

Kriminologie, Kriminalpolitik und Strafrecht aus internationaler Perspektive

Criminologie, politique criminelle et droit pénal dans une perspective internationale

Criminology, Criminal Policy and Criminal Law in an International Perspective

Festschrift für Martin Killias
zum 65. Geburtstag

Mélanges en l'honneur de Martin Killias
à l'occasion de son 65^e anniversaire

Essays in honour of Martin Killias
on the occasion of his 65th birthday

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Stämpfli Verlag

New Forms of Policing and the Feeling of (Un)Safety Among the Shopkeepers in Athens and Piraeus

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Contents

I.	Community and Policing	485
II.	Police confidence and insecurity: an empirical approach	488
	1. Interviews with Police Officers	489
	2. Shopkeepers' attitudes	490
III.	Discussion	497

I. Community and Policing

Community crime prevention includes “interventions designed to change the social conditions that influence offending in residential communities”¹. This concept, stemming from the *ecological approach of the Chicago School*², has inspired *Problem Oriented Policing* to a great extent, aiming at crime reduction through the improvement of the wider social conditions related to it. In order for the Problem Oriented Policing to be implemented it should also involve the community in a process of cooperation to resolve the problems that it faces³.

In this context, *situational crime prevention*, with the participation of residents of the local area as well as with the appropriate technical support, does not aim at altering the criminal's personality but at the changing his/her decision or ability to commit crimes⁴. The reduction of criminal opportunities can

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1 M. Tonry and D. Farrington (1995). “Strategic approaches to crime prevention”, in M. Tonry and D. Farrington (Eds.), *Building a safer society*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1-20 (2).

2 C.R. Shaw and H.D. McKay (1969). “Juvenile Delinquency and urban Areas. A Study of Rates of Delinquency in Relation to Differential Characteristics of Local Communities in American Cities” in M.A. Andresen, P.J. Brantingham and J. Bryan Kinney (Eds.), *Classics in Environmental Criminology*, Simon Fraser University, Taylor and Francis Group, 2010, 87-123.

3 H. Goldstein (1990). *Problem-Oriented Policing*, New York, McGraw Hill.

4 P. Ekblom (2006). “Situational crime prevention”, in E. MacLaughlin and J. Muncie (Eds.), *The Sage Dictionary of Criminology*, 2nd ed., London/Thousand Oaks/New Delhi, Sage, 383-385.

be achieved either by reducing crime's attractiveness or by eliminating the actual criminal opportunities hindering its commission⁵. These policies are combined with *community policing*, as is the case in the characteristic example of "neighborhood watch". The most notable drawbacks of this kind of prevention are the displacement of crime and the excessive extension of surveillance to the detriment of individual liberties, as in the case of zero tolerance⁶.

Within this framework, the role of citizens' participation is very important. Nevertheless, as it has been clear from international experience which has been collected up to date, a basic condition for success is the delimitation of residents' voluntary participation, the clarification of its prerequisites and their incentives as well as the proper coordination of actions taken in this context.

In general, Greece does not have a tradition in community prevention, with the exception of the establishment of *Local Crime Prevention Councils* in 1999 and the *Neighborhood Officer*, being implemented for the first time as a pilot measure in 2003⁷ and reactivated in January of 2010⁸. According to the related Presidential Decree, the "Neighborhood Officer" (N.O.), in collaboration with residents and local agents, approaches the problems associated with neighborhoods security, intervenes to resolve them, contributes to crime prevention and strengthens citizens' feelings of safety. During the same period, *police units of motorcycle patrols*⁹, called D.I.A.S.¹⁰, were established in the area of greater Athens and of Thessaloniki that patrol by a policy design based on the size of each area and crime mapping.

The frequent reference to the reduction of citizens' insecurity is generally characteristic of the forms of *participatory criminal policy and community prevention*, although it reflects a particular problem in the case of Greece, i.e. the *high levels of fear of crime expressed by Greeks in the last years*, being the most intense compared to other European countries since 2005¹¹. The dimensions of insecurity are higher among Athenians, according to the rates

5 A. Crawford (1999). "The Local Governance of Crime. Appeals to Community and Partnerships", Gladerdon Studies in Criminology, New York, Oxford University Press, 28-31.

