

## THE ROLE OF POLICE IN PREVENTING JUVENILE DELINQUENCY AND VICTIMIZATION: A CASE STUDY OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

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### Abstract

*The purpose of this paper is to provide strategies for the police force to prevent juvenile crime using the SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) model evaluation matrix. Research is done to determine the currently most important issue in police strategies and field research using SAST (Strategic Assumptions Surfacing and Testing) to set three strategic priorities. The most important finding of the study is that violence against children in the community that may affect them later in life. Three Strategic priorities of police in preventing crime and victimization of children include: 1. Marking an organization as custodian and coordinating with organizations concerned with children's rights; 2. Providing advice and training to all police personnel to deal properly with children; and 3. monitor the activities and performance of the police in order to protect children from violence.*

**Keywords:** Child, Crime, Delinquency, Victimization, Strategy

### Introduction

Increasing expansion of communities, new social life, the complexity of the technology, followed by continuous changes in terms of economic, social, cultural and political conditions increase crime in different ways and broad level, which reflect in community affecting it- consequently a big change can be seen. This change has manifested in the process of re-development of crime in new forms and so the cycle is repeated, so that in this transition, Children as the most vulnerable actors in the crime scene and victim offender have received a special attention of politicians, policy makers, practitioners and researchers, obliged them to embark Applied Sciences strategies so as to control delinquency and child victimization. If crime prevention comes to realize, thereby the Criminal and becoming a victim are prevented. Hence, Planning, policy and measures regarding the role of each would come effective to reduce the Criminal and becoming a victim (Ebadchi, 2004, 38). child's first contact with the police is very important and perhaps that will affect his entire life, assumed by the child with the first offense, and If the child is treated with violence in his first contact, it would certainly have a negative

effect on his mind and soul, and remains for a very long time; Quite often, if the child being drawn into hatred of the police and the community in which he lives, So, a little negligence and lack of attention to the feeling of child offenders by the law enforcement authorities would come to realize that such offenders become an event till the end of their life across the community, becoming the enemies of communities, even Deliberate and spiteful criminals(Salahi, 1987, p. 21). Vice versa, if they are treated well in the Police stations and questioned in a kind and fatherly way, this Little well treatment with good advice Often cause them to repent of their actions and be guided to the right path(Ibid.). Given that psychological points, today it is striven in progressive countries to train juvenile police and get them ready so as to prevent juvenile crimes and to familiar them with psychology principles of delinquent Children's mental to face this daunting social and educational deal. As discussed above, the phenomenon of juvenile crimes more appears in industrial environments, but Experts and statisticians know two other factors effective in increasing juvenile crimes and those two factors which somehow depend on each other include poverty and unemployment. It is evident that Unemployment and non-employment of Children and adolescents to work productively and fruitfully, leads them to commit crimes, especially crimes such as theft and pickpocketing; but considering that a large part of juvenile crimes are from theft and pickpocketing and/or collective disputes, and such crimes occur mainly in public places like malls, cinemas, theaters, coffee shops, public parks and crowded streets regarding the statistics in this context, so the police would be able to reduce juvenile crimes as much as possible while sustained on permanent protection of such places and would arrest criminals and the ones suspected to crime on time and give them to juvenile police and court (ibid, 22). When we say that the police is protecting life and property of individuals, in order that his main task is to prevent crime; It is necessary to support protecting the lives and property of persons before suffered loss or damage, mentioned that after the crime, find the criminals and punish him and even redress would not lead to a desired outcome (Afandak, 2003, p. 65). Here, it is better to refer to article 18 of world declaration of protection and support from children issued in the 1990s. According to this article, family is the first responsible for educating children from the early birth time till their adolescence. The process of familiarizing children with culture, values and norms existing in the community starts in family, mentioned that children, for their personality development, need to be raised up in the family environment and in an atmosphere replete with vitality, love and understanding Thereafter, community entities have to respect any effort by parents and families, give them assistance to raise their children in family environment and protect them. Most children especially in slum areas spend their entertainment time in streets, alleys and crossroads far from their parents. They are in contact with their friend and might go through a wrong way by having a bad friend, entering to groups of friends and then going to improper places, and encouraged to acts which are not adaptive leading to crime. Police has to support children and take care of their behaviors and deeds in such cases. A police staff, using his good social position and personal ability, can conduct children and juvenile in their behaviors outside so that a police staff is undertaken a bilateral task. On one hand, police staff should deplete thoroughfares, streets and public places of violation, and on the other hand might come effective in the youths exposed to violation. Initial Arrest and interrogation is the first step is to avoid a child from the way in which stepped. Impact resulting by the first police action may be constructive and useful. Initial investigation often allows children and teenagers make their conscience relieved of the burden of sin by telling the truth, because his pure nature influenced of different crimes has not been destroyed. For this, if competent authorities draw a particular attention in advance and respect the juvenile personality,

the juvenile might be influenced of the police's reaction and have a big change in his nature. This occurs mainly in juvenile offenders with the history of crime, because a good deed would not be seen in their arrest time due to his previous backgrounds, and his act is not seen the same as the act by adults (Ibid). In most occasions, Identifying the strengths and weaknesses concerning the internal environment of the organization is done, and Opportunities and threats are sought in the external environment, but sometimes identifying these four items might be done both in internal and external environments. Anyhow, identifying each of these four items entitled SWOT analysis that must be analyzed As objectively as possible (Jahani, 2007, p. 57).

