

POLICE MANAGERS' CHARACTERISTICS OF IMPORTANCE FOR SUCCESSFUL ACHIEVING OF THE COMMUNITY POLICING CONCEPT

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Abstract: For the effective implementation of the concept and practice of community policing, it is very important for it to have an immanent management. This implies the need not only to adapt the known forms and styles of management that are applied to the police, but also to select the appropriate managers. It is necessary for these systems and methods to be carefully thought-out in the context of the community policing, and to even find and build-new ones, as well as that the criteria of selection and deployment of managers are adapted to the functions and organization of the community policing. This paper attempts to point out to the said needs and to present ideas aimed at finding adequate police management for effective implementation of community policing, i.e. the style and characteristics of the persons in charge of management.¹

Keywords: community policing, police management, characteristics of police managers, style of police managers.

INTRODUCTION

Since it has become more apparent that cooperation with citizens and the local community is necessary in order to fight crime effectively, the implementation of the community policing concept is one of the strategic goals of the Serbian police and at the same time one of the priority tasks of police management. Community policing as a new model of police work has a local, problematic, partnership-oriented, cooperative and proactive approach and, as such, requires a different police organization (and management). Community policing shifts the focus of police action from responding to the existing problems of citizens to elimination of their problems [Feltes 2002]. This explains the need for different police management

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from which it is expected not only to articulate the philosophy of the community policing, but also to operationalize and implement it. The police management which is recommended for community policing is characterized by: decentralization, customer service orientation, long-term strategies, proactive management, training and education. Evaluation is an indispensable part of the process of such management (Simonović, 2006: 321).

Police officers who implement the community policing concept are expected to “establish legal and realistic frameworks for improving the relations between the police and citizens” (Simonović, 2004: 34), while at the same time putting all of its potential into the function of revivification and accepting of police community models, so it would not be perceived as an imposed model of behavior and labor, reducing resistance to this concept within the police organization itself and reducing the suspicion as to its positive achievement (Talijan & Ristović, 2012: 370).

The traditional way of police management which is characterized by hierarchy, rigidity, bureaucracy, obedience and autocratic style is counterproductive for community policing, and it is necessary to change the form and style of management, but also the personal characteristics and properties of the police manager (Nikač, 2014: 41-43).

In addition to formal conditions relating to professional education and professional experience, the manager must also have many intellectual, character, moral and other personality traits, as well as the necessary knowledge about the concept and basic components of community policing, its organization, management and value system.

How much the implementation of the community policing will be successful predominantly depends on the “personality of the manager, the style of his work, his dominant characteristics, the conditions in the organization and the nature of the job” (Luft, 1969: 226). Police management in community policing implies readiness for changes, and not for partial and superficial changes, but for profound changes, which would change the whole organization, the way of working and thinking of all employees. The form and style of police managers should be such that it is adaptable to the security issues of the local community and the needs of citizens.

Implementation of the community policing concept is a big challenge for police management because its structure, form and style must change, as well as the personal characteristics of the police managers themselves.

THE FORM AND THE STYLE OF POLICE MANAGEMENT WITHIN THE COMMUNITY POLICING FRAMEWORK

Within the entire police organization, and especially in the implementation of the community police concept, the need to change the police organizational

structure has been recognized, which will be followed by a different form and style of management. Instead of a linear form of police management characterized by rigidity and an absolute hierarchy, decentralization is advocated, and instead of an autocratic style characteristic of the police organization, what is advocated is the participative management style. This is because the current form and style of police management contradicts the basic idea of community policing that the police must adapt to the specificities of each community and become more involved in decision-making on the local level in respect of the criminality problems.

Linear form of organization and police management is not immanent to the community policing. It is based on the principle of absolute hierarchy, strictly adhering to the principle of unity of command. The traditional way of policing prefers this form because "the police system corresponds to a high level of discipline and mobility that can be achieved by this type of management, which emphasizes the authority of a manager, his ability and responsibility" (Ristović, 2015: 167). Poor communication with subordinates, while communication with citizens almost does not exist, uncritical adherence to established procedures and prescribed rules, unconditional execution of orders, as well as resistance to any change, are characteristics of this form of police management.

This form is more appropriate for a centralized police organization, in which community policing cannot exist. The community policing concept prefers decentralization because it allows deeper and more direct consideration of the security specifics of each local community and problem-oriented policing applied accordingly. Therefore, the decentralization of the police organization is often cited as a prerequisite for successful implementation of the community policing concept.

