

CONCEPTS OF COMBATING SECURITY CHALLENGES IN THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

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Abstract: *The local community as a place where people live and exercise their rights and interests is full of various security challenges and threats that endanger its values. Through various measures and activities, the local self-government, together with other supplementary security entities, as well as the police, strives to create a safe environment that is necessary for development and prosperity. Various forms of criminal activity, socio-pathological phenomena that prevail in the local community are a serious threat to the security and development of society. Modern society has brought with it modern security challenges and threats that also reflect on the local community. Citizens in the local community will constantly insist on the highest possible level of security, pointing not only to criminal behavior, but also to all other factors that make their local community unsafe. Aware of this fact, the people who lead and manage local communities establish adequate concepts for confronting security challenges in the local community. Those concepts are nothing more than the prevention of socially negative behavior, i.e. crime, theory of defensible space, as well as situational crime prevention. In connection with the above, this paper aims to point out the security challenges in the local community, as well as the consequences they entail. Also, this paper will show the concepts of confronting security challenges in the local community, as well as the role of the police and other supplementary security entities in protecting social values and building a safe environment that is the basis for a better and better quality of life for citizens.*

Key words: *Local community, Local self-government, Security, Security challenge, Security concept*

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1. INTRODUCTION

Citizens have always strived for their security to be at the highest possible level, and for this reason there is a general interest in security. In their local environments where they live and work, citizens are best informed, and what they can see and feel, about the very level of security achieved. This security is best and measurable in the area of the local community, because it is in that local community that citizens most directly satisfy their elementary needs, realize their civil rights and interests. Those needs of the people in the local community are for the most part common needs that live on the same territory and are also related to their territorial closeness, and the relationships in which the citizens find themselves are not of crucial importance. In the context of people's needs, Pusic is of the opinion that "these primary human needs in the local community occur universally, regardless of the type of settlement: village and city. The needs of the people in the local community appear as common due to the spatial proximity of people living in one settlement" (Pusic, 1963:11). This primarily refers to the quality of life in that local environment, which is observed through the achieved level of medical care, children's education, availability of communal services, human rights and freedoms, etc. Certainly, the time we live in is very demanding not only in terms of the way and quality of life, but also from the aspect of the necessary and necessary level of security. Contemporary trends point to the growing need for research and improvement of security in the local community. Today's way of life and work has brought with it contemporary security challenges and threats that affect both the state and its institutions, as well as society, i.e. the individual. These new contemporary security challenges and threats appear everywhere, they are of different form and intensity, which depends on many factors and the very specifics of the local community. Each local community has its own specifics that distinguish it from others, and these specifics determine and are a prerequisite for development, but also for endangering security. The natural and democratic right of every local community is to make certain decisions, positive legal regulations, etc. which improve safety and contribute to every citizen. However, there are many activities that contribute to making the local community safe. Thus, according to Bjelos et al. "in order for the community to be safe, among other things, it must:

- develop partnerships of community actors, whereby partnership not only sublimates the level of cooperation, but essentially influences the will of community actors to build, within their domain, the security of the environment, relations of unreserved trust and responsibility in improving safety and security;
- preventive approach to problems in the community, by providing the necessary information for the creation of proactive mechanisms and instruments with the aim of prevention and reduction;
- problem-oriented work, which means realizing the synthesis of an interactive approach of several actors in identifying and solving specific security problems;
- to establish a communication process through the active exchange of information between actors, especially in larger cities, where such subjects are often alienated and unknown to each other;
- respect the specificities of the local community and the possibility that different local communities have specific needs;
- to develop a high level of tolerance between the subjects of the community, which is a process that creates conditions for the development and improvement of the trust that these subjects have among themselves;

- there must be responsibility of all community entities for security conditions in the community, which is expressed by a more conscientious approach to events and phenomena, as well as the obligation to participate in activities related to the creation and improvement of a better environment for the life of citizens“ (Bjelos, Brozovic, Đorđević, 2011:7).

