Adopting Community Policing toward Neighborhood Engagement to Reduce Crime Fear in the Central of Thailand

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Abstract

This article provides readers with an overview of fear rely on crime perspectives derived from people lived permanently in a central area of Thailand where the crime rates have been increasing dramatically in a decade. The research aims to investigate how social and policing aspects affected those fear level. For the methodology, the researcher applied quantitative techniques to conduct the study with questionnaire of 409 samples represented 4,827 neighbors. The one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) is utilized to determine significant differences among demographic independent groups and crime fear as a dependent variable. Moreover, the regression analysis is selected to examine a model with key factors from social engagement between a community and a police agency. First, the result exposes that demographic data - age, income, and length of stay - are significantly associated with the crime fear among the neighborhood by mean square within subject variances are 0.959, 0.634, and 0.633 respectively. The second finding shows that fear could be found an implication with factors related social interaction, including social cohesion and even police services by about 19.3 percent. To conclude, long-term residents who mostly provide contributions to public activities tend to feel safer. In addition, public services authorized local police to get in touch a neighborhood and to influence people with high confident during daily lives among others who are commuting in and out their living space.
Keywords*:* Community Policing, Public Support Service, Fear Reduction, Social Engagement

Significance of Crime Fear as a Public Concern

Crimes as social phenomena literally is a social problem which difficultly to solve and correct once it has often occurred in any place. With the overlap of wealth and poverty, society results in a lack of regulation, in the other words, social disorder. Violences that occur under these social conditions ranging from petty theft to drug trafficking. The implication seems directly to those living within the area crimes committed rather than visitors who get in and out the place temporarily. In addition to increasing the number of criminal cases, it also causes villagers live in fear during day and night activities.

Fear of crime can be measured in several ways, but one well-liked method is to measure the behavior of the respondent regrading crime occurs surrounding areas. Crime avoidance and participation in crime prevention are two most choices by victims and even potentials selecting to respond violence in the vicinity of their houses. In Thai, most victims trend to ignore to report police a crime problem even directly experienced with that. The reasons are they think it wastes time to get into a long process of criminal justice starting from police station to court. Someone does not believe in police's practices to arrest offenders (Suksamran et al., 2017: 2). So, public look forward to having police more focusing on crime occurrences within the area of responsibility.

Studies on fear of crime and community policing have been evolved continuously over the years mostly in western perceptions (Khruakham, and Joongyeup, 2014: 2). Nevertheless, there is a small amount of research focusing on the relationship between both factors above. It is worth to conduct a research on fear among people toward engagement with their law enforcement agency in Thailand. Pathumtani, a boundary city nearby Bangkok, has one of very diverse and crowed residential. Wat Khun Ying Som Jeen is an underline living area, as a community located a define boundary between Bangkok and nearby cities, where had high rates in crime statistic last decades.

The performance of Thai police in the past has been defensive. When a situation of serious crime arises, the organization starts with mobilizing troops to operations within the define area to carry out clearance strictly. Although a number of crime incidents has decreased occasionally, living in fear remains entire the case occurred area. Since an unworkable performance apparently, community-based practices are increasingly replacing the traditional policing. In 2007, Royal Thai Police added one more role to field officers to increase the reliability. This includes: (1) focusing on crime prevention, (2) solving public misery, (3) seeking public support, (4) dedicating by professionalism.

Under an approach of community policing driving safety into a neighborhood, an officer of Royal Thai Police acts as a mentor for consultation and supports a neighborhood addressing problems toward causes of crimes. This strategy performs as the source of the project of Community Policing Service (COPS) was held by the Highway Police who were the key participants in this study and would be mentioned and referred to as police activities for the whole papers.

Within this research, the author conducts the study under a hypothesis which is about social engagement and community support by police has a positive relationship with public' crime fear toward a define community. Since the author has experienced directly with community service in a local police station for years in Thailand, a gap among crime, fear, and even more a community are still existed and require a study to reflect a relationship into global perception. Police should be a kind of perfect character to fulfill the space between all of them. Notwithstanding, they should play the role appropriately to deal with crime.

Crime Fear Reduction

People fear crime is all about nervousness toward the unreliability upon those life (Amerio et al., 2005: 18-20), and against the unexpected danger may occur during their life (Corder, 2010: 8, and Sahapattna et al., 2013: 7-11). After being fearful, people usually have reacted the opposite behavior to incoming threats. Purposely, they wish to secure their lives far from harmful objects, especially assault, battery, and violence.

