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## Opportunities for Improvement in Organisation of Police Operations

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**Abstract:**

**Purpose:** The purpose of this paper is to define opportunities for improvement in organisation of Police operations in Poland, both within the force and extra institutionally.

**Design/Methodology/Approach:** The studies whose findings are presented in this paper are the consequence of the authors' own qualitative studies as well as surveys conducted among theoreticians and practitioners engaged in public security, management and security management.

**Findings:** The findings prove that the determinants in rationalisation of organisation of Police operations include internal reserves of the Police, the force's cooperation with other institutions, use of modern technologies and application of highly objective tools to assessing the effectiveness of operations. They have various effects on improving organisation of Police operations, but only when applied in concert.

**Practical Implications:** The superiors of all organisational structures within the Police should be aware of opportunities for improvement in the performance of their structures. Furthermore, they should monitor the environment in which the Police operates to be able to identify emerging areas with potential for making changes to improve the force's performance, effectiveness and efficiency.

**Keywords:** Rationalisation, management, security, public security, threat, polish police.

**JEL classification:** H56, NO1, K38.

**Paper Type:** Research study.

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## **1. Introduction**

From the perspective of organisation of a State, security (Wiśniewski, 2020) can be considered in *inter alia* its institutional dimension, as a State establishes institutions to identify and counter threats, and if threats are identified – to respond to them adequately. State security institutions are therefore established under either existing or specially created legal norms. The Police is among such institutions (Wiśniewski and Piątek, 2009).

The good of the society and the good of the State comprise a matter of interest for the Police (Czupryński *et al.*, 2021; Kuczabski, 2021). The Police serves the society, and the interference competencies with which it has been equipped must be used in a manner that confirms, not contradicts, that role (Sagan, 2015). Creating the conditions for the force to effectively perform its job involved defining its purpose and tasks, establishing its organisational structure, specifying the rules of operation and identifying cooperating entities.

In subjective terms, organisation of the Police includes both horizontal and vertical aspects of structuring the sphere of the public order and security (Card and English, 2017). Within the vertical aspect, there are field authorities and the supreme authority, and the ultimate subordination is done with respect to the Minister competent for internal affairs. Within the horizontal aspect, one can observe integration at respective levels of organisation of the State (Karpiuk, 2016).

It must be noted that the Police's organisational structures are not formed around collective management bodies, but rather around monocratic bodies of professional nature. Only when structured in that fashion can an organisation ensure professional protection of the values it has been assigned to (Czuryk *et al.*, 2014). It will also meet what is required of it when it adapts its operations to the changing circumstances, which can be achieved only through systematic and continuous improvement (Gwardyński, 2019) based scientific grounds. Quality encompasses all properties of services provided by public institutions (Firlej, 2005), as determined by the ability to satisfy public needs in a specific area. In the case of the Police, that service means the public security (Justyński, 2019).

A high level of public security indicates that the organisation concerned functions correctly, performs its tasks in an appropriate manner and can modify those tasks in the changing security environment. Quality is everything that can be improved. Quality is "a state of awareness" of all parties involved in creating the service concerned (the security), and it depends on having personnel that is aware of their roles (Stone, Ward, 2000), motivated and educated (Závadský *et al.*, 2016; Hys, 2014). This manner of perceiving improvement in Police operations is rooted in the force's mission and tasks for the society and State (Das and Marenin, 2000; Pieprzny, 2011).

The fundamental tasks of the Police include *inter alia* protecting health and life of people and property against unlawful attacks on those goods, protecting the public order and security, including by ensuring peace in public places and public transport, detecting crimes and offences, and prosecuting the perpetrators, as well as conducting counter-terrorist operations. Furthermore, the Police is obliged to initiate and organise actions to prevent crimes, offences, and crime-conducive phenomena (Lee, 1988), and cooperate in this respect with State and self-government bodies and social organisations.

People constantly seek ways to best adapt to the environment in which they operate. Developing useful methods of reasoning, concepts of operation and selecting tools is possible though detailed identification of the environment in which the Police functions. Efforts are made at every stage of Police operation to define a set of rules that permit efficient, cost-effective, and advantageous functioning in given circumstances.

