

Community Policing Reforms and Organizational Changes: An Assessment of Officers' Perceptions of Community-Police Relations in Slovenia¹

Mahesh K. Nalla,² Maja Modic,³ Gorazd Meško⁴

Police officers' views about police-citizen relationships are shaped not only by opportunities to interact with community residents during normal police work but also in part by efforts due to the larger police mission of encouraging and supporting such attitudes. In 2009, the new leadership in the Slovenian police organization promoted the importance of citizen-police relationships to enhance the quality of police services and, consequently, its impact on community policing. The goal of this study is to examine if Slovenian police officers' views of citizen-police relationships and community policing have changed from 2006 to 2011. We compare officers' perceptions of various facets of police-citizen relationships as they relate to police work and community policing before and after the more active promotion of community policing. While the findings from 2006 suggested that police officers were dissatisfied and at best ambiguous about citizens' participation in crime prevention activities or support for the police, their perceptions 5 years later showed a marked positive improvement in their attitudes on various dimensions. These include officers' views about the overall police mission, increased emphasis on service-oriented policing in contrast to a law enforcement approach, support for community policing, perceived citizens' willingness to cooperate with the police in crime prevention activities, and decreased cynicism about citizens. These findings suggest confidence in the utility of community policing ideas.

Keywords: community policing, citizen-police relationships, attitudes, supervisory support, Slovenia

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1 Introduction

A key element of all police work is how police officers perceive their relationship with the community and the extent to which they believe citizens cooperate with officers. This is

especially significant given that the nature of police work not only brings them in close contact with citizens but also often does so in an adversarial way. Literature on police-community relations in the past few decades note that traditional, reactive policing strategies alienated citizens and police from one another, resulting in various types of reforms instituted by police organizations around the world that focused on the importance of public support. The implications for the importance of police officers' perceived relationships with their communities and citizen groups has consequences for the effective delivery of services and citizen cooperation with the police. Consequently, new styles of policing have emerged under labels that include problem-oriented policing, community policing, and intelligence-led policing, among others. The once popular "reactive policing" transformed into more proactive forms of policing that included assigning more officers to foot patrols, reinstating cooperation with community leaders, and other efforts that focused on rebuilding citizen-police relationships (Sunshine & Tyler, 2003).

Prior research has shown that many police officers viewed themselves as being held in low regard by the public, criticized for every action, and some even believed that their

¹ This article is based on two research projects jointly conducted by the authors of this article – a research project on fear of crime and provision of safety in local communities (V5-1038, 2010-2012) and a research project on legitimacy of policing, criminal justice and execution of penal sanctions in Slovenia (J5-5548, 2013-2016). Both projects were (co)financed by the Slovenian Research Agency. In addition, the Slovenian Research Agency financed a joint research project on legitimacy of policing in Slovenia and USA (2014-2015) which is headed by Gorazd Meško and Mahesh Nalla.

² Mahesh K. Nalla, Ph.D., Profesor of Criminal Justice, School of Criminal Justice, Michigan State University, Michigan, USA. E-mail: nalla@msu.edu

³ Maja Modic, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Security Studies, Faculty of Criminal Justice and Security, University of Maribor, Slovenia. E-mail: maja.modic@fvv.uni-mb.si

⁴ Gorazd Meško, Ph.D., Professor of Criminology, Faculty of Criminal Justice and Security, University of Maribor, Slovenia. E-mail: gorazd.mesko@fvv.uni-mb.si

constituencies were uncooperative and hostile (Mishra, 2011; Pagon & Lobnikar, 2001; Sun, 2002; Worden, 1989). This influenced police organizations to place emphasis on public opinion of police as an important factor that shapes police performance and citizen cooperation. In addition, at an individual level, research suggests that police officers derive their job satisfaction from perceived citizen cooperation (Nalla, Rydberg, & Meško, 2010⁵).

Though various forms of community-based approaches to policing existed before 1991, when Slovenia became an independent country, the formalization of existing community policing efforts was implemented only after 2003 and was followed by several documents (Basic guidelines for the preparation of a medium-term plan for police development and work for the period from 2003 to 2007 (Ministrstvo za notranje zadeve, 2003b), Annual work plan of the police in 2003 (Ministrstvo za notranje zadeve, 2003a), National programme of prevention and suppression of crime (Resolucija o preprečevanju in zatiranju kriminalitete, 2006), National programme of prevention and suppression of crime for the period 2012–2016 (Resolucija o nacionalnem programu preprečevanja in zatiranja kriminalitete za obdobje 2012–2016, 2012), Strategy of community policing (Ministrstvo za notranje zadeve, 2013)) declaring community policing as a guiding principle of Slovenian police for strategic reasons as well as for crime prevention policy. These documents emphasize methods and forms of work, such as consultancy, working in consultative bodies, working in police offices, the education of children and adults, and informal ways of socializing and connecting with people. The role of the community-policing officer was especially important. To achieve a greater sense of security among citizens and deterrence of potential offenders, the goal was for police officers to be physically present at the local level, and to be integrated into the local environment (e.g., to increase awareness of problems, personal contact with problematic people, particularly young people, verbal counselling, and warning), as well as to function as a positive role model in the community.

Thus the focus of this paper is Slovenian police officers' views about police-citizen relationships in the context of implementing these community policing efforts. More specifically, the goal of the paper is to assess police officers' views on how they perceive police-community relations as they reflect on issues that relate to community-based policing after the more active promotion of community policing. The various dimensions of community-based policing include officers' perceived goals of the department with a focus on the op-

erational philosophy of the department, citizen cooperation, community policing, and cynicism.