The consideration regarding impacts of fear in public could examine with the attitudes and feelings looking through representatives as a group of people in the same situation (Dammert et.al., 2003: 83-85). Markowitz et al. (2001) suggested that the assessment of being fearful with crime should concentrate the content combining with questions of fear and anxieties relying on crime against person, property, and rape, toward the process of perception of victimization risk.

Not only external factors like poor areas and motivated criminals are making a crime existing amid society and remaining fear toward the society, internal factors also have efficiency to retain terror toward people. Likewise, other relevant research titled "Fear of Crime among People in Muang-Ake, Lak-Hok, Muang, Pathumthani" (2015) by Jermsittiparsert, Trimek,and Vivatthanaporn which their finding pointed to gender difference, crime perspectives, and personal experience with crime in past significantly impact people with dissimilar fear lever on crime.

Community Policing and Public Service
Community policing refers to police and a community establishing a collaboration to protect and serve. It is held as a guideline for a law enforcement agency to maintain public order. It is an exchange of goodwill in expectation of success in obligations and a trust in police ability to be a key person to lead inhabitants ensuring safe and crime free. According to Trimek's study in 2016, people lived in Bangkok, as a capital city of Thailand, had high confidence to spend daily activities outside their houses when public agencies provide effective surveillance which as public's CCTV (26-28). It associates with Thai Police's effort regarding to maintain a community with high-secured service to monitor committed crimes.

Lack of police efforts into a residential neighborhood diminishes public confidence in crime prevention. According to the result of Suksamran and colleges's study in 2016 revealed that people would decreasingly communicate their police since formerly unpleasant experiences including unsolved crime problem and unproductive manner [Abstract]. This discovery has reflected the public require more engagement into their community in order to enable participation and maintain security assurance providing by local officers.

Visible and active officers in residential areas is a key to secure a neighborhood with less violence, including street crimes, drug abuse, gang violence, and police brutality (Crawford and Lister, 2004: 22-25, Dempsey et al., 2009: 377; National Statistical Office, 2012). Community officers have potential to solve public issues, similarly solid waste, polluted water, even awful nuisance (Crawford and Lister, 2004: 41-42; Dempsey, 2009: 377). Officers who stayed within the community have potential to start an initiative securing safety along with their regular missions (Brogden, 2005: 88).

Community Engagement and Social Collaboration
A definition of community engagement is broadly understood as Myhill (2006) concluded that the way toward empowering people living in a residential neighborhood under a state of public policing to secure life and properties, guiding community with regulation for violent prevention, engaging them to distinguish and develop solutions for their public issues, and persuading to accept suitable strategies and hence appropriate decisions (8). Likewise, enhancing neighborhood participation that influence villagers out of their house to join social activities in order to keep living area of them tidy and safety.

A core component of community service approach is a collaboration between a law enforcement agency and residents for solving the problems. The police will not be alone to combat crime and keep public order. Communities must also play a role to support a government agency by partnering with police to bring safety and order existed in their places. In Thailand, the main missions under a community-focused approach are aimed to enhance trust and reliable partnerships between police and public. For an outcome, police expect this work, as a field operation, to reduce fear from violence to an acceptable point satisfactorily. At last, a community will be strong enough to face and solve problems itself.

Social cohesion and involvement have the negative effect literally towards fear. Building social cohesion, literally gathering people's involvement, is related to a residential member expressing the intention to involve community activities. Previous studies found adults were usually anxious when leaving home to associate public events. Furthermore, they also met youngsters with annoying behaviors (Pain, 2000: 376-377). To enhance the harmony, it is necessary to set the primary mission of the community members to produce and consume sympathy for each other until collaboration yields. If the community lacks a living plan of coexistence, it may affect the peaceful community cannot be existing.

Research Methodology
Data use in the research are individuals' feeling and perceptions deriving from a community names Wat Kun Ying Som Jean (WKY), as our target, has 2,122 households with

a total household population of 4,827 people. Since it is the large residential area, there are many kinds of commercial buildings including shops, industrial spaces, rental houses, and hostels. It is known as a municipal zone. Therefore, not only commercial places have been increasing in years, but also the crime statistic.