However, the environment changes over time, and the existing rules of operation become obsolete (Hankus-Kubica, 2017). It should also be noted that the changes in both internal and external environment are induced by the arrival of new ideas and views about how organisation of Police operations should be managed, where the management methods should be oriented to, and approach should be adopted. Organisations increasingly often launch initiative in response to the dynamically changing requirements of their environments (Hankus-Kubica, 2017).

This paper contains conclusions from studies conducted by the authors in the area of improvement in organisation of Police operations at all organisational levels within the force. The most important aspect of the studies was for the research team to focus on the servant nature of the Police with respect to the society and citizen, who have the right to function in a threat-free public space (Lee, 1988.). That servant nature means total identification of Police officers with the force's mission (Mehler, 2013) and tasks, and roles for the security. The content of this paper contains generalised findings of the authors' studies into opportunities for improving organisational aspects of Police operations.

## **2. Research Methodology**

The studies whose findings are presented in this paper were conducted in 2018 – 2020. The research problem assumed in the course of the studies took the form of a question: How can processes of organisation of Police operations be improved? Assumed as the cognitive purpose was exploration of the conditions for improvement in organisation of Police operations. As regards the research problem and cognitive purpose, the subject of the studies covered processes of improving organisation of Police operations. Based on a review of the literature, observations of the social realities of

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Police operations and own professional and academic experience, the authors formulated a research hypothesis in the form of a presumption that, the foundations for improving the processes of organisation of Police operations are comprised of the ability to appropriately utilise the potential, skills, capabilities, and organisational innovation of own personnel.

An important role in the process of operational improvements is played by the Police's ability to enter cooperation with other institutions and to implement rational organisational solutions through exchange of experience and lessons learned. The possibility to apply modern technologies and scientific achievements to manage the force in an effective manner has a positive impact on increasing the quality of organisation of the force's operations. Application of objective tools of assessing the effectiveness of the Police's performance is a condition for implementing operational improvement processes.

As regards the aspect of research assumptions, the authors set forth the following criteria of impact on improvement in organisation of Police operations:

- internal reserves of the Police;
- cooperation with other institutions;
- use of modern technologies;
- application of highly objective tools to assessing the effectiveness of operations.

The criteria served also as determinants for detailed research tasks. The process involved mainly an in-depth examination of the literature (Creswell, 2009; Czupryński, 2020), the continuous data comparison method (Silverman, 2005; Glaser and Strauss, 1999) and interviews with experts (Steinar, 2007). A valuable cognitive experience was provided by confronting the authors' findings with expert opinions.

The interviews had the form of a structured interview because the questions addressed to the experts had been prepared earlier and asked in a specific order. Expert opinions were sought from a total of twelve employees of Polish and foreign academic centres and Police officers, including:

- four serving Police officers;
- two former Police officers, currently involved in research and teaching in the subject area of these studies;
- one employee of US Federal security services;
- five persons who have never served in the Police but are involved in research and teaching in the subject area of these studies.

The experts included, the Commander-in-Chief of Polish Police, the President of Police in Neubrandenburg, the Federal Republic of Germany, the Director of the Police Directorate of the Moravian-Silesian Region, the Czech Republic, a Deputy

Commander of Police in Jermasoi, Limassol District, the Republic of Cyprus, a former Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Polish Police, a former County Commander of Polish Police, an employee of US Federal security services, a Professor of the University of New Haven, USA, and four Professors of Polish higher education institutions involved in teaching management and public security.

The studies were conducted in several stages, respectively:

- at the first stage, a sheet for interviews with experts was prepared;
- at the second stage, qualitative studies were conducted and the related conclusion were prepared by the experts;
- at the third stage, a group of experts were selected to be asked to give interviews;
- at the fourth stage, the experts were interviewed;
- at the fifth stage, the findings of the authors' studies were confronted with the results of the interviews with the experts and elaborated in writing.

The authors believe that the research assumptions were sufficient to verify the research hypothesis.

### **3. Use of Internal Reserves of the Police**

Well-educated personnel represent the main internal reserves of the Police. As of 2019, 56.4% of Polish Police Officers held higher education diplomas, 39.81% had secondary education, 3.76% had post-secondary education, and 0.03% had vocational education (Wiśniewski *et al.*, 2019). An analysis of the data demonstrates that the Police is a learning organisation that recruits educated persons. Building on the high requirements imposed on candidates to work in the Police, their skills and knowledge gained from their earlier professional and personal experience can be utilised in the process of improving the force's performance.

