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THE PROBLEM OF FORMING LAW ENFORCERS' READINESS FOR THE PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITY

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Abstract. *The article is devoted to the actual issue of law enforcers' education and training, their readiness for professional activity that is the foundation of an effective domestic security and safety system. In the context of the complex fighting crime and increasing threats, as well as the need for constant community interaction, the role and training of the police have been significantly important. An analysis of the current challenges of the police service and the need for significant changes in the police officers training was conducted; the components of the readiness of law enforcement officers for their professional activities were considered, and a study of the knowledge and skills necessary for successful police-public interactions was conducted. It was emphasized that proper law enforcers training is crucial for ensuring that officers understand their role in law society, effectively resolve social conflicts and extreme situations, and maintain public trust. New and more complex challenges the police face (contemporary strategies for crime combating and prevention, new advanced technologies and equipment, etc.) affect key components of law enforcement officers' readiness for police service, namely: adherence to high professional standards, responsibility, honesty and impartiality, ethical and minimal use of force, human rights protection. Highly educated and quality-trained police officers are able to solve problems effectively and make decisions, think creatively and interact with the public, reveal respect and impartiality, in addition to traditional tactical-combat skills,*

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strict discipline, etc. Police training and activities based on respect for human rights, legal knowledge and justice, methods of conflicts de-escalation and the reasonable use-of-force policies are also of crucial importance. The article summarizes the basic principles, effective training methods and technologies for training law enforcers in contemporary conditions, such as problem-based and practical-oriented, systematic and experimental training, realistic simulations, that allow forming decision-making skills, creative thinking, and interpersonal communication skills of police officers.

Key words: *law enforcers training; readiness for professional activity; training principles; challenges for police service; training methods and technologies.*

ПРОБЛЕМА ФОРМУВАННЯ ГОТОВНОСТІ ПРАВООХОРОНЦІВ ДО ПРОФЕСІЙНОЇ ДІЯЛЬНОСТІ

Анотація. *Стаття присвячена актуальному питанню освіти і навчання правоохоронців в сучасних умовах, їх готовності до виконання професійної діяльності, що є основою ефективною системою внутрішньої безпеки держави. В умовах складної боротьби зі злочинністю та зростаючих загроз, а також необхідності постійної взаємодії з громадськістю, роль і підготовка поліції набуває важливого значення. Проведено аналіз сучасних викликів поліцейської служби і потреби суттєвих змін у підготовці поліцейських; розглянуто складові готовності правоохоронців до їх професійної діяльності, проведено дослідження знань і навичок, необхідних для успішної комунікації з громадськістю. Наголошено, що належна підготовка правоохоронців є вирішальним фактором для забезпечення розуміння офіцерами своєї ролі у правовій державі, ефективного вирішення суспільних конфліктів та екстремальних ситуацій, підтримки громадської довіри. Нові, складніші виклики (сучасні стратегії боротьби зі злочинністю та її попередження, новітня техніка та оснащення тощо), впливають на ключові складові готовності правоохоронців до поліцейської служби, а саме: дотримання високих професійних стандартів, відповідальність і неупередженість, етичне і мінімальне застосування сили, захист прав людей. Високоосвічені та якісно підготовлені поліцейські здатні ефективно вирішувати складні ситуації та самостійно приймати рішення, творчо мислити, взаємодіяти з громадськістю, проявляти повагу і гідність, крім володіння традиційними тактично-бойовими навичками, суворої дисципліни тощо. Підготовка і діяльність поліції, що базуються на дотриманні прав людини, правових знаннях і справедливості, методах деескалації конфліктів і розумного використання сили, також мають вирішальне значення. У статті узагальнено основні принципи,*

ефективні методи навчання і технології підготовки правоохоронців у сучасних умовах, такі як практико- і проблемно-орієнтоване, системне та експериментальне навчання, методи реальних ситуацій і симуляцій, що дозволяють сформувати у правоохоронців навички рішення проблем, критичного мислення, міжособистісної комунікації, стресостійкості.

Ключові слова: *підготовка правоохоронців; готовність до професійної діяльності; принципи навчання; сучасні виклики поліцейської служби; методи і технології навчання.*

Problem statement and its rationale. Since crime has become more complex and threats have been increasing, law enforcement officers charged with enforcing laws must be open to new challenges and approaches. Policing also involves the community interaction, so the role of police in democratic societies has been increasingly important. Well-educated and trained officers are much more adept and used to solving problems, thinking creatively, and exhibiting open-mindedness. Therefore, law enforcer's education and training is the foundation of an effective domestic security and safety system in the state. Efficient and professional distinction based on police education and training is particularly important for the transition countries like Ukraine, constructing new police forces, and undertaking reforms in the law enforcement sector.

