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Relationship between trust in the police and the effectiveness of the police¹

Abstract

In recent decades, a number of studies have appeared, mainly in the Western European police literature, which have examined the role of the police in society, the social utility of their operations and the social trust factors achieved through the effectiveness of their procedures. These studies have revealed a number of factors which, although indirect, can be measured and understood. Nevertheless, they have hitherto been treated as abstract concepts in scientific approaches. These include the legality, legitimacy and fairness of police actions and procedures. In this study, I will show that the police can have a significant impact on social capital if they focus on these factors. In particular, it can improve that by focusing on aspects of procedural justice in measuring organizational effectiveness. However, the malleability of trust is questionable in a society where the overall level of trust is already low.

Keywords: efficiency, police, procedural justice, social capital, trust

Introduction

The police's social role and participation decipher the essence of public trust in the state's public institutions and thus in the law. Social faith as a kind of capital is a collective sense of the 'social effects.' At the same time, it is also an attitude towards the violent organization of power. This attitude is also the acceptance or rejection of the system of regulating power, given that the police are the 'ultima ratio' of the exercise of state control, that is, the executive power. However, unlike other public authorities, the law has a complete set of tools for enforcing violence. Thus, the social attitude towards it is emblematically an

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expression of the citizen's attitude towards power. The results of modern scientific research have now gone beyond quantitative indicators, which are mainly 'produced' by law enforcement. They have mostly taken scientific steps towards the objective measurability of quality indicators such as 'public satisfaction' or trust in the police. In the 1990s, in addition to the valuable efficiency narratives of policing, the need to consider the elements of 'legitimate policing' and social equality became more and more pronounced.

The key to legitimate policing is to develop appropriate efficiency indicators and to be able to measure positive effects critically in terms of social impacts. So, as far as the legitimacy of policing and public opinion is concerned, it is needed to reduce the number of crimes by improving quantitative efficiency and showing the processes how they have been achieved. Harmful in terms of its social 'side effects,' i.e., a police strategy rejected by the majority cannot be justified even if the statistical results improve. In terms of side effects, the medical concept's analogy shows that a complex society functions similarly to a complex living organism. The use of treatments and side effects without experimental studies can be a source of serious risks. Often, only the presence of side effects, as measured by decisions, decides to reject a procedure that seems promising. Without measurement, however, we cannot even talk about the chances of experiencing a side effect. Of course, measure itself does not seem to be significant 'news'. Its lack carries even more dangers, as, without a 'good measurement' method, the relationship between the population and the police can become extremely unstable. The results of a favorable objective security situation are merely misleading and lead to incorrect policy strategy formulation. All of this only preserves social distrust and tension with the police. 'Good measurement methods' are those that focus on social trust and the legitimacy and fairness of procedures. These factors are discussed in the following chapters.

The relationship between legitimate operation of the police and public trust

Although the trust can mostly be seen as a kind of 'aftermath' that accompanies the organization's activities, it also impacts significantly the quality of law enforcement activities related to maintaining public security. Legitimate policing in this context means not only the observance of the relevant laws and norms in police activities (measures, procedures) and the correct, fair, equitable treatment and form of citizens (Stanko & Bradford, 2009). The latter includes bias and equal treatment of all those who contact the police in any capacity and

condition. Therefore, in legitimate police work, it becomes imperative that this actually leads to a positive attitude and that the majority also actively supports the police's job. In this way, the law can play a policing role effectively and with broad social authority for the community (Murphy, Hinds & Fleming, 2008).

Of course, police officers are not just 'one' in a particular role in modern, pluralistic society, so it would be a mistake to look at them from only one point of view. It also follows that it is impossible to generalize their judgment or set a uniformly favorable expectation towards the public. The opinion of someone who has been the subject of a quick and effective police action just after a call for help will be different from someone who recently received a fine after exceeding the maximum speed by a few miles. The emphasis is not on current opinion or formal judgment. Even harmful acts of the police are acceptable (arrests, punishments, etc.) as long as they make the decision-making processes leading to the outcome transparent and tangible. The whole process becomes familiar and most understandable to anyone. If the procedure is transparent to the community with their fairness, legitimacy, and impartiality, negative results are more likely to be acceptable by the people. The existence of procedural justice is based on the following main criteria:

- on the one hand, individuals should be allowed to interpret police decisions concerning them by receiving complete and thorough information, if necessary, with an explanation of their questions,
- respect their human dignity and an impartial attitude in the proceedings,
- individuals trust that decision-makers and executors are driven by neutral goals (Mazerolle, Antrobus, Bennett & Tyler, 2013).

