PROTECTING SOCIAL ORDER AND DEMOCRACY IN MACEDONIA A CASE STUDY

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Abstract

Protecting social order is essential; however, it doesn't mean that while protecting social order there should hinder democratic rights. This study identifies the applications of community policing that improve the prevention initiatives of local institutions in Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. To explore these activities, the dynamic and ongoing processes of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) are mentioned. This process also helps to identify the successes, and failures that reflect the reality of implementing community policing in the country.

Keywords: Democracy, Macedonia, Policing, Social Order, Community, Community Policing, Democratic Policing.

Introduction

The philosophy behind community policing is based on a form of power sharing between police, related institutions and citizens. Each of these actors independently adds a unique component of achievement. However, attaining peace, harmony, and security within the social structure may be difficult if all actors do not equally support each other. In order to perform community policing activities successfully, police are required to authorize, support and co-operate with citizens. To achieve this goal, there has to be a good understanding of the importance of co-operation between the police and people. In this context, it is reasonable to say that community policing is collaboration between the police that first identifies the problems and then focuses on detecting crime and solutions.

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The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) has been very active in supporting community policing in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. According to the OSCE's official web site, the organization, especially the Mission to Skopje, Police Development Department supports the Government in implementing its National Police Reform Strategy, which aims "to bring policing in the country closer to European standards" (http://www.osce.org, 2008).

1. Overview of Macedonia

The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia gained its independence in the early 1990's after the former Yugoslavia was divided into eight parts. One of the parts was known the Republic of Macedonia at that time, however; it is currently named *Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*. The country is surrounded by Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia, and Albania. There are 2,022,547 inhabitants in the country according to the last census which was held in 2002 (http://www.stat.gov·, 2008). According to this census, 64% of inhabitants are Macedonians, 25% are Albanians, 3, 8 % are Turks, 2, 4% are Romans, 1, 7% are Serbians and the rest of them are from other ethnicities.

The first years of the new state were affected by the usual post-communist problems. During the following years, these problems increased and the Albanian community became increasingly unhappy due to their ineffective representation at the institutional levels. As a result of this uneven representation of Albanians, the National Liberation Army (NLA) was created to fight for the liberation of Albanians. By that time several thousand of Kosovar Albanians had moved to the northwest of Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

When the Albanian community claimed that they made up one-third of the population of the country, the conflict aroused. The local elections, held in 2000, served to make the situation worse. When the Ohrid Framework Agreement (OFA) was signed 13th August 2001, the attacks against state authorities began and quickly amplified. At the request of Macedonian government, the international communities enhanced their presence in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Among them is the OSCE, one of the most important international organizations in Europe. In order to assist and support the country, the OSCE has contributed much to Macedonia, especially in the field of human rights and community policing.

2. Overview of Community-based Policing

There is no exact definition of community policing because its advocates describe it by focusing on different aspects (Gozubenli, 2007:63-71). However, community policing is principally rooted in the belief that having traditional officer on the beat will bring the police and the public closer together. The most vital purpose of community policing is changing the nature and emphasis of policing from a police force to police services (Daglar and Akbas, 2005:207-218). To achieve such a goal, police officers must become familiar with the neighborhoods, build a relationship based on mutual trust with community members, and secure the cooperation of local residents (Eck & Spellman, 1987). The popularity of community-based policing has been gradually increasing around the world (Skolnick & Bayley, 1987:411).

There are several reasons that make community policing is so important. First of all, nearly all developed and developing countries, including Former Yugoslavia Republic of Macedonia, confer weight to the accountability of police forces. Therefore, it is quite important to monitor how police authorities deal with the public (Wycoff & Skogan, 1994:78). Community policing particularly addresses the need for the improvement of quality of police services to the public, and respect for human rights while performing police tasks.

Secondly, minorities may feel that police discriminate against them. Even when the police behave uniformly to all citizens; their actions can be misunderstood by some communities. Citizens not only evaluate police officers according to their effectiveness regarding crime prevention, but

also on how sensitive they are about their constitutional rights and how they meet their needs (Moore, 1992:110-118). Community-based policing promises that police departments are quite sensitive to the protection of constitutional rights of citizens and that police officers act fairly in their daily activities (Greene, 2000:310-312; Skogan, 1994:79). By treating citizens fairly and respectfully, and trying to establish a positive relationship with citizens (especially with minorities), the officers are less likely to be seen as adversaries in neighborhoods.

Lastly, citizens can feel that crime rates are high and police are not working enough to handle the cases. However, providing appropriate and accurate information to police is one of the citizens' duties so that police can resolve trouble easily. Community policing, therefore, holds that the higher the degree of public participation, the more progressive the policy strategy and, hence, the greater the capacity of the police to solve problems (Friedmann, 1992:29). In a democratic country, in order to be more effective, policing must be based on consent from the community. The police must be trusted and respected by citizens in order to be supported by the public (Eck & Rosenbaum, 1994:85); thus, gaining trust is one of the crucial objectives of community-based policing.