While policing has changed dramatically in the last few decades, the way in which police recruits are trained has not fundamentally changed all that much. However, the mission of police academies is to prepare new police officers to serve and protect their communities with compassion and humanity; and officers need to develop skills beyond following the orders of their superiors; they need to learn to think and act on their own. Police officers need communication skills, and they need to know how to be problem-solvers and how to defuse tense situations. In 2020, an independent research study in the USA found that if effective communication is a central element of training and key to successful de-escalation, which is associated with sizeable reductions in use of-force incidents, and fewer injuries to both officers and citizens (Transforming Police, 2022). While there are pockets of innovation in policemen training, training as a whole has not kept pace with the dynamic changes taking place in policing. As a result, today's police officers are not universally being prepared for the challenges they face in providing police services in increasingly diverse and demanding communities. So, re-imagining policing begins with tackling how police officers are taught.

Analysis of the recent publications. Since police training plays a crucial role in the development of officers, the issues of both police activities and police training have drawn attention of a number of domestic and foreign researchers and practical experts. Due to importance of the police functions to protect the rights and freedoms of the citizens, the society and the state, various

aspects of police training have been examined. Thus, by Kleygrewe L., Hutter R., & Koedijk M. (2022), police training is a complex, multifaceted topic combining several educational components. Their study investigates training at six European law enforcement agencies and identifies challenges of current training organization and practice. The authors Staller M., Koerner S. et al. (2022) debates about police professionalization and reform focusing on police education and training, observing and re-evaluating learning settings and goals of the complex system that has led to unfavorable outcomes in police – citizen encounters. The study Hutter of V., Kok M. & Oudeians R. (2023) is devoted to the didactical criteria for the high quality training of police officers, and also to the skills to be learned and applied in various situations like motor learning, performing under pressure, and motivation. The researchers Bennell C., Jenkins B. & Jones N. J. (2022) conducted a review to identify the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary for officers who police in democratic societies to successfully manage potentially volatile police-public interactions.

Additionally, the significant contribution of the Ukrainian scientists in the development of conditions, methodologies and techniques of police education should be noted. Thus, the Ukrainian researches Bondarenko V., Okhrimenko I., Prontenko K. et al. (2020) have investigated the formation of significant professional skills and competencies of future police officers during studying at higher educational institutions and police academies. The problems of improving policemen's professional psychological and behavioral skills, interpersonal communication skills that are basis for the efficient official activities and aimed at de-escalating conflict situations, have been studied by Shvets D. & Yevdokimova O. (2020). The important issues of physical, tactical and firearms training for patrol policemen as the basis of their professional activities, and also innovative technologies for their studies are investigated in the works of Kazncheiev D., Volkov Yu., Myslyva O., Barko V., Medvediev V., Fedorenko O.; Tsumarieva N., Hryshchenko M., Merdov S., Hospodarenko V., & Kyslenko D. (2023), etc. The specifics of the police officers training under conditions of the full-scale invasive war against Ukraine were analyzed by Ukrainian scientists L. Chystokletov, V. Polyvaniuk, D. Bodyriev, Lopaeva E., Boyko O., etc. These and many other aspects of the researched problem are also examined in the works of foreign scholars (Pieczywok, 2018; Monteiro, Santos, Abel, Langford, Martinez, & Massuça, 2024), etc.

Despite intensive researches on the different issues of police training, several essential aspects remain insufficiently researched. In particular, there is a lack of a comprehensive analysis of the contemporary trends and changes in policing and coming from those core principles and methodology of police training and education.

Therefore, **the purpose of the study** is to analyze the contemporary trends and challenges of police service and connecting with them changes and peculiarities of police training; and also to summarize the main principles of

police training under the current conditions; to analyze the concept of readiness for the police service, so the important knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to police in democratic societies for successful police-public interactions; to disclose the most effective educational methods and training technologies.

Methods of the study. The study has used the methods of comparative and deferential analysis of contemporary state of police education and training, generalization of the base training principles, the theoretical analysis of the literary sources and the study of experience of practical realization of the researched issue.

Presentation of the basic material. Effective professional police training helps ensure officers are professional and prepared in all aspects of their work. Proper training is crucial for ensuring officers understand their role in society, maintain public trust, and treat citizens with respect and fairness; and continued and advanced training improves the skills and qualifications of police officers throughout their careers. In the light of that, the recent research studies of the Police Executive Research Forum (USA) have concluded that globally policing changed dramatically over the past several decades in a number of important ways, namely:

- Crime-fighting according to the new strategies for controlling and preventing crime. These approaches (community policing, problem-oriented policing, intelligence-led policing, and others) are based on the principle of preventing crime through partnerships with the community and other stakeholders, collaborative problem analysis and solving, effective use of technology and outside resources.

