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The Role of the Number of Detected Criminal Offenses in the Police Performance Indicators System

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Abstract

The aim of the study was to analyse the system of police performance and determine the role of the indicator that shows the number of detected criminal offenses in this system. A comprehensive study of the chosen topic was realized through empirical and theoretical methods, as well as the comparative analysis. It is determined that the components of the system of police performance indicators include the level of public trust in the police as a fundamental indicator that reflects the real state of crime and security in the country; the level of detection of criminal offenses; crime rate and public safety; citizens-police interaction rate; response time to offenses. It was found that the ratio of detected and solved crimes for the reporting period allows reflecting the police performance in the fight against crime, identifying the main problems of organizational, personnel, material, technical and legal nature of their activities. The evaluation of the effectiveness of policing through the prism of detected criminal offenses provides for further research and justification in order to determine effective legal tools for its regulation.

Keywords: activity; crime; criminal offenses; detection; police.

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El papel del número de delitos penales detectados en el sistema de indicadores de desempeño policial

Resumen

El objetivo del estudio fue analizar el sistema de actuación policial y determinar el papel del indicador que muestra el número de delitos detectados en este sistema. Se realizó un estudio integral del tema elegido a través de métodos empíricos y teóricos, así como el análisis comparativo. Se determina que los componentes del sistema de indicadores de desempeño policial incluyen el nivel de confianza pública en la policía como indicador fundamental que refleja el estado real de delincuencia y seguridad en el país; el nivel de detección de infracciones penales; tasa de criminalidad y seguridad ciudadana; tasa de interacción entre ciudadanos y policía; tiempo de respuesta a las ofensas. Se constató que la relación de delitos detectados y resueltos para el período informado permite reflejar el desempeño policial en la lucha contra el delito, identificando los principales problemas de carácter organizativo, personal, material, técnico y jurídico de sus actividades. La evaluación de la eficacia de la actuación policial a través del prisma de los delitos detectados prevé una mayor investigación y justificación a fin de determinar herramientas jurídicas eficaces para su regulación.

Palabras clave: actividad; crimen; delitos; detección; policía.

Introduction

Police reform is necessitated by the statehood development stage, political, socio-economic and legal transformations, and building up efforts to combat crime. In this context, changes in the system of real orientations and the attitude of the police officers to the performance of their official duties become a priority. Legal, economic, political and social factors of objective reality always influence policing, which is constantly in the public eye in different parts of the world. As the public is the main user of police services, it should control their completeness and quality. Policing is not only the result of the implementation of the provisions of current legislation, but is the result of the implementation of a range of organizational and legal tools. In aggregate, such tools contribute to the establishment of an appropriate mechanism for establishing the right conditions and factors to ensure the professional activities, rights and interests of the police as a key player in the jurisdiction process.

The approach to evaluating police performance in developed countries has changed significantly over time. This was promoted by the spread of

the practice of researching the level of public confidence in the police and determining the index of crime and public safety. Therefore, the police performance evaluation system has gradually become more complex and many-sided. There is currently no single approach to the policing evaluating model, all existing options have a number of advantages and disadvantages. Even in countries with developed economies, there are ongoing discussions about the appropriateness of taking into account certain indicators when evaluating police performance. Although the EU police have gained considerable experience in evaluating police performance by setting uniform policing standards, these countries are also trying to adjust the performance system of police as the main body to combat crime.

Most European countries evaluate policing by quality, not quantity. This is the philosophy of the Venice Commission (2011), which was chosen by the EU and the Council of Europe as the basic standards for evaluating the quality of work of institutions that ensure the rule of law. The police have special powers to restrict human rights and freedoms on legal grounds. Police officers face a wide variety of situations in their work every day.

The law does not always provide a clear answer to the algorithm of actions of police officers, but law enforcement officers must always make an operational decision on their further actions in a given situation. The rule of law should be a safeguard against human rights violations by the police. That is why policing must be based on the rule of law in its broadest sense.

The aim of this study is to determine the police performance through the prism of the number of detected crimes. The aim provided for the following objectives:

- define and describe European standards of quality of work of law enforcement agencies in the context of ensuring the rule of law;
- consider criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of policing;
- find out the role and place of the level of crime detection in the system of police performance indicators;
- identify the main problems of evaluating the effectiveness of policing and suggest ways to solve them.

1. Literature Review

Many scholars studied the system of police performance indicators and its constituent elements. Examining the police performance from the perspective of detected criminal offenses, Drugă (2020) noted that reduced crime rate is the best police performance indicator, as it can be achieved through highly professional management, the results being constantly presented in the media, as well as professionalism and the rule of law.

