

DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONCEPT OF COMMUNITY POLICING IN THE REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA

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Abstract: In the last decade of the last century, a large number of countries around the world have abandoned the traditional (reactive and control) way of working of the police, implementing the new model of "community policing". This concept of police work has prompted a series of reforms and led to changes in the relationship between the police and the community (through the competencies of the police, the methods and means of work, the method of training police officers, and the method of recruiting new police members).

The adoption of this philosophy of police work has essentially led to radical changes in all elements of the organizational structure and the work process of the police. According to this concept, police services are forced to create a new style of work that reflects the needs of citizens and the community they serve.

In the Republic of North Macedonia, the concept of community policing was first introduced by the OSCE in the period after the end of the conflict in 2001. During that period, the introduction of this concept in police work gave good results and enabled the return of the police to the post-war regions. Although this concept of police work has given good results, a special law has not been adopted in North Macedonia that would regulate this matter in detail. However, in 2006, a Law on Police was adopted, which included part of this issue in Article 11 (without explicitly using the term community policing). This law partially standardized this matter, and the police were forced to cooperate with the community. This article of the law serves as the basis for further development of the community policing model.

This issue is also addressed in other documents and strategies prepared by the Ministry and the Government of North Macedonia, and in all of these acts the role and responsibility of the police are clearly defined. In general, the police are obliged to be transparent, to advocate for the protection of citizens' rights and to take care of their safety through preventive and proactive activities. With the Law on Police and other acts, the police are authorized to implement various preventive measures, such as patrols, analyses of criminal movements and engagement in resolving local conflicts and problems.

Keywords: Police, community, cooperation, prevention, crime, standards, ethics.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the Republic of North Macedonia, the police play a key role in ensuring public order and peace, but also in the development of security services in the community. The legal system of the country defines the police as an authority tasked with enforcing laws, maintaining order and preventing crime. According to the Law on Police, the police have an obligation to cooperate with the community to identify and solve security problems through prevention, information and development of trust between citizens and the police.

Community policing is a concept based on active cooperation with local communities, where police officers are involved in decision-making processes, identifying citizens' needs and solving security problems at the local level. This creates conditions for building strong partnerships between the police and citizens, which leads to greater efficiency and trust in police institutions.

The police, within the framework of this concept, use preventive measures, educational programs and public activities, such as joint meetings with citizens and local authorities, to solve problems related to crime and security. This cooperation is essential for the development of communities based on law and other acts, where citizens are actively involved in ensuring their own security.

2. THE MEANING OF THE CONCEPT OF COMMUNITY POLICING

Traditional police work can be characterized as a model of crime control, while community policing is a combination of maintaining law and order and providing services to citizens (Smith, 2022). The community policing system requires every police officer to build good relations with the community in which he works, that is, it requires abandoning bureaucratic work and moving towards sharing responsibility for the situation with crime and public order with community representatives (Carrington, 2003). Community policing consists of two main components: building a partnership with the community and solving specific security problems that are a priority for the community.

The concept of community policing has greater relevance in the research community, because it has contributed to the change from a "centralized - bureaucratic model to a decentralized - open model of policing". In this regard, the

definitions by Troyanovitz and Carter are also relevant, according to which community policing is a type of philosophy, not a specific tactic, but “a proactive decentralized approach designed to reduce crime, disorder and the fear of crime, by involving the same police officer in a specific community over an extended period of time “ (Селими, 2015). Over the years, community policing as a concept has undergone many changes, with numerous attempts to implement it in many areas and countries that had no previous experience with this concept. This concept was more prominent in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, as well as on the African continent. The implementation of this concept also highlights the differences in the implementation, according to which the Anglo-Saxon way differs from the American or continental European (Brown, 2023). Therefore, many authors have described this concept as a model inspired by the West, which as a finished product has been copied by many countries in the world.

3. THE PRINCIPLE OF COMMUNITY POLICING IN THE REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA

Community policing in the RNM, as a concept, is closely linked to the political and institutional changes that occurred after the adoption of the Ohrid Framework Agreement (OFA) in 2001. The OFA contributed to the end of hostilities in the RNM, and also initiated numerous reforms in various social segments, including the entire security sector. The adoption of the OFA strengthened the foundations of a multi-ethnic society and achieved sensitive management of institutions, as well as the employment of representatives of non-majority communities, including Albanians, in the ranks of the police (Мухареми, 2022). The changes were intended to better represent and respond to the needs of all communities living in the RNM.

