

Factors that influence death penalty support among college students in Bosnia and Herzegovina

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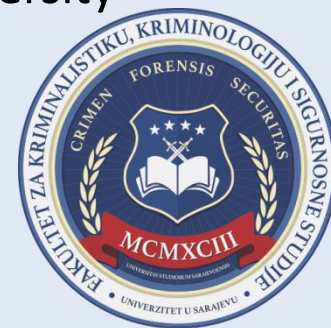
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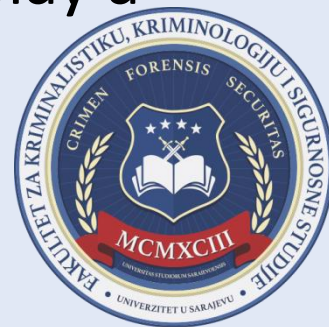
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STUDIJE -FKKSS

- Capital Punishment / Death Penalty
 - person is sentenced to death for committing a crime
- Punitivity = support for harsher criminal sanctions and crime policies regardless of the goal behind these activities (Maruna & King, 2009, p. 9).
- Research:
 - today - 2/3 of countries have abolished the death penalty
 - list of abolitionist countries grows
 - general decrease in death penalty support across the globe - sizeable body of research.
- Bosnia and Herzegovina
 - BiH abolished the death penalty as legal sanction in 1998
 - self-reported survey data collected from 440 university students.
 - study addresses the gap in the literature.



- Individuals residing in postconflict communities face a number of challenges that impact individually held beliefs.
- **Three** reasons for examining this support for the DP:
 1. BiH - Relatively recent nationstate (1992) and war.
 2. Residents have been exposed to a variety of forces at the macro and micro levels compared to residents of nations not directly effected by conflict.
 3. In the post-conflict years - growth in the number of students studying at UNSA.

These individuals will go on to impact policy in the country; Thus, it is imperative that policy makers, criminal justice practioners and educators 'understand what factors play a role in shaping students' views with regard to capital punishment' (Besserer, 2001).



Research questions:

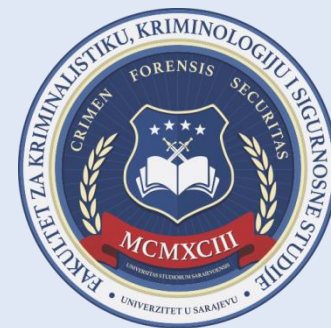
- What percentage of students support the death penalty?
- For which crimes is the death penalty supported? – Students' opinion



- DP support is related to specific factors
 - **Individual characteristics**
 - Sex – male more supportive
 - Age – older more supportive
 - Education – more education less supportive
 - Major – CJ/Law more supportive
 - **Individual experiences**
 - Victimization – previous victimization more supportive
 - Fear of crime – more fearful more supportive
 - **Philosophical beliefs**
 - Deterrence – more supportive
 - Retribution – more supportive
 - Modernity – less supportive
 - Indifference – less supportive



- Sample
 - N = 440 students (9 faculties)
 - 48.9% female (51,1% male)
 - 78.0% Bosniak, 7.7% Serb, 7.0% other, 6.1% Croat
 - 22.44 years of age (SD=2.12, range 18-35)
 - 23.4% Law/CJ major
- Data Analyses
 - Univariate. Bivariate and Multivariate analyses



DP support

- „Even if capital punishment is NOT practiced in your country, do you support the DP for certain crimes?“ („Yes“ =1 or „No“ = 0)
- If „Yes“, asked to indicate for which crimes (murder, rape, kidnapping, terrorism etc.)

Individual characteristics

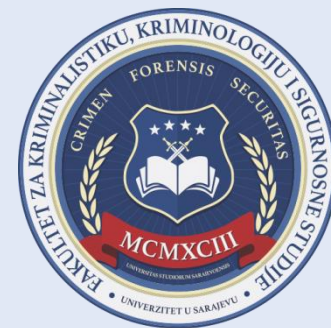
- Sex (males = 1, females = 0)
- Age (in years)
- Education (in years)
- Current area of study (i. e. major – CJ/Law = 1, other = 0)

Individual experiences

- „Have you ever been a victim of a crime?“ („Yes“ =1 or „No“ = 0)
- Fear of crime – 4-point scale (`1` = „not worried at all“ and `4` = very worried)

