Studying the factors affecting the fear of crime in south areas of Tabriz

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Abstract:-Fear of crime is a common phenomenon and one of the problems in modern societies. Factors such as gender, social disorganization, the attitude towards the police, the official social control, and life environment affect the formation and intensification of the phenomenon. Fear of crime is quite normal in proportion to the probable crimes, but when the feeling becomes extreme, it has widespread social and individual effects, including the passivity and social isolation of citizens, the increase of economic and social costs and loss of public trust. The primary aim of this study was to determine the effect of social disorganization, the attitude towards the police, the official social control and gender on fear of crime. This is a survey research and the measuring tool is a questionnaires. The statistical population of the study includes the south area of Tabriz aged 65-15 chosen through Cochran formula and stratified random sampling methods. After collecting the questionnaires, the data were analyzed by SPSS software. Based on the results, the fear of crime mean among the residents of Tabriz is higher than average, and this rate among women is also higher than men. Also, the results of multiple regression analysis test show that the correlation coefficient is 0.405. This means that 40 percent of the total variation in fear of crime is the result of two independent variables remained in the final model.

Keywords: fear of crime, social disorganization, the attitude towards the police, the official social control, gender

I. INTRODUCTION

Many scholars believe that 'insecurity Feeling' and 'fear of crime' are specifically urban problems that affect urban dissatisfaction a lot. The city as an environmental location containing the dense volume of different individuals would be able to render its varied roles if it can prepare an acceptable level of safety for the inhabitants. If a society is not safe, there would be chaos and inefficiency in the city and this is among the different dangers resulted from insecurity or fright from the crimes.

During some recent years some questions have been posed regarding fright and concern about broad issues such as being afraid of urban environment, fear of crime, being afraid of others, and reinforcement of fright through the media. Fright and concern of crime and misdemeanor are among frights that most of big city inhabitants encounter to some extent and they affect their life quality and social behaviors tremendously[1].

Today undoubtedly the urban areas are among the most criminal and thus the most frightening places. Accordingly researchers in different parts of the world have noticed fear of crime in urban areas greatly. Such a notice is due to the considerable effect of crimes on life quality, to some extent. Finally, the thing that causes crime to be posed as a social problem is the depth and severity of its consequences for the individuals and the society. People react differently against fear of crime. They may avoid joining certain locations and in certain times. They may buy equipment to prevent crimes. They may form groups against crimes to protect themselves. They may change their daily activities and lifestyles or avoid participation in social life. The decline of social life resulted from fright may also lead to the deterioration of society capability and it would reduce the effect of organizational and non-formal efforts carried out by the society to control crime and illegal actions [2]. However, research has shown that the spread of fright has not always accorded with the real crime map. A safe city is where streets and public places are without violence and crime, but this does not necessarily mean that there is not fright in the city. Additionally, in big cities that usually encounter crime and fright there are several social groups and inhabitants who have different sensations regarding the crime. The present research aims at identifying fear of crime and factors affecting it in southern suburbs of Tabriz to know that to what extent there exists fear of crime in southern suburban areas in Tabriz. Also we would like to identify to what extent the factors investigated in this project can affect the phenomenon of fear of crime.

BODY TEXT

A research was carried out by Serajzadeh (2010) entitled: "social disorganization and fear of crime in districts 3 and 12 in Tehran". Based on the results of this research there has been a meaningful relationship between social disorganization and fear of crime [11].

Seyyedzadeh (2008) reviewed some researches carried out about fear of crime in a paper entitled: "repeated fear of crime". Based on the studies carried out, fear of crime is a sense resulted from being afraid of physical hurts and such a feeling arises from crime oriented symbols that exist in the form of an individual's images from the surrounding environment. The most important reason to pose the fear of crime concept is the distance between the amount of real crime danger and the understanding of people of the crime probability [3].

In a study by Bayat (2008), variables affecting the feeling of safety among citizens in Tehran have been investigated. In this research fear of crime has been studied as a subordinate and minor constituent of the broader concept of safety. According to research results, there has been a meaningful relationship between insecurity feeling and the variables such as the amount of crimes occurred, expectation of people from the police, district belongingness, and urban structure [12].

Hinkel (2005) carried out a research on the effect of disorganization on fright using broken glasses theory. In this research the role of police in reducing fear of crime has been discussed in addition to broken glasses theory. The main idea is that since disorganization refers to issues such as drunkenness, yelling, homelessness, beggary, and such things, police can focus on disorganization to affect crime and fear of crime efficiently [13].

Hall (2009) did a research to investigate about the factors identifying fear of crime, fright outcomes, and fear of crime measurement. Based on research results, there has been a meaningful relationship between fear of crime and social disorganization and physical disorganization (garbage left in streets, writings on walls, unfinished or abandoned buildings, vagrancy, begging, unfold prostitution, …) [14].