Considering the activities of police officers through the prism of their level of education, practical training and experience, Cordner (2022) stated that the efficiency of police activities can be improved by combining the administrative system of influence and acquired level of knowledge, skills and abilities. Lum and Nagin (2017) studied the effectiveness of policing in a democratic society and found that such activities can be improved through indicators of crime prevention and high public confidence in the police. Wechsler, Kümmerli and Dobay (2019) considered policing through the prism of public goods.

The system of police performance indicators and their components were studied by: Richardson, Schultz and Crawford (2019) from the standpoint of human rights violations; Wuschke et al. (2017) - the ratio of police participation in criminal investigation and public safety; Asif, Shahzad, Awan and Akdogan (2018) structured framework for measuring various aspects of police performance for resource allocation, reorientation of activities and identifying ways to improve efficiency, Nepomuceno, Santiago, Daraio and Costa (2020) – the ratio of criminal offenses and exogenous crime, Lum and Nagin (2017) – the ratio of the level of public safety and public confidence in the police.

European police performance indicators have been the subject of research by many scholars. Bilouseac and Armanu (2021) studied the mechanism of the Romanian and French police and found that the Romanian police is more efficient at the local level due to accelerated modernization compared to the French municipal police. Vince (2019) analyses the activities of the Hungarian police and notes its effectiveness through the introduction of the police officer's individual evaluation model with a bonus system, rather than the influence of subjective factors. Analysing the police influence on the crime rate in Denmark, Laufs, Bowers, Birks and Johnson (2021) noted that the crime rate significantly affects the consciousness of citizens and their trust in the police; Mendel, Fyfe and Heyer (2017) studied policing in the UK from the perspective of its reform and the formation of the optimal structure.

The role of forensic information in policing was studied by Ribaux, Roux and Crispino (2017) who found that the amount of such information increases due to increased costs and inflated control mechanism, which negatively affects the development of police management and public trust in police.

Despite the rather wide range of scientific research on this issue, the issues of the importance of detected criminal offenses in the system of police performance indicators and the formation of public confidence in law enforcement remain incomplete, thus determining the topicality of the chosen subject matter.

2. Methods and Materials

This study was conducted in three stages. The first stage involved the search and study of scientific literature on criminal law, research papers on assessing the effectiveness of policing, the provisions of international treaties on law enforcement, the practice of law enforcement and analysis of statistics of international organizations and national police on crime rates, public trust in the police and public safety. The review of these sources was the basis for the selection of subject matter, aim and objectives of the study.

The second stage provided for a theoretical and experimental study of the chosen topic, which was conducted by comparing their results and analysing the differences. The theoretical study allowed determining the content of the system of police performance indicators from the perspective of the level of public confidence, the ratio of the number of committed and solved crimes, and other additional criteria for evaluating effectiveness. Experimental research based on international standards, the legal framework of European law enforcement and generalization of their practical application, as well as doctrinal analysis of research papers on problematic issues of policing effectiveness, allowed fulfilling the objectives and determining the role of detected crime in the system of police performance indicators.

The third stage involved the final analysis for achievement of the set aim and presentation of the research results.

The study of the research topic was carried out through the use of empirical and theoretical methods of scientific knowledge. Empirical knowledge reflects the content of the object of study — a system of police performance indicators — from the perspective of international legal support in the field of law enforcement and the importance of crime rate for the countries of the world. Scientific, legal, statistical and practical information on the components of the system of police performance indicators was analysed through the method of comparative analysis.

Theoretical knowledge of law enforcement reveals the subject of research from the universal internal, essential connections and patterns, followed by the rational processing of empirical data. An empirical interpretation of the theory and theoretical interpretation of empirical data is carried out, as well as the significance of the level of detected crimes on the police performance of the is revealed through the combination of empirical and theoretical methods.

The sample of scientific research included such objects of research as: general characteristics of law enforcement and its powers in the fight against crime, analysis of criteria for police performance evaluation, the significance of the crime rate for police performance. Statistics on the crime rate of Europol, Numbeo and the national police authorities of European countries allowed identifying the main components of the system of police performance

indicators. The combination of the study of these objects helped to reveal the content of the problems of forming a police performance evaluation system. The research was carried out on the basis of information retrieval and scientometric databases.