2 Background and Prior Literature

2.1 Community Policing in Slovenia Prior and After 2006

Historically, since the end of World War II, the police mission of Slovenia, which was part of the former Yugoslav Republic, has been similar to the philosophy of community policing, as we know today. At that time, the basic unit of national police was a militia station, and the jurisdiction of the station was divided into patrol districts. Despite the centralized management, militiamen, unlike the civilian police today, were responsible for getting to know residents and the area of their station. In the 1960s, the area of the militia station was further divided into newly established patrol districts, headed by the officer who was tasked with establishing broader and more genuine partnership with citizens in the local community. After 1976, security districts replaced patrol districts, with a set of new tasks mostly related to the development of social self-protection and provision of public safety on the local level (Policija, 2014c). Certain elements of the social self-protection system in the 1970s represent the beginnings of the current role of the community policing officer and can be understood as a form of socialist community policing, with an emphasis on cooperation between police and the local community (Meško, Tominc, & Sotlar, 2013).

After 1991, when Slovenia gained its independence, the old practices of the social self-protection system were abandoned and Slovenian police started implementing new foundations of police prevention and community policing along the lines of those developed in the United States and Great Britain (Meško, 2009; Lobnikar & Meško, 2010). As a result of the reorganization in 1992, 318 newly created police districts emerged, replacing 635 security districts (Meško & Lobnikar, 2005; Žerak, 2004). Today there are 327⁶ police districts. Each police district is covered by one or more municipalities. Larger municipalities such as Ljubljana may have multiple police districts. Each district is headed by community policing officers, the practitioners of community policing (Meško & Lobnikar, 2005), who are responsible for preventive tasks within local communities and for implementing the social role of the police (Policija, 2014b; Kolenc, 2003).

⁵ Research was conducted in 2006 among Slovenian police officers (995 completed surveys) (Nalla et al., 2010).

⁶ Data as of January 2014 (Policija, 2014b).

Since 2003, community policing has been formally defined and recognized as a guiding principle of the Slovenian police in the document entitled, *Basic guidelines for the preparation of a medium-term plan for police development and work for the period from 2003 to 2007* (Ministrstvo za notranje zadeve, 2003b). With the adoption of *National programme on the prevention and suppression of crime* (Resolucija o preprečevanju in zatiranju kriminalitete, 2006) in 2006, community policing was recognized at the criminal policy level as well. These documents note that to manage crime at the local level, situational preventive tasks may be successfully employed by police, who have been practicing community policing for years. The emphasis was on such methods and forms of work that include consultancy, working in local safety councils, education of children and adults, and informal means of socializing and connecting with people. The role of the community policing officer was clearly specified. To achieve a greater sense of security among citizens and the deterrence of potential offenders, police officers should be physically present at the local level, and they should be integrated into the local environment. This enabled officers to be aware of problems, to develop personal contact with people with problems, particularly young people, to engage in verbal counselling, and to issue warnings, as well as to be a good example to others.

The *Local Self-Government Act* (Zakon o lokalni samoupravi, 2007) introduced legislation to create opportunities for establishing formal protocols for police-local community partnerships. This came on the heels of the provision in Article 21 of the *Police Act* (Zakon o policiji, 1998) on police cooperation with local authorities. Today there are 183 local safety councils within several municipalities in Slovenia, representing the strategy of community policing and fostering an organized way of setting priorities for crime prevention and provision of safety at the local level (Meško, 2004; Meško & Lobnikar, 2005; Meško, Nalla, & Sotlar, 2006).

As noted before, the formalization of existing community policing efforts was observed only after 2003 and was followed by several documents declaring community policing as a guiding principle of Slovenian police on the strategic, crime policy, and legislative levels. Since 2009 community policing ideas were intensively promoted by the police leadership. On various occasions the Director General of the Slovenian Police stressed the importance of openness and police cooperation with other institutions, communities and individuals. At the round table on the preparation of the current National programme of prevention and suppression of crime in 2011 he emphasized the paramount importance of partnerships with citizens and civil society for the successful work of the police (Jere, Eman, & Bučar, 2011). In 2010 the Ministry of the Interior further contributed to the efforts of promoting

community based approaches to policing by co-funding the nationwide research project *Feelings of safety and the role of police in local security provision*, which was conducted between 2010 and 2012 by the Faculty of Criminal Justice and Security, University of Maribor.

2.2 Prior Research on Police Officer-Community Relations

Policing scholars in general have noted that when the concept of community policing was introduced some decades ago, the idea was not welcomed with open arms by many police organizations in many countries. This was partly due to a police work culture that dictated that such an idea had nothing in common with “real” police work (Meško et al., 2000). Skogan and Hartnett (1997: 12) noted that community policing also gets labelled as “social work”, the job of “empty holster guys” and not of “real police officers”. Police officers are usually sceptical toward initiatives coming from outside the police organization because they believe that outsiders (civilians) cannot possibly understand their work. Particularly rejected are initiatives that include people from the outside setting police standards or valuing their performance.