Procedural justice is essentially an inherent part of every police action. It is a dynamic coefficient, a shaper of legitimacy and trust, and an elementary determinant of community satisfaction with the police. Legitimacy and trust can be built if this spirituality drives the daily interactions of the police officer and the citizen; if these traits are not characterized, they can be degraded easily and quickly. Michael Lipsy has identified this dynamic interaction among many public service professions, including the police and the prosecutor, judge, and social worker (Lipsky, 1980). The issue of trust appreciates today's globalizing world and is integral to the third stage of policing strategies. Kelling and Moore distinguished three eras in the history of policing: eras of political, reform, and community problem-solving (Kelling & Moore, 1988). Since 2001, we can speak of its fourth station to prevent the threat of terrorism.

There is no doubt that the expectations against police have shifted significantly in recent decades, as police strategies have taken other ways. The community

policing model of the 1990s, which sought to maintain close contact with community members, indirectly focused on strengthening public confidence but could not respond to crime in response to the threat of terrorism and social tensions of the 2000s and meet a legitimate social expectation although its effect on reducing crime, strengthening public confidence has been demonstrated in several studies (Gill, Weisburd, Telep, Vitter & Bennett, 2014). The initial community policing model shifted to problem-oriented crime control (Weisburd, Telep, Hinkle & Eck, 2010) and then ‘intelligence-led policing’ (Ratcliffe, 2003) to meet the needs of the information society in ‘hot spots’ (Sherman, 1995).

The purpose of police communication should also be reassessed as each police strategy evolves. Its primary task is to demonstrate the achievement of neutral, fair, and politically motivated police results by creating transparency in decision-making processes. It must make unambiguous what is going on in society and the police’s collective interaction. Just as the population’s perceptions of police measures are not homogeneous, we cannot talk about the overall effects in individual communities. Citizens’ negative experiences of the police will undoubtedly destroy trust, but positive experiences will not necessarily improve it (Boda & Medve-Bálint, 2017). Some factors influence the police’s public perception, including negative experiences of crimes committed among one’s friends and relatives, including media reports of police abuse (Vári, 2016). These factors were different in terms of adverse effects for each ethnic and racial group (Weitzer & Tuch, 2005). Above all, the most important thing is to decide what needs to be displayed to the public so that the police can be persuaded and explained about their neutrality, impartiality, goals, and work results. Convincing the public is typically based on the basic concept of procedural justice, as my opinion, it is worth apostrophizing policing along with the following issues:

- What are the police doing, and why?
- What is the result of the police operation?
- How can be the errors of individual and organizational police operation be revealed and articulated? In other words, is there a normative framework with citizens accessibility for feedback on common operational effects?

Police efficiency measurement practice

Reforming police efficiency and performance measurement has been a challenge for years, and the scientific field has achieved significant results (Maguier, 2015). However, most efforts have focused on reducing crime, such as the detection rate, increasing the number of arrests, reducing reaction time, etc.

Law enforcement strategy's failures focusing on these, have led to a shift in direction towards experimental public trust and satisfaction measurements. The measurement has shifted to a multidimensional unit for community policing, which is now only partially correlated with the police's aforementioned actual output performance data, and increasingly with the community's concept of locally generated order. Several studies have aimed to capture the essence of social impacts and legitimate functioning through multilevel measurement, but these have not found widespread acceptance (Milligan, Fridell & Taylor, 2006; Moore & Braga, 2003; Willis, 2011; Davis, 2012).

To learn about the multidimensional significance of policing, researchers have drawn attention to the lack of more relevant data, such as creating a database covering atrocities involving police members at the national level. In a 2004 research summary, the U.S. National Academy articulated the need set up a database. Injuries or deaths resulting from resistance in police action, possibly offensive strokes to the police, which do not give rise to proceedings for violence against an official. In the absence of a database, an attempt was made to create a research database (URL1). In the professional discourse on the adverse side effects of police strategies, several proposals have been made in the United States at the federal level to display additional significant information:

- the territorial distribution of the use of police force about the entire population, the locations of escalations,
- follow-up of complaints,
- police opinion on police action culture and community opinion (McDevitt et al., 2011),
- number of police activities according to the size and nature of the community, police measures following emergency calls.