The Police undertakes several actions aimed at professionalisation of the quality of its tasks, giving priority to the level of knowledge of its personnel by means of training which, combined with the personnel's professional experience, represents the force's biggest potential. The Police has officers of varying level of professional experience.

The median of professional experience in the 11-20 years range is 20.62% of all officers. It must be highlighted that officers aged 31-40 represent the largest age group in the Police, accounting for 44.15% of the expert personnel (Wiśniewski *et al.*, 2019). The largest reserves lie in the irreversible loss of that potential now of retirement of officers whose knowledge and experience are not utilised in the process of training of Police officers who are just starting their service. While some retired officers from the rank of Inspector up are actively involved in the process of teaching at public and non-public civilian higher education institutions, a large part are not used in the process of professional training and education of Police officers.

Conclusions from the studies indicate that this is largely due to the poor functioning of the system of utilisation of the knowledge and experience of former high-ranking Police officers from the level of County Commander of Police upwards. The Police's existing personnel reserves should be enabled to actively participate in the process of training and upskilling of Police officers and improving the force's performance.

Potential is cumulated in the personnel who have been performing tasks at various management levels for many years. Their theoretical knowledge and, more importantly, practical knowledge and skills backed by personal experience undoubtedly represent unique deposits of unused Police resources. These resources can be utilised both to develop diagnoses of the existing legal solutions and to assess their practical functioning in everyday performance of statutory tasks.

With the environment promoting the development and implementation of own organisational solutions effectively in place, the reserves in question could indicate many good and action-proven methods of cooperation between the Police and non-force entities in the event of threats and emergencies, including rational and effective solutions to quickly neutralise existing threats or prevent new ones already at the stage of symptoms.

The Police's internal reserves at local level rely on direct access to information as well as the proximity of local communities and infrastructures that can be exposed to threats. In this sense, the local Police is among the first elements of the public security system to arrive at the scene. When their cooperation in the field with entities from the area concerned is appropriately organised, then the situational assessment of the decision-making resources and systems is more thorough than one made at superior command levels or by non-governmental organisations.

#### **4. Interinstitutional Cooperation**

Ensuring public security and order requires systemic actions, among which institutional integration plays a key role. Quality of cooperation determines the effectiveness of actions undertaken. However, it must be genuine and actual. In the first place, cooperation does not mean taking over statutory responsibilities assigned to the other party, which is a widespread practice at present. Cooperation may not be reduced to merely signing successive agreements between the Police and other entities responsible for security.

Rather than that, it must involve real actions. Improving the efficiency of cooperation around prevention and elimination of threats and emergencies undoubtedly encompasses exchange of information about threats and their causes, effective system of signalling threats, undertaking joint preventive initiatives and effective recovery actions. The Police cooperates with all elements of the public security system,

including *inter alia* constitutional bodies, central institutions, local authorities, grass root organisations, and associations).

Easier access to information resources of other institutions enables the Police to respond to emergencies faster and more effectively. It must also be highlighted that close and effective cooperation with other institutions makes it possible to prevent certain threats. Cooperation with local communities is another essential area in the context of security, as it allows more effective performance of one of the Police's primary tasks, i.e., ensuring public security to citizens, which, notably, is also the responsibility of local communities and self-government authorities.

Coordination of actions and integration of local communities in security are relevant in this respect. It is worth emphasising that building social capital through engaging citizens in cooperation in the maintenance of security in their areas of residence has become one of the Police's priorities (the recent social projects implemented by the Police have been focused on cooperation with citizens through enhancing the role of community officers, reinstating police stations, organising social debates on security, and creative use of new technologies).

Actions aimed at improving security enable the Police to respond to problems experiences more effectively in local communities and, in consequence, across the country. These actions contribute to strengthening the sense of security and trust in the Police, which may lead to enhancing the mechanisms of compliance with social norms, thus reducing the number of offences, and facilitating the performance of the Police (Gwardyński. 2020).

## **5. Use of Modern Technologies**

Without IT tools, the modern-day Police is unable to rationalise its performance in any way. An effectively built and used management information system (Peak, 2016) seems to be among leading concepts in this respect. It collects comprehensive data in a form that is useful to those in charge of Police operations and provides information which is necessary to respond to emerging threats and emergencies quickly and effectively. It allows automatic data processing while supporting the process of management of personnel and resources necessary for effective performance.