While the core of community policing philosophy calls for a communal endeavour by police and the local community, line officers are the ones who may ignore, obstruct or sabotage the intentions of the police and the community (Oliver & Bartgis, 1998). There is some research that suggests the reluctance of police officers towards community policing often results from a general resistance to reforms and changes coming from management (Sadd & Grinc, 1996; Cheurprakobkit, 2008), though police administrators appear to support changes coming from outside and within their own departments (Cheurprakobkit, 2008). Some have argued that community building through police-citizen partnerships is rather complicated because, on the one hand, some officers perceive that they can put community interests above personal interests, while on the other hand, a majority of the officers doubt that citizens are able to do so⁷ (Glaser & Denhardt, 2010). Officers with such misperceptions will be reluctant to promote community well-being. Others have noted that resistance to community policing could also come from work-related strain emanating from a perceived lack of organizational support and commitment⁸ (Yates & Pillai, 1996).

⁷ The research was conducted among more than 500 officers serving a Midwestern city, USA.

⁸ Study was conducted on population of police officers (335) in Fort Worth, Texas, USA.

In Slovenia, earlier research on citizens' perceptions of citizen-police relationships in Metlika, the Severna Primorska region, and Ljubljana indicate that people are willing to cooperate with the police and help them by providing information, but are reluctant to allow police officers to enter their home (Meško et al., 2000). In another study of the residents of the Slovenian-Croatian border region (before the implementation of Schengen regime), respondents are generally quite willing to cooperate with the police, with the exception of joint patrols and assessing effectiveness of police work (Lobnikar et al., 2005). In a similar study of citizens in the area of the police directorate of Maribor, respondents noted that while police officers still do not entirely meet their expectations, a majority of them were willing to cooperate with the police (Virtič, 2006). A more recent public opinion poll sponsored by the Ministry of the Interior showed that although police visibility in the community was low, citizens were satisfied with the police–local community cooperation (Černič, Makarovič, & Macur, 2009).

In a survey of Slovenian police officers, nearly half of the police officers remain neutral about citizens' willingness to work with police to solve neighbourhood problems, and only a third expressed willingness to cooperate with police (Nalla, 2009). In 2010, a study on local security provision was conducted among mayors and local safety council members from 42 Slovenian municipalities. While respondents' willingness to cooperate with the police received high ratings, police–community cooperation did not receive a similar ranking (Gorenak & Gorenak, 2011).

Research on the differences between police officers and citizens of Ljubljana regarding their attitudes towards community policing and mutual cooperation prior to the reform period indicated that both groups favoured these things; however, citizens were found to be much more willing to cooperate with the police than the latter perceived them to be (Pagon & Lobnikar, 2001). A more recent nationwide study, conducted with a sample of Slovenian citizens and police officers, police chiefs, community policing officers, and mayors, found that cooperation between police and municipality administrations exists mainly on a case-by-case basis and informal bases (Meško, Sotlar, Lobnikar, Jere, & Tominc, 2012). On the other hand, the sampling of citizens and police officers found that citizens were much more willing to cooperate with the police than police officers believed them to be (Meško et al., 2012).

Research also has shown that age is a significant predictor of various dimensions of community-based policing. In their study of Chicago's community policing programme, known as the Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy (CAPS), Lurigio and Skogan (1994) found that older officers were more fa-

vourable in their orientation toward community policing. Other, similar research in the US also found that police officers with more years of service tend to hold more negative attitudes towards community policing⁹ (Lewis, Rosenberg, & Sigler, 1999). Conversely, Moon and Zager (2007) in their study¹⁰ on Korean police officers' attitudes found that older officers were more likely to hold positive attitudes toward citizen support. Skogan and Hartnett (1997) also found that older officers were much more ready for a change from traditional to community policing than younger officers.¹¹ In Slovenia, Pagon and Lobnikar (2001) found that younger police officers were more in favour of community policing than their older colleagues. According to the results of a study conducted in 2006 among Slovenian police officers, younger officers also had a more positive view of "who it is they serve"¹² compared to older officers (Nalla et al., 2007).

Education was another predictor of support for community-based policing and police-community partnerships. According to several studies, education seems to have very little (Adams, Rohe, & Arcury, 2002; Lewis et al., 1999; Paoline, Myers, & Worden, 2000; Sun, 2002; Worden, 1990) or no effect (Schafer, 2002) on police officers' attitudes. However, Brooks, Piquero, and Cronin (1993) found that police officers with at least some college tend to be more service-oriented and more likely to believe that the community supports them compared to their colleagues without any college at all. In Slovenia, according to the findings of the 2001 study among police officers, more educated officers are more favourably disposed towards community policing (Pagon & Lobnikar, 2001).

While there is considerable research on citizens' and police officers' perspectives on various dimensions of community policing and police-community partnerships, very little research has assessed the impact of reforms aimed at improving community-based policing, more so in Slovenia. We fill this void in the research by examining Slovenian police officers' attitudes towards police operational philosophy, community partnerships, and general citizen cynicism of such partner-

⁹ Survey was conducted in 1997 on the population of police officers (163) in Racine, Wisconsin, USA.

¹⁰ Survey was conducted in 2002 on the sample of 434 Korean police officers. They examined how individual, organizational and beat variables affect officers' attitudes toward citizen support (Moon & Zager, 2007).

¹¹ Data are drawn from the large-scale evaluation of community policing Chicago, conducted between 1992 and 1995.