Collier (2001) hypothesizes that it can be detrimental to human rights and legal procedures in general if police officers strive to meet performance measurement goals. He concluded that greater autonomy should be granted to police forces at the local level and that a model based on qualitative indicators would be preferable. The study examines the implications of a performance-oriented culture for human beings and guarantee rights and suggests a shift towards a performance culture that values and enforces democratic fundamental rights rather than preferring money-centered indicators. Neyroud and Beckley (2000) indicated that increasing professional autonomy and more effective law enforcement feedback practice are also important. This method should be essential in the development of policy to ensure compliance with legal and guaranteed rights. In their opinion is the 'professional clinical model' should also be introduced in

law enforcement performance measurement. This method is similar to a general practitioner. However, the police clinician also solves problems at his or her discretion, makes a diagnosis, acts independently, and makes decisions based on available facts and circumstances. Feilzer (2009) warns of the dangers of using the British Crime Survey (BCS), which is used in England and is essentially a quantitative source and it is made for police performance measurement. It focuses primarily on methodological issues, particularly on the lack of validity of measurement questions. The paper summarizes the usefulness of using BCS data to assess the performance of local police forces.

Moore and Braga (2004) point out that police services' evaluation is not merely done by those who personally use that; this is a more complex question. Furthermore, the assessment does not only last as long as it is used or linked to it. But it is more extensive in space, person, and time. Significantly, the service carries several different dimensions of performance. Moreover, since diversity is mostly a matter of perspective, it is about what is desirable for law enforcement. It appears in the specific points of view of different groups. In this, it is primarily politics that needs to find common ground to select from many perspectives common and unified values in the diversity of other interests. These should be the principal basis for police performance appraisal. When choosing a value system, the evaluable aspects can be objective and measurable, such as crime reduction. Such different values are:

- to prevent the commission of criminal offenses by other means, such as arrest and any restriction of personal liberty;
- the judiciary does not neglect former perpetrators;
- reduce feelings of fear and promote security;
- encourage the community to participate in society to reduce the burden of crime (Bradford & Jackson, 2010);
- make road traffic and the use of public spaces the interest in creating order by using resources equally;
- to support the use of different types of medical and social services.

Besides, the ultimate value is determined by the positive outcome of the police-produced products of these effects, and society itself makes a substantial contribution to the costs incurred. By price, we mean the specific amount of money we spend on police services and the value of giving up certain freedom and privacy elements designed to protect society from crime. The authority of law enforcement and the broadening of its field of power is directly proportional to the increase in budget spending. On the other hand, compliance can be more reliably and cost-effectively ensured if citizens believe that a system

that enforces compliance is legitimate and widely accepted. It can be a source of tension if measures taken to increase security conflict with citizens' freedom and human rights (Moore & Braga, 2003).

Charbonneau and Riccucci (2008) emphasized the importance of factors of social equality in research. In doing so, they propose social equality indicators, including an assessment of fair treatment, which is similar to what is otherwise defined as 'procedural justice.' In their view, these should be included in measuring police performance and efficiency, as they are closely linked to community policing. They provide an analysis of the effects and results of empirical and theoretical research in the field of police performance measurement (Fielding & Innes, 2006). Their primary goal is to determine how social inequality is related to indicators of police performance. The authors' literature conclusion is that indicators of social differences exist, but they continue to play a marginal role in assessing individual police forces' arrangement. Even though the social differences are of paramount importance for the effectiveness of 'performance measures.' They conclude that if efficiency does not rely on sociodemographic factors, it can have serious consequences, especially for the police. The result is a police force that is alienated from society and loses confidence. Such police tend to have high social rejection and low trust capital.

Quantitative elements of measuring effectiveness include, for example, crime rates, number of arrests, and point of investigations. The indicator of the effectiveness of performance measures is the ratio of arrests to police officers and the specific cost of using police vehicles. However, there is no doubt that the point of the police means more than just improving the numbers. Along with the service's quality, it should also mean that the service achieves its purpose and meets that particular community (Shilston, 2008).

The relationship between police efficiency and social trust

Efficiency also means more and more to the police than merely being effective, whether in criminal or economic terms. Just as quantitative indicators cannot measure the police's efficiency in the absence of exact numbers, if this is attempted, it will have consequences that mask low efficiency and undermine the credibility of statistics (Finszter, 2018). The 'social utility' in the environment, i.e., in the community, can hardly be influenced by the 'quantitative' output set by the police organization, nor does it have any meaningful interaction with it (Mátyás, 2015). It is enough to refer only to the contradictions of legality and effectiveness. According to Skolnick (2015), the main problem of democratic

social policing can be grasped in that the police's pursuit of efficiency contradicts legality requirements. On the other hand, quasi-citizens, as an expectation in the outcome scene, do not match the police organization's performance criteria. It is a proven fact that police officers' behavioral culture, attitude, and communication better improve the police's social perception and reduce the dissatisfaction of citizens and the number of complaints against police measures (Haas, Crean, Skogan, Fletias & Diego, 2015).