International legal acts were the main materials for the study: European Statistics Code of Practice, EU Regulation No. 223/2009 on European Statistics, EU Strategy for the Beginning of the New Millennium (2000/C 124/01) on the Prevention and Control of Organized Crime, the report of the Venice Commission on the rule of law, as well as statistics on the crime rate of Europol, Numbeo, the World Values Survey and the national police authorities of European countries.

3. Results

Police performance indicators should take into account not only the legality of their activities, but also really reflect the state, which allows responding quickly to its changes. Police performance evaluation criteria should also include the parameters of the professional activity of the police officer, which are revealed through the prism of objective and subjective factors. The components of the police performance evaluation system are shown in Figure 1.

Public trust in the police is measured by surveying citizens to determine their views on the effectiveness of the police and violations committed by law enforcement officers in the performance of official duties. The level of public trust in the police is the main criterion for evaluating the effectiveness of policing, as this indicator allows to measure the police performance in general. Other indicators, such as crime rate, the detection rate and the level of interaction, allow reflecting assessments of the effectiveness of individual components of the law enforcement system to improve it and make appropriate management decisions.

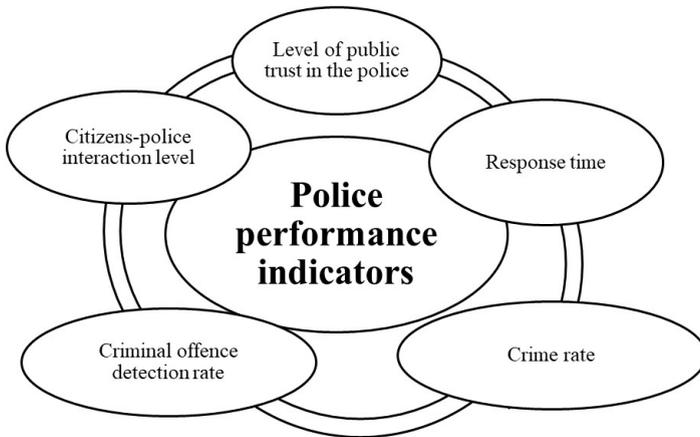


Figure 1: The system of police performance evaluation indicators (on the basis of the literature reviewed)

Source: Authors.

Trust in the police in European countries is high, which is shown in Figure 2. The police are most trusted in Finland (97.9%), Denmark (95.9%), Italy (94.7%), Sweden (94.2%) and Greece (94%). There is a high level of distrust in the police in Bulgaria (18.9%), where one in five people does not trust the police. The Czech Republic (17.9%), Spain (17.4%), Estonia (17.2%), Hungary (14.3%) and Germany (14.1%) also have high levels of distrust in the police. In other countries, this distrust rate ranges from 12.9 to 2.1% (Potapenko, 2020).

The state of distrust in many European countries is the result of active police interference in people's private affairs and personal lives. Police interference in private life was much more common in Ukraine (9.1%), Romania (8.3%), Cyprus (3.6%), Greece (3.1%) and Germany (2.7%). The level of public trust in the police and law enforcement system in general is significantly influenced by people's consciousness in terms of the priority of their safe life in comparison with material goods and personal development conditions.

According to the Ukrainian Centre for European Policy's Values Survey as part of the World Values Survey, the vast majority of Europeans continue to prioritize a stable economy over the security of their lives (Figure 3). In choosing the priority between economic stability, the transition to a more humane society, where the individual and his ideas are valued, only 14.9% of Romanian citizens prioritize the issue of security of life, crime and effective police measures to combat it as a tool to improve crime rates in their place of residence. The crime situation is also a priority for residents of Germany (13.7%), Cyprus (10.5%), Greece (10.1%) and Ukraine (9.8%).

Statistics for the formation of a system of police performance indicators in the EU are regulated by the European Statistics Code of Practice (Eurostat, 2017) and EU Regulation No. 223/2009 on European Statistics (European Parliament & Council of Europe, 2009). These European regulatory documents establish uniform requirements within the EU in the field of statistics, standards and rules for statistical processes, as well as results in order to make the European Statistical System more transparent.

In order to intensify the EU’s action in the field of organized crime in view of new current challenges and to ensure the rights and freedoms of the European community, which are significantly threatened by new forms of crime, EU Strategy for the Beginning of the New Millennium (2000/C 124/01) on the Prevention and Control of Organized Crime was adopted (Council of Europe, 2000). The provisions of the Strategy are aimed at ensuring a high level of security in the area of freedom, protection and justice, including the introduction of effective legal measures to combat crime in all its forms.