¹² Respondents were asked five questions relating to police mandate and whom they believe it is their job to serve (e.g. *Officers in my unit know their primary duty is to serve the people of the community; Police officers have to be accountable to the citizens for their acts*) (Nalla et al., 2007).

ships before and after community policing ideas were more formally introduced and intensively promoted by the police leadership. More specifically, we wanted to assess if there are differences in officers' perceptions between the two time frames and whether there were any measureable significant differences in their attitudes.

3 Data and Analytic Strategy

Data for 2006 came from a larger research study conducted in Slovenia on police organizational characteristics in 2006 (Nalla et al. 2007). The survey questions were drawn from prior research on organizational characteristics (Zeitz, Russell, & Richie 1997), police culture (Paoline, 2001, 2003, 2004), and community policing (Nalla et al., 2007). The survey was originally written in English and translated into Slovene. Further, back-translation and pre-test methods were employed to increase the reliability and validity of the study.

The survey was distributed to 1,100 police officers in two large directorates or cities with a population range of 86,000 to 255,000; four mid-sized directorates or cities with a population range of 22,000 to 38,000; and, five small-sized directorates or cities with a population range of 6,000 to 13,000. A total of 995 (90%) usable surveys were returned. Data for the 2011 study also came from a larger research¹³ with a sample from all eight police directorates - from each one small, one medium, and one large municipality was randomly selected, representing officers from 24 police stations in Slovenia. A total of 1,200 questionnaires were administered, representing the entire officer population of the selected 24 police stations, out of which 581 officers (48%) responded. Though both studies were not originally designed to measure the intervention directly, data that allowed for comparing between the two time periods were compiled from the two data sets to make comparisons as appropriate.

Comparable variables were drawn from the two data sets. The first set of variables consisted of police officers' perceptions of the larger organization's mandates, including their views on the overall and specific mission of the police, and on matters relating to police-community relations as it related to community support, citizen-cooperation, and cynicism of the community. The second set of variables related to perceived organizational support, in terms of supervisory support and opportunities for officers to innovate at work.

The first set of variables on community-related policing matters included questions that tapped into perceptions regarding: the dimensions of police organizations' overall mission; if enforcing the law is the most important responsibility of the officers; if their primary duty is to serve the community residents; the utility of community policing; police-community relationships; and cynicism as related to working with the community. Questions regarding organizational support related to supervisory support and innovation. All attitudinal questions required answers on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

4 Results

4.1 Demographic Characteristics

In terms of the demographics (See Table 1), the samples were fairly evenly distributed in both data sets. Female officers made up 12% (2006) and 15% (2011) respectively. This is close to the national average of about 15 percent of total female police officers in the country (Policija, 2014a). In terms of age, a majority of the officers were 40 years or younger, representing 80% (2006) and 76% (2011) respectively, and the remaining respondents were 41 years and above. A similar distribution by age groups was found for 46 to 50 years, 51 to 55 years, and 56 years and older categories. In terms of years of service, officers' experience in years was fairly evenly distributed in both years. In the 2006 sample, 27 percent of the officers had been on the force for 5 years or fewer, 32 percent had 6 to 15 years' service, and 41 percent had 16 years or more. In the 2011 sample, 23 percent had been on the force for five years or fewer, 38 percent for 6 to 15 years, and 38 percent for 16 years or longer. The last demographic characteristic was work type. The 2006 sample had a fairly small percentage (5%) of the officers assigned to community policing, compared to 11 percent in 2011, with the remaining officers coded as other. Although small, these numbers are comparable to the actual population of community policing officers, as there are 327 of them among the total of 7,212 police officers in Slovenia, which is less than 0.5 percent.

¹³ Nationwide research *Feelings of safety and the role of police in local security provision* conducted by the Faculty of Criminal Justice and Security, University of Maribor (Meško et al., 2012).

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of Police officers – 2006 and 2011

Variable	Value	2006 (N/%) (N = 995)	2011 (N/%) (N = 581)
Gender	1 Female	120/12.1	84/14.6
	2 Male	875/87.9	492/85.4
Age	1 ≤ 40 years	772/80.2	427/76.3
	2 > 41 years	190/19.8	133/23.8
Years of service	1 Up to 5 years	268/26.9	132/22.7
	2 6-15 years	316/31.8	219/37.7
	3 16 years and more	411/41.3	220/37.9
Work Type	1 Community policing officer	37/4.9	57/11.3
	2 Other	716/95.1	447/88.7

ranging from “Strongly disagree” (1) to “Strongly agree” (5). The findings are presented in Table 2. Overall, there was an increase in the number of officers who noted their awareness between 2006 (37%, Mean = 3.16) and 2011 (50%, Mean = 3.43). Results of T-tests, presented in Table 2, indicate that there is a statistically significant difference between police officers’ perceptions in 2006 and 2011 ($t = -4.92$). We did further analysis of variance by subgroups. Both male and female officers expressed their awareness of the overall mission of the department. The mean score for females increased from 2006 (Mean = 3.28) to 2011 (Mean = 3.56), a finding that was statistically significant ($t = 3.94$). Similarly, the mean scores for males increased from 2006 (Mean = 3.15) to 2011 (Mean = 3.40), with a statistically significant mean score ($t = 19.57$). Similar increases were noted among various groups within age, years of service, and work type with statistically significant mean differences. While there were significant differences among the groups, only a couple of statistically significant differences were noted within groups. More specifically, in 2006, compared to community policing officers, other officers appeared to agree about their awareness of the department’s overall mission. In 2011, statistically significant differences were found only for sub-groups by age.