2. LOCAL COMMUNITY

People have always joined together in certain communities, because they believed that it would be safer and easier for them to realize their interests when they were united in one area. That's how people belonged to a certain social group. In the context of the above, it is worth seeing Pejanovic and Sadikovic who consider that "the criterion of that belonging was some objective or subjective characteristic that characterized the individual as a member of that group. Only the settlement of people in a certain area shapes the community of people's living, which today we call the local community" (Pejanovic, Sadikovic, 2010:13). Today's form of the local community due to various circumstances is different in many ways and imposes somewhat different forms of connection, which bring with them some other interests of individuals and society in general. However, in order to deal with and elaborate on the local community itself, the people and their needs in it, it is necessary to point out its definition. There are many theorists and researchers who have dealt with the local community, but a single and unified definition of the local community has not yet been given. However, for a better understanding, it is worth seeing the definitions of some of the authors. First of all, as stated by Smidovnika, "the term local community means more than just a local community, it means a local community that has the status of self-government. The local community is the bearer of local self-government, its subject, and local self-government is a legal institution that determines the status of the local community. This is manifested in its independence from the state and any other organization. Analytically, the concept of local self-government unites two components, the local community and the legal system component, local self-government" (Smidovnik, 1999:23). Unlike this author, Hawley believes that "the formal definition of a local community marks the structure of relationships through which the population bound to a specific area (localized) meets its daily needs" (Hawley, 1950:180). Nevertheless, it is necessary to point out the fact that in modern sociological theory, "the local community is defined as a certain territorial entity in which citizens, through their own and common resources, satisfy most of their needs. A local community is a form of association of people - who, gathering around common problems, interests, needs and values - engage in various social interactions, developing a sense of belonging to that community" (Pejanovic, Sadikovic, 2010:14). However, when talking about the local community, the impression is created that a certain part of the public does not make a clear distinction between the local community and local self-government. Local self-government also has several definitions, but for a better overview of all elements of determination, the view given by Vljaj is valuable. Thus, Vljaj and other authors are of the opinion that "the difference between the local community as a sociological entity and local self-government, i.e. local self-government units (municipalities and cities) as legal-political entities is that the local community - in order to become a local self-government unit, i.e. a municipality, must fulfill five conditions:

- territorial element – the possibility of establishing a territorial unit with residents who have common interests,
- functional element - refers to the competencies and tasks defined by law,
- organizational element - the existence of local self-government units in this case of municipalities and cities and the manner of their constitution (elections),

financial element – the right to own income for the performance of competences and tasks and legal subjectivity" (Vlaj, 2006:36).

Also, when we talk about the definition of local self-government, among the many definitions of local self-government, Pejanovic's point of view deserves special attention according to which "local self-government in political theory is defined as the political right of citizens to participate directly and through their freely elected bodies in the management of certain public affairs in their local communities and that this right is guaranteed by the constitution and the law of the country" (Pejanovic, 2015:155). Generally speaking, today's connection of people into certain communities is adapted to many needs of those people themselves, but also to the specifics related to that area. From the aspect of security, these particularities are of particular importance, and on the basis of which representatives of the local self-government together with other entities that exist in the area of the local community, above all the police, adopt and implement certain strategies and plans that contribute to increasing the level of security and creating a favorable security environment.

3. SECURITY CHALLENGES IN THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

Many different security challenges and threats that are current, both at the global, international and national level, are reflected in some form on today's modern society, regardless of the level at which that society or group is organized to live. Safety for the local community and the people who live in it are of crucial importance. Security is a very complex concept, which is researched and monitored every day. Its definition is also complex and not unified, however, a valuable definition of security is given by some authors, above all Stajic, according to the commission, defines security as "a property of a real social, natural or technical subject (being, creation or thing) manifested as established, maintained or improved condition and (or) value, which is expressed through the fulfillment of a minimum of certain (safety) standards specific to that subject, which enable it to have a realistic basis for survival, growth and development, regardless of the carrier, form, time and place of possible endangerment" (Stajic, 2008: 173). In contrast to the determination of security itself, it is valuable from the aspect of security in the local community to determine the security challenges. There are many definitions for security challenges, as well as for security itself, but even in this case there is still no single, unique and generally accepted definition. However, for the sake of a better overview and understanding of the concepts of security in the local community, it is necessary to point out some definitions. Thus, according to Maksimovic, "a security challenge means a potential danger or a potential form of endangering the security of a protected value, that is, a challenge is a condition that precedes a threat, and a threat is the materialization of a challenge." It is about the lowest level of danger to the security object, which may or may not be a source of security risks and threats, since the initial value of the challenge is neutral" (Maksimovic, 2014: 133). In contrast to this author, and regarding the determination of security challenges, the view of Mijalkovic and Keserovic, who consider that "according to that they represent the so-called abstract danger, by their very nature these phenomena are actually sources of security threats. Demographic challenges, environmental challenges, challenges of poverty, challenges of ethnic, religious, racial and cultural identity, challenges of socio-economic and political transitions, challenges of globalization, challenges of migration, challenges of security sector reforms, etc. are often discussed. The fact that of the mentioned levels of threatening phenomena develop the slowest, indicates that it is easier to identify them in a timely manner and prevent them, that is, control them" (Mijalkovic, Keserovic, 2010: 111).