6 W.J. Bratton (1997). "Crime is down in N.York city: Blame the police", N. Dennis (Ed.), *Zero tolerance : Policing a free society*, London, Institute for Economic Affairs, 29-42. See also A. Crawford (1998). *Crime prevention and community safety*, op.cit., 154.

7 74A' of the Presidential Decree 141/1991.

8 "The policeman comes back to the neighbourhood", *Police Review*, v. 259, January-February 2010, 16-17.

9 It is implemented the 29th Mars 2010 in Athens and Thessaloniki in the context of the new criminal policy of the Ministry of Citizen Protection: <astynomia.gr>.

10 This is an acronym but also stands as the synonym of Zeus (the Olympic God).

11 Ch. Zarafonitou (2011). "Fear of crime in contemporary Greece: Research evidence", in Ch. Zarafonitou (Guest Editor), *"Fear of crime. A comparative approach in the European context"*, *Criminology*, Special Issue, October 2011, 50-63.

derived from the research of 1998 (58.7%)¹², 2004 (52.7%)¹³, 2005 (55%)¹⁴, 2006 (56.5%)¹⁵ and 2010 (58.9%)¹⁶.

The lack of confidence in the police is considered an important factor in the explanation of this insecurity. The first surveys on fear of crime observed the decisive role that the involvement of the police with the community can play in this context, in a way that “protecting would seem to be an essential component of any overall strategy to reduce fear”¹⁷. This role becomes even more important in modern urban environments. Within this framework, the police are perceived as “an organization in the service of the local population” and, as such, satisfaction from police services “constitutes a ‘logical’ criterion for its assessment”¹⁸. In this way, the findings indicate that those who feel more intense fear are those who are also most dissatisfied by the work of the police and who seek tougher policing¹⁹.

The evaluation of police work in the context of the European capitals shows that the inhabitants of Athens are the most negative since they rank last with 52% saying that the police do a good job (*figure 1*).

On this basis, it is worth examining whether the new forms of policing, six months after the start of their implementation in the Greek Capital have begun to be effective in reducing everyday insecurity and improving police image in social representations.

¹² Ch. Zarafonitou (2002). *Fear of crime. A criminological approach and inquiry based on an empirical phenomenon within the city of Athens*, European Studies in Law, Athens-Komotini, A. Sakkoulas Publ.

¹³ A. Tseloni and Ch. Zarafonitou (2008). “Fear of crime and victimisation: A multivariate multilevel analysis of competing measurements”, *European Journal of Criminology*, vol. 5, 387-409.

¹⁴ J.J.M. Van Dijk, R. Manchin, J.N. Van Kesteren and G. Hideg (2007). *The burden of crime in the EU. A comparative analysis of the European Survey of Crime and Safety (2005 EU ICS)*, Brussels, Gallup Europe.

¹⁵ Ch. Zarafonitou and N. Courakis (Eds.) (2009). *(In)security, Punitiveness and Criminal Policy*, Athens-Komotini, A. Sakkoulas Publ. (in Greek).

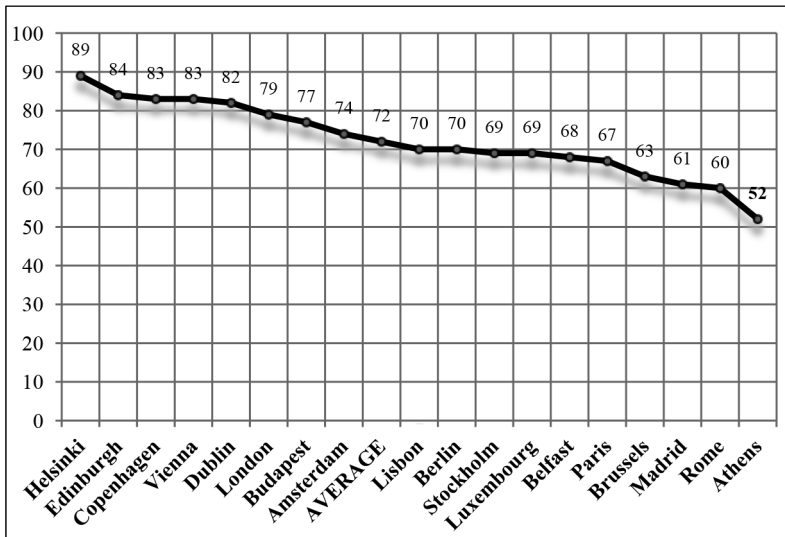
¹⁶ According to research presented in Ch. Zarafonitou, V. Lekka and A. Patelaki (2010) <criminology.panteion.gr/attachments/article/223/Αν%20ασφάλεια%20καταστηματαρχών%20Αθηνών%20και%20Πειραιώς%20και%20νέες%20μορφές%20αστυνόμευσης.pdf> (in Greek).

