rise of violence among young people and other categories of citizens; financial aspects of meeting the needs of residents in the community; availability of health services; mobility of the population, the need for the help of others, etc. In relation to this the most notable are the following services, institutions and public services whose engagement is of particular importance in the community: health institutions, social services, police, school institutions, transport services.

## RESEARCH OF QUALITY OF LIFE AND SAFETY NEEDS OF CITIZENS

The research base of this topic in Serbia is poor and inconsistent. Studies conducted since 2000 have been carried out as part of broader project activities, mainly by the Ministry of Health, the Institute of Public Health, organizations

dealing with environmental protection or economic, and financial institutions. We find determining the security needs of citizens as the subject and goal orientation of research studies in Serbia only in the public opinion polls carried out by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in Serbia in cooperation with the Ministries of the Interior or Defence. Within these studies, each year, the degree of confidence of citizens in individual institutions is assessed and the security risks that citizens perceive as the most present. Studies dealing exclusively with the relationship between the quality of life of citizens, their security needs and the community policing as a strategy of police work in the local community do not exist in research bases in Serbia.

The analytical approach in this paper is based on the findings of certain researches carried out in the world that dealt with quality of life across the domain of local community security and personal safety of citizens, taking into account their perception and assessment of the effectiveness of community policing as a strategy of police work directed towards improving the quality of life. Improved quality of life would mean that there is no fear of crime among citizens of research communities, nor need for protection from violence, but trust in the work of the police. A number of studies have sought to identify indicators that police organizations use to assess the contribution, that is, the quantitative and qualitative results of their activities in the context of the implementation of the community policing strategy in order to improve the quality of life of citizens in the local community (Nikač, 2012; Đurić, 2013).

In these surveys, the quality of life of citizens in local communities and their security needs are operatively defined through the dimension of general safety of community life, personal security of citizens, degree of fear of different types of crime, and identified forms of community violence and citizens' attitudes towards police officers of the local police organization. The attitude of citizens towards police officers and their manner of performing police affairs in local communities pointed to the existence of a gap between what the police do and what citizens expect from them (Spasić et al., 2013). The existence of the gap (gaps, defects) is being operationalized as a need to be met in order to raise the quality of life of citizens to a higher level.

## COMMUNITY POLICING AND THE QUALITY OF LIFE: WHAT POLICE PRACTICE EXPECTS AND WHAT CITIZENS EXPECT FROM IT?

The definition of community policing has been the subject of much debate. Agencies, practitioners, and researchers tend to define it differently, though most definitions contain similar principles, including problem solving, community involvement, and organizational decentralization (Adams, Rohe, & Arcury, 2002; Chappell & Lanza-Kaduce, 2004; Skogan, 2004). Quality of life and crime preven-

tion are also emphasized (Community Policing Consortium, 2006). The concept of community policing involves the association of citizens and police in the fight against crime, that is, the concept of performing police tasks that places emphasis on the formation of a partnership between the police and the community in order to reduce crime and strengthen the safety of citizens (Champion 2003: 2). When the concept was experimentally introduced into the work of the US police in the 1970s, it was meant to provide an answer to the problems of crime, disorder and conflicts of citizens and police in the local community (Trojanowicz & Bucqueroux 1990; Chappell 2009).

Today, however, the concept has taken on the characteristics of social-service work in the local community, and is directed primarily towards addressing the requests and needs of the local community, that is, improving the quality of their lives in the community (Spasić et al., 2013). It is precisely on the difference between the objectives and results of the traditional work of the police and the modern strategy, that is, community policing, possible to identify and evaluate the impact that community policing has on the quality of life of citizens in the local community.

"Traditional" police departments have long defined their primary mission and measured efficiency in terms of enforcement and enforcement of laws, primarily on the basis of initiated investigations and the arrest of criminals. As a result, police efficiency depended on the number of arrests taken and the percentage of detected crimes (Xu et al., 2005: 149). Accordingly, statistical reports of crime represented the "most visible" measure of the effect of the police organization (Bayley, 1994). However, this approach, according to some theoreticians, could have led to the ignoring of real problems in the community, that is, the security needs of its citizens. When discussing the responsibility of the police, Trojanowicz (1998) raised several essential questions relating to the primary objectives of police work in the community: 1) Is the primary function of the police to fight crime or to maintain peace in the community? 2) What is primary - to arrest a criminal or to prevent crimes?