A decentralized approach enables the transfer of authority and responsibilities to lower levels of management and executors at the local level. Instead of "top to bottom" communication (when issuing orders, instructions, requiring reports), what must be established is "bottom-up" communication in order to open channels for suggestions, opinions, ideas, initiatives, creative solutions, proactive approach in work, etc. Decentralization contributes to greater accountability of all police officers, because police in the field becomes more independent, and managers take on the role of coordination, guidance and support, encouraging policemen at the operational level to be disciplined, but creative in taking the initiative and providing the means necessary to effectively solve the problem [Skolnick & Bayley, 1988: 4].

One of the ways to gradually begin to delegate authority is to create opportunities for lower police management and police officers to devise the content of their work and participate in decision-making, thus demonstrating their expertise, ability and skills. The next way is to transfer competencies to carry out certain customary tasks, and thus the responsibility for their execution. After that, they are left to work using their knowledge, experience and creativity. In addition, the transfer of authority to a subordinate is a good motivating tool because in that

way police officers show greater responsibility, greater job satisfaction and better results.

Delegation of authority implies increasing of the discretionary power of employees in decision making. One reason to justify transferring of authority is the need to quickly make a decision (and effectively implement it!), and this is best done by those who know most about certain issues, and they are often at lower organizational levels (Robbins & Coulter, 2005: 443). For this reason, police officers on the ground, i.e. those who are in direct contact with real life and security problems, must be given the opportunity to make decisions on their own in order to respond quickly and efficiently. Decentralization enables the operational level of police management that implements the community policing model to comprehensively perceive specific security issues and needs in the local area and to apply problem-oriented policing accordingly. They must be given greater authority to show initiative and independence in decision-making and taking concrete actions, because their longer standing in a certain territory has the consequence of many personal acquaintances and the establishment of various connections and relations with citizens and other official and unofficial representatives of the community, which enables better communication and the flow of information between them, and therefore, as the end result, the best knowledge of specific security issues.

Traditional police are characterized by an autocratic style, as the dominant style of police management, which is not desirable in the realization of community policing. This is because it is characterized by the dominant role of a manager as an individual, as an autocratic and bureaucratic personality, who uses his position to make decisions and manage independently, without consulting the associates and seeking opinions or suggestions of his subordinates (Holden, 1994: 16). Such a manager has resistance to change and unconditionally adheres with the prescribed rules and procedures. Management with power, as well as independent decision making by police managers, reduces the initiative, autonomy and commitment of the employees, and thereby also their effectiveness.

Community policing is based on completely opposite principles and prefers the participatory management style in which the managers consults and respect - essentially, not declaratively and formally - the initiatives, suggestions, opinions and advice of their associates and subordinates. This style implies relations of cooperation, mutual respect and trust. With this style, a police manager will assume his real authority. On the other hand, police officers are additionally stimulated by this approach: they feel respected, and all of this positively influences the acceptance of the community policing concept, and consequently, their commitment and efficiency. In a contemporary society - a knowledge society, decisions should be made by people immediately in charge, such as knowledgeable workers, and for the implementation of this postulate, the police must prepare their organization and their management, primarily in the area of community policing.

According to the theory of two-dimensional management style, there are two types of management: people-oriented and task-oriented.²

With people-oriented management style, the manager strives to develop motivation to work through interest of his associates, their problems, at work and beyond, is ready to help, develops a spirit of community, tries to eliminate conflicts and create a positive working climate. When task-oriented, the manager is focused to the technical side of the job - on procedures and standards. He is focused on expert knowledge and skills that are best to accomplish the task, while neglecting interpersonal relationships, which can lead to accumulation of problems of employees, misunderstandings, conflicts and their dissatisfaction. Although people-oriented management has proved to be more effective, according to some researches, it has not unequivocally received more favorable marks than task-oriented management (Kotler & Keller, 2006:68). For community policing, both people-oriented management style and task-oriented management style are important. The first one, because the implementation of community policing implies that a police manager has a relationship of trust and respect with his associates and subordinates, that he seeks their opinion for decision-making and engages their potentials to achieve it. However, the task-oriented style is important too, because a manager appears in the role of someone who provides conditions and means of work, provides support to police officers on the ground and facilitates work (i.e. removes obstacles), is flexible in everyday management, and helps in finding creative approaches to performing tasks.

Each police manager should create his own style, which will be characterized by the balance and absence of a commanding approach, but also the absence of lenient behavior towards his subordinates. They should also strive to open space for new ideas, encourage creativity in the work and feedback of their associates.