¹⁷ St. Box, C. Hale and G. Andrews (1988). Explaining fear of crime. *The British Journal of Criminology*, 28, 340-356 (353).

¹⁸ M. Killias (2001). *Précis de Criminologie*. Berne, Staempfli Editions, 429.

¹⁹ U. Zvekic (1997). Les attitudes des victimes envers la police et la punitivité : résultats des sondages internationaux de victimisation. *Revue Internationale de Criminologie et de Police Technique*, 1, 3-16 (8).

Figure 1: Evaluation of police in European capitals. Percentage of residents saying that the police are doing a good job



Source: J.J.M. Van Dijk, R. Manchin, J.N. Van Kesteren, G. Hideg (2007a). *The burden of crime in the EU. A comparative analysis of the European Survey of Crime and Safety (2005 EU ICS)*, Brussels, Gallup Europe.

II. Police confidence and insecurity: an empirical approach

Based on the aforementioned, the main characteristics of the above two police units (D.I.A.S. & N.O.), as well as their theoretical grounding reveal as their key parameters the following:

- the proximity to citizens and to their problems,
- the immediacy of their actions and thus the pursuit of effectiveness,
- their accessibility to the public,
- their visibility (in order to deter crimes' commission),
- their implementation at the local level, and
- their collaboration with local agents and citizens.

A key component of everyday urban activities is trade. The recording of the shopkeepers attitudes in three areas of the Greek capital (center of Athens [K], center of Piraeus [P], an outlying area [H] where the new measures of policing were implemented) as well as the interviews with neighborhood officers, members of the D.I.A.S. unit, commanders of the police departments of

each area and two responsible officers of the Directorate of Athens, consist a first form of evaluation of their implementation, especially since no similar empirical investigation has been undertaken in Greece²⁰.

The first part of the survey was held by the completion (from 1/5/2010 to 30/06/2010) of questionnaires by a representative sample of shopkeepers in each area (n=229), based on a clustered sampling. Initially, all the shops were recorded and then 10% of each specific category was chosen. The second part of the survey was carried out through semi-structured interviews with representatives of the aforementioned police units. Their answers were recorded as given and were analysed with the method of content analysis.

The main findings obtained up until now by our data analysis are summarized as follows:

1. Interviews with Police Officers

- It has been observed that despite their brief training, *Neighbourhood Officers (N.O.s)* have assimilated their mission and the priorities of their role, focusing their contribution to the consolidation of the *feeling of safety* among citizens and on the *confidence in the police* as well as *crime prevention*. Their attitudes also indicate that they are convinced about the significance of their mission contrary to their colleagues, who either ignore its exact content or underrate it in comparison to other police duties.
- Almost all N.O.s believe that *their mission can be successful* contrary to the Commanders of the police departments and the members of D.I.A.S. unit, whose attitudes are rather cautious or even negative. Indicative of this observation is their characterization as “delivery services” or municipal policemen by their Commanders.
- It seems, however, that the role of the N.O.s in the enhancement of police image in citizens’ representations is not questioned by their colleagues or their superiors.
- Concerning the *negative features of N.O.s*, they themselves refer to the absence of effective support, infrastructure and information as well as to the need for a central “coordinator of the unit’s activities“. In this case too,

