

THE ROLE OF PROCEDURAL JUSTICE IN THE WORK OF THE POLICE

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Abstract: 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. In my study, I intend to present the results of the most significant empirical research on procedural justice. I shed light on the significant correlation between procedural justice and the legitimate operation of the police. In the study, I will conditionally address the research methodology used to examine the existence or absence of procedural justice. The relationship between the police organization's internal systems, especially the fairness of the distribution system, is also an important criterion to be addressed in my study. Just as procedural justice affects a citizen-police relationship, so ethical, legitimate policing is in close nexus with the police organizational culture and the enforcement of internal procedural justice. These are essentially called "feedback loops," that is, the enforcement of procedural truth within a police organization can indirectly carry greater social support; however, they may also appear negatively, adversely affecting the organization's performance. Therefore, procedural justice elements must appear in the measurement of the efficiency of a police organization, just as special attention should be paid to the structure of police training.

Keywords: legitimacy, procedural justice, police, performance measurement, trust

INTRODUCTION

Procedural justice is intrinsic to every police action, a dynamic coefficient that shapes legitimacy and trust and an elementary determinant of community satisfaction with the police. Legitimacy and trust can be built if this ethos drives the everyday interactions of officers and citizens. If these traits are not present, they can easily and quickly erode. As a pioneer, Michael Lippman identified this dynamic interaction in several public service professions, including the police officer and the prosecutor, judge, and

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social worker (Lipsky, 1980). Thus, it can be said that any modern police force is based on the rule of law. Procedural justice must be an indispensable, inherent element of all citizen-police interactions, whether it is a simple act or appears as a processing element of any police procedure. When we talk about human dignity, respect, and equal treatment, this is embodied in the form of procedural justice, in the way police officers communicate, interact and behave with citizens. The law and the law alone constrain police actions and procedures, but the human factor cannot be ignored, alongside the loopholes in the norms that justify police action. The culture of action, the choice of behavior, the general human attitude, the ability to think and act responsibly and maturely, independently of stereotypes, cannot be learned in school or taught in books. Only exemplary teachers and proper law enforcement training can develop attitudes in the individual that will accompany him throughout his future career. Nevertheless, it shapes and forms his decisions and determines his behavior and the quality of his conduct. The positive effects of police officer training with this approach have been demonstrated in the short and long term (Crean and Skogan, 2017).

It must be added that respect for and compliance with the law is a cornerstone of police work. Still, the stubborn adherence to the letter of the law, in its dry, cold, and inhumane form, threatens almost as much or has more damaging consequences than the consistent breaking of the law, even when used in the pursuit of effective and efficient procedural goals. And suppose a police officer makes an unfortunate mistake. In that case, the prosecution behaves not entirely honestly when it cites only the general argument of formal compliance with the law to justify the usual prosecution and conviction in such cases. Meanwhile, in Hungary, the police organization is not fundamentally sustained and operated by a set of values that regard the essential complement of procedural justice mentioned above as a critical element. Professional research on policing in the international arena - especially in modern and developed democracies - has addressed this issue for almost 40 years. As a result, a body of research literature has now been accumulated that has made the recognition of the role of procedural justice in evaluating police organizational and individual performance a particular element. It has also been used in the study of public satisfaction with the police. Its influence and impact on the subjective perception of safety are so often used and in vogue in our country. Unfortunately, in our country, despite the findings and lessons of empirical research in the international literature, a professional policy does not support the incorporation of procedural justice considerations either into the measurement of police organizational effectiveness or as a critical focus of internal control systems, not accepting the well-established and proven link between legitimate policing and procedural justice. Because, by reconciling these two aspects, procedural justice also promotes proper police functioning. Police officers must treat all persons under their control with respect and humanity, with due regard for non-discrimination. The police body camera can be an excellent tool for this purpose. A recent study in Turkey has shown that it has a beneficial effect on citizens' assessment of procedural justice (Demir et al., 2018). Of course, positive changes do not occur in the short term. Still, suppose the police adopt a procedural justice approach. In that case, they will undoubtedly produce more effective outcome indicators in the long run by more easily exploiting the explicit benefits of community support.

