



COMMENTARY

VOLUME 2

3 THINGS WE CAN LEARN FROM POLICEWOMEN

www.analyticamk.org



Female police officers are less corrupted than men, in general they do not use excessive force and they increase the confidence in the police among vulnerable categories of citizens.

Our societies can learn a lot from female police officers. Their policing style can contribute in reforming Macedonia's police into an institution with higher approval and integrity rate, as well as an institution where community policing is one of the pillars of its work.

According to [Analytica's public opinion research](#) the percent of citizens who believe that the police is corrupted is high. Yet, corruption is something that is not mentioned to a great extent when female police officers are described.

Therefore, it is necessary to study the methods that policewomen use during their work which could ultimately bring a positive change. What is it that women can teach us about the police work?

FEMALE COPS ARE LESS CORRUPTED

Recently published [Analytica's public opinion research](#) about the citizens' trust into the Macedonian police revealed several interesting findings. More than half, or to be exact 58,5% of the citizens trust the police. Simi-

larly, 57,6% of the respondents believe that the police is corrupt. On one hand, this ratio looks inconsistent, on the other hand, the Macedonian citizens correlate trust and police corruption, due to the fact that many do not consider corruption to be a bad phenomenon.

However something that stands out as particularly striking is that less than 1 percent of the respondents consider policewomen corrupted, while corrupted behavior of male police officers is far greater according to the research. [Citizens of the Western Balkans](#) gave similar responses to these issues.

These figures suggest that one should look into greater details about the reasons why respondents consider women in the police to be less corrupted than men.

WOMEN DO NOT USE OVERWHELMING FORCE

Macedonian police often receives negative criticism that it 'flexes muscles' during police operations. Despite several cases of [police brutality](#), for which there was vocal criticism from citizens and number of civil society organizations, the internal control measures did not suc-

ceed to reveal the mistakes made by the police. The latest series of criticism about the over-excessive use of force came from number of [international organizations](#), in April this year, when thousands of migrants attempted to cross the Greek-Macedonian border. Similar criticism is also present when it comes to the police offering protection (safeguarding public safety) during public protests.

Policewomen use force far less. According to several studies, majority of women do not really rely on authoritarian style of policing and choose other ways of solving conflict situations. For example, the [National Center for Women and Policing Study](#) shows that in the USA, citizens file complaints against female cops when it comes to over excessive use of force in only 5% of the cases and they are officially processed in only 2% of the cases.

POLICEWOMEN DRIVEN POLICING MODEL

In different research publications, policewomen are suggested to be better communicators than their male counterparts. In Macedonia for instance, the citizens in general have a positive perception about the work of police women. [Analytica's public opinion research](#) shows that both male and female po-

lice officers receive kind words when people are asked to describe police officers. However when it comes to positive comments about professionalism and kindness they are by far more present when it comes to policewomen. Using less force and having better communication skills gives women the ability to use non violent methods and innovative models and approaches when solving conflict situations. Hiring more women in the police would contribute to better representativeness of the police service overall. This should also reflect in increased citizens' trust in the work of the police. The higher [representation of women](#) in the police also plays an important role in building trust among the vulnerable categories of citizens such as: family violence victims, single mothers, etc.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In the past few years, Macedonia's police have constantly received serious criticism about the excessive use of force. Most of the time, the comments were addressed towards handling civic protests which several times went out of control, as well as, the Kumanovo clashes in 2015 and other police operations initiated by the Ministry of Interior. Some of the citizens have also expressed discontent because of lack of police transparency and presence of police officers in their local communities.

Taking this into account, a reform in the police is necessary which would increase the role of women in strategic positions. One of the few possible starting points is conducting an analysis of what women do when it comes to policing

while at the same time receiving a higher approval rate by the population. Citizens tend to score female police officers positively and perceive them less corrupt. Analyses in other countries show that compared to men, women do not use militarized style policing. Instead they use more approachable and kind methods when solving conflicts. This way of policing increases trust between the communities and the institutions.

Reaffirming police integrity is a prerequisite for building a more cohesive society. Police officer can fulfill his/her duties in the community only if he/she is visible, approachable and effective. The way to achieve this goal can be partially addressed by applying the methods that female police officers use and showed to be effective.

This Commentary has first appeared in ResPublica.edu.mk written in Macedonian. Analytica think tank is not responsible for its content. The author Martin Manaskov was an intern at Analytica (July-October 2016).

www.analyticamk.org



MARTIN MANASKOV