

БЕЗБЕДНОСНИ ДИЈАЛОЗИ / SECURITY DIALOGUES

ISSN 1857-7172

eISSN 1857-8055

Година 10, Број 1-2, 2019/Vol. 10, No. 1-2, 2019



ISSN 1857-7172

eISSN 1857-8055

OPEN ACCESS

[http:// sd.fzf.ukim.edu.mk](http://sd.fzf.ukim.edu.mk)

Издавач/Publisher

Филозофски факултет – Скопје/Faculty of Philosophy – Skopje
Институт за безбедност, одбрана и мир/Institute of security, defence and peace
Уредувачки одбор/Editorial board: тел. (+389) 2 3066 232, email sd@fzf.ukim.edu.mk

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Enhancing Security in an Urbanized World

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Компјутерска обработка: MAP-CAЖ

Печати: MAP-CAЖ Тираж: 100



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URBAN SECURITY PROVIDERS: STATE, NON-STATE AND PRIVATE ACTORS⁷³

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Abstract: We live in a predominantly urban world. Contemporary cities are places of new opportunities, improvement of social wellbeing, cultural and artistic enjoyment, the dominant civilizing factors and hubs of innovation. But cities are also sources and theatres for numerous and diverse problems, ranging from crime and violence, to inadequate provision of communal services. That is why it does not come as a surprise that scientists and practitioners more and more discuss about urban security. The city, area of unprecedented social, political and economic complexity, is arguably one of the emerging referent objects, a level of analysis marked by specific security dynamics.

This paper is concerned about one important dimension of urban security – its provision. More precisely, objective of the study is to describe, analyze and understand providing of security in the urban context, as well as actors i.e. providers responsible for protecting important values from significant urban security threats. We argue that there are several types of urban security providers: state, non-state and private. It is discussed that state security providers (national, regional and local authorities, police, armed forces, emergency protection services and other agencies) are most active actors in protecting citizens from serious security threats, and bare most responsibilities in the field of urban security provision. However, upwards, downwards and horizontal shifts in steering activities and power, caused state provider to lose their monopoly in securing urban environment, which gave rise to non-state (international and national NGOs, citizens' organizations, media, schools) and private actors as urban security providers. There is also a preposition that in order to achieve optimal level of urban security all involved actors must cooperate and work together in a network of diverse and interconnected urban security providers, creating what is called nodal or plural security provision.

For theory and practice of urban security, it is of utmost significance to identify and explore security providers, and understand their role and responsibilities, due to rising urban population, diversity of urban settlements and complexity of contemporary urban security problems (challenges, risks, vulnerabilities, and threats).

Key words: urban security providers, state actors, non-state actors, private actors, networked security provision

⁷³ The paper represents the result of Project 47011 financed by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia.

Introduction

We live in a predominantly urban world. Contemporary cities are places of new opportunities, improvement of social wellbeing, cultural and artistic enjoyment, the dominant civilizing factors and hubs of innovation. The leading institutions in education, research, medical care, and finance are found there. The factories and service companies that depend most on skilled labor are concentrated in cities, ensuring that well managed cities can be economically self-sufficient. By the very nature of the activities they host, in their structures and in their monuments, cities are also powerful symbols that embody the pride of a nation.

However, cities, especially larger ones, are particularly vulnerable because all their systems are interdependent, and the vulnerability of one system can have a major impact on other systems (Bugliarello, 2003: 499). Unless the population can be assured a reasonably safe and secure life, no amount of social services or economic resources would make life in the city sustainable (Branscomb, 2006: 225-226). As we may conclude, cities are sources and theatres for numerous and diverse problems, ranging from crime and violence, to inadequate provision of communal services. That is why it does not come as a surprise why scientists and practitioners more and more discuss about urban security. The city, area of unprecedented social, political and economic complexity, is arguably one of the emerging referent objects in security studies, a level of analysis marked by specific security dynamics.

This paper is concerned about one important dimension of urban security – its provision. More precisely, objective of the study is to describe, analyze and understand providing of security in the urban context, as well as actors i.e. providers responsible for protecting important values from significant urban security threats. In order to achieve this goal, the paper is structured as follows. First, the basic conceptions on security provision are outlined. In the second part we focus on specificities of security provision in the urban environment. Third, characteristics, role and activities of state and non-state security providers are addressed, as well as nodal form of security provision. Finally, some of the approaches and strategies for urban security provision are proposed.