For previous background, WKY is facing drugs and street crime. It was considered a major source of drug abuse in the central area of Thailand. When the researcher considered criminal statistics in the report in 2012, the rate of crime statistic in WKY was very high, including drug abuse, murder, larceny with injury, and robbery. All those mentioned above lead the researcher to pick WKY as the valuable instance to conduct the study.

By mid-2013, after receiving acceptance from the local agency along with the permission of research ethic, the researcher started to investigate the defined area. All the people who participated in this study were residents living permanently in a community. The unique participants were picked from the number of returned and qualified questionnaires. Nevertheless, the total of finite populations were 4,827 persons and the overall participants were reached 409.

After the researcher looked back to the table of sample size determination by Krejcie and Morgan, this number of sampling has potential to stand for the entire area. Once a population size is exceeding to 4,500, a sample size should not less than 354. So, the sample size which is 409 is held to be a good number of sample group to represent efficiently the whole people in the selected area.

Data Analysis involves independent variables and a dependent variable. There are two aspects as the key components after applying the factor analysis and Cronbach'a Alfa as techniques to evaluate variables. The first variable, community support service (CSS), was pointed to designed activities within a community coordinated by police. The effective questions include "Police meet and talk with people", "Patrols are assigned to the community", and "Police advise how to prevent crimes".

Finally, social cohesion, as the second key component, the researcher considered a collaboration among the neighbors in prevention activities whose purposes aimed to terminate crime problems. The oustanding questions related to "Group discussions are organized among police and the community members", "The Neighborhood Watch activities are organized to alarm the community", and "Many activities are organized on auspicious days".

Apart from above, sense of community, victims' experience and crime awareness are also reliable to crime fear, but not significant. In those questions, the researcher relied on how a residential member feels with recent live, frequencies of experiences during the past six months, and never been subject to victim experience.

Fear of crime, as a dependent variable, the researcher applied it as perspective toward crime. Its questions are designed by combining fear and frequency of anxieties. They were relevant to the sentiment from least to most. The key questions were found during the tool examination include "People fear to leave home on daytime", "People fear to leave home at nighttime", and "Neighbors living closely feel fear crime committed in the community".

Before applying a statistic technique to determine a relationship, the author filtered a number of demographic and social variables to provide only intense factors corresponding to crime fear and public collaboration as a hypothesis. The factor analysis is basically applied to conclude which independent variables as said above are precisely correlation to people's fear in a define community. Then, ANOVA is selected to compare mean square to apprehend a relationship among individual variables and fear. It also brings forward an outcome regrading each significant correlation with each comparison. Finally, in order to find out an appropriate model about how social participations and policing perspective are corresponded to fear amid a neighborhood, the multiple regression analysis is applied to examine for a purpose.

Research Results
Demographic Findings
The total number of participants the target neighborhood, WKY, are 409 populations. The data appears obvious that the demography regarding gender, 46.9% was female and the rest was male. Besides sexual conditions, income also acted as one of the key study variables, it revealed that 31.3% earned less than 285.71 USD monthly. The last key demographic variable is residence time. It is considered the duration of dweller staying permanently in the community. The result demonstrated that people in the community has been joyful to become a member in this neighborhood upon the duration around 5 - 15 years.

Overall Descriptive Findings
The researcher found significant factors - gender, age, income, and duration of staying - have had relationship with fear of crime (FOC). Results of t-test show a statistically significant mean ($t = 2.576$, $p < 0.01$) difference in gender between male and female. Male demonstrated greater average levels of fear less than female.

Table 1 One-way analysis of variance regarding key variables affecting crime fear (n = *409*)

Varibles		Sum of squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Age	Between groups	5.346	4	1.782	2.766	0.042*
	Within group	592.490	405	0.959		
	Total	600.218	409			
Income	Between groups	9.570	4	3.190	5.033	0.002**
	Within group	256.680	405	0.634		
	Total	266.250	409			
Length of stay	Between groups	10.678	5	2.670	4.220	0.002**
	Within group	255.572	404	0.633		
	Total	266.250	409			

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$

From table 1, the data reveals that the age variable affecting fear had statistical significance ($p < 0.05$) in their relationship. After applying LSD-test, the researcher found the mean of fear came from the youngest group, younger than 25 years old. There are critical differences when compared to the older levels.