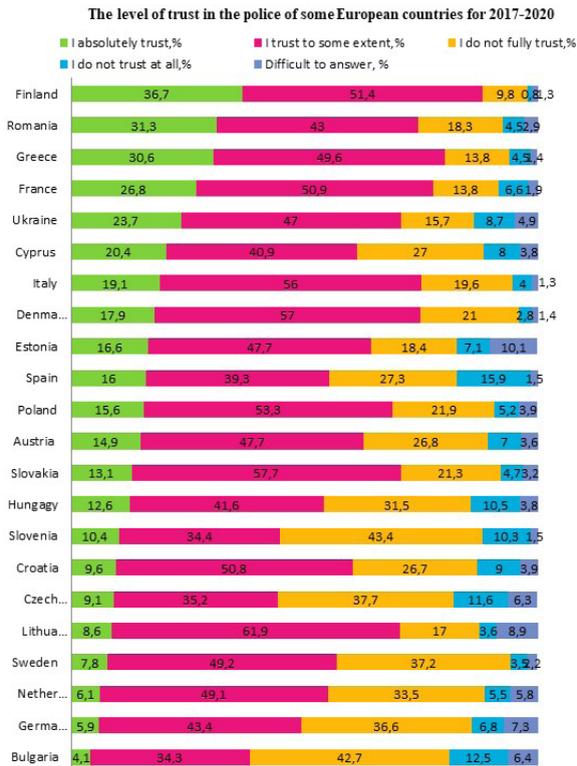


Figure 2: The level of trust in the police in some European countries.

Source: Potapenko (2020, 66-67).

Correlation of society's priorities in some European countries for 2017-2020

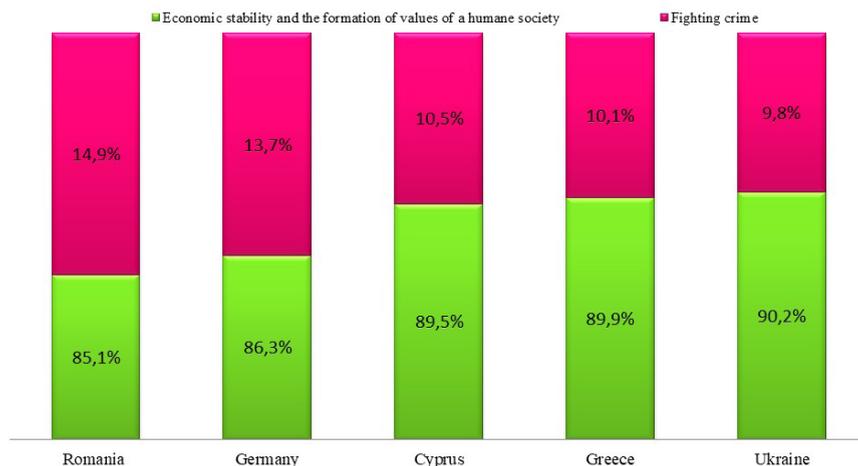


Figure 3: Priority goals of European societies.

Source: Potapenko (2020: 123).

On the territory of the EU, the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (hereinafter — Europol) collects information on criminal offenses, their detection and analyses crime (Europol, 2021). Europol's main activities are to assist States Parties in exchanging information, analysing and processing information on crime, and to assist States in investigating crimes and providing them with background and analytical information. Europol provides information to States Parties on the links between criminal offenses that concern them and prepares strategic reports for crime analysis.

The competence of the said European law enforcement body does not include the coverage of data on the number of registered and detected criminal offenses. Such indicators are disclosed by each state at the national level. Europol conducts research on crimes against the person, financial and cybercrime on the basis of information received from European countries on crime, identifies the risks of such crimes and develops ways to overcome them.

The crime rate and level of public safety in the world is formed by an independent online database Numbeo (n. d.) by surveying its users from around the world. In 2022, the top five safest countries in Europe (according to the Security Index) included Spain, Portugal, Switzerland, Germany

and Norway. The five most dangerous countries in Europe according to the Numbeo Crime Index were led by England, France, Italy, Belarus and Sweden. This year's ranking of the Numbeo crime index was formed with the participation of more than 110 thousand respondents in 6,589 cities around the world.

The 2021 Crime and Security Index of European countries according to Numbeo is shown in Table. 1. Given the data provided in Table 1 we can note that the listed countries with a high crime rate are dangerous countries and have, respectively, completely opposite values of the Security Index. Given that the Numbeo crime rate below 20 is very low, between 20 and 40 is low, between 40 and 60 is medium, between 60 and 80 is high and above 80 is very high, European countries are determined by countries with a medium crime rate (Numbeo, n. d.).