Regarding community response to crime, the primary role of the police can be "problematic" and debatable for several reasons: firstly, how the real state of crime in the community can be assessed if a large part of crimes remains unreported. Second, can the police and to what extent influence the crime rate? And thirdly, is crime prevention and suppression the only indicator that ordinary citizens use to assess the effectiveness of police work? Bayley (1994) also points out that what most people consider as "security" is difficult to measure and does not mostly relate to what the police are doing, while, at the same time, what the police are doing is easy to measure, but it often does not refer specifically to the security needs of citizens and the quality of their lives in the community.

In contrast, the community policing strategy uses a more comprehensive approach and includes a more inclusive concept, i.e. quality of life, as the ultimate goal of police work (Skogan & Hartnett, 1997). The definition of community po-

licing by Trojanowicz recognizes the need to "look" beyond the focus of the traditional criminal justice system in order to find the conditions that generate crime and solutions for their eradication. When social conditions are included in the assessment of the scope and possibilities of reducing crime, a more accurate picture of "cost of crime" is obtained, i.e. its objective consequences. The issues of quality of life, which were previously neglected, were included in the calculation of "cost of crime". This new way of thinking analyses crime in a holistic sense by bringing its "cost" into account with general social conditions and its impact on reducing the quality of life in the community. For the work of police in the community, the fight against crime is not an end in itself, but the quality of life of citizens is the ultimate outcome of all forms of police work. Arresting criminals is just one means of reaching this goal. This change in the paradigm in the philosophy of police work requires changes in the police work strategy. This means that for the efficient work of the police it is not enough just to "cure the symptoms of crime", but, more importantly, to eliminate the causes of this "disease" by changing the social conditions that generate crime, that is, they create a fear of crime in the citizens.

This expanded community policing concept aims to help the community create a secure environment in which its basic institutions (family, churches, schools) can function effectively, improve and influence the quality of life of its citizens. This also affects the expectations that citizens have in relation to the police in the community – in addition to demanding the arrest of criminals, it is expected that the police influences, with their activities, the reducing of fear of crime and raising the quality of life in the community. In this sense, the work of police in the community implies a holistic and synergistic approach and a "higher level of thinking", a new relationship to the philosophy of police work, that is, according to functional, organizational and personnel issues, but also to measuring the effectiveness or impact of the police organization. Spasić and Radovanović (2019) summarize the essence of modern police work as a need to help citizens feel safe in their communities and to have confidence in the work of the police.

## MEASURING THE EFFICIENCY
## AND PRODUCTIVITY OF POLICE WORK

Moving from a traditional to a modern, problem-oriented police work, also brought change, i.e. redefining of the standards for measuring and evaluating the work of the police. The factors used to measure and assess the way the police conduct their mission evolved from the traditional measurement of the productivity of the police to complex measures that assess the impact of police on the quality of life in the community they serve, and to what extent problems in the community are solved (Langworthy, 1998). Traditional police departments measure their performance in terms of productivity (the number of arrests, the value of smuggled goods confiscated, the number of calls sent to the police service, the average response time on calls, etc.). Although these types of indicators are simple, clear

and legitimate to measure specific police activities, there is no clear consensus between theorists and police experts as to whether there is a link between police productivity and the reduction or improvement of public safety and citizen security (O'Brien, 1996). Traditional police departments can have objective results in arresting criminals, but this does not mean, by itself, that they are effective in accomplishing a police mission to reduce crime and improve quality of life (Alpert & Moore, 1993).

Police organizations that focus on the work of police in the community have a different approach to measuring performance than organizations that are traditional. Police organizations that implement the community policing strategy can report some of the traditional actions of arrest or the average response time to citizens' calls, but they focus on measuring the police's performance in terms of quality rather than productivity. The quality, simply put, is "compliance with the customer's needs", which is the basic component of the police work in a community where the customer or consumer is a local community. Quality, in this context, means "quality of life", which includes many conditions and factors that affect everyday life in the community (Wilson & Kelling, 1982). The quality of life is "the subjective state of well-being in the collective mind of the community" and represents a measure of police effect. Accordingly, the community policing strategy is conceptually based on the hypothesis of the cause-and-effect relationship and the existence of correlation, i.e. the impact of results of the police on the quality of life (Trojanowicz & Bucqueroux, 1990).

Measuring community policing effects focuses on the role of the police as a social control mechanism in the community. However, a more systematic and complex discussion of this role of the police should include the wider context and all relevant parties in social control, such as the "big six" – police, citizens, media, politicians, public and private organizations, and business community. In reality, all parties should contribute to the effectiveness of the community policing strategy.