Philosophical attitudes

- Deterrence, Retribution, Modernity and Indifference
- 4 dichotomous questions (agree = 1, disagree = 0)

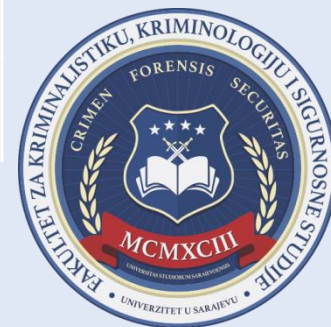


- 52.7% (n=232) support the death penalty
- Support death penalty for
 - Murder – 88.4%
 - Rape – 65.5%
 - Human trafficking of children – 62.1%
 - Act of terrorism – 51.7%
 - Kidnapping children and/or young persons – 32.3%
 - Selling illegal drugs – 25.9%
 - Armed robbery – 11.2%
 - Treason – 8.6%
 - Hostage taking – 8.6%
 - Arson – 6.5%



Variable	Support DP (n = 232)	Do Not Support DP (n = 194)	Test Statistic
<i>Individual Characteristics</i>			
Percent Male	57.8%	42.8%	$\chi^2 (1) = 9.481^{**}$
Age in Years (mean/SD)	21.5 (2.01)	21.4 (2.3)	t (418) = 0.431
Education in Years (mean/SD)	2.3 (1.1)	2.6 (1.0)	t (386) = 1.361
Percent CJ/Law Majors	22.4%	24.7%	$\chi^2 (1) = 0.319$
<i>Individual Experiences</i>			
Percent Prior Victimization	30.0%	22.9%	$\chi^2 (1) = 2.678^{\dagger}$
Fear of Crime (mean/SD)	2.23 (0.74)	2.32 (0.76)	t (393) = 1.231
<i>Philosophical Attitudes</i>			
Percent Deterrence	55.5%	12.9%	$\chi^2 (1) = 73.446^{***}$
Percent Retribution	70.8%	28.2%	$\chi^2 (1) = 72.006^{***}$
Percent Modernity	17.5%	63.8%	$\chi^2 (1) = 89.145^{***}$
Percent Indifference	27.0%	52.0%	$\chi^2 (1) = 25.996^{***}$
***p < .001; **p < .01; *p < .05; †p < .10; 2-tailed.			

	Model 1^a: Individual Characteristics & Experiences					
	B	SE	Exp(B)			
Constant	-.190	1.193	.827			
Male	.534**	.226	1.705			
Age in years	-.016	.059	.984			
Education in years	.179	.121	1.196			
CJ/Law Major	.099	.268	1.104			
Previous Victimization	.377	.249	1.458			
Fear of Crime	-.065	.150	.937			
^a R ² = .048; X ² (6) = 12.949, p < .05 *** p < .001, ** p < .01, * p < .05; one-sided.						



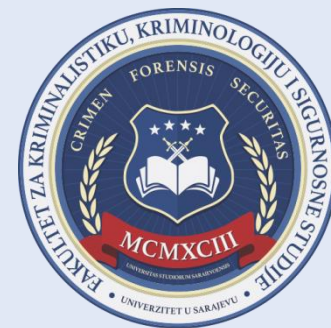
Roughly half (52.7% n=232) reported that they support the use of DP for certain crimes.

First model

- In favour (57.8% male > female 42.2%)
- Opposed (57.2% female > male 42.8%)
- Victims more likely to support the DP
- Education, Major & Fear of Crime were not significantly related to DP support.

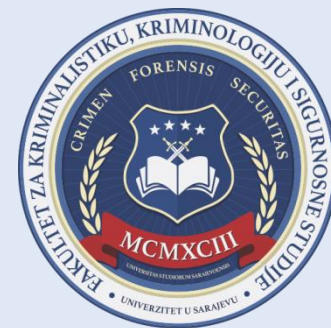
Second model

- DP as effective deterrent – supportive (significantly more likely to favor)
- Retribution beliefs – supportive. – II -
- DP NOT for a modern society – not supportive
- Indifferent students – not supportive
- The effect of „Sex“ was MUTED when attitudinal controls
- were added



Limitations & Policy Implications

- Generalizability of research findings?
- Indifference and modernity attitudes decrease the likelihood of student supporting the death penalty.
- Second model highlights the importance of effect on attitudes on DP support.
 - ✓ It needs to be investigated further.
 - ✓ Likelihood of support can be changed by giving more information to students.



Thank you



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