The specific causes of public governance debates (such as law enforcement, militarization, or visibly declining effectiveness) are based on the fact that there are more significant and more fundamental changes in contemporary society. Previously, it was observed that in parallel with the development of modern nation-states, outstanding organizations in state governance became increasingly separated from each other but sought to control sub-areas centrally. Today, this is an untenable view. In society, the police's symbolic role has become as important as its direct effect on crime (Newburn & Reiner, 2012). Consequently, the police's social embeddedness and trustworthiness are strongly correlated with its effectiveness (Tihanyi, 2019). As an abstract element, strengthening the guarantee emphases of the rule of law (openness, civil control, fair procedure, equal treatment, etc.) is manifested in the decrease of elusive criminal fear and the increase of public trust (Gaál & Molnár, 2009). A Belgian empirical study also confirmed that procedural justice plays a considerably more significant role in judging the police's performance, thereby building citizens' trust in the police than the so-called crime statistics (Creane & Skogan, 2015). Of course, it is undeniable that, especially in Central and Eastern European countries, the fear of crime and the police's effectiveness still play a significant role in trust in the police and in willingness to cooperate (Moravoca, 2015). Research in Western Europe complements the link between efficiency and trust with equal treatment in police behavior (Jackson & Bradford, 2009; Sunshine & Tyler, 2003). Based on these, higher levels of trust have been identified in northern European countries, which have significantly lower crime and a reliable, predictable administrative and judicial system (Kääriäinen, 2007). In Finland and the other Nordic countries, trust in the police linking to high social equality and citizens' general government experience. The police are also a part (Kääriäinen, 2008).

The nature of confidence in police

The confidence certainly promotes cooperation between the police and citizens. However, the question rightly arises as to whether police officers trust their

community at all. The literature on police culture has generally concluded that the police take a somewhat cynical approach to citizens (Paoline, 2004). However, there is little empirical evidence on this, mainly from the United States and the United Kingdom. On the other hand, the literature focusing on social capital suggests that general trust varies significantly between societies. (Hickman et al., 2004; Langworthy, 1987; Regoli, Crank & Rivera, 1990). It stems from social equality, good governance, and high civic activism. The European Social Survey 2002-2008, based on aggregated data collected from 22 countries, supports the presumption of police cynicism among police officers and other respondents. Although the general confidence of police officers equally reflects the level of public trust in society. This theory leads us to conclude that in countries where citizens generally trust each other, the police also have better confidence in citizens, as in countries where social trust is typically low. In these societies, members of the police also behave cynically with citizens (Kääriäinen & Sirén, 2012). So there are two alternative explanations for the nature of trust in the police and the public. The first starting point is police cynicism, which has emerged in previous research among Broderick police types, among others (Broderick, 1977).

Cynicism, or police officers' dismissive or indifferent behavior towards citizens, is essentially part of police culture, manifested in a most suspicious or even hostile attitude. There are research positions that view cynicism as an inherent element of a police culture that stems from the content of police work and its hierarchical structure. There is an inverse relationship between police solidarity and the lawlessness they commit and the orientation and openness to the outside world, i.e., society (Schernock, 1988). Organizational sociological research also defines law enforcement as a specific subculture with well-defined internal group criteria. Each police organization, when taking on the marks of this body, simultaneously carries out two types of operation: on the one hand, it isolates itself from the surrounding society (isolation), expressed in uniform, non-general rules of conduct, special privileges, and restrictions on police service, on the other hand, a robust internal group formation process develops, forged by learning the profession and daily assistance. These cohesion elements create police collectives' specific values, such as the extraordinary level of risk-taking, a high degree of collegiality, and excessive solidarity. This subcultural milieu, which is closed, and in solidarity with its environment, develops a special relationship with the social environment. Many theories see the notion of an ethnocentric police image rejecting, alienating from its environment. All this leads to the conclusion that he can be considered as a good policeman, who rules over people and protects his colleagues from being held accountable (Krémer, 1998). In other words, in the