²⁰ See on this topic from an international perspective: Ch. Mouhanna (2000). *Quel service pour quel public? Une tentative d'évaluation chiffrée de l'image de la Police dans la population face à la territorialisation*, Centre d'Analyse, d'Information et d'Intervention, Convention IHESI no 99/79, Juillet 2000; J. Jackson and B. Bradford (2010). “What is trust and confidence in the Police?”, *Policing*, 4(3), 241-248; B. Bradford, J. Jackson and E. Stanko (2009). “Contact and Confidence: revisiting the impact of public encounters with the police”, *Policing and Society*, 19 (1), 20-46; D. Povey, K. Smith, T. Hand and L. Dodd (Eds.) (2009). *Police powers and procedures England and Wales 2007/8*, Home Office Statistical Bulletin; J. Tapio Kaariainen (2007). “Trust in the police in 16 European countries”, *European Journal of Criminology*, vol. 4(4), 409-435.

the Commanders refer to the fact that “Police Stations have been de-nuded”.

- The answers given by them concerning the *effectiveness of N.O.s* are unanimously positive and are, in contrast, almost unanimously negative by their Commanders.
- N.O.s themselves are also confident about the positive *attitudes of residents towards them*, believing that their complaints are expressed through the demand for more frequent patrols in their area and their stronger presence.
- Evaluating overall assessment of the main forms of policing, the sample as a whole, considered D.I.A.S. unit as being the most effective.
- Finally, with regard to the speculation concerning “law and order” as well as “security and freedom”, the police officers generally believe that safety is feasible without violating the individual freedoms of citizens. The majority of answers converge on the view that this is a pseudo-dilemma, identifying the root of every problem at the educational level of a society.

2. Shopkeepers’ attitudes

Additionally, by studying the attitudes of the shopkeepers, we observe on the one hand the points of convergence and divergence compared to the picture derived from police officers’ attitudes, and on the other hand the differentiation of answers based on the research areas. The main conclusions in this case are the following:

- As shown in Figure 2, the majority of respondents consider the location of their shop as “*rather or highly unsafe*” (58.9% contrary to 41.1%). Nevertheless, these answers are differentiated on the basis of the area of the commercial activity. Thus, in the central area of the capital “K” almost all respondents (93.6%) describe it as “*rather or highly unsafe*”. This percentage is lower, although still relatively high, at the center of Piraeus (65.3%). Only in the outlying area “H” do the majority of respondents feel safe, when considering that 67.9% characterize it as “*rather or highly safe*”.
- They refer to the financial crisis (30.6 %) followed by thefts and burglaries (25.5%) as *major threats* for their enterprise or shop. They mention professional competition, aliens and state policies much less frequently.
- To the question “*What could make you feel safer in this area?*” most of the respondents answered:
 - “the police patrols” (66.7%),
 - “the D.I.A.S. Forces” (12.7%), and
 - “the patrol cars” (7.5%).N.O.s gather only 0.4% corresponding answers.

Figure 2: Perception of safety among shopkeepers according to research areas (Percentage)