Security providers

Security providers, in the most general sense, can be identified as actors involved in achieving security and responding to security problems in order to protect vital values. These are all forces and entities engaged in the protection of important values against serious security threats (Lipovac, 2014). Some authors differentiate macro (international) and micro (sub-state) levels of actors that participate in reaching security (Møller, 2000). It is commonly considered that there are state and non-state security providers, with private security providers sometimes considered as separate category. State or public providers are usually military, police forces, different levels of government, intelligence, emergency protection services etc. Non-state providers could be non-governmental organizations, citizens' associations, media, private companies. Non-state actors are not "new" in the security provision arena. As Elke Krahnmann stated they "have not only proliferated disproportionately over the past two decades, [but] also significantly

expanded their contribution to the making and implementation of security policies" (2005: 9). Which security providers will be active in providing security and what will be the scope of their responsibilities depends mainly on the level of security, i.e. discussed unit of security, as well as on the nature of the security problems (challenges, risks, threats).

Although state actors, i.e. national government, regional and local authorities, police, military, other services and agencies, are traditionally recognized security providers, modern security provision is increasingly becoming the task of a network of actors. To signify the complexity of security provision, adjectives such as nodal, plural or polycentric are often used. These terms serve to indicate the fact that the provision of security should not be limited to state actors and their activities (Dupont and Wood, 2007:99). Within the complex network of actors in charge of providing security, the state actors, private security as well as individuals have specific roles (Button, 2007). There is also a notion of "security governance" described as network of growing range of diverse security providers, "a fragmented mode of policy making that includes state and non-state actors" (Krahmann, 2005: 11) on different levels, from individual to international. Provision of security is the duty of numerous formal and informal, legal and illegal actors who attach specific significance to security, carry out various activities in accordance with different interests (Dupont and Wood, 2007: 111).

Urban security providers

Considering security providers at the city-level, the authors who question this issue are either examining security in the city in its entirety (Devroe, 2013; Meško et al., 2013, Virta, 2013), or they are trying to explain security provision through one of the segments or problems (such as crime prevention and repression, emergency, social delinquency etc). Providing urban security includes models, strategies, and practices for identifying and controlling problems and risks associated with crime and antisocial behavior in the city. Broadly speaking, this process refers to the constellation of institutions, actors and actions, whether central or local, formal or non-formal, public or private, commercial or voluntary, which provide social control, conflict resolution and protection from threats (Recasens et al., 2013: 372). Providing urban security includes different levels, actors and contexts, and in particular their interconnectedness.

Security providers in contemporary cities are numerous, which depends on the many factors that are affected by the specificity of the urban environment, which relates to the size of the city, its appearance, the functions it has, the socio-demographic structure of the population, built environment. The security response will also be heavily influenced by the nature of the security problems that dominate in one city. We can therefore expect different ways of providing security in the highly violent cities of Latin America, post-industrial cities of the Far East, developed cities of Europe, overpopulated cities of Africa, or the capitals of post-communist countries. The nature of the provision of urban security can be influenced by legislative and constitutional solutions regarding the political organization of the country (whether it is federal or unitary) (Devroe, 2013).

In general, two broad types of urban security providers could be identified. The first group consists of state actors who are also official representatives of the government. In one city, those are primarily police (national or local), local authorities, then numerous consultative bodies, civil protection services, emergency management sectors and other specialized agencies and services. Within non-state actors, very roughly, we can accommodate representatives of civil society - citizens, civic initiatives, non-governmental organizations, as well as growing private security sector.

Public security providers in the city

State or public security providers are usually seen as having the most prominent role in the city. They have the widest spectrum of activities and responsibilities for securing the satisfying level of urban life quality, coordinate numerous services and organizations directly and indirectly affecting different spheres of urban security. Local government, national and local police forces, local security councils, and emergency services are the most recognizable in the security provision in urban environment.

Local government is one of the key - if not the key - state security provider at the city level. This stems from the fact that the local government is in charge of a wide range of activities and responsibilities, which relate to almost every area of urban life, and therefore different dimensions of urban security. Local government, in accordance with the authority and degree of power and autonomy at their disposal, can be responsible for responding to a whole range of threats immanent to urban environments. These may be traditional threats to security, such as urban crime, protests and rebellions, as well as contemporary threats such as natural disasters or the consequences of introducing modern information and communication technologies.