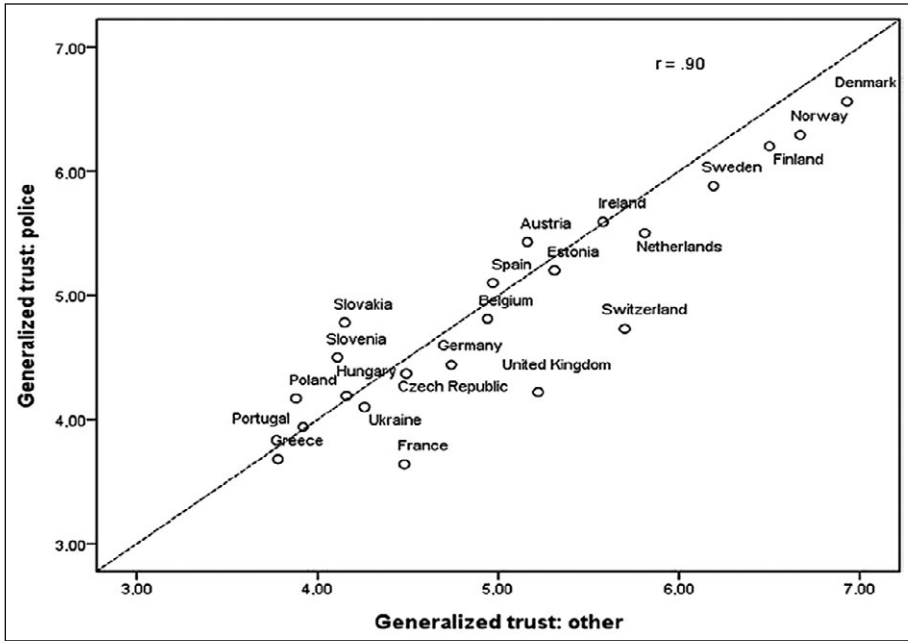
cynical police approach: in extreme cases, police officers defend each other even in cases of obvious illegality, while citizens are seen as hostile, as denouncers, as people with problems. Thus, in a police organization operating under such an approach, a police officer - without fearing his colleagues - can afford to drive drunk or hit a suspect. According to this assumption, the police must adopt a cynical mindset towards citizens in all organizations, regardless of society. There is a scientific view that police officers' behavior with citizens can be positively influenced by internal organizational development and trust (Crean, 2016).

On the other hand, the different approach is based on general trust, including the meaning of trust, the development of trust, and its effects on society. An excellent question is whether police officers have a similar general level of trust as other citizens living in the same community. Likely, the same forces that generally build trust between people will also increase mutual trust between the police and citizens.

Actually, who is the problem now: the police or society?

The study's observations of European societies yielded surprising results. European police seem to have a slightly lower general level of trust than the average citizen, but the difference is relatively small. In the same way as the citizens of their country, the conviction of police officers is closely linked to the general state of trust in society. Societies that generate and maintain social capital and trust also appear to build public trust among police officers. In other words, their findings suggest that police trust in citizens can be explained by the same factors that determine the overall trust of citizens as a whole. Those who become police officers grow up and raise their children in the same society as everyone else's lives and works. This research is in line with the findings of a study of 1,500 young children aged 10–15 in England and Wales between 2010 and 2012. It is concluded that the children's views on the police were the same as those of their parents. There is a consistent and robust relationship between children and their parents (Sindall, 2016). The results of European comparative research strongly show that men and women working in policing are above all community members. It seems that the police profession does not create a specific 'culture' that would significantly undermine trust in itself. There are exceptions to this rule. In France, the United Kingdom, and Switzerland, police officers' confidence in citizens is much lower than the population's trust in them. On the other hand, in some countries, the situation is just the opposite: in Slovakia, police officers are much more confident than other citizens.

Table No. 1: Police officers' overall confidence score compared to other respondents








Note: Kääriäinen & Sirén (2012)

As the figure above shows, the overall level of trust for the population and the police coincides perfectly. In Hungary, there is only a 0.03% difference between the two (4.19: the marginal average of the general trust values of the police and 4.16 of the other respondents). However, it is not good news that Hungary was just three countries ahead of the confidence index at the end of the list. Until then, the value of the police and others' trust is almost the same in the Czech Republic, representing a slightly better value than in Hungary or Poland. It is no coincidence that northern European countries with low levels of corruption have the highest levels of trust. An interesting correlation is that the rate of corruption has a more significant impact on confidence than the number of police officers (Nägel & Vera, 2021).