- Technologies, that is sophisticated records management and data analysis systems, powerful land mobile radio and mobile broadband networks, ballistics and other forensic applications, gunshot detection systems, and artificial intelligence and machine learning have all revolutionized how police respond to and solve crimes.

- Equipment. Police officers have access to new tools and equipment. More powerful and reliable service weapons, a wide range of less lethal tools, and technologies such as body-worn cameras and drones are helping today's officers be more efficient and effective.

- New challenges facing the police have grown more numerous and complex. Officers today are confronted by criminals armed with incredibly powerful firearms, "ghost guns" that can't be traced. They also face a new breed of offenders who understand how to use the Internet to facilitate both traditional crimes such as drug and human trafficking as well as entirely new types of cybercrime. And while the police have traditionally confronted issues such as addiction, homelessness, and mental illness, the scope and complexity of these problems and their impact on the community are arguably unprecedented (The Changing Nature, 2018).

All above mentioned nowadays changes influence the concept of law

enforcers' readiness for their professional activity, and in general, the process and key principles of police training that include: upholding professional standards, fostering public trust through community policing and procedural justice, and ensuring effective and ethical use of force (Staller, Koerner, Bennell, & Suss, 2022). Effective training should also focus on legal knowledge, de-escalation techniques, and human rights; often using systematic methods like needs analysis and pilot testing (Police Training, 2022; Staller, & Koerner, 2022).

We consider the concept of readiness for professional activity as a multifaceted state where an individual integrates their motivational, cognitive, emotional, and social qualities, and also necessary skills and knowledge for effective functioning in a career, adaptation to challenges, and achievement of self-realization, encompassing not just competencies but a positive mindset and self-awareness for successful performance and well-being. Professional readiness means being fully prepared with the knowledge and skills (hard & soft), attitudes, and mindset to successfully enter, adapt to a specific job, combining academic learning with practical abilities to meet workplace demands and contribute effectively to an organization. It's about demonstrating a strong work ethic, good communication, problem-solving, and the ability to work well with others.

A comprehensive policing transformation and readiness for service are based on an evidence-based approach to police training that emphasizes five principles, including that training should incorporate the following: 1) do no harm; 2) be based on policing activities, tactics, and strategies supported by evidence demonstrating effectiveness in promoting the rule of law and protecting the population; 3) use educational training methods shown to be effective in transferring critical knowledge and skills to police; 4) be continuously evaluated; 5) be flexible and contextualized in its delivery (Police Training, 2022, p. 2). So, coming from that the following foundational principles of police training can be distinguished:

- Ethics and accountability: Training emphasizes honesty, integrity, and accountability, often guided by codes of conduct and the seven principles of public life (selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty, and leadership).

- Community and procedural justice: This involves training officers in community policing, active listening, treating citizens with dignity and respect, and understanding the role of history in building trust.

- Human rights: Training focuses on proactively respecting and protecting fundamental rights, ensuring actions like the use of force are based on principles of legality, necessity, and proportionality.

- Operational and tactical principles and use of force mean that when force is necessary, training emphasizes minimizing injury and damage, exercising restraint, and ensuring responses are proportionate to the situation.

- De-escalation and conflict resolution is that officers are trained in skills

like de-escalation and active listening to resolve conflicts peacefully.

- Impartiality, that is training reinforces the principle of acting impartially and making decisions based on facts, not bias.

As police officers are frequently involved in potentially volatile interactions with the public, a primary goal in such interactions should always be to minimize the potential for harm, which will often involve the use of non-escalation and de-escalation strategies by officers. The research of Bennell C., Jenkins B., Jones N.J. et al. (2022) allowed identifying and confirming the importance of the knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) necessary for officers who police in democratic societies to successfully manage potentially volatile police-public interactions. They include: 1) knowledge of policies and laws; 2) an understanding of mental health-related issues; 3) an ability to interact effectively with, and show respect for, individuals from diverse community groups; 4) awareness and management of stress effects; 5) communication skills; 6) decision-making and problem-solving skills; 7) perceptual skills; 8) motor skills related to use-of-force; 9) emotion and behavior regulation; and 10) an ability to treat people in a procedurally just manner. The authors highlighted two additional critical KSAs: understanding the role of policing in a free and democratic society and tactical knowledge and skills. To ensure that police-public interactions are managed effectively, police training may focus on development and evaluation of the given knowledge, skills, and abilities.