Theoretical foundation of the research: Although the concern of individuals regarding crimes dates back to several centuries ago, fear of crime is a relatively new concept. fear of crime was first used in 1930 in American newspapers to describe the reaction of people against criminal behavior. In Europe there has not been any research done on fear of crime before 1960 and it was emerged as a concern after a national poll carried out in mid 60s regarding the crime [3].

The very first poll carried out regarding fear of crime was posed by some members of presidential commission board of the United States in 1967. The findings of this survey were published in a big book entitled: "challenge of crime in a free society". This report claimed frankly that fear of crime has resulted in deterioration of life quality among Americans. Findings of this research showed that in two regions in America with high crime statistics, %43 of the respondents felt fright at night in streets, %35 did not talk with their neighbors due to their fears, %21 did not use automobile or taxi at night due to fright, and %20 of the respondents stated that they would like to change their residential location due to fear of crime [3].

In Iran there has been a very short literature of researches about fear of crime and it cannot be extended for more than a decade. Alikhh&Rabiee investigated about fear of crime in 22 districts of Tehran in a research entitled: "women and fear of crime in urban environments". In this research carried out through both quantitative and qualitative methods, the data were collected through two methods of holding group meetings with women in different districts of the city and a questionnaire distributed among 800 women among 22 districts of Tehran. The summary of research results showed that about %48 of women were afraid of crime threats highly, %33 were afraid of crime threats on average, and %19 were afraid of crime threats the least [2].

Fear is not a cognitive or behavioral process, but it is a complex and strong emotional status formed as a result of feeling the danger by an individual. Also fear of crime is a type of logical or illogical stress that occurs as a result of the reasoning by an individual who encounters a crime danger. Fear is considered as a natural and necessary reaction; because it makes human being conscious of dangers and stimulates him/her to act against dangers and problems. For example, if there is a logical level of fear of crime, an individual will try to use strategies to avoid the crime or prevent it and lack of fright makes human being vulnerable and unsafe against dangers. Fear becomes pathological when exists in an intemperate and illogical form and leads to the decay of self-esteem, human being vulnerability, and his isolation, or when uncontrolled and anxious reactions are formed [4].

Today fear of crime is an inevitable part of modern life. Social changes in culture and tradition and the development of technology have resulted in the emergence of a novel form of social environment through which everything is formed conceptually through risk taking. Naturally in such a society the danger of crime occurrence is an inevitable part of the daily human life like other risks. This in turn results in fear of crime become an inevitable issue in such societies [5].

fear of crime is based on two factors of: "an individual's attitude towards the probability amount" and "crime occurrence and an individual's attitude about the crime intensity". Therefore, crime that are thought to have the greatest severity and the greatest occurrence probability, create the highest amounts of fear and insecurity. The important point is that in estimating the amount of crime occurrence, the amount of the realization of crimes is not the criterion, but it is the public conception about their occurrence. For example, although usually the occurrence of crimes in apartments is higher than crimes on streets, people consider crimes on streets to be more because they are more observable and thus such crimes create more general frights [5].

One of the effective factors on outlooks of individuals regarding crime severity is the quality of crime outcomes. Crimes with more objective and direct effects are considered more severe. In fact, in measuring the severity of crimes, their real s or weakness is not considered, but the criterion refers to the common conception of their severity. For example, usually people are more sensitive towards the crimes against individuals because their effects are personal, direct, and objective. But crimes without people being affected directly and white collar crimes do not create much fear because of indirect and non-objective effects. We can touch and understand the effects of a simple bag snatch much more than multi-billion embezzlements [4].

Attitude towards the police is among factors affecting the amount of fear of crime discussed in the present research. The police are considered as the most important social surveillance institution. This force in democratic countries has the lawful monopoly in using force and obligation and violence against disorganization. However, police basically rely on cooperation and support of citizens to succeed in rendering the duties. Without public support police would not have the ability to resolve the crimes, to reduce the problems, and to maintain orderliness and cooperation in order to avoid crimes. Trust and reliance of people is the cornerstone of the police and the basis for any type of public cooperation to validate the lawfulness of the police in democratic societies [6]. Based on studies and researches carried out before, in most countries it would be insufficient to carry out public safety supply methods like rapid reaction to telephone reports, efforts to recognize and capture aggressive people, and to increase guards in order to increase objective safety and to reduce citizens' fear of crime without the participation of people. Some major police theorists believe that it is well over to think that the more number of police and rapid reactions on the part of the police will lead to resolve crime and fear of crime and it has been altered by a period through which the cooperation among the police and people has enhanced. During the current period the best avoidance method regarding the development of crimes is education and making people aware of the participations in supplying safety [6].