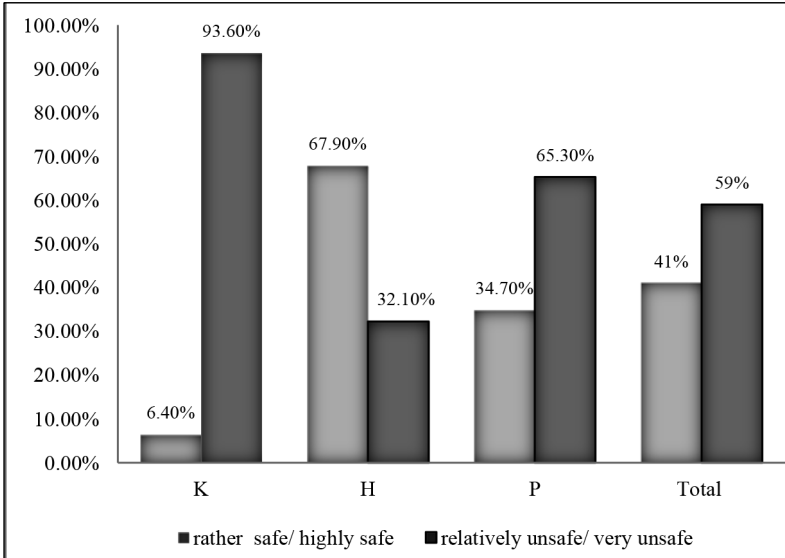
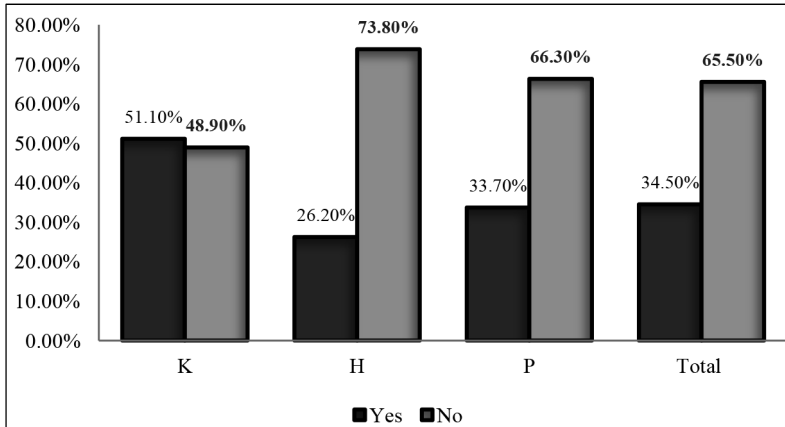
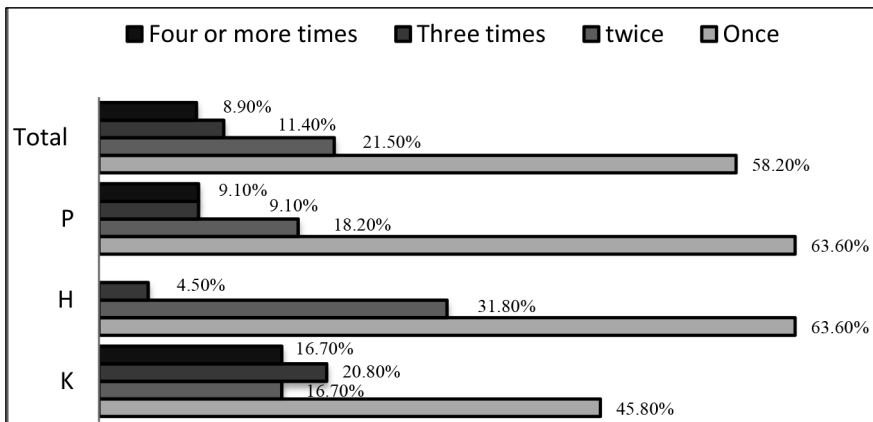


Figure 3: “Have you ever become a victim within your area of work?” (Percentage)



- Regarding previous victimization experience (Figure 3), it has been observed that a little more than one third of the respondents “have been victims in the area of their professional activity” (34.5%). It is worth underlining the highest levels of victimization are recorded in the central area of Athens “K”, where there are also the highest levels of feelings of unsafety (51.1%). In general the ranking of victimization rates is corresponding to the characterization of their area as unsafe, associating previous victimization experience with the feeling of unsafety, according also to the findings of previous surveys conducted in the Greek capital.
- Despite the fact that the majority of victims refer to just one instance, several mention repeated victimisation (Figure 4). The area with the highest repeat victimisation rate is again the central business district in the capital “K”, corresponding to the highest level of unsafety.

Figure 4: Repeated victimisation among shopkeepers according to research areas (Percentage)