THE TRAITS OF POLICE MANAGER WHO APPLIES COMMUNITY POLICING CONCEPT

What features a police manager must have in applying the community policing model is one of the unavoidable questions of successful implementation of this concept. It is indisputable that he must possess specific knowledge, abilities and skills, as well as positive personality traits that are necessary to initiate, start and direct the functioning of community policing.

Several features that are essential for the successful realization of any managerial function can be distinguished, e.g. knowledge of work, giving good suggestions, general intellectual ability, information, personal reputation, ambition, leadership motivation, decision making ability, acceptance from the

² The creator of this theory is Likert and it is based on the results of research which he conducted with associates at the Michigan University in 1961.

group, influence on higher level of management, communicativeness, readiness to accept “rational risk”, health, readiness to listen to personal problems, use praise and criticism, and readiness to ask, consult, and if necessary, issue an order (Mihailović, 2005: 226-229).

In addition to the aforementioned, as desirable qualities and abilities for police managers, the following may also be added: inspiration; good judgment; morality; competency; confidentiality; positive character; equity and righteousness, patriotism and humanity; flexibility; courage and self-confidence; resourcefulness and inventiveness; results orientation; boldness of spirit, courage and fearlessness; professional attitude; ability to analyze and synthesize; organizational and coordinating skills (Talijan, Talijan & Ristović, 2014: 271).

Each of these characteristics is of different importance and desirability for different levels and types of management, and also for the implementation of community policing. However, the properties are not static and unchanged. And while for some of these traits their current advantage depends on numerous social, political or other factors, others have preserved their continuity and are always important and desirable, such as: education, righteousness, respect for colleagues and the police force as a whole, modesty, courtesy, willingness to help.

When appointing police managers, as well as those who apply the community policing model, the background from which they are selected within the police environment should prevail. It is desirable that they have a managerial experience in the police. This is because police management is not possible only based on school knowledge and theory, but it also requires knowledge, direct experience and knowledge of the organizational and functional activities of the police, the nature and character of the police work.

By introducing career development and career advancement, there is no longer the possibility of early and extraordinary promotion, but only the advancement in terms of clear and publicly defined procedures, equal for all employees in the Ministry. Conditions for the career development of police officers have been created as a system that is based on the principle of competence management and employee performance that ensures that only the best, in expert, moral and professional sense, can advance in career and occupy the most responsible jobs (Ristović, 2018). For police managers applying for a transition to an operational or directly higher management level, training for an appropriate level of management and passed professional examination for direct higher management is required (Law on Police, “Official Gazette of RS”, 6/16, 24/18 and 87/18). All training programs and exams for appropriate levels of management and ranks must include areas and topics devoted to community policing. While police managers at the strategic and high level of management need conceptual skills and understanding of the mutual relations of organizational units of the police and the impact of police activities on the community and citizens, medium and operational level of management need skills of managing police work with an understanding of the methodology of community policing, managing projects

that enable the sustainable development of community policing, as well as specific knowledge and analytical skills (Community Policing Manual, 2017: 26).

Furthermore, it is necessary to upgrade the existing knowledge and skills with additional knowledge about the methods and principles of problem-oriented policing, partnership with citizens, prevention through community policing, and wider scope of skills, such as, e.g.: communication, confidence building, mediation in conflicts, creative problem solving in the community, conflict solving and management, motivation of citizens to cooperate with the police, gathering information, analyzing security situation, designing preventive programs, involving the community in solving security problems, accepting cultural diversity and the elimination of prejudice and the like.

For police management in the context of community policing some of the most desirable characteristics are the knowledge and skills related to: teamwork, interpersonal skills, initiative and creativity and realization of the role of mentors.

Each police manager, and especially the one that implements the community policing, needs partners - collaborators. No one, not even the police and or police management, can function on their own. Because of this, the focus is increasingly placed on team work. A team can be defined as a group whose members have complementary skills and are gathered around a common purpose or a set of work goals, for the achievement of which all of them are equally responsible (Grinberg & Baron, 1998: 274). Given that one person cannot know everything, the need for creating teams and the increasing development of teamwork as a primary way of solving professional duties is emphasized. In regard to this, a police manager must organize good working teams composed of high-quality and capable people, who will develop with the aspiration of achieving outstanding results (Adižes, 2008). Creating teams for the implementation of community policing is also important because "teams are usually self-governing to a certain degree, i.e. they have the freedom to determine their goals, the tempo and the desired approach to work without the intervention of the administration" (Grinberg & Baron, 1998: 274). Creating a team is not an easy task, because it requires not only the right combination of professionals, but also individuals who are willing to work with each other within the team.