THE IMPACT OF PROCEDURAL JUSTICE ON POLICE LEGITIMACY

When people come into contact with the police through the actions of the police officer in charge, the fairness of such actions and fairness of their behavior have a significant impact on citizens' trust in the police. Along with their perception of the legality and professionalism of the police action itself, the quality of the culture of action that citizens subjectively experience also affects the extent to which they perceive police action as legitimate. Much social psychological research has shown the strength



and consistency of these empirical relationships (Harkin, 2015). Procedural justice is a matter of treating people with dignity and respect, allowing them to explain their situation and have their say heard. On the other hand, it makes them aware of what the police officer is doing or will do, and why, in a clear and tolerant style. This behavior should clarify that the police officer is taking their particular situation and problems into account. In this way, decisions will be made taking into account the law and individual circumstances. People who believe that the police are law-abiding are more likely to accept police decisions and comply with police requests and appeals, are also more likely to cooperate with the police, and are even more likely to adhere to the law. An abstract view of legitimacy includes both cognitive and affective elements. Police legitimacy can be seen as necessary for several reasons. Citizens who perceive the police as legitimate are more likely to comply with police orders, instructions, and requests in their interactions with the police. In police-citizen encounters, the fairness of the policy process will significantly facilitate the performance of police duties (Mastrofski, Snipes, and Supina 1996; McCluskey 2003; McCluskey, Mastrofski, and Parks 1999). It is expected to result in fewer adverse outcomes, such as using police force or injuries to police officers or citizens resulting from such conflicts, subsequent litigation, and prosecution. A study in Chicago confirmed that police training built on a foundation of procedural justice reduced complaints against police in the district by 10.0% and reduced the use of force against civilians by 6.4% over two years. These findings confirm the reality of changing police leadership and management styles (Wood et al., 2020). Citizens who perceive the police as legitimate might be expected to cooperate more readily with the police and other legal actors, for example, by reporting crimes and possibly providing information to assist their operations (Hart and Rennison, 2003).

Furthermore, citizens who consider the police legitimate are less likely to break the law in general (Paternoster et al. 1997; see also Tyler 1990; Tyler and Huo 2002). Just as significant research has confirmed the hypothesis that even harmful acts are acceptable (arrests, punishments, etc.) as long as they make the decision-making processes leading to the outcome transparent and tangible, it becomes familiar and now understandable to anyone. If the processes are transparent to the community and their fairness, legitimacy, and impartiality, negative results are more likely to be accepted. It can be concluded that police behavior has four features that can be grouped around decision-making and interpersonal treatment and influences the assessment of procedural fairness (Schulhofer et al., 2011; Sunshine & Tyler, 2003; Tyler, 2004, 2009, 2011).

1. The first is participation. Decision-making processes are considered fairer if the citizens concerned can explain their positions and opinions. Their input will be taken into account in making decisions about their case.
2. The second is neutrality. Processes are considered fairer if decisions are made in a neutral, impartial environment. Transparency in decision-making presumably encourages the assessment of neutrality. Individuals trust that the perpetrators and executors of acts are driven by neutral goals (Mazerolle et al., 2013).
3. Third, when citizens trust the motives of the police (they believe that the police are concerned with the well-being and quality of life of the participating citizen or society as a whole), police processes are again seen as fairer. Tankebe (2010) identified three dimensions of trust in the police: (1) reliability, (2) efficiency, (3) procedural fairness. The results show that indirect, non-personal experiences of police corruption and abuse have significantly reduced the positive responses to each of the issues affecting police trust.



4. Finally, human dignity and respect. When police treat citizens politely, and with dignity, their rights are recognized and respected, and the assessment of procedural justice is improved. In the process, they respect their dignity and experience as impartial along with impartial attitude.