The Harvard policy model well known to SWOT, abbreviation of threats (T), opportunities (O), weaknesses (W) and finally strengths(S), stated. According to this method, a particular attention was paid to the aim of evaluating threats and opportunities existing in the environment, strengths and weaknesses existing in the organization (Fred, 1990: 143-140).

### **Research method**

Library and documentary type of method has been used to determine the most important police strategies on the current topic, where field study has been used to determine three strategic priorities for police. The results of library and documentary studies in the form of SWOT matrix provided and then the strategies provided for police determined. Thereafter, these strategies together with brochures grounded on this topic provided for 12 individuals of police, social and legal experts. These individuals using Strategic Assumptions *Surfacing and Testing*, determined three strategic priorities for police. In following, two methods of SWOT and SAST have been defined.

### **SWOT analysis matrix**

An organization necessarily cannot follow beneficial opportunities because it may have better chance at developing a competitive advantage by identifying an approximation among organization's strengths and opportunities in the near future. In most occasions, an organization can focus on weaknesses to equip itself so as to follow a compensatory opportunity (Jahani, 2007, p. 58). To develop and extend a strategy in the form of SWOT model, a matrix of the factors can be created that is well-known with SWOT matrix or analysis matrix. This matrix is as follows:

	<b>Strengths(S)</b>	<b>Weaknesses(W)</b>
<b>opportunities</b>	SO strategy	WO strategy
<b>threats</b>	ST strategy	WT strategy

The stages of Strategic Assumption Surfacing & Testing include:

Group Formation: firstly the individuals have to be classified into two groups. Each group aims to maximize conversion in attitude so as to acquire the utmost utility from the whole members in a group by suing differences (Mason and Mitro!, 1981; Mason, 1969; Mitro! et al. 1977; Mitro! et al., 1979):

Then grouping can be carried out based on functioning, organizational level or time horizon, or in terms of type of personality and beneficiary groups, and/or based on advocacy of specific strategies of each group. Now, it is the time a group faces a challenge.

Assumption Surfacing: at this stage, it is aimed at Assumption Surfacing and analysis.

Argumentative discussion (argument): the speaker in each group retells the best solution or the priority of Probability theorem and specifies the main assumptions. At period introducing solution, other groups are only allowed to ask for surfacing. Before any discussion and entering into a challenge, understanding assumptions and other's views is prioritized. Followed by each group proposed its topic clearly, thereby an Argumentative discussion starts.

The topics can be conducted regarding the questions as follows:

- what difference lies in assumptions of other groups?
- which property of beneficiaries mostly caused each group accepts such important assumptions?
- have the groups a different evaluation of assumptions?
- which assumptions found more troublesome by groups?

After the discussions continued for a while, each group has to observe tempting to correct its assumptions or not. The process of correcting assumptions has to be continued till the time at which a progress seen in the task.

Synthesis (composition): this stage aims to adapt with assumptions of which a newer solution at higher level can be extracted. Bargaining and assumptions correction continuously continue, whereby a list of assumptions is provided. If the list be pretty long, mental solutions can be inferred of it. This new solution has to remove the gap existing between different groups and a solution going beyond is included here. If not able to achieve synthesis, the different points are written down and studies to resolve differences would be started. Any solution chosen has to be perceived and underlying assumptions can be evaluated followed by implementation (Farzin Abdehghah et al, 2014: 122-123).

### **Research theoretical foundation**

The effect of violence can persist on the victim for a lifetime. Quick access to high quality support services can result in reducing and mitigating the effects of violence on victims so that prevention of longer term outcomes like transforming the victim to a violation agent (*Sergio Leone, 2008, p. 346*). If children not improved, nations cannot have a progress. Experiencing violence in childhood as having healing of soul and if this does not heal, then leads to imposing pain to others and then the person. No child can be a victim of violence. All the children have the right of enjoying national support and resources (*Pearson, 2008, pp. 16*). Children are trapped by Hatred and anger of two groups of: and local criminals and police forces that such a situation empowers Sense of desperation throughout the local communities, further strengthens this belief among juveniles that use of violation is acceptable and prevailing across the world (*Cardia, 2008, p. 328*).