Therefore, efforts for equitable representation of citizens in the police were in the focus of attention and therefore during that period the police were stimulated and assisted by international partners, with the intention of restoring the lost trust and respect of the local population. Such commitment of the police and international partners at the same time represented a process of comprehensive reforms, including police reforms. According to the above, the implementation of the principle of community policing in the RNM is in favor of early warning of abuses and undesirable events and will also encourage citizens to report crime. We believe that this way of working will motivate and encourage citizens to engage in preventive projects and campaigns, in order to contribute to a safer environment and overall security. In the RNM, community policing is not covered by a separate law, but most of this matter is found in various strategies and documents of the Ministry of Interior Affairs, namely:

- Law on Police;
- Rulebook on the Manner of Performing Police Work;
- Code of Police Ethics;
- Handbook for Prevention Inspectors;
- Handbook on the Basics of Preventive Policing;
- Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Interior Affairs,
- Police Development Strategy;
- Strategy for Training of Ministry of Interior Affairs Employees and
- Curriculum and syllabus for basic training.

In order to implement the principle of community policing in the RNM, it is required to change the philosophy of functioning of the entire police structure, and not just partial solutions. Therefore, this model must not be just a one-time introduction to citizens (through organizing joint meetings, distributing flyers, giving advice, visiting schools), but rather real cooperation for more successful preventive action by the police (Стефановска, 2015). Also, this model should not be reduced and ended only by the establishment of additional bodies at the national and local levels (such as, for example, local prevention councils), because the community policing model is much more than a function of those police officers who are selected to be included in a particular program (Mackenzie, 2009).

4. COMMUNITY POLICING IN THE REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA ACCORDING TO THE LAW ON POLICE OF 2006 AND OTHER LEGAL ACTS

Police law of 2006

Police Law of 2006 standardizes, i.e. regulates the work of the community police in Article 11 (community police work in the Law is not explicitly defined in terms), which obliges the police to cooperate with citizens, citizen associations and other legal entities, to cooperate with the bodies of the municipalities and the city of Skopje, in order to improve security and prevent and detect criminal acts and misdemeanors. In order to achieve cooperation and build trust and a partnership between the police and citizens, the aforementioned article provides for the establishment of joint coordination bodies in the municipalities in order to improve public security (Закон за Полиција, (Сл. весник на РМ. Бр. 114 / 2006), 2006). Namely, the Law on Police has laid the foundation for the

institutionalization of part of the preventive work and the possibility of a multi-sectoral approach in resolving certain security issues in the municipalities (Мухареми, 2022).

Rulebook on the manner of performing police work

This Rulebook defines the activities of the police, such as:

- guard;
- patrol and
- motorcycle patrol activity. (Правилник за начинот на вршење на полициските работи, Службен В. на Р.М. бр: 149/2007 од 10.12.2007, 2007)

These activities are more precisely defined in the section on maintaining public order and peace, as "direct preventive work of police officers", who, with their direct presence and taking actions, maintain public order and peace, protect the life and personal safety and property of citizens, prevent the commission of criminal offenses and road traffic safety, provide necessary assistance and protection to citizens and conduct surveillance of the area by observing and assessing the security situation (Jovanovski, 2023).

Code of police ethics

A special part of the concept of community policing is also contained in the Code of Police Ethic (Кодекс на полициска етика, Службен весник на РМ бр. 72 од 11.06.2007 година, Член. 18, 2007). This code enables the establishment of relations between the police and the public, cooperation with other state bodies, local self-government units, citizens' associations and with the citizens themselves (Стојановски, Полициска етика и деонтологија, 2006). It also enables the police to adhere to ethical standards as one of the conditions for the protection of human freedoms and rights. The above indicates that the police are organized in accordance with the stated principle of police work in society.

Prevention inspector manual

Part of community policing is also explained in this Rulebook, which states that in order to achieve good cooperation between the police and citizens, it is necessary to: "collect and analyze information to monitor what is happening in the police and what is happening in the community; police management to support and encourage police officers in their inventiveness and creativity in performing tasks, and to constantly evaluate the results and effectiveness of strategies in order to make their adjustments in order to meet the needs of citizens" (Мухареми, 2022). It is interesting to note that the manual defines a problem as: "a situation that is alarming, harmful, threatening, causes fear or has the potential to cause disorder in the local community, especially incidents committed in a recognizable manner against a common victim or in a known geographical location through a process of devising and implementing strategies to find a solution or to transform an unwanted situation into a desired one". It is interesting to note that the manual defines a problem as: "a situation that is alarming, harmful, threatening, causes fear or has the potential to cause disorder in the local community, especially incidents committed in a recognizable manner against a common victim or in a known geographical location through a process of devising and implementing strategies to find a solution or to transform an unwanted situation into a desired one".

Handbook on the basics of preventive policing

This Manual explains preventive policing in detail (Прирачник за основите на превентивно полициско работење, 2013). Community policing is defined here as: An approach to policing that emphasizes the integrated and coordinated use of community resources, a philosophy that guides both management styles and operational strategies, but also an approach that emphasizes the establishment of partnerships between the police and the community and an approach to solving problems that truly responds to the unique needs of each community. „The above definition is not appropriate, as it emphasizes the use of resources, without mentioning the citizen. Namely, the definitions not only in this section, but also in other parts of the Manual are confusing and contradictory, which confirms that it is not enough to just translate good practices, but real steps to have successful implementation on the ground“.