In the area of crime prevention and security enhancement in the community, in contemporary urban context, local government is seen as an equally important entity as well as the police. City administrations play a key role in identifying crime risks and vulnerabilities and ensuring that safety and security policies are tailored to meet local needs, including the involving communities and other relevant non-state actors (UNODC, 2016). The principles of good governance in the city require that local authorities and leaders must be responsible for improving security in urban areas.

Expanding the authority of local government in the area of urban security is justified by the fact that local problems require a local response, and that local actors are main experts in solving them. Thus, the local government is seen as a leader in achieving a safer city environment, which implies a holistic approach in creating a policy of urban security (US Department of Justice, 2001: 18-19). City governments have multiple regulatory powers related to crime prevention and control, but also to a range of other resource distribution and executive powers that can also be used as levers to reinforce security and address root causes enabling insecurity.

European institutions have shown growing interest in urban security, and especially for the role of local administrators in its achievement and enhancement. The Council of Europe has published important publication - Prevention of Violence - A Guide for Local Authorities (2002)

- which emphasizes the central role of local government in crime prevention and security for citizens. In this sense, local government can be involved in the prevention of crime in the city, through the prevention of crime, the creation of social policies, policies for vulnerable groups such as young people, minorities, women, then activities related to traffic security, cooperation with the police, the judiciary, the private sector, and encouraging citizen participation.

In addition to the local government, the most visible and most prominent state security provider in the city is the police, since crime and various social deviances are traditionally widespread in the cities. When security management is understood primarily as crime prevention, this activity is usually observed within the community policing model.⁷⁴ According to this concept, the police and the community work closely to identify problems, set priorities and find solutions to issues such as crime, drug abuse, fear of crime, social problems, environmental problems and other types of anti-social behavior and threats to the working and living environment (Meško and Lobnikar, 2005). Community policing is characterized by a decentralized organization whereby police officers obtain legitimacy for their work from the community they serve in addition to the traditional sources of legitimization (e.g. laws, the ruling power and other political structures) (Hahn, 1998).

National police, as well as local police forces, can operate in the city. These two security providers may have different powers and be under the control of various state authorities. National police is usually under the authority on the state level, while local police forces are run by local government.

Recognizing the importance of promoting security and crime prevention, the Council of Europe issued the European Urban Charter (Council of Europe, 1992), pointing out that effective crime prevention involves, inter alia, the involvement of all members of the community, and that the effectiveness of the urban security policies depends on the close cooperation between the police and the local community. Law enforcement must involve local communities and support the systematic use of partnerships and problem-solving techniques to proactively address conditions that give rise to public safety issues and fear of crime. Upholding human rights and the rule of law are vital for enhancing safety in cities (UNODC, 2016: 4).

While it is commonly understood that local government and police have the greatest responsibility in controlling crime and security, other actors also play an increasingly important role in achieving urban security. First of all, those are local administrative bodies, schools, social services etc.

As urban security providers, some cities hold local security bodies with a very diverse composition and duties (Devroe, 2013). These councils are established in municipalities or cities as consultative bodies on crime and security issues (Meško and Lobnikar, 2005). Authors point to several significant advantages of these councils: "democratization of formal social control and control over the police; cooperation of (responsible) citizens and knowing each other; development of more active cooperation between all local key persons; facilitating of "safety conscious-

⁷⁴ Community policing can be labeled as a philosophy and organizational strategy which emphasizes cooperation between citizens and the police (Trojanowicz and Bucqueroux, 1994).

ness" and discussions on local problems and "communities that care" mentality" (Meško and Lobnikar, 2005: 364-365).

There are indications and ideas that in the future, security professionals in the city - urban security managers - might appear. This assumption stems from the complexity of security management in cities and the fact that security provision, especially in urban areas, is a job for professionals (Meško et al., 2013: 291).

It should be noted that in some cases state security entities could be perceived as a source of danger and insecurity. In cities marked by high rates of crime and violence, poor economic performances, poverty, rapid and unplanned urbanization, imperfect electoral processes and corruption, security forces are more often than not seen as agents of violence and intimidation, rather than protection (Brähler, 2014: 17). Local and national government lose control over certain parts of the city, that are left to criminal actors such as drug traffickers, youth gangs and paramilitaries (Arias, 2006; Arias and Goldstein, 2010; Goldstein, 2004). Those who have means react with gating themselves in well protected communities, with private guards and expensive alarm systems. The poor and marginalized groups and citizens feel abandoned in security matters or even threatened by state security forces and seek protection elsewhere. Large segments of the population are forced to share urban space with illegal actors and respect them in return for minimal protection (Campbell and Brenner 2002).