4.2 Police Mandate – Overall Police Mission

Respondents were asked a single question to assess officers’ perceptions of the overall mission of the police organization: *Officers in the police department are aware of its overall mission.* The responses were coded on a 5-point Likert scale

Table 2: Police officers’ perceptions of their department’s overall mission – 2006 and 2011

Variable	2006 (N = 995)		2011 (N = 581)		T-value ³
	SA/A ¹ (N/%)	Mean/S.D ²	SA/A (N/%)	Mean/S.D	
Officers in the police department are aware of its overall mission.	370/37.1	3.16/1.02	289/49.8	3.43/1.02	-4.92**

ANOVA		Mean	Mean	F-value ³
Gender	Female	3.28	3.56	3.94*
	Male	3.15	3.40	19.57***
F-value		1.88	1.72	
Age	< 40 years	3.16	3.37	11.67***
	> 41 years	3.18	3.59	14.68***
F-value		0.05	4.40*	
Years of service	Less than 5	3.18	3.49	8.41**
	6-15 years	3.11	3.36	6.80**
	16 years and more	3.19	3.45	10.29***
F-value		0.63	0.53	
Work Type	CP officer	2.62	3.25	7.94**
	Other	3.12	3.47	32.50***
F-value		9.14**	2.38	

¹ Response categories range from 1 (strongly disagree) [SD] to 5 (strongly agree) [SA]. SA/A represent strongly agree and agree.

² Mean on a 5-point scale and standard deviation.

³* p ≤ .05; ** p ≤ .01; *** p ≤ .001

4.3 Police Mandate – Is Enforcement of Law the Most Important Responsibility?

Clearly, police officers' attitudes about the mission of the police department have changed in the last 5 years. However, the respondents were unclear about the nature of that mission, that is, if it was more law-enforcement-oriented policing or community-oriented policing. We asked officers a single question about the extent to which they agreed on officers' most important responsibility, using a 5-point Likert scale as noted above: *Enforcing the law is by far a police officer's most important responsibility*. The findings are presented in Table 3. While 59 percent of officers (Mean = 3.71) agreed with the statement in 2006, only a third of the respondents

(30%, Mean = 3.10) in 2011 agreed with sentiment. The results suggest that there is a statistically significant difference between police officers' perceptions in 2006 and 2011 ($t = 13.35$). Additional analyses of variance also suggest similar trends for all subgroups in gender, age, years of experience, and work type. The largest statistical significance was found for males ($t = 158.69$), non-community policing officers ($t = 135.56$), and those aged 40 years and under ($t = 131.37$). This suggests that overall more officers in 2011, compared to 2006, expressed awareness that enforcement of law is definitely not the most important responsibility.

Table 3: Police officers' perceptions of the importance of enforcement the law – 2006 and 2011

Variable	2006 (N = 995)		2011 (N = 581)		T-value ³
	SA/A ¹ (N/%)	Mean/S.D ²	SA/A (N/%)	Mean/S.D	
Enforcing the law is by far a police officers' most important responsibility.	582/58.5	3.71/1.06	172/29.7	2.97/1.06	13.35**
ANOVA	Mean		Mean		F-value ³
Gender					
	Female	3.71	3.10		20.84***
	Male	3.71	2.94		158.69***
F-value		0.00	1.52		
Age					
	< 40 years	3.70	2.96		131.37***
	> 41 years	3.76	2.96		47.14***
F-value		0.58	0.01		
Years of service					
	Less than 5	3.74	3.17		27.18***
	6-15 years	3.68	2.94		60.30***
	16 years and more	3.70	2.86		89.43***
F-value		0.24	2.44		
Work Type					
	CP officer	3.97	2.83		26.90***
	Other	3.73	2.98		135.56***
F-value		1.97	1.15		

¹ Response categories range from 1 (strongly disagree) [SD] to 5 (strongly agree) [SA]. SA/A represent strongly agree and agree.

² Mean on a 5-point scale and standard deviation.

³ * p ≤ .05; ** p ≤ .01; *** p ≤ .001

4.4 Police Mandate – Is Serving People the Primary Duty of Officers?

The previous finding suggested that officers in 2011 appeared to disagree with the responses from 2006 on whether the most important responsibility of the police is to enforce the law. To clarify this issue, we asked the officers the extent to which they agreed with the statement: *Officers in my unit know their primary duty is to serve the people of the community*. The findings are presented in Table 4.

There was a slight increase in the percentage of officers who believed that officers in their unit felt that their primary duty was to serve the people in the community from 2006 (33%, Mean = 3.08) to 2011 (41%, Mean = 3.28). The mean differences are statistically significant (t = -3.92). Analyses of variance among groups showed a similar trend for some sub-groups with statistically significant mean differences. These included males (t = 13.26), those 40 years and under

(t = 9.85), those 41 years and above (t = 5.48), those with less than 5 years of experience (t = 12.27), and those with 16 years' experience or more (t = 3.72), as well as community policing officers (t = 7.05) and others (t = 10.34). This finding suggests that while more officers in 2011 compared to 2006 believed that their primary responsibility was not enforcement of law, a similar trend in the opposite direction was apparent, with more officers believing that serving the people was their primary duty. This may be reflective of the more formal and intensive introduction of community policing ideas since 2006. Interestingly, in 2006, compared to community policing officers, other officers had a higher mean score, a finding that was statistically significant (t = 7.46).