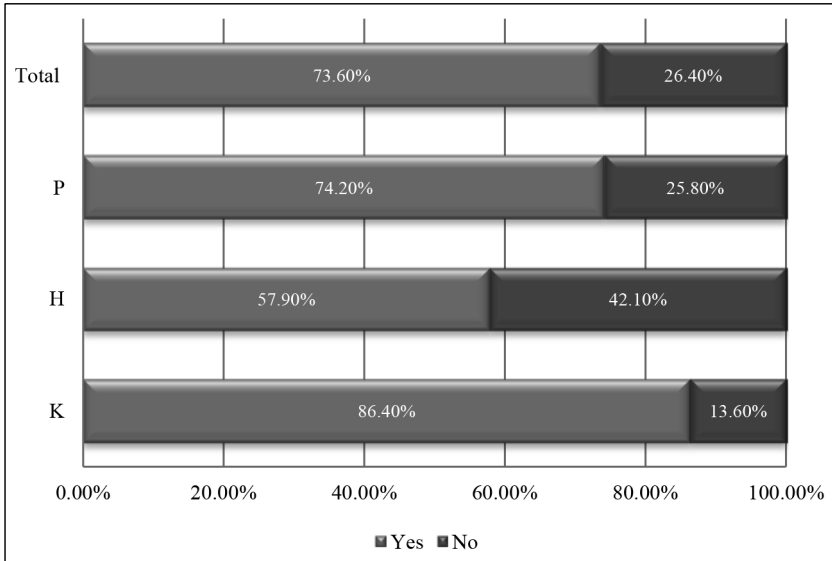


- As expected, shopkeepers are mostly affected by crimes against property. The highest percentages are recorded for theft and attempted theft (61.1%), burglary (16.7%) and negligible fraud (13.3%). However, references are also made to vandalism (5.6%) and arson (2.2%), since they elicit a strong concern at the center of Athens in recent years.
- Most of the victims stated that *they reported the incident to the police* (73.6%, Figure 5). This percentage is similar to that of prior surveys concerning the inhabitants of Athens²¹. Most of the reporting is recorded in

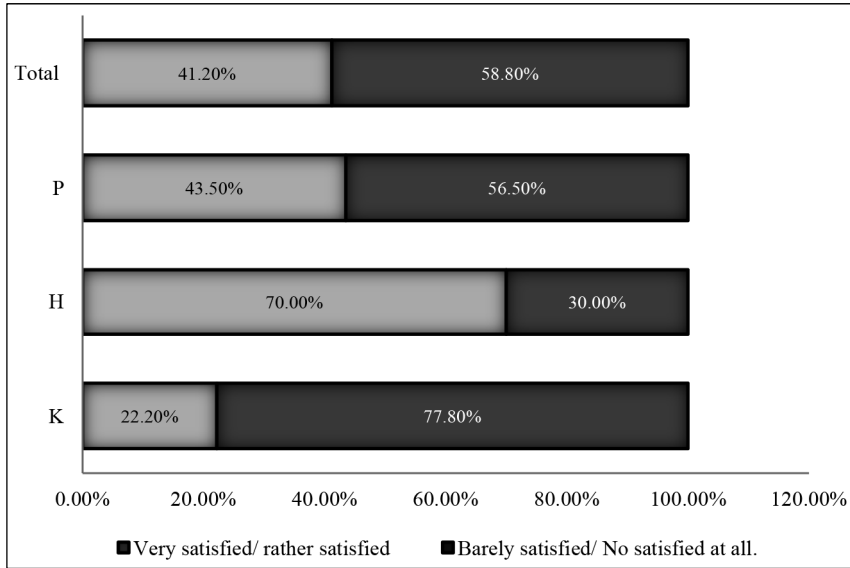
²¹ Ch. Zarafonitou, (2011). “Fear of crime in contemporary Greece: Research evidence”, in Ch. Zarafonitou (Guest Editor), “*Fear of crime. A comparative approach in the European context*”, *Criminology*, op.cit.

the area of the center of Athens “K”, followed by Piraeus and Helioupolis, following similar findings concerning victimization experience and unsafety.

Figure 5: Victimisations reported to the police (Percentage)



- Inversely proportional to victimization and unsafety is the expressed satisfaction with the treatment received from the police while filing the complaint, since the lowest percentage (22.2%) is recorded in the central area of the capital “K”, followed by Piraeus (43.5%) and the outlying area “H” (70%), where the recorded rates of satisfaction are very high (Figure 6).
- The *reasons presented for the aforementioned satisfaction or dissatisfaction* can be differentiated:
 - The level of satisfaction increases if the shopkeeper noticed a swift intervention by the police, an interest and effort in the case, and effectiveness in the police operation.
 - Correspondingly, the level of dissatisfaction was influenced by perceived ineffectiveness, indifference, lack of presence, insufficient treatment and bureaucracy.