The European research results coincide with the research I conducted in 2016 (Vári, 2016). In connection with which I partially modified the questions of Krémer-Molnár's research (Krémer & Molnár, 2003). Unlike them, I also wanted to know what the civilian's and the police officer's good relationship means. But also how dominant the attitude of social co-operation is in the police and how frustrated they are with the system of expectations that citizens

expect from them to solve more problems. The data obtained tend to confirm the concept of passive civilians' theory, more precisely within the police. It seems to be the most common approach inside the police. Still, the proportion of 'police help citizens' responses is welcome, which shows many police officers who show support attitude to the community. On the other hand, the majority of police officers (80%) say that most citizens have an indifferent attitude towards them. In comparison, only 18% rated the attitude of civilians towards police officers as acceptable, which does not paint a rosy picture of civilians—police relationship.

Table No. 2. *The citizen's trust in the police is more ...*

Excellent	0		0%
Acceptable	63		17,8%
Neutral	127		36%
Rejective	119		33,7%
Hostile	44		12,5%

Note: Vári (2016)

It should be noted, the above-mentioned 2002 questionnaire in the survey (Krémer & Molnár, 2003) asked the public for their opinion on the work and role of the police. Surprisingly, the lack of moral, material esteem and technical backwardness were identified as the main shortcomings. On the other hand, professionalism and lack of corruption were mentioned as quality. The two spheres of opinion are somewhat contradictory. Although they seem to be aware of the problematic situation of police officers, the link between corruption and financial crisis has not been sufficiently perceived (Nagy, 2004).

Patricia Warren emphasizes a similar principle when examining citizens' trust in the police (Warren, 2010). She notes that confidence can come from citizens' personal experiences of police work and the narration of affairs by the whole community, primarily determined by the social position of the individuals involved. In communities that engage in discrimination and social injustice, social gatherings build a mistrust culture that targets the police and other institutions with state decision-making powers (Vári, 2018). The debate on police culture revolves around the same idea: police behaviors and procedures negatively affect citizens. The results of the research (Kääriäinen & Sirén, 2012), on the other hand, showed that the social interpretations developed concerning the police depend to a large extent on the collective mental state of the surrounding society. Societies in which social conflicts have not yet been adequately managed

and prevented are likely to provide fertile ground for police officers' negative behavior and, with it, for social rejection.

Conclusions

There can be little doubt that all outsiders and disliked groups are trying to defend themselves in a hostile social environment by clinging to their own values and cohesion (Perez, 1998). This results in further intensification or reproduction of harmful environmental factors (Ericson, 1989). This case is already entirely unnecessary to investigate faults or causes, especially if they are coupled with long-embedded collective social or subcultural stereotypes. Therefore, it is more plausible to rely on research results against the fundamentally negative police image, which is not incidentally confirmed by the Japanese police model's effectiveness. Sincere respect, acceptance, appreciation of inner groups, and intensive identification based on positive acceptance of the values and traditions that strengthen group cohesion are directly proportional to the need to increase outward orientation (Kenneth, 1979). The same approach can be applied to any law enforcement organization, including the prison officers (Czenczer, 2019). The police's closedness and belonging are not created or aroused by the rejection of society towards to police. The shared love of the profession and its exercise by the police justifies the need for greater social solidarity, my research has highlighted. Finszter (2010) agrees with this when he says that the system's excessive secrecy causes society to be prejudiced against the police. In most countries globally, the police's effectiveness is measured mainly by professional number activity figures. This process alone does not satisfy the public and scientific need to take into account cost-effectiveness and legitimate operation. However, the world has changed a lot in recent decades; in an information society, it is no longer a question of good publicity propaganda for statistical effectiveness 'selling' police work. But about finding out as authentically as possible what real social impacts our activities have had (how much satisfaction, trust, the recognition they have gained in society). The results of community apperception and police effectiveness measurement should be aligned so that all factors influencing subjective sensation should be mapped and understood. Researches should primarily determine what factors influence individuals' trust and supportive attitude towards the police. Today, any information content is available on the World Wide Web in a matter of seconds, from which we can get information and news in width and depth as we like. The stakes of change are no longer insignificant from a political point of view: the possibility of news

sharing, provided by anyone on the Internet, can trigger tectonic social effects in a matter of moments. Police and political leadership, erroneously positioning themselves in terms of their social role, misleading in terms of their results, and applied with measurement-methodologically incorrectly constructed data, are sitting on a barrel of gunpowder. May also stem from the growing need for governments in modern democracies to understand and map the actual social impacts of policing.

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