

The topic of this thesis is the zero tolerance policing which was established in New York in the second half of the 1990s. Authors of this police approach were New York City Mayor Rudolph Giuliani and Police Commissioner William Bratton. They took their offices in 1994, when there were very high crime rates in New York. Crime rates increased mainly in the 1980s but the situation was still very serious in the beginning of the 1990s. Under Bratton, who had a political support from mayor Giuliani, the New York Police Department adopted a strict law enforcement strategy, which is also called the zero tolerance. In the following years the crime rates went down indeed, and Giuliani and Bratton claimed credit for this crime drop. However, a lot of criticism of their police approach appeared soon and many studies explained falling crime rates as a result of other factors. This paper focuses on the description of changes that took place in the New York Police Department and on the discussion about factors that might have caused the crime drop. The purpose of this paper is to explain what the zero tolerance policing is, to analyze different factors that might have had caused declining of crime rates and to consider the effect of zero tolerance on crime rates.