Procedural justice is inconceivable without respect for human dignity. Even more often than not, in individual situations, people already experience police action in itself as a violation of this and question its legitimacy. This fact shows why it is necessary to meticulously pay attention to human dignity in police action. Human dignity in itself implies a minimum of recognition in law that ensures individuals' human nature. It cannot be called into question by anyone, requiring anyone to demand respect due to all. This obligation is the basis of social coexistence, which is precisely why it is raised to the level of the Basic Law and is also contained in basic international treaties. *"The right to human dignity means that there is a core of individual autonomy, self-determination, extracted from the provisions of everyone else, as a result of which man remains a subject and does not become an instrument or object."* (Decision 8/1990 (IV. 23.) AB).

As interpreted by the Constitutional Court, human dignity is the "mother right" of the rights of the individual and thus the right to honor and reputation. Reputation, honor, and human dignity are separable rights of the person and are closely linked. Reputation and honor protect the social value judgments about a person. On this basis, defamatory conduct constitutes an attack on human dignity, against which human dignity and honor as legal objects are also protected by the Criminal Code in the area of defamation and libel. Because of the above, any expression which insults human dignity, i.e. which contains a degrading value judgment, is liable to defame. In this respect, the form in which it is used, for example, in a joke, a story, or a question, is irrelevant. Thus, the seriousness or plausibility of the statement is not a function of its factual nature. Typical examples of such conduct include calling the victim stupid, a thief, or even a homosexual, or making offensive or hurtful remarks about someone's origin or ethnicity. Section 216 of the Hungarian Criminal Code punishes hate crimes as "Violence against a member of the community." Since the new Penal Code entry into force, the law no longer only refers to acts of violence motivated by racial, ethnic, or religious hatred but also specifically covers attacks against members of groups based on sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability.

The theory of procedural justice emerges in the work of Tom Tyler (1988, 1990, 2004, 2011; Tyler et al., 2007), who argues that if the police demonstrate 'fair' procedures appropriately, this will have the further consequence of increasing police legitimacy. If police legitimacy is increased, Tyler argues, the police can expect increased cooperation and compliance from the public and thus provide better police service, as the likelihood of acceptance is enhanced. Tyler (2004: 84) offers a 'process-based model' of how police legitimacy can be improved. This situation can be achieved by: '[providing] people with the opportunity to express their views before decisions are made in the policing context; explaining the reasons and the facts behind decisions; and making complaint mechanisms available to people and treating them with courtesy and respect by the police' (Tyler, 2011: 260). Tyler (2011: 257) demonstrates that the most crucial dimension of the encounter between police and citizens is the perceived fairness of the process.

The primary question that shapes people's reactions when they meet the police in person. Citizens who felt that they were treated fairly during face-to-face encounters with the police were more likely to respond in the desired way: cooperating with police and sharing information (Mastrofski, Snipes, and Supina, 1996; Tyler and Huo, 2002). It should be added that Tyler's process-based model was first empirically tested on a sample of 1,000 Chinese, which concluded that procedural justice played a significant role in predicting police legitimacy and cooperation with the police. Still, it showed that police effectiveness was the strongest predictor. Procedural justice seems to be a culture-centric factor, which



is interesting to examine in different relations (Sun et al., 2017). However, in Western democracies, not only successful but also 'fair' policing can have some related outcomes: it can reduce the number of hostile encounters that are detrimental to the overall evaluation of the police (Skogan, 2006); it can enhance the legitimacy of the authority in the eyes of individuals and communities (Sunshine and Tyler, 2003); it can encourage the public to cooperate and comply with crime prevention efforts voluntarily; and finally, it can inspire everyday compliance with the law (Tyler, 2004: 89). As can be seen, procedural justice theory offers some essential insights into police legitimacy; besides being a vital benchmark for democratic societies, police legitimacy plays a role in many desired outcomes. This includes cooperation with the police, information, assistance in solving crimes, acceptance of police authority, and willingness to obey the law more generally (Tyler, 2003; Tyler, 2006; Tyler & Fagan, 2008).