Table 4: Police officers' perceptions of their primary duty – Service the citizens – 2006 and 2011

Variable	2006 (N = 995)		2011 (N = 581)		T-value ³
	SA/A ¹ (N/%)	Mean/S.D ²	SA/A (N/%)	Mean/S.D	
Officers in my unit know their primary duty is to serve the people of the community.	327/32.8	3.08/1.01	239/41.1	3.28/0.99	-3.92**
ANOVA	Mean		Mean		F-value ³
Gender					
	Female	3.15	3.36		2.37
	Male	3.07	3.28		13.26***
F-value		0.68	0.48		
Age					
	< 40 years	3.06	3.26		9.85**
	> 41 years	3.14	3.40		5.48*
F-value		0.93	2.14		
Years of service					
	Less than 5	3.04	3.40		12.27***
	6-15 years	3.07	3.25		3.48
	16 years and more	3.10	3.26		3.72*
F-value		1.29	1.04		
Work Type					
	CP officer	2.62	3.19		7.05**
	Other	3.09	3.29		10.34**
F-value		7.46**	0.44		

¹ Response categories range from 1 (strongly disagree) [SD] to 5 (strongly agree) [SA]. SA/A represent strongly agree and agree.

² Mean on a 5-point scale and standard deviation.

³* p ≤ .05; ** p ≤ .01; *** p ≤ .001

4.5 Police Mandate – On the Utility of Community Policing

The previous finding suggested that there was a greater consensus among officers in 2011 about the value and importance of community citizens as the central focus of their duties. Consistent with this theme, we questioned them about the utility of community policing. More specifically, we asked about their degree of agreement with the statement: *Community policing is a waste of time and has no value.* The findings are presented in Table 5.

Compared to the groups of respondents in 2006 (72%, Mean = 2.14), fewer officers agreed with this negatively worded statement in 2011 (37%, Mean = 1.84). This statistically significant finding (t = 5.85) is similar to the trend seen in the officers' assertion of the importance of citizens in police functions. In other words, the change in the degree of their perceptions of citizen- and community-centric orientation suggests

that the intensive introduction of community policing ideas since 2006 may have had some influence on shaping the officers' perceptions of the importance of community-oriented policing. Analyses of variance among groups showed a similar trend for some sub-groups with statistically significant mean differences. Prominent among them are findings among males (t = 30.51), those 40 years and younger (t = 24.93), those 41 years and older (t = 5.79), those with 6 to 15 years of experience (t = 20.89), and those with 16 years' experience or more (t = 12.67), as well as for non-community policing officers (t = 28.37). Interestingly, there are no statistically significant mean differences for those working as community policing officers. This finding suggests that more officers in 2011 compared to 2006 believed in the utility and value of community policing. Consistent with the expectation, the one statistically significant mean difference was found between community policing officers and others in 2011 (t = 3.83), where non-community policing officers did not see much value in community policing programmes.

Table 5: Police officers' perceptions of the utility of Community Policing – 2006 and 2011

Variable	2006 (N = 995)		2011 (N = 581)		T-value ³
	SA/A ¹ (N/%)	Mean/S.D ²	SA/A (N/%)	Mean/S.D	
Community Policing is a waste of time and is useless.	72/7.2	2.14/0.99	37/6.4	1.84/0.97	5.85**
ANOVA	Mean		Mean		F-value ³
Gender					
	Female	2.08	1.86		2.84
	Male	2.15	1.84		30.51***
F-value		0.53	0.04		
Age					
	< 40 years	2.14	1.85		24.93***
	> 41 years	2.09	1.83		5.79*
F-value		0.45	0.04		
Years of service					
	Less than 5	2.08	1.95		1.49
	6-15 years	2.11	1.73		20.89***
	16 years and more	2.19	1.89		12.57***
F-value		1.08	2.47		
Work Type					
	CP officer	1.89	1.60		2.53
	Other	2.18	1.86		28.37***
F-value		2.92	3.83*		

¹ Response categories range from 1 (strongly disagree) [SD] to 5 (strongly agree) [SA]. SA/A represent strongly agree and agree.

² Mean on a 5-point scale and standard deviation.

³ * p ≤ .05; ** p ≤ .01; *** p ≤ .001

4.6 On Police-Community Relationships – Citizen Cooperation

We asked respondents in both 2006 and 2011 a series of questions on police-community relationships. These topics were centred on officers' perceived citizen cooperation, cynicism regarding community members, and the relationship between quality of police work and citizens' quality of life.

The first issue centred on the extent of officers' perception of citizens' willingness to cooperate with the police. We asked the officers about their degree of agreement with three statements: (a) *Citizens often call the police if they see something suspicious*; (b) *Citizens often provide information about a crime if they know something and are asked by the police*; and, (c) *Citizens are willing to work with the police to try to solve neighbourhood problems*. The findings are presented in Table 6. Of the three items, only the first item on "call the police" saw a slight increase in the percentage of officers in 2011

(37%, Mean = 3.21) agreeing with the statement compared to respondents in 2006 (33%, Mean = 3.07). This difference was found to be statistically significant (t = -2.68). However, the remaining two questions did not exhibit any statistically significant differences between the two time frames. To perform ANOVAs, we developed a scale to compare mean differences for subgroups. The scale had loadings between 0.73 ~ 0.84 with KMO of 0.66 and Cronbach Alfa of 0.71, suggesting a fairly strong reliability.