### **Child**

Determine the age group to define the term "child" is necessary. If it is easy to determine the exact boundaries for puberty and physical changes during development, but determine adolescent limits psychologically and emotionally which go beyond physical puberty limits seems so complicated (*Mansour, 1987, p.66*). Child, or minor child, in legal term, is someone who is not enough developed physically and mentally for social life (*Ebadi, 1995: 5*). Hence, to define the term child, a particular attention has to be paid on social, mental and biological facts.

Convention on the Rights of child, to Determine followers of penal codes particularly for Children Offender, defines the child a person younger than 18 years old, this is in a way that

child means the person who is not yet developed to the age of puberty. Age of puberty for females and males has been determined 9 and 15 years old respectively. The criminal children younger than 18 years old are included in the rules for criminal children except for some cases, regarding that gender and religion of the child have caused discrimination in treating with him appears.

### **Delinquency**

Delinquency in the literal meaning means the act out of legal duty and/or commits an act against the law. Crime conveyed as offense, which can be applied especially in connection with the crimes committed by the children (Najafi Abrand abadi & Beigi, 1999, p.199). According to criminologists, any act which is dangerous for most people across the society is called crime (Danesh, 1997: 48). Yet, sociologists call crime any act that opposed to the current strong conditions in the collective consciousness (Ardebil, 76-1996). From the perspective of psychologists, crime is a biopsychosocial phenomenon (Hekmat, 1993: 323). Finally, in viewpoint of jurists, any act concluded in compliance with the penal code and Measures of educational supplies is called crime. In international documents for children instead of using the word juvenile victimization have use juvenile crime, claimed that crime means any act which is in compliance with law in the legal systems that formulate *penalties* for juvenile crime.

### **Victimization**

The victim is a person who suffers from painful consequences rooted in physical, mental, economic, political, social and natural factors due to a particular position (Najafi Abrand abadi & Beigi, 1999, p.199 ). In a plain language, if the person exposed to danger in a disaster and all the people in the community believe in it, then the person would be called the victim (Lyse, 2003, p.96). In international documents for children, the term victim has not specifically defined, which determined only through defining its types and characteristics. Yet, given international document of protection from the victims, the victim is the one who exposed to danger and damages especially in the contexts associated to damage to body, mind, funding and rights (Tavajohi, 1998). Given international documents for children, a particular attention has been paid to vulnerability of individuals of whom children is a group. Iranian law that the legislature sought to define the Child Victims of Crime, any abuse of children exposing them to mental, physical and moral damages, and jeopardizing their mental and physical health, has been forbidden.

### **Prevention**

Prevention in term means avoiding and foreclosing (Moayen, 1974). In scientific view, prevention means an effort by means of any activity of criminal policy which aimed at limiting the possibility of event of criminal acts through making it impossible or difficult or reduce its occurrence (Gassen, 1993,p.333). In other words, anticipate, identify and assess the risk of crime and taking measures and necessary steps to eliminate or reduce it is called in a word prevention. However, prevention programs of crime have to be exercised according to individual freedoms and human rights (Najafi Abrand abadi, 2004, p.199).

### **Research Findings**

In a community, overcrowding and compression of space and availability of services and facilities which help to the welfare of families play an important role in social relations and determining the child is victim of crime or the offender. On the other hand, how to design public spaces can come effective in reducing crime like an improvement in lightening streets and pathways. Further, development of computer programs which can result in increased violence in children and the increasing concentration of poverty can result in deterioration of social and physical status in areas and children development, would jeopardize the public order in the end. Hence, the conditions that cause crime of children constitutes are the very conditions that childhood is spent at them such as home, family, schools, correctional and rehabilitation centers, workplace and community. Some crimes acting against children mentioned punishment and other forms of cruel and degrading punishment by parents and other family members at home or school by teachers and the children found with legal and judicial problems.

Since the police's duty is to provide a safe and nonviolent society, it is expected to behave with the children exposed to abuse in a way that provisions to rehabilitation comes to realize throughout the society having an effective role in future; otherwise, the child exposed to crime would be the leading factor for victimization. In this regards, it can say that violation and crimes of juvenile can be a product of effects in childhood taking from the environment, so a police presence because of the important role and effects of this period at adulthood to learning and training skills for the child are essential. Finally, through A SWOT analysis which is a structured planning method used to evaluate *the* strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats involved in a project using Library and documentary type of method has been used to determine the most important police strategies on the current topic, aimed to prevent juvenile crime with retrospect to future. These strategies found a proper utility for experts to propose three superior strategies using SAST.