3. Implementation of Community Policing in Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

When the OSCE started its activities in Macedonia, it realized the potential importance of community policing since communication between citizens and police was lacking. Effective communication channels needed to be established immediately among police officers and citizens in Macedonia because building a strong communication network between communities and the police would eliminate possible rumors or other false information regarding police operations (Innes, 2006:224). According to Skolnick and Bayley (1986), building consensus among community partners to deal with complicated situations requires community meetings and effective communication.

In addition, there were complaints from minority citizens about the unequal and unsatisfactory treatment they had received during the traditional policing era; therefore, the OSCE has started community-based policing activities in Macedonia in December 2001. The community policing concept was officially introduced at a conference, held at Ministry of Internal Affairs, in the beginning of 2002. After that meeting, the OSCE has increased its support to the Ministry to implement community policing activities and inter-community relations. In this context, the organization firstly created a small unit of Police Advisors in 2001. Later, the organization developed a department with four sub-divisions: management, training, community development and education support. It is currently called *The Police Development Department (PDD)*. The PDD has been supporting the Macedonian government in bringing the national police up to democratic police standards.

From the beginning, the OSCE wanted to evaluate the effectiveness of police activities and determine citizen's opinions and their feelings regarding police works. Therefore, a survey was conducted in April 2002. After evaluating the results of the survey, the organization started a new approach, namely the "community policing". The organization deployed OSCE community police trainers and gave numerous training programs to the police officers about community-based policing. Both the community policing concept and democratic policing mindset were presented during the training programs. As it has in other European countries, the OSCE has supported Macedonia in different aspects which can be evaluated under four main titles: (a) citizen advisory group meetings, (b) local prevention councils, (c) police community relation coordinators and inspector of prevention, and (d) election monitoring, campaigns and workshop activities. Hereafter, these activities will be discussed briefly.

4. Citizen Advisory Group Meetings (CAG)

The PDD of the OSCE has started to implement the citizen advisory group meetings after the conference held in May 2002. CAG meetings which include citizens, police and the mayor (or an official from the mayor's office) had two primary aims: a) to provide a long-term sustainable forum to discuss the common interests by putting the ideas into practice, and b) to improve the communication and co-operation between citizens and police and to establish a deeper trust and confidence towards the police. By the end of 2006, 50 CAG meetings had been formed. Even though each CAG could have representatives from all levels of the society, more CAGs were needed since each community had its unique regional aspects.

The topics discussed in the meetings are diverse and reflect the urgent needs of the communities. The agenda can be directly related to police activities such as misbehavior of police officers, crime rates, and patrolling services. However, occasionally, it may be related to non-policing issues such as railroad safety, the maintenance of public utilities, and unemployment rates. If the topic requires an external expert, a professional is invited to present an in-depth explanation.

Following subsequent efforts, the CAGs now number more than 130, and all CAGs have been regularly bringing community members and police together. However, for several reasons, it is not an easy task to create a CAG in every community. First, the ethnicity issue is quite a significant obstacle in the country. As Macedonia does not have a homogenous society; thus, it can be difficult to gather citizens from different ethnicities, even in the small communities. The second main obstacle of CAG gatherings is citizens' different political opinions. Although none of the CAG meetings are related to politics and do not permit political discussions, to convince citizens to come together despite their different political backgrounds is challenging.

All in all, the CAG meetings have contributed a lot to getting individuals together to solve some of their problems; however; in time, it was clear that CAG meetings must be expanded by involving more participants from other society groups. The OSCE evaluated the meetings' effectiveness and decided to include some other actors in the meetings such as representatives from local governmental and non-governmental organizations and a number of institutions. This decision led to establishment of Local Prevention Councils (LPC) at the municipality level all over the country.

5. Local Prevention Councils (LPC)

The CAG meetings were first launched in the west and the north of the country in 2002, and then they were extended to the whole country in 2004.The CAG meetings have accomplished much and still remain the key factor of community policing in Macedonia; however, the members of the CAGs have usually not been in the charge of carrying out local or national duties, which was an obstructive factor for their complete success. Establishing the LPCs was, therefore a necessity; they were created in the first quarter of 2008. The main aim of LPCs is to implement the policies decided at the CAG meetings. Implementing this requires having formal authority because practitioners who are expected to execute the CAG plans want to have clear orders from their Ministries. The most important feature of LPCs is that they exhort the relevant Ministry personnel to work together more closely within the same structure. LPCs are also aimed to minimize bureaucratic procedures and accelerate the implementation process of community policing.

The OSCE organized a series of conferences for the mayors and police commanders to explain the importance and necessity of the LPCs. At these conferences, it was clarified that the Minister of Interior is in charge of policies at the local level. Additionally, representatives from other ministries such as the Justice, Health, Education and Finance will be able to participate and contribute to the meetings. Planning the meetings and inviting individuals from related ministries

to LPCs are under the responsibility of both the offices of mayor and the chief of police. In theory, the mayor is supposed to lead the LPCs, but in practice, just the secretariat who is assigned by the mayor carries out the duties. Others involved in LPCs are local representatives of other ministries, religious leaders, media local representatives, and representatives from NGOs.