Table 1. European Crime and Security Index, according to Numbeo (as of December 2021)

Place	Country	Crime Index	Place	Country	Security Index
1	Belarus	60.27	1	Greece	55.86
2	France	49.20	2	Belgium	55.83
3	Ukraine	48.28	3	Italy	55.63
4	Sweden	47.20	4	Ireland	54.98
5	Moldova	46.56	5	Britain	54.74
6	Britain	45.26	6	Moldova	53.44
7	Ireland	45.02	7	Sweden	52.80
8	Italy	44.37	8	Ukraine	51.72
9	Belgium	44.17	9	France	50.80
10	Greece	44.14	10	Belarus	39.73

Source: Numbeo (n. d.).

According to the Numbeo server, in 2021 Ukraine ranked 54th in the world out of 135 in terms of crime rate. In Europe, Ukraine ranked third after Belarus and France in the list of the most dangerous and criminal countries in Europe. One of the developed EU countries, France, is on the list as a result of a sharp rise in homicides over the past two years as a result of the Covid-19 health crisis. According to the Ministry of Internal Affairs of France (2022), 681,561 crimes were detected in 2020, which is dozens of times higher than in the 1950's. As of the end of 2021, the situation in the country with crime

and delinquency is gradually stabilizing, but there is still an increase in sexual violence (+11%), theft without violence against people (+5%), theft of property from vehicles (+5 %) etc.

Growing crime rates, to some extent linked to the Covid-19 pandemic, has significantly reduced Europeans' confidence in law enforcement and the EU project as a whole. According to a report by the European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR) published in 2021, the level of trust fell in half of respondents: the vast majority of the population of France – 62%, Germany – 55%, Italy – 57%, Spain – 52%, Austria – 51%, Poland – 33% (TVN24, 2021).

Despite the fact that Ukraine has a high crime rate, the National Police of Ukraine is recording the opposite dynamics of reducing the number of crimes committed in the country itself. Figure 4 shows the dynamics of criminal offenses, their detection and suspension of cases over the past 5 years.



Figure 4: Dynamics of crime in Ukraine for the last 5 years.

Source: (Office of the Prosecutor General of Ukraine, 2021)

The National Police of Ukraine reports an increased share of grave and especially grave crimes in 2020: 95% of homicides; 97% infliction of grievous bodily harm, including fatalities; 98% of rapes (Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, 2021). As a result of changes in the organization of operational

work of Ukrainian law enforcement agencies and the improvement of the quality of documenting criminal offenses, the police managed to increase the detection of grave and especially grave crimes to 45%. According to the EU Advisory Mission to Ukraine, the level of public confidence in the National Police of Ukraine in 2020 was insignificant – 33%, despite the decline in crime rate, including a roughly stable annual crime rate (Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine, 2021).

For comparison, in the EU this figure ranges from 39% in Hungary to 94% in Finland. Only the balance of trust/distrust indicator in the National Police of Ukraine has a positive trend (+5.8%). In order to improve the level of public trust in the national police, Ukraine has joined the Open Police project of the United Nations Recovery and Peacebuilding Programme. This Programme is implemented with the participation of four UN agencies: the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Plan for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women, the United Nations Population Fund and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

Given the criminogenic situation in Ukraine, its crime rate in the international arena and the indicator of national trust of Ukrainians in the police, we can note that the system of police performance indicators should be based on the indicator of trust in the police, being then summarized in the number of crimes and the number of detected criminal offenses. The state of the crime detection rate reflects the realities of the organization of police activities, the mechanism of their legal activities, the use of policing tools, as well as the real state of their personnel, resource, social and legal support.

4. Discussion

The effectiveness of policing significantly depends on the police performance – the ratio of the number of detected and solved crimes during the reporting period. The state of crime detection by the police and the transfer of criminal cases to court with the participation of the police reflects the realities of police activities in combating crime and the problems in the use of effective legal means by the police in the performance of their duties.