A few differences were observed between subgroups from the two samples. Males in 2011 (Mean = 9.12) with 16 years or more of service (Mean = 9.36) and working non-community policing officers (Mean = 9.20) expressed a higher degree of confidence in citizen cooperation than did their counterparts in 2006. This finding once again suggests that there is a slight increase in 2011 in the confidence expressed by police officers in citizens' willingness to cooperate and work with the officers. It is also worth noting that there were statistically sig-

nificant within-group mean differences within gender and age categories. In 2006, compared to males, females and officers over 41 years had more trust in citizen cooperation relative to their counterparts. A similar statistically significant mean difference was also found in the age group for 2011 respondents.

to citizen cooperation. We asked the officers their degree of agreement with two statements: (a) *Police officers have reason to be distrustful of citizens*, and (b) *If a police officer is kind to people they usually abuse (take advantage of) him/her*. The findings are presented in Table 7. Compared to 2006 (37%,

Table 6: Police officers’ perceptions of “Citizen Cooperation” – 2006 and 2011

Citizen Cooperation ¹		2006 (N = 995)		2011 (N = 581)		
Variables		SA/A ² (N/%)	Mean/S.D ³	SA/A (N/%)	Mean/S.D	T-value ⁴
Citizens often call the police if they see something suspicious.		330/33.1	3.07/1.03	216/37.2	3.21/0.93	-2.68*
Citizens often provide information about a crime if they know something and are asked by police.		216/21.7	2.82/0.92	131/22.6	2.86/0.90	-0.95
Citizens are willing to work with the police and try to solve neighbourhood problems.		288/28.9	3.01/0.92	166/28.5	3.05/0.86	-0.69
ANOVA		Mean ⁵		Mean		F-value ⁴
Gender						
	Female	9.43		9.12		5.47*
	Male	8.83		0.00		30.51***
F-value		7.87**		0.04		
Age						
	< 40 years	8.83		9.04		2.38
	> 41 years	9.21		9.50		1.19
F-value		4.51*		4.43*		
Years of service						
	Less than 5	8.92		9.11		0.61
	6-15 years	8.81		8.88		1.13
	16 years and more	8.95		9.36		4.58*
F-value		0.38		1.77		
Work Type						
	CP officer	8.27		9.02		3.13
	Other	8.93		9.20		4.03*
F-value		3.00		0.37		

¹ Factor loadings for each item range from 0.73 to 0.84; KMO: 0.66; α: 0.71; Mean: 2.99; SD³: 0.74

² Response categories range from 1 (strongly disagree) [SD] to 5 (strongly agree) [SA]. SA/A represent strongly agree and agree.

³ Mean on a 5-point scale and standard deviation.

⁴ * p ≤ .05; ** p ≤ .01; *** p ≤ .001

⁵ Mean Range: 3 = Strongly Disagree ~ 15 = Strongly Agree

4.7 On Police-Community Relationships – Officer Cynicism about Citizens

Within this group of questions we examined whether differences exist in how officers in the two time frames perceived police cynicism towards citizens. In some ways, this measured the opposite reaction to the statements relating

Mean = 3.19), fewer officers in 2011 (23%, Mean = 2,90) agreed with the statement on “distrust”– only the first item on “call the police” saw a slight increase in the percentage of officers in 2011 (37%, Mean = 3.21). Similarly, more respondents in 2006 (36%, Mean = 3.16) were cynical about citizens than the group in 2011 (33%, Mean = 3.03). Both findings had statistically significant mean differences (t = 5.78, 2.21, respectively).

To perform ANOVAs, we developed a scale to compare mean differences for subgroups. Both statements on the scale had loadings of 0.80 with KMO 0.50 and Cronbach Alfa of 0.44, suggesting weak reliability of the scale. Differences emerged for most all subgroups among the various independent variables between the two samples. Once again, males in 2011 (Mean = 5.91) in both age categories (Mean = 6.03 and 5.53, respectively, who have worked for 6 to 15 years (Mean = 6.00) and for 16 years or more (Mean = 5.62), irrespective of their work type (Community policing officer mean = 5.68; Other officers mean = 5.93), were less cynical compared to

the 2006 sample of officers. The mean differences between the two groups were statistically significant. These findings suggest the officers' responding in 2011 appeared to place greater faith and trust in citizens than the earlier group of officers. In addition, in the 2011 sample, statistically significant mean differences were noted for age and years of service. More specifically, age, i.e., older males over 41 years and with longer service relative to their younger colleagues were found to be less cynical of citizens. These mean differences were statistically significant.

Table 7: Police officers' perceptions of "Cynicism" – 2006 and 2011

Cynicism ¹		2006 (N = 995)		2011 (N = 581)		
Variables		SA/A ² (N/%)	Mean/S.D ³	SA/A (N/%)	Mean/S.D	T-value ⁴
Police officers have reason to be distrustful of most citizens.		368/37	3.19/1.07	134/23.1	2.90/0.92	5.78**
If a police officer is kind to people they usually abuse him/her.		358/36	3.16/1.09	194/33.4	3.03/1.08	2.21*
ANOVA		Mean ⁵		Mean		F-value ⁴
Gender						
	Female		6.23		5.94	1.65
	Male		6.37		5.91	22.29***
F-value			0.58		0.02	
Age						
	< 40 years		6.35		6.03	9.65
	> 41 years		6.37		5.53	20.39***
F-value			0.02		11.64***	
Years of service						
	Less than 5		6.43		6.27	0.75
	6-15 years		6.40		6.00	7.20**
	16 years and more		6.26		5.62	21.85***
F-value			0.96		6.35***	
Work Type						
	CP officer		6.62		5.68	8.21**
	Other		6.21		5.93	7.78**
F-value			1.86		1.31	

¹ Factor loading for both items is 0.80; KMO: 0.50; α : 0.44; Mean: 3.08; SD³: 0.85

² Response categories range from 1 (strongly disagree) [SD] to 5 (strongly agree) [SA]. SA/A represent strongly agree and agree.