Investing in modern technologies is a must as far as performance rationalisation is concerned. Information is the key to the effective performance of the Police. To acquire information, the Police establishes broad contacts with other institutions and conducts effective actions for the security policy. For that process to remain the highest level, it is required to deploy modern tools offered by the world of modern technologies. The Police has made tremendous progress also in this area.

At present, managing the Police, categorising social problems and issues within the force, as well as diagnosing and forecasting internal and external threats are complex processes which are handled with the use of modern management techniques involving new technologies. The use of analytical software has made the decision-making process much faster and more accurate (Prońko and Wiśniewski, 2017). Easy access to comprehensive information resources, analysis of Internet resources, fast exchange of information, analysis of data collected by Police officers, and consistent search for solutions that will facilitate information gathering for easier access to information, all offer huge capabilities for forecasting social crises and negative sentiments or monitoring processes that cause antisocial behaviours.

Omnipresent monitoring is a new element that dominates the modern public security environment. This means that public security forces must consider the public relations variable of any short-term operation. In and of itself, that variable reflects the new level of complexity and uncertainty with respect to experiences of past generations, who did not have to face it. The technologies should include communications solutions, risk assessment software, databases, decision-making systems, integrated situation assessment systems and monitoring applications.

Deployment of new technologies is in fact necessary. Because citizens and newspapers also use messaging services, traditional exchange channels will be no longer sufficient for the force to receive, process, use and share information as fast the public opinion does. New technologies must be introduced in all possible areas of command and operation assets, such as e.g., protected vehicles, radio communications, weapons etc.

Use of new technologies (including the Internet, databases, analytical software that facilitates information sharing) enables also faster detection of offenders and investigating crime groups. Data systems, as well as professional social research conducted with modern research and analytical programmes, offer easier access to comprehensive information about the Police (i.e., opinions on the force's performance, and moods, aspirations and aims of those who comprise it), its perception by the society, and threats and fears that citizens find particularly relevant. All this permits faster and more accurate adaptation of Police operations to the requirements of the changing society. New technologies mean also modern equipment used in everyday work of Police officers.

## **6. Application of Highly Objective Tools to Assessing the Effectiveness of Operations**

Every action undertaken by the Police must be measurable, as this is the only way to know whether it is effective. Without objective tools – measures or indicators – it is difficult to determine to what extent the assumed objective has been accomplished. However, it must be noted that a tool must not be an end. It seems essential to use



such measuring tools as the indicator method, cost accounting, social assessment of performance, as well as internal and external audits. In addition, effective performance requires developing competence measurement methods and tools for assessment of cooperation with external entities.

Utilisation of highly objective Police performance assessment instruments contributes to rationalising the force's operations. Such instruments include the level of citizens' satisfaction and the public opinion, as they provide feedback about the Police's performance. The said instruments can be implemented as part of community policing, which provides information on the provision and maintenance of the public security and order by the Police with the participation of the public interested in getting involved in public matters. As part of this concept of Police work, the society should be regularly informed about the security situation, and planning of Police operations considers the citizens' needs and expectations expressed through regular satisfaction polls.

## 7. Summary

The environment in which the Police operates is characterised by dynamic, sometimes even chaotic changes. These changes affect the conditions of functioning and performing tasks which are becoming increasingly complex. This in turn influences the process of managing the Police. The said circumstances are a challenge to those responsible for the security.

Changes must be made. Indeed, if one wants to be prepared for events of adverse nature for the State and the society, one must integrate with and skilfully use the surrounding reality to be able to effectively monitor, neutralise and eliminate effects of adverse events (Ścibiorek *et al.*, 2017). Given the purpose and tasks of the Police, and the close relations between performance of those tasks and the level of citizens' security, the authors could escape the challenge posed by investigating opportunities for improving the force's performance. Improving organisation of Police operations depends largely on the ability to use the force's internal reserves, interinstitutional cooperation, use of modern technologies and application of highly objective performance assessment tools.

In the light of the foregoing, it is reasonable to say that adopted research problem has been solved, the assumed purpose has been achieved and the adopted research hypothesis has been confirmed. The findings demonstrate that improving organisational processes within the Police requires permanent exploration of that cognitive area.

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