Apart from age, income is important for the study. After applying this variable into Dunnett T3, income demonstrated the significant mean of fear from the low earnings group, under 285.71 USD, was less than the higher group.

Another key variable, the length of stay is also found a significant value ($p < 0.01$) in F-test. After giving LSD test, there was a critical difference within the staying 1-5 years and staying over 15 years' groups. When comparing to the short period groups, the mean of FOC from them is found a little distinction from the longer group.

Community Policing Has Relationship with Public Crime Fear
The researcher applied the Multiple Regression Analysis (MRA) to investigate the independent variables affecting the dependent variables. The dependent variable was the fear of crime. In the MRA, a stepwise technique was applied to examine variables affecting the fear and replace one variable at a time for predicting equation until none effect.

Within the designed model, the result illustrates the entire territory of the target. The researcher found three factors affecting fear, including social cohesion ($p < 0.001$), and community support service ($p < 0.001$). The efficiency of police services has also contributed significantly to the feeling of public safety. But we cannot ignore the perception of the community persistence which accounted for equally important to another.

Table 2 Standardized regression coefficients predicting fear by critical factors *(n = 409)*

	B	SE	β
Sense of community	0.103	0.075	0.166
Community support service	-0.294	-0.271	0.000***
Social cohesion	-0.311	-0.254	0.000***
Victim experience	-0.003	-0.001	0.976
Crime awareness	-0.046	-0.021	0.645
R^2		0.193	
F for change in R^2		19.252***	

*$p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.001$

Wherewith three variables are the inverse relationship with fear of crime (Beta = -0.294 and -0.311, respectively). Both factors - community support services and social cohesion - influence the dependent variable in the opposite direction by statistical significance. Thus, if police maintain the service and people participate in activities regularly, they could affect the fear dismissed among residents.

However, the value of F test above seems low level which it is under than 20%, the result also remains a positive direction. It implies that a public agency, especially local police, is worth to provide its support to serve a community to solve a problem existed in there. Likewise, villagers are supposed to take more action, as community's owners, to maintain cooperation and participation whenever need.

Discussion

Different gender and age evoke attitudes towards crime

The study disclosed that males have less fear than females. We have seen this perception existed in many former studies. Women have the tendency to be more fearful than men (Khruakham et al., 2014: 12). From the actual findings, the difference of gender had relationship with fear over crime incident inside a community. It also associates with the finding provided by Trimek (2016) concluded that difference's gender and personal income has ability to predict crime fear happened in a city (28).

Scoping into the Thai context, some women has been seemed to have a male guardian for protection and carefulness. We could simply find in a family relationship. Since an influence of paternal power, fathers and brothers must protect mothers and sisters from unsafe situations. The studied area is located at the skirt of the capital city, Bangkok, where considered as a rural area that most women are housewife as same as found in the Hartnagel's study in 1979 and Jermsittiparsert et al.'s study in 2015.

From the finding regarding age, it could say that the elder moved in and out the community slower than the younger. The reason is they could not help themselves when facing urgent situations. It leaded elders getting high risk to assaulted and property crimes (Boyd, 2011: 5-6). Another possible fact, elders prefer isolated lives, and ignore social activities. Corresponding to the social structure in Thai context, people felt insecure because of isolation with eroded physical health (Sahaphattana, 2013: 11-12).

However, the study rejected the findings of Hartnagel in 1979 which found that the aging people living in Canadian cities inclined to fear towards crime at a low level (Hartnagel, 1979: 177-182). Although the previous finding contradicted the present, we could see the difference of the social and economic status among Canada and Thailand.

Low-income and long-stayed families associate with less fear

Families with higher salary feels unsafe rather than the low income. This fact came from social inequality. Likewise, Sahaphattana et al. (2013) and Jermsittiparsert and Ruangsilp

(2017) also found that income correlated with a level of fear when considering people's feeling in society. Individuals with earning income between 430-715 USD a month tend to get more fear than those with lower salary rate, especially feel insecurity and loss property during daytime and nighttime (Sahaphattana et al., 2013: 44-47). However, this study rejected the finding of Andrés Villarreal and Bráulio Silva (2006) who found that people with low income and resided in slum though having strong social cohesion but there was no relationship with fear of crime (Villarreal et al., 2006: 20-21).