Another benefit of LPCs is that they clarify the goals of CAG meetings, explain the tasks, and delineate the implementation procedures. For instance, when LPCs receive complains and requests from citizens, they share them in order to analyze and find solutions for citizens' demands in terms of safety and security issues. LPCs also provide opportunities for local authorities to instantly diagnose the problems in the neighborhood and solve them before they become more widespread. LPCs make policies and co-ordinate the local authorities and institutions to decrease the local crime rates. Action plans are decided at LPCs; the members of councils are aware of the threats to safety and set up activity plans to resolve them.

In short, LPCs are in the charge of collecting complains, requests and demands of local people; these then are all discussed by the members who come from different entities. The LPCs are places where individuals have formal authority to make decisions and choose action plans for future activities.

6. Inspector of Prevention or Police Community Relation Coordinators (CRC)

Due to the lack of effective communication channels between police and citizens, the OSCE has focused on establishing a new unit for police officers who have been employed for community policing. For that reason, 32 police officers were selected and assigned as community relation coordinators. At the end of 2003, the OSCE organized a training program for these officers to improve their communication skills. These officers were employed at the local police stations to seek citizen support.

The OSCE, in cooperation with Netherlands Police, sent the CRCs to Holland to gain hands-on experience in community policing. Additionally, 50 different police officers were trained to work in the field of community policing in the other parts of the country. The officers were also encouraged to improve their communication skills with the OSCE's other activities.

Indeed, the OSCE regularly brings the CRCs together and organizes different activities with them to strengthen their communication proficiencies. The organization is very serious about these training programs because it is aware of how it is difficult for the CRCs to effectively integrate in society. If the OSCE observes that additional programs such as confidence building or empathy training are needed or would be beneficial for officers, it includes these kinds of activities in the curriculum as well. The CRCs' activities and efforts are also supported and benefited by the local government because of a current national law. This means that the CRCs not only perform community policing activities but also they carry out other policing activities if they have enough time. The OSCE is performed another project which gives the CRCs a better status so that they can perform community policing activities more effectively. The CRCs who are titled as "Inspector of Prevention" (IoP), are mainly dealing with community policing activities.

7. Training Activities, Campaigns and Monitoring Elections

Training programs are the most important and effective activities of the OSCE. The organization is aware of the values of training programs which enable police departments to change and transform themselves more effectively. Therefore, from the beginning of its presence, the OSCE has arranged numerous training programs. The first training program was scheduled for 1,000 police cadets from minority communities in July, 2003. This was one of the important aims of the 2001 Ohrid Framework Agreement. The second important training program was organized for local police officers to give the essential knowledge about their duties during the 2006

Parliamentary Elections because the OSCE has also the responsibility of assisting host countries (in this case Macedonia) to make the elections secure and reliable. At the end of these training programs, a total of 8,000 officers were trained to secure the polling stations in Macedonia.

Thirdly, upon the request of the Minister of Interior, the OSCE has arranged a series of workshops on different topics such as drug awareness and democratic policing. The organization arranged campaigns to raise drug awareness in 2006 and in 2007. This successfully helped building local networks to support the struggle against drugs use and drug dealers. Lastly, the OSCE has supported the Macedonian police technically as well. To meet the needs of the police service, the organization has not only donated technical equipment but also taught local police how to use this equipment effectively.

The OSCE works to increase police standards in all European Countries. The organization, therefore, has been monitoring the capacity of police in Macedonia so that their needs could be identified and their standards could be improved. For these purposes, the organization has arranged many training courses and worked not only with European countries but also with the United States.

8. Evaluation of Activities

Understanding and evaluating how useful community policing activities are requires regular assessment actions. Real success can only be achieved by good and effective assessment tools. Therefore, the OSCE evaluates its activities weekly, monthly, and yearly basis. For yearly basis evaluation, the Community Police Extended Survey is one of the important indicators. The organization has implemented six surveys every other year starting from 2002 so far. A total of of 1500 police officers, citizens, and selected government officials responded to these surveys concerning community policing practices and concepts. The survey results helped to evaluate the development of the reforms and the implementation of community policing in the county since 2002.

According to the first survey results, the confidence building activities between police and citizens in the country were not as successful as anticipated. The relations between police and the communities have been improving day by day in Macedonia, but it was not adequate. The OSCE, therefore, has organized many activities in order to increase the trust between police and citizens. The second survey was about the effectiveness of CAG meetings in 2004. The results of the second survey were fairly positive and encouraging. Due to the successful outcomes of CAG meetings, fifty new CAGs were established by the end of the 2006. However, according to the last survey result, which was conducted in 2012, only 26% of the police believe that one out of four citizens is aware of community policing and citizen advisory groups. That says there is still important work to be done.

The OSCE puts great attention to the CAG meetings because it considers that citizens are more cooperative when they trust and believe in the police (Ross & Sabir, 2004:50). The CAG meetings give the police opportunities to show their sincerity, fairness, and their respect to citizens' values, beliefs, and cultures. Within this context, community policing can function as an accountability mechanism as it provides a forum for individuals to put their own concerns and priorities, and hold their police accountable for addressing them (Goldstein, 1990:64; Moore, 1992:110-118).

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