Academics and practitioners often disagree about the best way to measure community policing program successes, while studies offer mixed results on whether these programs improve community conditions. Data from Seattle show that community policing is rarely successful in achieving effective collaborations between community members and police (Herbert, 2006). Scholars have also punctured the broken windows rationale of community policing by arguing there is no direct relationship between disorder and more serious crime (Sampson & Raudenbush, 1999). Conversely, other researchers suggest that community policing can in fact reduce rates of serious crime (Connell, Miggans & McGloin, 2008; Spasić & Milojević, 2016).

Some research suggests mixed findings can be expected given that community policing looks differently depending on police leadership, the geographic area, and the demographic characteristics of communities (Thatcher, 2001). Other studies claim police departments have simply relabelled old tactics as community policing, making little structural change to police activities (Morabito, 2010).

More sceptical work highlights the fact that community policing "seems much less practiced in disadvantaged neighbourhoods" (Reisig & Parks, 2004). Another explanation for differential community outcomes as a result of community policing is the lack of true partnerships between the police and particular communities (especially in communities where ethnic, racial and language barriers exist). Evidence from a review of 11 community policing programs across the country finds there is widespread disagreement among police and community members regarding (a) a shared goal of public safety and (b) how much authority and force police should utilize in everyday policing (Thatcher, 2001). Thus, a gap between police and the community regarding the roles and goals of policing can hinder the implementation of community policing strategies (Spasić & Radovanović, 2019)

Objective consideration and measurement of police performance at the organizational and functional level should also be based on the perception and assessment of police work by the citizens of the local community. According to Bayley (1994: 95), citizens' surveillance of police work should be based on: 1) assessment of citizen satisfaction (publicity) by the police service and trust of citizens; 2) assessment of the adequacy of the responses of police patrols to citizens' calls; 3) assessment of the satisfaction of victims of crime by the attitude and treatment of police officers; 4) the relationship of reported and illuminated criminal offenses; 5) the speed of answering the telephone calls of citizens; 6) the satisfaction of citizens who report the criminal offense committed by police officers; 7) speed of reaction in emergency situations; 8) assessment of the satisfaction of all citizens who have contact with the police; and 9) criticisms and complaints on the work of the police. The use of feedback from citizens is important in the context of indicators of the results of police work that directly affect the quality of their lives in the community.

## CONCLUSION

There are fundamental differences between the way that "traditional" and modern police organizations view the work of the police. Community policing denies the view that with the arrest of criminals and the return of stolen property the police can permanently influence the reduction of crime rates. Instead, the advocates of the community policing concept claim that if the police solves the problems of physical disorders in the community and set the basis for social control, it can influence the reduction of crime rates. Thus, while the police mission remained identical to that of the traditional police work, modern forms of community policing imply involvement in resolving community problems that lead to improving the quality of life of its citizens. Consequently, improving the quality of life in the community entails and a new role and task for police administrators – to monitor and measure the performance of their officers. Accordingly, the impact of the community policing strategy on the quality of life of the individuals in the community imposes the imperative of strategic changes in the police orga-

nization. Changes imply a new police model, a new philosophy of work and new management in the police.

A prerequisite of all changes in community policing strategies and their impact on the quality of life of the citizens is a territorial decentralization of the police organization. The police organizations have to function in a society as an authority of formal social control and a public service which acts in line with the citizens' needs, with the distinguished decentralization of the management, competencies and authorizations, with strong and stable finance and support sources, qualitative personnel and material resources, continuous training and system of remuneration and evaluation of the police work. The community policing concept is an efficient strategy which can positively affect the quality of life in the community, which numerous police models research and world experiences have shown. At the same time, acceptance of the concept by the police organizations as a strategy of work in the local community and balanced functioning of its organizational elements, with the knowledge of the community specificities and the characteristics of its security problems, create, by applying it, the conditions to overcome the gap in the citizens' security needs and affect the quality of their lives (Spasić & Radovanović, 2019).

Research and practice need to place a greater emphasis on studying and implementing police oversight, which is a less-often practiced component of community policing. Future studies on community policing should incorporate engaged research methods that include the valuable input of community members regarding their experiences, needs, and concerns pertaining to contact with police. One way police departments can reach the community is through building connections with grassroots community organizing groups that are comprised of residents and have meaningful and sustained relationships with other community members (Cossyleon, 2019).

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