Non-state providers of urban security

Upwards, downwards and horizontal shifts in steering activities and power, caused state provider to lose their exclusivity in securing urban environment, which gave rise to non-state (international and national NGOs, citizens' organizations, media, universities) and private actors and their role as urban security providers. However, their number, range of activities and level of importance differ considerably, bearing in mind that each city has its own protection system, which vary greatly with its size, the nature of the perceived threats and how the city is organized to face them. This section examines the nature and capabilities of non-state actors which enables them to help address urban security threats either in collaboration with governments or independently.

Citizens can actively participate in the achievement and improvement of their own security, by organizing on the neighborhood level and by establishing good cooperation with local authorities and the police. In many cities, especially in the United States, there are organized citizens groups in neighborhoods actively involved in providing security. The so-called Neighborhood Watch is a national program where citizens take responsibility for neighborhood surveillance, report suspicious activities and disturbing behavior to their neighbors (Tulumello, 2018). This program emphasizes the role of the community in providing timely information to law enforcement agencies, primarily the police.

Non-governmental organizations, like Red Cross could play important role when emergency occur in urban environment.⁷⁵ This is due to expertise and knowledge, as well as experience of the organization and its personnel in facing serious threats. NGOs contribute directly and indirectly to security by offering services such as humanitarian aid, emergency protection, lobbying governments etc. (Krahman, 2005). Universities and colleges could have well developed research thrusts, often in cooperation with other institutions. They could also offer academic programs, short training courses, seminars, etc. in the area of security.

In discussion about provision of security in the city, the question on private security inevitably arises. Past decades have witnessed a remarkable expansion of the private security sector.⁷⁶ This development marks the emergence of public-private security network that plays significant role in urban security provision. In the literature, the private sector has been usually seen in two main ways. First, there is a tendency to associate the rise of private security with erosion of state sovereignty (Abrahamsen and Williams, 2007). Widening the scope of activities of private security providers is seen as decentralization of security, and distancing from traditional state centric understanding of the phenomenon (Davidović and Kešetović, 2007: 25). Second, when private security actors are considered in the literature on non-state authority and governance, they are frequently regarded as illegitimate actors (equal to mafia or militias) (Musah, et al., 2000; Cilliers and Mason, 1999; Hall and Biersteker, 2002). Neither of these positions is completely wrong, but is undoubtedly problematic.

Under urban private security providers we usually consider private security companies whose core activities consist of the day-to-day provision of security.⁷⁷ They provide service to individuals, businesses, governments, and international organizations. The services offered by private sector range from basic manned guarding to alarm, patrol and response services, as well as more sophisticated surveillance and satellite tracking systems (Abrahamsen and Williams, 2007: 239). The very nature of this security provider means that it sells service (i.e. security) on the market, where public actors are only one of many security providers.⁷⁸ The activities and expertise of the private sector made them preferable provider of security in the city for richer

⁷⁵ In the United States, for example, prominent among the NGOs in the area of urban security are federally funded research and development center - the Homeland Defense Institute at ANSER (Analytic Services) - and the National Academies (National Academy of Sciences (NAS), National Academy of Engineering (NAE), Institute of Medicine (IOM) and National Research Council (NRC)), which, although private, are chartered by Congress to provide advice to the government and conduct a large number of studies pertinent to homeland defense (Bugliarello, 2005: 288-289).

⁷⁶ Some of notable examples of this expansion are private security companies Securitas and G4S. The Securitas group has over 300,000 employees in 53 countries worldwide. G4S is the world's largest security company measured by revenues. It has operations in more than 90 countries. With over 570,000 employees, it is the world's third-largest private employer, the largest European and African private employer, and among the largest on the London Stock Exchange.

⁷⁷ Private military companies are not discussed here, because we are more interested for everyday security provision that impacts life and wellbeing of citizens, in contrast to massive involvement in military operations.

⁷⁸ Authors discuss this especially in relation to private policing. See Johnston, 1992; Jones and Newburn, 1998; Loader, 1997.

layers of society. But this can have political implications on questions such as who is secured and how. Those who pay are also able to play a powerful role in determining the security agenda.

Relations between the public and the private security sector are very important for achieving a stable security situation in the city. These relationships can take the form of cooperation, ignorance or interference. If there is a proper balance between these entities, clear and precisely regulated relations and readiness for cooperation, defined competence, responsibility and division of labor, their capacities will be multiplied, which will affect the prevention and suppression of crime and other urban security threats (Davidović and Kešetović, 2007: 30). Engaging the private security sector to protect the property of private businesses, increasing the safety of residents in certain parts of the city and neighborhoods, allow the police to redirect their resources to organized crime and other serious forms of crime.