4. CONCEPTS OF COMBATING SECURITY CHALLENGES

Various security challenges impose the obligation of a comprehensive approach on the part of local community representatives to prevent socially negative phenomena that threaten the safety of people and their property. Crime is a special form of endangering the security of the local community. According to Krivokapic, "local communities provide numerous economic and social externalities such as employment, social and cultural benefits, education and the like. Together with the rapid expansion of urbanization and giving preference to the urban, development strategies have seen the growth of huge slum suburbs and settlements, which has caused an increase in the crime rate. The fact that crime has always been a burden for both poor and rich societies (its manifestations have changed, but its scope has rarely decreased, its action has had a destructive effect on economic, social, political and any other progress and is an internal and international problem), created an urgent need for every organized society to oppose it in various ways" (Krivokapic, 2008:37). There are different forms of opposition to threats to the security of the local community and all its values. Before adopting certain strategies and concepts in the fight against various security challenges and threats at the local community level, it is necessary to take into account certain specificities of that local community. In the context of the above, the view of Butorac and Solomun is valuable, who believe that "the process of creating security in a certain area depends on the economic, social, political and individual characteristics of that area, scientific and technological standards, geopolitical and geostrategic circumstances, and action towards the public" (Butorac, Solomun, 2013: 132). The most adequate ways of confronting security challenges in local communities are implemented through different concepts of confrontation. According to Balgac, the concepts of confronting security challenges are:

- crime prevention through landscaping
- theory of defensible space and
- situational crime prevention" (Balgac, 2013: 74).

The concept of crime prevention through landscaping (hereinafter referred to as CPTED) is "an approach aimed at reducing the opportunities for committing criminal and other dangerous acts by increasing the risk and effort that must be invested to commit criminal activity, and reducing the perpetrator's expected benefit" (Australian Capital Territory Government, 2000:1). The very beginning of this approach is linked to the 70s of the last century, when the idea arose that the appropriate design and use of the environment has an impact on the safety of the local community in a way that reduces its occurrence, and thus also affects the reduction of the appearance of fear of contemporary security challenges, which leads to improvement of people's quality of life. "With its ideas and way of acting, CPTED raised security risks and dangers to a new level through the study of space plans and the realization of cooperation between local authorities, the police and professional agencies with the aim of creating security in new and already existing spaces" (City of Virginia Beach, 2000 :1-27). When it comes to the concept of the theory of defensible space, it is related to the fact that crime prevention through landscaping as a concept is not the one that provides complete security to citizens and causes objective fear. Balgac, "they explain this fact by the absence of a social component of the space, and supporters of this idea advocate focusing on semi-private and semi-public spaces (places intended for meeting and joint activities of citizens), because these are places of social interaction that strengthen cohesion between residents, striving for collective success and increasing the degree of informal social control, which creates a greater sense of security and contributes to more successful crime prevention" (Balgac, 2013: 80). The concept of a defensible space brings some new trends when it comes to crime prevention and in itself has a positive impact. When it comes to the third concept of situational crime prevention, it was

better defined by Clark, considering that it is a preventive approach that does not rely on the improvement of society and its institutions, but simply on reducing the opportunities for crime. Reducing opportunities for crime is achieved through changes or manipulations of the physical environment to directly affect the offender's perception of increased risk and effort and reduced reward. From this we can conclude that the focus of situational prevention is precisely on the opportunities that play a role in every criminal act and are specific to a certain type of crime. "In addition, they depend on everyday events and movements. Also, it is important to emphasize that with the development of society there are increasing difficulties with controlling situations, considering that some products of the modern world provide greater opportunities for the development of criminality, especially social and technological changes" (Gok, 2011:112). The concept of situational prevention criminality, includes measures to reduce opportunities for crime that: "are aimed at very specific forms of crime; include management, design or manipulation of the immediate environment in the most systematic and continuous manner possible; make the crime more difficult to commit, i.e. more risky for the perpetrator" (Clarke, 1997:34). The concepts of confronting security challenges at the level of the local community require the involvement of all actors who create socio-political life in that environment, with the inevitable participation of its citizens, because citizens are the ones who know best what are the problems they face every day. Contemporary trends in crime prevention and community safety require an adequate response at all levels of organizing people, and have created the idea of joint responsibility of all subjects at the local community level. The response to crime prevention is different and individual due to the very specifics of that local community.

5. CONCLUSION

In local communities, where people live in a certain area, all decisions that are made should be clear, transparent, important for citizens and, most importantly, harmonized in accordance with their needs. All citizens, especially young people, should be included in the dialogue on the prevention of security challenges in the local community. By including them, the representatives of the authorities in the local community will concentrate more on their demands, among which, in addition to employment, education, housing, etc. and measures for a safe local environment. In today's modern globalized society, there is almost no country, and therefore local communities, that are not exposed to various security challenges. The fact that today those countries with a low level of development of democracy and human rights, as well as a very low percentage of employment, are much more affected by security challenges and threats. The request of today's modern man and society is to find the most adequate concepts for the prevention of socially negative phenomena that threaten a safe local community. The concepts of prevention of all kinds of threats to the values of the local community and its citizens should be adequate and adapted to the specifics of that local community. Also, prevention implies adequate legal regulation that regulates certain issues and sets tasks for competent entities and citizens in the area of the local community. One thing is certain, through planning and joint work, along with monitoring and analyzing contemporary forms of security challenges, both at the domestic and international level, a good prerequisite is created for the creation of a better and safer local community.

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