Figure 6: Shopkeepers' satisfaction with the police reaction after reporting (Percentage)

- 87.1% of the respondents also believe that either they themselves or their enterprise/shop will be victimized within the following months. These rates are uniformly distributed in all three areas.
- The risk assessment also seems to justify the high percentages of adopted self-protection measures in the store, which are more widespread in the outlying area where the lowest level of unsafety and victimization are recorded (Figure 7).
- Regarding *the evaluation of the police effectiveness in tackling crime in their area*, the most negative evaluations were made by shopkeepers of the central area of the capital “K”, where the highest victimization and unsafety rates are observed (Figure 8). It is worth noting, however, that in this area the highest percentage of reporting to the police was also recorded. It is obvious, therefore, that the perception of police effectiveness does not influence the decision for reporting, which seems to be associated more with the need for more safety.

Figure 7: Did you apply any security systems in your store? (Percentage)

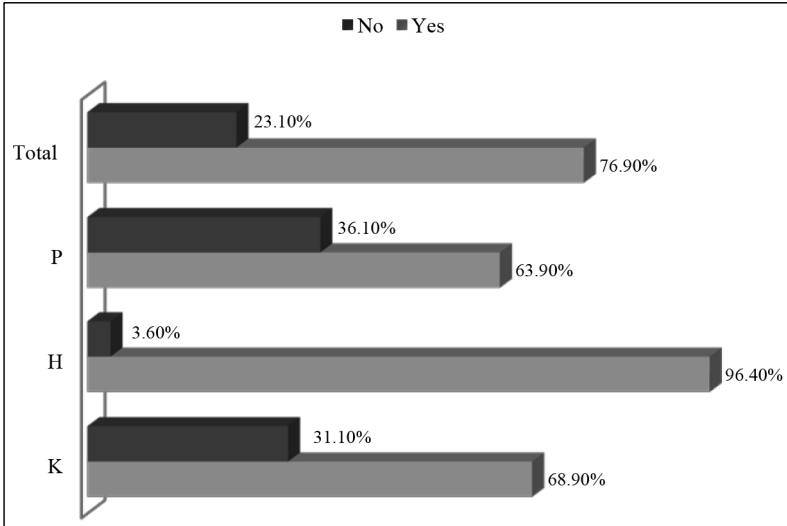
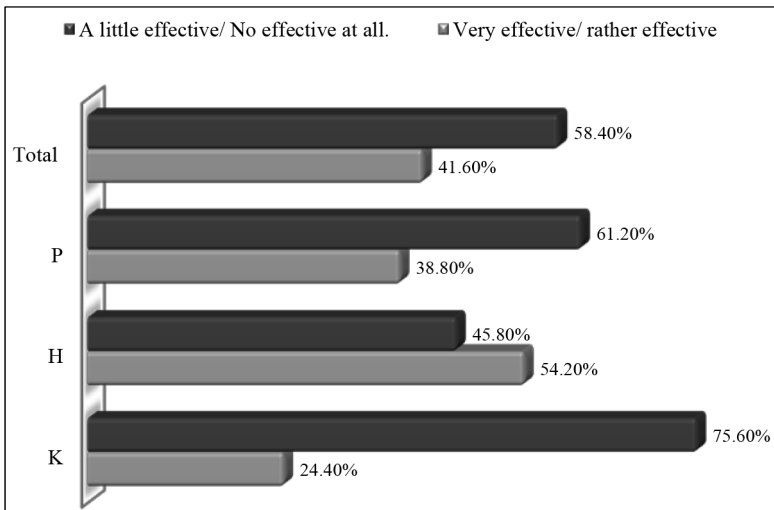


Figure 8: How do you evaluate police work as to the tackling of crime? (Percentage)