Table 1. SO Strategies

<p>SO Strategies</p>	<p>Strengths(S)                      -Police presence in streets and public places                      -Discipline in the police organization                      -Criticism of police</p>
<p>Opportunities(O)                      -Conduct special classes and centers for violators                      - More attention to supporting families in the context of employment, population, and education                      -increased attention to family and increase the relationship between children and parents                      -Legal protection of children against violence in their families, schools and neighborhoods                      -Combating ignorance, poverty and addiction and combating marginalization and urban slums and squatter settlements</p>	<p>SO strategies                      O23.S1. Creating conferences for children and their parents to know about the rights of children and families; Create television programs for children - parents by police cooperation for accurate notification and increasing family culture                      O5.S2. Collect the drug addicts at neighborhoods and create a special place for them, bring about changes in old areas like changes in the alleys, streets and old buildings</p>

Table 2. ST strategies

<p>ST strategies</p>	<p>Strengths(S)                      -Police presence in streets and public places                      -Discipline in the police organization                      -Criticism of police</p>
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<p>Threats(T)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- slum areas which are prone to irregularities</li> <li>-The lack of support from parents of delinquent children in the context of Poverty and Mental Health</li> <li>-Disregard the personality of the child (by the family)</li> <li>-Lack of attention to the problems of delinquent children</li> <li>-Poor lighting in neighborhoods</li> <li>-Ignorance of Children of Rights of the Child</li> </ul>	<p>ST strategies</p> <p>S1 ‘T3. To identify an organization as trustee and coordination between the entities relevant with child rights</p> <p>S2 ‘T145. Lighting in areas thoroughly, trying to remove the old neighborhoods that are prone to crime and disorder, training children Conduct and education in trust to police and retelling power and the ways of self-care</p> <p>S3 ‘T34. create a system for children to communicate with the public authorities, especially police</p>
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Table 3. WO strategies

<p>WO strategies</p>	<p>weaknesses (W)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Weakness in close communication with children and their parents</li> <li>- Lack of Police involvement as a pediatrician</li> <li>-lack of Child help lines</li> <li>- poor involvement by police in children conflicts in neighborhoods</li> <li>-Lack of awareness of police officers towards children's rights</li> </ul>
<p>Opportunities (O)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-create special classes and centers to conduct criminals</li> <li>-More attention to supporting families in the contexts of employment, population, and education</li> <li>-a serious attention to family entity and increased positive relationships between children and parents</li> <li>-Legal protection of children against violence in families, schools and neighborhoods</li> <li>- Combating ignorance, poverty and addiction and combating marginalization and urban slums and squatter settlements</li> </ul>	<p>WO strategies</p> <p>W1‘O23.. To provide families education and guidance centers in upbringing and development of children and families as communities and encourage local people to participate in the centers</p> <p>W3 ‘O1.. Supply lines to communicate indirectly with children, such as telephone lines, the Internet and direct as centers for children to refer to them</p> <p>W4 ‘O5. Raise the level of culture In the field of children's rights and the consequences of inattention to the TV - Radio</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- community programs to educate parents, Identify those who would harm children in the family, such as poverty, addiction, mental</li> </ul>

	illness of parents, and as the result Identify families who faced with problems and supervision by authorities to improve the their children
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Table 4. WT strategies

WT strategies	<p>Weaknesses (W)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Weakness in close communication with children and their parents</li> <li>-lack of Police involvement as pediatrician</li> <li>-lack of help lines for Child</li> <li>-weak involvement of police in children disputes in neighborhoods</li> <li>-Lack of awareness of police officers towards children's rights</li> </ul>
<p>Threats(T)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- slum areas and prone to irregularities</li> <li>- lack of support from parents of delinquent children in the context of Poverty and Mental Health</li> <li>-Disregard the personality of the child (by the family)</li> <li>- Lack of attention to the problems of delinquent children</li> <li>-Poor lighting in neighborhoods</li> <li>-Ignorance of Children from Rights of the Child</li> </ul>	<p>WT strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Promote interaction between children and local community officials (including police and judicial authorities)</li> <li>-Providing advice and training to all police personnel in the proper order to deal with children</li> <li>- Creation of an effective reporting system for children (for children referred to social workers, health care professionals or law enforcement officer)</li> <li>- Monitor police activity and performance in children to remain safe from violence, To provide safe routes for children to communicate with local community and neighborhoods</li> <li>- To provide the complete lighting and the presence of police officers in poorer communities and prone to violence</li> </ul>

**Conclusion**

Twelve strategies from SWOT matrix provided for experts and then three proposed strategies using Strategic Assumptions *Surfacing and Testing* after a large discussion as follows provided:  
 1- To identify an organization as trustee and coordinate with entities relevant child rights, 2- Providing advice and training to all police personnel in the proper order to deal with children, 3- Monitor the performance and activities of the police in order to keep children safe from violence.

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