Another effective factor on the amount of fear of crime is social disorganization. Social disorganization theory was developed following studies in 1920s and 1930s in Chicago School in America. This theory emphasizes on identifying the crime and going astray on social and economic factors, specifically social structure and organization. This theory claims that due to the development of urban residence, rapid changes in industrialization, emigration to cities, and modern societies, specifically metropolitans, have resulted in changes that result in increasing crime and going astray [7].

Based on this theory, modern cities encounter changes such as the weakening of interests and relative relations, reduction of efficiency of social institutions, weakening neighborhood relations, reducing social orderliness, increasing poverty, increasing mistrust and the like that prepare a proper environment for deviations and crime. The presupposition in social disorganization is that lack of dependence on institutions and social organizations such as family, school, and …, results in deviated behaviors [8]. In other words, such theory emphasizes on conditions (social disorganization) through which dependence on social institutions and social organizations to decay and no control is applied anymore.

Social control variable has been another effective factors referred to in the present research. Social control refers to mechanisms used by the society to force the members to adjust and avoid incompatibility. In other words, social control refers to total tangible and intangible factors that a society uses to preserve its criteria and the sum of obstacles to avoid individuals from going astray [10].

Regarding social control theory, fear of crime and insecurity does not solely refer to emotional reaction towards experiencing sacrifice, but the outcome of the decay of social control is the perception on the part of the inhabitants. Based on this approach, the avoidance structures of fear of crime include the perception and understanding of neighbors of the capacities of non-formal social controls (neighborhood inhabitants) and also general and common social control (such as formal and governmental institutions). Accordingly, fear of crime reduces when the inhabitants feel that neighbors are reliable and they share some common values and also tend to report crimes and the local police and city authority to respond to the claims of the residents [9]. the research hypotheses will be as follows:

- There is a relationship between formal social control and fear of crime.
- There is a relationship between social disorganization and fear of crime.
- There is a relationship between police performance and fear of crime.
- There is a meaningful difference regarding the average amount of fear of crime considering the gender of the respondents.

II. METHODOLOGY

The present research is a measurement research regarding the type and it can be considered as an extensive research. Also based on time criterion it is a cross sectional study and it has been carried out in the year 2015. To collect data, a researcher made questionnaire has been used in a response scale (in the form of Likert continuum) and to analyze the data SPSS software has been utilized. Also in data analysis section the frequency distributions and percentages have been calculated to describe qualitative variables and to describe

quantitative variables central tendency and dispersion indexes have been used and to test the hypotheses we have exploited Pearson's correlation coefficient and regression analysis.

The statistical population of this research contains men and women residents of southern suburbs of Tabriz aged between 15 and 65. Based on the consensus, almost out of 400000 inhabitants of the suburbs, %20 of the population, equal to 80000 persons, lives in southern suburbs of Tabriz. To estimate the sample volume we have used Kokran formula. Also, sampling was carried out using a multiple stage method.

$$n = \frac{Nt^2 pq}{Nd^2 + t^2 pq} \qquad n = \frac{80000 \, (1.96)^2 \, (0.5 \times 0.5)}{80000 \, (0.05)^2 + (1.96)^2 \, (0.5)(0.5)} = 381$$

N= 80000 : Statistical Society
n= 381 : The sample size
t =1.96 : 99% confidence level
d= .05 : Probable accuracy
p= .5 : Proportion of men
q= .5 : Proportion of women

In this research we have used content validity (the questionnaire has been reviewed by several experts and has been approved before administration) to measure the validity. Also to assess reliability of the measurement means, Cronbach alpha technique was utilized. The results of consistency analysis for the different items of independent and dependent variables showed that the reliability of the items was in a desirable status. Results of consistency analysis of the items in the questionnaire have been represented in table (1).

Table (1): Results of Reliability analysis of research variables

research variables	Cronbach's alpha coefficient
formal social control	.892
social disorganization	.852
police performance	.851
fear of crime	.820

III. Result

Based on table (2), results of the test of fear of crime for the genders in isolation showed a meaningful difference between the two variables. It was found that fear of crime is more among women than among men in a way that the average fear of crime among women was %71.90, while it was %63.83 among men.

Table (2): Results of test of average fear of crime among genders in isolation

fear of crime	genders	mean	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
	women	71.90	F	sig	t	df	sig
	men	63.83	26.47	.000	-6.683	357	.000

To test the relationship between formal social control and fear of crime we have used Pearson's correlation coefficient. Results gained showed a meaningful and reverse relationship (r = -0.115, p<0.05) between the amounts of formal social control and fear of crime. In other words, the higher amount of formal control on the part of the police that is responsible to maintain order and safety in the society will lead to lower level of fear of crime. Also the relationship between social disorganization and fear of crime was a meaningful and direct one (r = 0.533, p<0.01) in southern suburbs of Tabriz. In other words, the higher levels of social disorganization in such areas will lead to higher amounts of fear of crime. Results gained showed a meaningful and reverse relationship between attitudes towards the police performance and fear of crime amounts (r = 0.200, p<0.01). In other words, police performance could be studied regarding two different dimensions: first, the weak performance of the police leads to mistrust of the citizens towards police and this may limit the cooperation between people and the police and it may lead to lack of cooperation between people and the police. Second, strong and desirable performance of the police will lead to trust and assurance of the people. When police acts in time as people need and tries to maintain safety in the society, the citizens would approve police performance and would have a close cooperation with them.