- The most frequent complaints towards the police involve:
 - inadequate presence and limited patrols (21.5%),
 - ineffectiveness of the police forces' actions (19.6%), and
 - slow intervention (19%).
- When asked “*Who do you trust the most for your safety?*” the majority refers to the D.I.A.S. unit (68.5%). The Neighbourhood Officer is chosen more often only in the central area of the capital “K”. Respondents' main complaints towards the latter involve:
 - their insufficient presence at the area (70.3%),
 - their limited information about N.O. (18.6%), and
 - Ineffectiveness (3.5%).
- A similar proportion believes that the *N.O. should be improved* with the following measures:
 - establish sufficient presence and more patrols (78.1%),
 - contact with/information of citizens (10.4%),
 - effectiveness (4.9%),
 - more staff (2.7%),
 - and 3.8% of the respondents did not know in which way the aforementioned police unit should be enhanced.
- Likewise, respondents' *suggestions concerning the improvement of the police* in general reveal the need for:
 - more intensive police presence (by 26.5%),
 - more patrols (16.5%), and
 - better training (10.4%).
- The attitudes of the shopkeepers and their employees towards the cooperation with the police in crime prevention and confrontation are apparently positive, since 47.3% consider it as useful and 41.4% as relatively useful.
- The shopkeepers also name the attributes that the police should have (the most important of them are):
 - cooperation with citizens (23.90%),
 - accessibility for citizens (19.90%),
 - better training (16.50%),
 - visibility of presence (15.80%),
 - cooperation with other police forces and units (9.30%), and
 - respect of human rights (7.30%).
- We also asked whether respondents believed that individual freedoms should be limited in order for the citizens to feel safer. This question related to human rights standards was equally asked to shopkeepers and police officers.

Despite the fact that the majority of respondents disagree (61.9%), almost one third of the sample accepts limitations to individual freedoms in order to improve the safety situation. This viewpoint of the shopkeepers is different to that of the police officers who strongly disagree with the pseudo-

dilemma: “safety or freedom”. It is worth mentioning that the percentage of affirmative answers is much higher among people who feel “unsafe” (45.5%) compared to those who feel “safe” (27.7%).

III. Discussion

An examination of the results of the police investigation, illustrates a rather cautious attitude towards the Neighbourhood Officers by their colleagues. This attitude probably stems from a certain confusion regarding their “identity” and of how the social role outweighs the respective policing responsibilities, and bureaucratic responsibilities/tasks prevail over the relevant implementing/operational functions. These characteristics do not allow the identification of the extent of policing provided by the Neighbourhood Officers, within the ostensible “community policing”. It is worth noting, however, that both the shopkeepers and the police expressed their approval for a policing model that combines the features of proximity and efficiency in the field of crime prevention and crime tackling.

The research conducted on the shopkeepers, confirmed previous research which has been carried out on residents of the Greek Capital. It shows a significant deficit of trust into the police, which is associated with high rates of insecurity. As in previous Greek studies, this study found a positive correlation of levels of insecurity and previous experience of victimisation which is enhanced in the case of repeat victimization. In contrast, the understanding of risk was found as being significantly independent of insecurity and victimisation, when equally distributed in all regions reaching very high levels, in a mode that reflects a more general representation of crime as a “serious social problem”.

This notion is strengthened particularly through the perception of deterioration of quality of life in the work area. Thus, the signs of “environmental and social disorder”²² are positively linked to insecurity, and most eminently in the case of the central area of the capital, where there is an objective focalisation of similar problems (illegal immigration, prostitution and drugs, the black market, theft, robbery, burglaries). These problems are particularly intensified in recent years due to the financial crisis, whose effects are evident in the commercial activities of the Centre and the mass deployment of immigrants. These characteristics are associated with a strong perception held by the citizens that the state is indifferent to the problems and that there is an absence of official social control of criminal threats. People feel abandoned to

²² G. Hideg and R. Manchin, (2005). Environment and safety in European capitals, Research paper, EUICS Consortium.

their fate. For this reason the demand for the physical presence of police foot patrols is found to have increased.

There is no doubt that the modern globalised city often deals with multiculturalism as a cultural conflict. This often leads to substituting the way that people regard other individuals with suspicion, competition and a lack of social solidarity. Within this context, both key elements of personal and social development, safety and freedom, are compromised. In times of “crisis” as those faced by Greek citizens today, the regulatory role of the state must be decisive. Through the necessary synergies between the local community and the authorities it becomes obvious that there is a need to combine short-term interventions and long-term policies, so that the city can regain its positive role which, in turn, could be appropriated by its citizens.