For the community policing, it is very important that the manager has enough knowledge and skills for working with people, i.e. the ability to cooperate, as well as tactical behavior in dealing with his subordinates. Skills related to the conduct towards other people can be defined as the ability to cooperate well with others. Managers who possess these skills successfully work in groups, encourage others to express their thoughts and feelings, have understanding of the needs and attitudes of other people, listen and communicate very well. Skills of behavior towards other people are equally important for all levels of management, from first-line supervisors to the highest level (Williams, 2010: 14). Relations with subordinates involve the richness of interpersonal relations based on mutual

respect and trust. Being a manager does not just mean having the right and authority over police officers, but also involves responsibility for them, taking care of them, maintaining continuous and dynamic contacts, sharing good and evil with them, being familiar with their desires and possibilities, being able to critically use their own and others' experiences, to draw maximum work, commitment, talent and inventions from their associates when performing work tasks (Ristović, 2015: 178). What is expected from the police manager who is superior to the police officer on the ground is to provide support, initiative, innovation, motivation, encouragement of team work, problem solving with factual analysis, leadership on a new basis, and especially mentoring.

For police managers within the community policing it is of particular importance to have a high level of inventiveness and creativity and thus get rid of the routine approach, which stifles initiative and reduces the efficiency of the police. Possession of these traits will enable it to successfully adapt to the particular local community and its security needs and problems. The creativity of the manager is reflected in: introducing new ideas; forming and implementing new programs; applying a more free style in dealing with subordinates; decision-making and managing in a democratic manner; avoiding routine and introducing innovations in everyday work; putting up new rules; prediction and planning the future in terms of scope of work, working methods, creation of teams, phases of implementation of ideas, further flow of actions taken, rewarding the best, etc.

Community policing removes prejudices about police managers as conservative and inflexible. It does not correspond to rigid, intolerant, inflexible or authoritarian managers, but those who will quickly and competently identify, define and solve the problem creatively. The essence is to act preventively and focus attention on the conditions and causes of crime and other forms of socially undesirable behavior, and not react only when the consequences occur. For this kind of police work, it is necessary to change the form and style of police management, which follows the new system of values, appropriate training programs, cooperation and respect for community attitudes, security prevention, motivation, team work, and the like.

One of the important roles of police managers in community policing is the role of mentor, which allows him to help subordinate police officers to adopt the necessary theoretical and practical knowledge and develop their creative abilities. Mentoring is a process in which the mentor advises and in other ways stimulates the personal development of new workers. Mentors provide much needed emotional support and security to those who are just beginning to work and are not always sure of their abilities. They prepare them to be successful at work, suggest advancement, and give them the opportunity to show their competencies. They offer useful strategies for achieving work goals, often protect their subordinates from punishment for errors and help them avoid situations that may pose risk for their careers (Grinberg & Baron, 1998: 199). In this sense, one of the main tasks of police managers is to achieve the role of mentor which is

reflected in the guiding and advising police officers, their teaching and developing creative abilities, providing assistance and removing obstacles in order to perform the duties of a police officer in a satisfactory manner in the community policing setting. Their advisory role, energy, experience, and ability will enable them to extract maximum work, dedication, talent and creativity from their subordinates.

The stated characteristics and abilities are of varying importance and desirability for the implementation of community policing. However, even the best-made lists of desirable characteristics are not a sufficient guarantee that, if selected, police managers will be successful in achieving community policing. Desirable characteristics must be enriched by the knowledge, skills and experience acquired in the concrete application of this model of work and developed throughout the entire police service.

CONCLUSION

Police management within the community policing demands readiness for substantial changes that alter the whole organization, the way of work, the value system, and the thinking of all police managers.

The experience of countries in which the community policing concept is applied suggests that the role of police management in this process is irreplaceable, and that police management itself will necessarily be transformed and innovated in accordance with the concepts of organization and functioning of community policing. Implementation of the community policing concept will influence the change of form and style of its management, in which the focus will no longer be on the use of force and the primarily on the application of police special work skills, but rather on knowledge, experience, innovation, prevention, creativity and partnership in solving security problems.

It can be assumed that it is possible to make a special model of police management - management for the realization of the community policing concept in the near future. It will be characterized by the practice of indivisibility of direct implementation and management. Each employee will also be a manager, and every manager will be an employee in charge of the most complex police jobs and tasks.

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