³ Mean on a 5-point scale and standard deviation.

⁴* p ≤ .05; ** p ≤ .01; *** p ≤ .001

⁵ Mean Range: 2 = Strongly Disagree ~ 10 = Strongly Agree

5 Discussion and Concluding Remarks

Police scholars worldwide have recognized that one of the major hurdles for successful community-based programmes are misperceptions, as inaccurate as they may be, between the two major actors involved – police and citizens. In this research we examined police officers' own views on various dimensions of community-based policing efforts, including the perceived departmental operational philosophy, the utility of community policing, citizen cooperation, and citizen cynicism before and after the national programme was introduced in 2006 which implied intensive development of community policing. More specifically, in this exploratory study we examined whether there are perceptible differences in officers' views on these various dimensions not only between two time frames (2006 and 2011) but also within various subgroups of respondents within each time frame.

The overall findings were that Slovenian police in general in 2011 have more favourable views of the overall mission of citizen-centric policing, representing a more service-oriented approach over a legalistic law enforcement approach. Second, officers in 2011 held more positive views of the utility and value of community policing. Third, officers in 2011 showed an increase in favourable attitudes towards citizen-police cooperative efforts and community building. Finally, officers in 2011 were less cynical about perceived citizen distrust of police officers. This suggests that overall it is fair to conclude that community policing ideas more formally introduced in 2006 and intensively promoted by the police leadership since 2009 have been successful and received well by police officers.

Consistent with prior research conducted in Slovenia and elsewhere, the findings from this research suggest that age, experience, and assignments are significant predictors of officers' positive attitudes. These findings have utility for police organizations to paint a broad picture of the success of promoting community based ideas among specific groups. For instance, groups that appear to differ from other groups in each category can be targeted for professional development and training programs to orient them to the broader service oriented policing agenda that Slovenian police aim to achieve. However, what the findings do not reveal is that it is difficult to identify conclusively the specific factors that may have had an impact on bringing about these positive changes in the officers' broader acceptance of citizen-centric policing – or to be more specific, whether organizational factors such as supervisory support, social networks, job autonomy, and job satisfaction play any role on determining these positive attitudes. Future research should address these issues, while encouraging findings from 2011 should present a challenge

for the future. Moreover, for further development of police-citizen relations building we suggest a systematic approach to the monitoring of the elements constituting community- and service-oriented policing agenda.

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Reforme in organizacijske spremembe na področju policijskega dela v skupnosti: stališča policistov do odnosa med prebivalci in policijo v Sloveniji

Dr. Mahesh K. Nalla, redni profesor za kazensko pravosodje, School of Criminal Justice, Michigan State University, Michigan, USA. E-pošta: nalla@msu.edu

Dr. Maja Modic, docentka za varnostne vede, Fakulteta za varnostne vede Univerze v Mariboru, Slovenija. E-pošta: maja.modic@fvv.uni-mb.si

Dr. Gorazd Meško, redni profesor za kriminologijo, Fakulteta za varnostne vede Univerze v Mariboru, Slovenija. E-pošta: gorazd.mesko@fvv.uni-mb.si

Stališča policistov do odnosa med policisti in skupnostjo se ne oblikujejo zgolj preko stikov s prebivalci pri vsakdanjem policijskem delu, ampak tudi v okviru organizacijskih prizadevanj za spodbujanje pozitivnih odnosov in sprejemanja poslanstva policije. Leta 2009 je vodstvo slovenske policije pričelo bolj intenzivno promovirati pomen odnosov policije s skupnostjo, z namenom izboljšanja kakovosti policijskega dela in posledično izvajanja policijskega dela v skupnosti. Namen študije je proučiti, ali so se stališča slovenskih policistov do njihovega odnosa s skupnostjo in do policijskega dela v skupnosti od leta 2006 do 2011 spremenila. Primerjali smo stališča policistov do različnih vidikov odnosa med policijo in skupnostjo ter do policijskega dela v skupnosti pred in po obdobju bolj aktivnega promoviranja policijskega dela v skupnosti. Ugotovitve iz leta 2006 kažejo, da so bili policisti nezadovoljni oziroma negotovi glede sodelovanja prebivalcev pri preventivni dejavnosti in glede podpore prebivalcev, med tem ko so njihova stališča 5 let kasneje občutno bolj pozitivna. Slednje vključuje njihova stališča do poslanstva policije, usmerjenosti v skupnost, policijskega dela v skupnosti, pripravljenosti prebivalcev za sodelovanje s policijo pri preventivni dejavnosti, in nižjo stopnjo cinizma do državljanov. Opisane ugotovitve kažejo na zadovoljivo raven implementacije idej s področja policijskega dela v skupnosti.

Ključne besede: policijsko delo v skupnosti, odnos med policisti in prebivalci, stališča, podpora nadrejenih, Slovenija

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