MEASURING AND EXAMINING PROCEDURAL JUSTICE

Just as procedural justice impacts the citizen-police officer relationship, ethical, legitimate policing is closely nexus with the organizational culture of the police and the enforcement of internal procedural justice. These are what we call 'feedback loops,' i.e. the enforcement of procedural justice within the police. The Organization may carry more excellent social support in a leveraged way; conversely, they may also negatively affect organizational performance, with detrimental repercussions. Therefore, how the police define their role in society and the criteria for effective policing is not an irrelevant aspect. Moore and Braga (2004) argue that increasing the number of arrests, detentions, and citations do not reduce crime in the community of interest. According to them, many other things can have a more significant impact on society by having a greater effect on crime reduction. In their study, Charbonneau and Riccucci (2008) outline the importance of social equity factors. In doing so, they propose social equity indicators, including an assessment of fair treatment, similar to what is otherwise defined as 'procedural justice.' They argue that these should be included in police performance and effectiveness measurement, as they are closely linked to community policing. As a proven method, the New York Police Department's Compstat management accountability mechanism has been widely used in several countries. One of the primary virtues of the mechanism is its ability to focus police attention not only on the means - arrests, tickets, etc. - but also on the ends of policing: reducing crime, controlling disorder, improving quality of life, and community satisfaction. But the Compstat system has its drawbacks. Namely, the measurement of outcomes is generally limited to crime and thus misses essential elements that police should also be paying attention to (Worden, 2017). Mark Moore describes a range of outcomes or performance dimensions that reflect the value of policing to a broader extent, including:

- Reducing the number of victims of crime;
- Holding offenders truly accountable;
- Reducing fear and increasing personal safety;
- Ensuring the safety of public spaces;
- Using financial resources reasonably, efficiently, and effectively;
- Using power and authority reasonably, efficiently, and effectively;
- Satisfying the needs of customers and achieving an increase in the legitimacy of police action (Moore 2002, 131-33)



Public perception of police procedures fairness, evaluations of procedural justice, and the relationship between police legitimacy and other outcomes, are issues often examined through community surveys (Hinds & Murphy, 2007; Jonathan-Zamir & Weisburd, 2013; Kochel et al., 2013; Murphy et al., 2008; Reisig et al., 2007; Tyler, 2001, 2004, 2009). In these surveys, procedural justice is typically assessed using guided questions comprising the four mentioned above, often summarized in a single procedural justice function (Tal et al., 2015). Subsequently, the relationships between some of the variables in the processes, such as legitimacy and willingness to comply or cooperate with the police, have been examined (Sunshine and Tyler, 2003). One or more elements of procedural justice and the overarching concept have also been used as a framework for analyzing qualitative data from in-depth interviews with citizens who interact with police (Brunson & Miller, 2006; Elliot, Thomas, & Ogloff, 2013; Gau & Brunson, 2010; Miller & Hefner, 2013). Findings from a study of immigrants in Ghana also suggest that when people perceive procedurally fair behavior by the police, they feel an increased obligation to comply and are willing to cooperate with them (Pryce et al., 2017).

SUMMARY

Based on the above, we need to recognize and shed a whole new light on the quality of police procedures and assess the role of procedural justice as more than a conceptual, theoretical academic element. In addition, the development of a police training system that incorporates aspects of procedural fairness is also a key area, as is the result of an organizational and individual performance evaluation system with this hallmark. The issue of organizational justice is broader than procedural justice because it also includes the fairness of the distribution of material resources, i.e. the sense of how relatively limited/scarce resources, workforce, material, and intellectual endowments are distributed within the organization. Procedural justice, in addition to the aforementioned participation, includes being informed of decisions and fair and humane treatment of subordinates by managers. Police personnel should be involved in decision-making processes in such a way that their concerns are heard. At the same time, the background to management decisions must be justified and transparent (Fair Cop 2, 2015). In England, Oxford research in Durham police has provided a convincing argument that organizational justice, which includes the aforementioned procedural justice of managers and senior managers (decision-making involvement, notification, treatment) and distributive justice, has a positive impact on organizational cohesion and more social, cooperative organizational attitudes and behaviors, as well as having an effect on the work culture of subordinates (Bradford - Quinton, 2014).

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