Cordner (2022, p. 202-210) believes that the long-term police performance can be improved by establishing an administrative system of influence, including management supervision, control, discipline, fines, etc. Lum and Nagin (2017) follow this approach to improving policing. According to them, the main indicators of police activity should not be the number of arrests, but the measures taken to prevent crime and statistics of

detected crimes. Richardson, Schultz and Crawford (2019) note that such statistics on crime prevention, crime detection and criminal prosecution cannot, however, objectively assess policing, as such results of policing are accompanied by significant risks to their activities and the decreasing public confidence in this law enforcement agency. This position is supported by Wuschke et al. (2017), as only 20% of the daily workload of the police is related to the detection of criminal offenses, and 80% — to public security issues.

According to Demou, Hale and Hunt (2019, p. 702-706), the workload of the police officer, his/her psychological state should be taken into account for an objective calculation of the effectiveness of the police, while according to Lum and Nagin (2017) and Dau et al. (2021) — the ratio of the level of public security and public trust in the police.

Ashby and Tompson (2017, p. 109-111) and Laufs et al. (2021) believe that the crime rate formed by the police significantly affects the consciousness of citizens regarding the security of public life, their views on policing and trust in law enforcement; Wechsler, Kümmerli and Dobay (2019, p. 412-418) found that public trust in the police is formed as a public good even at the level of human biological processes because it is an extremely important factor in the prevention of crime. According to Pehkonen (2021, p. 615-617), public trust in police officers is established not only in the process of their direct communication with citizens, but also under the influence of different media. As Ribaux, Roux and Crispino (2017, p. 489-493) stated, the amount of forensic information is constantly increasing due to increased costs and inflated control mechanism, which leads to the deterioration of the model of police management and the formation public of trust in police.

When calculating the crime rate, Bove and Gavrilova (2017, p. 2-4) propose to take into account the data of the military police involved in the fight against street crime and public safety. According to Mummolo (2018), the importance of the military police in combating crime is twofold: it improves public confidence in the police on the one hand, while their activities do not improve the rate of crime committed by violence, robbery, etc. on the other. When calculating police performance indicators, Nepomuceno et al. (2020) propose not to take into account indicators of exogenous crimes (murder, violence, crimes against property), because the indicators of such crimes can only rank structural units according to their qualifications, rather than reflect the real state of law enforcement.

As Asif et al. (2018) noted, improving the efficiency of policing will help determine the optimal allocation of resources, reorientation of activities, and identify ways to improve police performance. According to Drugă (2020), reduced crime rate is the best police performance indicator, as it can be achieved only through highly professional management, the results of which are constantly presented in the media, as well as taking into

account professionalism and the rule of law. In Wilson's (2019) opinion, statistical indicators of policing are important for the formation of public safety platforms.

The efficiency of the European police has a number of country-specific features. According to Bilouseac and Armanu (2021: 39-41), the Romanian police is more efficient than the French municipal police at the local level due to accelerated modernization. Vince (2019) emphasizes that the introduced model of individual evaluation of the work of a police officer with a bonus system in Hungary is more effective in improving the policing than the assessment of subjective factors. Analysing the activities of the police in England and Western Europe, Mendel, Fyfe and Heyer (2017, p. 3-6) argue that the effectiveness of policing depends on its optimal structure and effective management model, as in Scotland and the Netherlands.

We can note on the basis of the doctrinal analysis of the problems of selection of criteria for evaluating police performance and components of the system of police performance indicators that researchers consider it reasonable to further study the formation of a system of indicators of the level of effectiveness of law enforcement from the perspective of detected crimes, effective recommendations for their practical implementation, which adjusts the content and directions of law enforcement development.

Conclusion

Policing should be based on the rule of law. The system of police performance indicators should take into account not only the legality of their activities, but also reflect the real state, which allows responding quickly to its changes. When calculating the police performance, the level of trust in the police should be taken into account first, then followed by the indicators of the number of crimes committed and the number of detected criminal offenses.

The system of police performance indicators is formed by such basic criteria as: the level of public trust in the police as a fundamental indicator that reflects the real state of crime and security in the country; response time to the offense; crime rate and public security; crime detection rate; citizens-police interaction level.

The crime detection rate is evaluated by the indicators of reporting on the closure of a crime based on the completion of police investigations into a criminal case with its subsequent transfer to court to determine the punishment or release from punishment. The crime is also considered solved if the case is closed on the basis of the death of the accused due to the lack of *corpus delicti*.

Developing criteria for police performance evaluation is the prospect of further research. Therefore, we see further prospect in the empirical research, as well as theoretical and methodological justification of effective mechanisms for implementing a system of police performance indicators, including not only the level of public confidence in the police, the crime rate and the number of detected crimes during the reporting period, but also other significant indicators that are necessary to ensure the proper policing.

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