However, as the experts confirm, overall, academies continue to train police officers to be warriors, even though their agencies and communities expect them also to be guardians, social workers, and community partners. So, there is a disconnect between the focus of the training that recruits receive and the range of skills that officers need to carry out the everyday demands of the job (Transforming Police, 2022, p. 8). However, there is a range of other skills – communications, crisis intervention, community engagement, and problem-solving, for example – that officers will rely on day-in and day-out for the routine encounters that will occupy the vast majority of their time. Being a skilled communicator and problem-solver is crucial not only to addressing crime and disorder, but also to building community trust and support (Transforming Police, 2022, p. 21).

One of the main principles of law enforcers training is protecting human rights. Human rights-based training helps participants to proactively respect and secure fundamental rights. It ensures that the use of force is exercised in accordance with the principles of legality, necessity and proportionality that are crucial to the development of just societies. Such training will therefore enable police officers to fulfil the role envisaged for them in the area of justice, freedom and security. By safeguarding all citizens' fundamental rights, police officers will engender trust throughout society, contributing to a virtuous circle that will encourage the reporting of crime, contribute to more effective crime fighting, enhance justice for victims and reduce societal tensions (Fundamental rights-

based police training, 2019).

Training not only needs to focus on effective policing approaches to promote the rule of law and protect the population. It also needs to use effective educational methods and pedagogy. As police officers face more serious challenges in today's world, general training, including tactical training, which is traditionally present in academies, is no longer sufficient. Police officers need more than mechanical skills or the ability to memorize mechanically. Currently, according to researchers, higher-level training, which would include problem-based learning, the formation of critical thinking and interpersonal communication skills, is required.

The way police officers are trained may well matter as much as the content of skills and knowledge on which they are trained. Using advanced training methods and methodology are capable to enhance professional preparation of new officers and to solve the mentioned quests. Among distinguished by the experts ones, there are the following. There is a growing emphasis on training methods that develops critical thinking, problem-solving, and interpersonal skills, as opposed to just rote memorization. Practical training, especially using realistic simulations that mimic real conditions, is seen as a highly effective way to build skills. Virtual reality is being used to create immersive and realistic training environments, allowing officers to practice in high-stress situations with distracting elements. Effective training also involves a systematic approach, including needs analysis, setting objectives, selecting methods, pilot testing, and evaluating outcomes. Using problem-oriented and experiential approaches with knowledgeable instructors can reinforce concepts through real-life scenarios and discussions. Adaptability is another methodology, that is training should avoid a one-size-fits-all assumption and be adapted to different conditions, such as urban versus rural settings. Reinforcement means that supervisors are often included in training to reinforce concepts and discuss real-life experiences (Good Practices, 2009; Hutter et el, 2023).

Since the current state of recruit training demands remaking the system for how new police officers are trained, it is needed to adopt a new philosophy and culture around police training – one rooted in academic inquiry and developing recruits' critical-thinking and decision-making skills, as well as physical fitness and discipline. This new approach and culture are achieved through rigorous institutions of education that combine classroom instruction with small group exercises, realistic scenario-based exercises, and other approaches that follow the principles of adult learning. Because policing is, by its nature, a profession that involves dealing with stressful situations, recruits need to be challenged with stress-based training as well, largely through scenario-based exercises. Police academies should be places where expectations are high, and students are challenged to reach beyond the minimum standards of proficiency and demonstrate mastery of everything they are taught (Transforming Police, 2022).

Conclusions and prospects for further research. Law enforcers training is the first and most significant step towards shaping more effective and professional police service. In the context of increasing demands to police activities, the issue of the high-quality training of law enforcement officers has become extremely important. Since policing has changed considerably in recent decades, instead of traditional emphasis on strict discipline, following orders, tactical skills and a stress-based style of instruction, police officers need more communication and interpersonal skills, de-escalation and active listening skills to resolve conflicts and be problem-solvers, and community partners in their communities. Key areas of training should include crisis intervention, behavioral health, use-of-force policies, and developing critical thinking and decision-making skills through problem-based learning, and also human right-based approach, dealing with stressful situations and others.

Law enforcers' readiness for their service needs to use effective educational methods and practical techniques like realistic simulations and scenario-based exercises, problem-oriented and experiential approaches etc. Under such conditions, the law enforcement officers responsible for public security in day-today contact with citizens, will treat citizens with respect and fairness, and determine the positive public perception, maintain social safety and public trust.

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The author(s) confirm that the preparation and submission of this article complied with the provisions of the Journal's Ethical Policy, as well as with the generally accepted principles of academic integrity in accordance with the recommendations of COPE (Committee on Publication Ethics).

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