For length of stay, long-stayed residents being less fear than short-stayed ones driven by its unique attribution each house. It corresponds with the location that locates near a highway with many entrances and exits (Klinkesorn, 2011: 23-30). The migration rates raise consistently impact as critical issue. During data collection, the officers remarked one obstacle to get in touch with residents since they moved in and out often.

However, this study rejected the findings of Rachel Pain's study in 1991 that individual unaccepted by the community or faded out from it, created weakness and led to high level of fear of crime. Individuals who prefer to spend short time in a community would ease opportunity of fear of crime more than those with prolong stay (Pain, 1991: 69-71).

Public Service by Police Enhances Social Collaborations

The studies revealed that a protection by police became another factor that reduced fear. It corresponds with the previous study which concluded that if people had been well taken care of on security of life and property, the fear of crime would decrease (Rohet.al., 2005; Renauer, 2007; Kuo-Kuang et. al., 2010; Sahaphattana et al, 2013; Riccio et al., 2013).

Works of police based on community are considered as the key issues to establish security in residences.The officers from the nearest police station have always entered into the place to collaborate people and lead to fix social problems. Riccio et al. (2013) found that public support services by police has affected directly against severe misbehavior (315). Mostly significant activities are related visible patrols across communities in proper periods.

Public shared value relies on others

The result was counted that synergy was the key to reduce fear of crime. Rationally, had the community members united in their community or residential area; it alleviated the community deterioration and minimized the opportunity of crime. Finally, people would feel less suspicious and distrust among themselves (Pain, 2000: 368-371). In addition, if a community lacked synergy, it might affect fear.

The absence of cooperation to handle cleanness, it also grew feeling unsafe widespread and led to disorganization. This finding was convinced that anxiety or insecurity came from distrust within a community where crime existing broadly, corresponding to previous studies (Hartnagel, 1979; Villarreal et.al., 2006, and Hardyns, 2010).

However, not at all public activities leads people out to joy others even for reducing fear. According to Randol and Gaffney's study, volunteers who had been living in their neighborhoods mostly participated in Block Watch - a program related fighting crime by supporting community policing officers- had not been recognized about how to reduce their fear about unexpected danger (Radol et al., 2014: 234-235).

Conclusion

For a campaign of fear reduction, police agencies should emphasize their work within a community, especially public services. One fact that we derived from the study is that if a cop desires to handle fear spreading over their territory, he or she must feature public support and often participation, as a typical strategy of crime prevention, entirely his or her accountable territory. An officer is expected to be the first person to respond public need. Thailand, for instance, once individuals faced a lawbreaker even unusual situation, they will notify nearest

a police station at first. Whether the police would complete the task or not, persons believe that an officer provides the best effort to serve public and solve problem.

Why they should focus on being supporters because most people who live in neighborhood believe in the performance of their police. They feel safe after seeing the police reach in their house, stop and talk, or even drive through in their residential areas. At present, whether men or women have adequately chances to face unsecure situations. Moreover, persons who get higher salary have the tendency to be concerned about crime. Probably, individuals get wealth need to secure their highly valuable properties such as houses, vehicles, and belongings. They ensure properties will not lost even going out.

Furthermore, to live in a community with long-term could maintain certainty to stay continuously with less fear. In Thailand, elders who live in one place, especially in local context, for a long period have realized social problems. They could simply identify problems which one should be concerned or not. These perspectives differ from the new residents.

Recommendation

Recommendation from field work

In Thai context, police have still faced the hardship to scope the definition of community policing. A part of problem, the works of the police have involved in the well-being of people regular as a routine. They give respect to the people who want to be served like looking after parents and sibling. Nevertheless, the outcome of this study demonstrates the performance of police service is the critical part to reduce fear over crime incident among people. They should establish partnerships before they get into a community. Then, they will come out with confidence from the community.

However, as a part of public service, the community approach conducting within responsible area by local police can establish collaborative partnerships among law enforcement agencies and residential members. This collaboration also enables people to be aware and stay alert by observing disorder in neighborhoods.

Recommendation for future research

To provide the potential recommendation, the research suggests conducting re-studying victim experience and crime new awareness, it was found that applying the social model to predict the relationship with fear of crime; it showed that there was no relationship with statistical significance. There should be additional study on both factors with other social circumstance factors.

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