Strategic plan of the Ministry of Interior Affairs (2014-2016)

Part of the strategy for community policing in the RNM is also contained in the strategic plans of the Ministry of Interior Affairs. In the strategic plans of the Ministry of Interior Affairs, the section "building a police-citizen partnership" is singled out as a separate project within the framework of public safety with defined activities (Стратешки план на МВР (2020-2022), 2020). Although certain changes have been made in that section, the weight of preventive policing is still placed on the prevention departments of the Ministry of Interior Affairs, on the prevention inspectors and on the envisaged projects that are implemented at the national or local level, the aim of which is most often to raise the awareness of citizens about the prevention of certain deviant or criminal phenomena. In order to implement the principle of community policing in the Republic of North Macedonia, it is required to change the philosophy of the functioning of the entire police structure, and not just partial solutions. Therefore, this model must not be just a one-time introduction to citizens for more successful preventive action by the police. Also,

this model should not be reduced and ended only with the establishment of additional bodies at the national and local levels (such as, for example, local prevention councils), because the community policing model is much more than a function of those police officers who are selected to be included in a certain program. (through organizing joint meetings, distributing flyers, giving advice, visiting schools), but a real cooperation (Стефановска, 2015).

Police development strategy (2016-2020)

In the police development strategy The development of the police is envisaged by strengthening the work of the police in the area of crime prevention and the work of the police with the community at the regional and local level, with a well-structured police force, including cooperation with the traffic police, crime fighting departments and prevention departments (Стратегија за развој на полицијата 2016-2020, 2016) .

Strategy for training of MIA employees (2012-2014)

The Strategy for Training of MIA Employees is a document that defines the importance of acquiring skills and competencies for all MIA employees (Стратегија за обука на вработените на МВР 2022-2024., 2021). It also defines the basic strategic priorities and various trainings starting from basic police training, which enables police candidates to acquire competencies for the job function "in achieving efficient public security".

Curriculum and syllabus for basic training

The essence of the community policing model can be recognized through the content of the curriculum and the basic training curriculum. In the RNM police, the prevailing view is that responsible, competent, independent police officers should be trained who will conscientiously implement the police powers defined in the Police Law. The police work profile consists of mastering the essential activities which are "clearly defined tasks that a police officer should perform in public order and peace, traffic and border control" (Meese, 1993). The community policing model should be realized through the role of the patrol officer and its work should be established on solid foundations.

5. BUILDING MECHANISMS FOR COOPERATION BETWEEN POLICE AND CITIZENS

In order to develop the principle of community policing in the Republic of North Macedonia, it is necessary to develop special mechanisms for cooperation between the police and citizens, more precisely, building mechanisms for mutual cooperation, with the aim of jointly identifying problems in society and contributing to improving the quality of life in society. For this reason, there must be a real partnership and real communication between the police and citizens in finding the right form of communication. In order to achieve the above, it is necessary to establish appropriate communication mechanisms. As more appropriate mechanisms for this purpose are: Citizens' Advisory Groups and Local Prevention Councils (Ангелевска, 2022).

Citizens' Advisory Groups

This type of communication between the police and citizens exists in democratic societies, in those countries it is used as a means of advising the Municipal Council on the concerns of citizens, as well as for finding solutions to overcome essential problems in the area of security and crime prevention. The above-mentioned groups are considered the best mechanism, i.e. form of cooperation, through which citizens and the police can find solutions and establish positive mutual relations.

Local Prevention Council

The basis for these councils is found in the Law on Local Self-Government and the Law on Police. Namely, Article 11 of the Law on Police provides for and defines the cooperation of the police with citizens, state bodies and citizens' associations. However, in order to implement the above, it is necessary to strengthen the cooperation between the police and the public and, through joint actions, for the public to increase its influence on the work of the police in terms of improving and maintaining public safety and successfully preventing potential incidents that directly affect the safety of citizens.

6. CONCLUSION

In today's society, community policing is a key element in building trust and cooperation between citizens and the police. The implementation of this model relies on the concept of active police work with the community in solving local problems and preventing crime. Namely, this approach encourages citizens to participate in the process of maintaining security without hesitation by communicating their concerns to the police, which creates more effective and transparent joint work.

In the Republic of North Macedonia, the concept of community policing, although constantly evolving, is still accompanied by a number of challenges, such as: lack of resources, lack of adequate training and insufficient cooperation with citizens, which directly affects citizens' trust in the police, as a key element in increasing the effectiveness of the police in carrying out their work tasks. However, some results of cooperation at the local level can be noted here, which show that the police can play an important role in creating safer and more inclusive communities.

To achieve long-term results in North Macedonia from this concept, additional investments are needed in training police officers, improving infrastructure by modernizing technologies that directly affect increasing police efficiency. Also, greater cooperation between the police, local authorities, non-governmental organizations and citizens themselves. Only with an active and inclusive approach, which includes all stakeholders, can a stable and reliable police be built that will guarantee security and improve the living conditions of citizens, guaranteeing stability and justice for the entire society.

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