Nodal urban security provision

In academic debate about security provision in the cities we can find notions about two important changes in the urban security (Boddy, 2008; Coaffee et al., 2008). First, physical security has shifted from an overt militarized landscape of decades past to a more camouflaged landscape currently prevalent in cities. Second, security policy and planning have become more decentralized, currently undertaken less by singular, public entities and more by networks of public and private actors (Németh, 2010: 2488).

Security provision in cities is increasingly seen as a task of a network of many actors, whose success in protection of basic values, such as the quality of life, public order and peace, and the well-being of citizens depends on mutually agreeable cooperation (Stenning, 2009). The realization of urban security requires cooperation and partnership between state and local authorities and organizations (state police, local police, consultative bodies, civil protection services, emergency management sectors), as well as the involvement of civil society representatives - citizens, civic initiatives, non-governmental organization (Meško et al., 2013: 285).

There are also stances that state actors' importance in providing security in cities has been reduced and that they are just one of the many providers in the political arena. These claims have been criticized by some researchers, stating that, despite the fact that changes in the allocation of management activities and power have led to the loss of a monopoly in defining social interests, values and policy implementation, state entities continue to be unique actors in public life, due to the fact that they have significant resources, such as legitimacy and authority arising from law, constitution, taxation and the ability to legitimately use force (van Kersbergen and van Waarden 2004: 152; Hoppe, 2010).

Even if efforts and demands for cooperation and coordination between different subject and entities in urban security provision are strong, the authors point to the fact that providing security at the local level remains the primary responsibility of state actors (Meško and Lobnikar, 2005). In spite of the partial loss of direct control, state actors continue to have a central position due to the exclusive power and resources (Rhodes, 1997; Peters and Pierre, 1998).

Concluding remarks

Provision of security in urban environment is a complex task. It involves many entities, groups and individuals who react to protect vital values from serious security threats. Furthermore, characteristic of the city, its structure, size, environment, demographics, social and economic status, influence the urban security provision. Structural factors, such as political organization and system on national level, the importance of the city in relation to other cities in the country etc., may dictate which urban security provider will have the primary role in the specific urban environment, and the relations between them.

At this place, it will be useful to overview some of the recommended strategies and policies in successful urban security provision. UN-Habitat's Safer Cities Programme suggests several preconditions for cities to develop effective strategy for enhancing security. First, they need an adequate institutional framework and resources to address the issue. Second, they need to develop a role that does not completely delegate the responsibility of a safer community to the police or to specialized organizations. Third, they need mechanisms to ensure participation of as wide a range of citizens as possible, such as consultation practices, public education and neighborhood-scale initiatives. Fourth, they need measures of transparency, such as anti-corruption initiatives, regular reports updating progress on initiatives and the ability to change course over time in response to changing concerns (Whitzman, 2008: 127).

Based on historical examples and contemporary experiences some authors conclude that key interventions in establishing efficient urban security provision include pacification and proximity policing, schemes focused on at-risk youth, urban renewal and slum upgrading and urban governance (Muggah, 2012: 53). Preventing the onset of offending behavior and incivility, enforcing the criminal law, enhancing democratic scrutiny and oversight of security strategies, and reducing social inequalities in household income and in access to education, employment, healthcare and housing (Meško et al., 2013: 289) could also be seen as preferable approaches for urban security provision.

It should be noted that development of one universal model for urban security provision is not possible, bearing in mind the specificities of different urban environments and complexity of urban itself. However, we believe that successful urban security provision requires holistic approach and cooperation and coordination between multiple security providers who operate in the urban environment. All policy makers should conceive urban security as a goal for a broad set of policies, those aimed at directly reducing the likelihood of crime and those indirectly promoting security through the improvement of societal cohesion, wellbeing and safety for all citizens.

For urban security practitioners it is of utmost significance to identify and explore security providers, and understand their role and responsibilities, due to rising urban population, diversity of urban settlements and complexity of contemporary urban security problems (challenges, risks, vulnerabilities, and threats). The changing nature of security providers is not only transforming the making and implementation of security policies, it also has serious implications for the theoretical analysis of security. Security needs to be broadened beyond the state as the

primary unit of analysis, both in terms of its object and subject. Studying and understanding security provision on a city level could be step forward to this request.

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