Table (3): Results of the correlation test between independent and dependent research variables

dependent variable	independent variables	Pearson Correlation	sig
	formal social control	-.115	.043

fear of crime	social disorganization	.553	.000
	police performance	-.201	.000

The goal of regression analysis is to identify the share and effect of independent variables in identifying and predicting changes in the dependent variable (fear of crime). Results gained through multiple regression analysis on the data showed that the correlation coefficient of the multiple regressions above was equal to 0.652, and the identification coefficient was equal to 0.405. This means that %40 of total changes related to fear of crime was due to the changes in two independent variables in the final model.

According to the results gained, the dependent variable of fear of crime was affected by the two variables of social disorganization and attitude towards the police performance. Results in table (5) showed that the two residual variables in the model could identify %40 of the total variance of fear of crime ($R2 = .405$). As the findings in the table above shows, results of beta coefficients among the whole respondents show that the variable of social disorganization has had an isolated direct and meaningful effect of 0.605 on fear of crime. Also attitude towards the police performance has had an isolated direct and meaningful effect of 0.265 on fear of crime.

Table (5): Multiple regression analysis of fear of crime

variables	B	Beta	t	sig	R		.652
social disorganization	.055	.736	.605	.000	R square		.405
police performance	.079	-.375	-.265	.000	Std. Error. E		9.456
					Durbin-Watson		2.147
					Anova	F	49.476
						sig	.000

IV. CONCLUSION

Today fear of crime is one of the outstanding and important issues investigated in researches carried out within the realm of criminology in different countries of the world. Some scholars believe that fear of crime is as important as the crime but the phenomenon of fear of crime is very complex and the amount and factors affecting it varies in any city or region. The goal of studying some factors related with fear of crime in suburban areas in Tabriz is to identify the role and the amount of the effect of these factors on fear of crime and feeling unsafe among suburban inhabitants in southern areas in Tabriz. To do so, first it was presupposed that police did not solely affect the amount of fear of crime, and concurrently social factors could affect the formation of fear of crime.Findings in the present research showed that the amount of fear of crime among citizens in southern suburban areas of Tabriz has been calculated to be a little higher than the average in a way that the average amount of fear of crime was 63 and this amount was 69 in such areas. Also, it was found that the average amount of fear of crime has been higher among women than that of among men. Women are more afraid of crime than men. Meanwhile, they suffer from lower crimes than men. The fright of women is mostly due to their vulnerability regarding sexual abuses and fright from sexual tortures leads to other types of crimes. Women suffer from disturbances on streets such as josh or maggery of men, disturbances on the part of drivers, improper looks and … . For some women the location may increase fright. This means that there is fear of certain locations that remind an incident. Therefore, women are afraid of rape and sexual violence meanwhile men are afraid of cars being stolen or bag snatch.

Results of the regression equation among the whole respondents showed that social disorganization and attitude towards the police have had a meaningful effect on the amount of fear of crime in isolation. Also it was found that social disorganization has had the highest effects on fear of crime amount in a way that this index solely could predict %60 of the variance in fear of crime.

Results of the present research accorded with findings in a research by Serajzadeh (2010). Also, in a research carried out by Bayat (2008) among citizens in Tehran, there has been found a meaningful relationship between feeling of insecurity and the expectation from the police and the present study accords with findings of Bayat. Findings of JashuaHinkel (2005) showed that disorderliness and social disorganization refers to issues such as drunkenness, yelling, homelessness, beggary and the like. Also, findings of AbdollahYousef (2000) showed that there has been a meaningful relationship between fear of crime and social disorganization and physical disorganization. The present research findings were in accordance with those in JashuaHinkel and AbdollahYousef.

Regarding the research findings, the following suggestions can be presented:
Since the highest average fear of crime has been related to social disorganization in the region, the judiciary office, municipality, urban managers, and other organizations and institutions should focus attention on micro issues. For example, municipality should try more to keep the area cleaner and have a more serious behavior with vendors, homeless people and beggars.

The existence or regular presence of the police in dangerous areas such as the suburbs may have positive effects on the reduction fear of crime. But people do not feel secure only when they observe the police and the police should increase interaction with the people and create a sense of trust among the people in some way.

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