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SATISFACTION OF PEOPLE WITH POLICE ROADSIDE PROCEDURES – A CASE STUDY

ABSTRACT

In the theoretical part of this paper, the authors present criteria by which the satisfaction of the public with police work can be measured. The focus lies on those criteria that are significant for police work in the community and for the reputation of the police as a state organ itself, which is co-responsible for (improving) security in the nation. The empirical part of this paper is based on a study that included 120 residents from the area of Slovenj Gradec police directorate. The interviewees had to give their opinion on various questions or statements about their satisfaction regarding police roadside procedures in the area that they live in. Furthermore, the authors examined the extent to which the residents are willing to help police officers, how they evaluate their work, on what basis the residents shape their opinion and how they evaluate interpersonal competencies of police officers. The results have shown that the satisfaction of residents with roadside police procedures in Slovenj Gradec police directorate is relatively good since the majority of answers varies between 3 and 4 on a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5. Even though the evaluations are promising, the authors conclude the paper with several recommendations.

KEY WORDS

satisfaction, residents, traffic, criteria, police, police work in community, respect

1. INTRODUCTION

Personal and public safety represents one of the key components in modern society in relation to the quality of life. Although the main aim is to maintain it, this component has often been endangered or even abused. The individuals' attitudes towards personal safety consequently affect the level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with police performance, and with police as an organization responsible for the level of public safety.

Dissatisfaction with police performance presents a major issue in modern society. If people are dissatis-

fied with police performance, they tend to see the police as a negative institution instead of a positive one that could help them in the situations of crisis.

Much criticism that arises in everyday communication with people is related to police procedures and police roadside procedures. Many people tend to say that police officers were arrogant and unprofessional during roadside procedures. A lot of criticism comes from younger people and is reflected in reduced trust in policing which furthermore results in less cooperation between police officers and the youth.

Indifference towards police work obstructs police work itself and leads to lower effectiveness and successfulness. Nonetheless, it is very important for police officers to cooperate with the residents when dealing with their problems, since cooperation in problem-solving leads towards partnerships and to even more productive cooperation.

This paper focuses on the satisfaction with police performance. The level of satisfaction with police work in roadside procedures is examined on a sample of 120 interviewees who live in the area of Slovenj Gradec Police Directorate in the north of Slovenia.

2. CRITERIA FOR MEASURING THE LEVEL OF PUBLIC SATISFACTION WITH POLICE PERFORMANCE

The police are currently considered to be an open system that provides "services" for citizens, while in the past the police were regarded as a closed system, extremely unwilling to change. This shift happened when it was realized that public opinion about the police, together with the feeling of safety and trust in police work can be used as a criterion for measuring police success. This is now a basic guideline in modern police management.

On the basis of a traditional approach towards police tasks, the police have mainly been dealing with

past events; a reactive attitude towards events that had happened. The main objective at that time was achieving statistically measurable actions, like the number of traffic tickets issued, the number of committed and solved criminal offences, etc. No matter how the police tried to stay in its traditional framework, it was incapable of providing its services in the modern society. For this reason we had frequently seen in the past decades that police needed to change the entire philosophy of the management of police work (Meško, 2004).

In the meantime there has been a transition between traditional and modern police work. The most modern form of police work is the so-called "Community Policing", which is based on cooperation and joined operations in problem-solving, instead of having police officers on one side and the members of the society on the other. This philosophy is mostly used in western societies because of a history of alienation of police, low perception of public safety and low cooperation between police officers and members of the society (Meško, 2004).

In Slovenia the idea of "Community Policing" was first seen in mid-eighties, but it was not until 2001 that the Slovene Police implemented the strategy called Strategy of Community Oriented Police Work (Strategija v skupnost usmerjenega policijskega dela, 2001).

The main effort during the changing of traditional police work into community policing concerned establishing a dialogue between citizens, various agencies, local community organizations, companies, associations, informal unions and their representatives, since community policing involves police officers integrating with residents and companies in the local community as their equal partners (Meško, 2004). It is getting more and more obvious that police work has to become community oriented since the police itself cannot cope with a rising number of criminal acts that are changing every day and because the future of policing is dependent on cooperation and assistance from community in which it operates.

According to the Strategy of Community Oriented Police Work (Strategija v skupnost usmerjenega policijskega dela, 2001), community policing is firstly and foremostly seen as preventive work of police. It focuses on the preliminary elimination of causes and circumstances that lead towards creation of criminal acts, offences and other deviant occurrences which cannot be stopped or prevented by police without closer cooperation with residents of a particular community. When performing community policing, the police can use methods and techniques that are not classical - repressive. Most common techniques in community policing are: counselling, work in consulting bodies, work in police offices, youth and adult education, informal forms of merging and bonding with

residents and organizations and organizing and executing other prevention projects and activities.

The shift to this modern approach towards police work means a quality leap from reacting to past events - the way the police had been working before; a reactive approach - to the preliminary solving of safety problems; a proactive approach (Internet - 1).

The introduction of community policing has brought about a whole new set of criteria of measuring police effectiveness. Meško (2004) describes that the traditional approach measured police effectiveness only by its response time (the faster the response, the more effective it was perceived to be), while the community policing on the other hand does not measure response time but measures the satisfaction of the parties involved in police officers procedures.

Traditionally, the police effectiveness was measured by discussing the numbers, basically only explaining the raw statistics (Pungartnik and Gorenak, 2005).

Before moving the attention to criteria for measuring police effectiveness, it is important to explain what is meant by effectiveness of a certain police organization. It could be simply said that this is the level to which one police organization is trying to reach its goals. Pagon (1993) has stated that the evaluation and measuring of effectiveness is the biggest problem police organizations are facing. The same author also states that the main problem is setting the criteria; this is especially due to a complexity of goals set for the police. For instance, if someone wants to develop a set of criteria for measuring police effectiveness, the first thing would be to create some sort of common scales that would enable comparison of actual police performance with the criteria.

The criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of police work are presented in goals that need to be reached in accordance with the primary or basic goals. Examples of these goals are: preventing crime, detection and apprehension of perpetrators, traffic controls, public relations, maintaining public order, etc. (Deutsch and Malmborg, 1986).

Furthermore, some criteria for the evaluation of police organizations are distinctive for community policing philosophy and are fundamentally different from criteria for the evaluation used in the traditional approach.

Warcup (1992) determined that criteria for evaluation of police effectiveness can be: speed, accessibility, sensibility of police organization, fairness, politeness, reliability, proficiency of police officers, readiness of police officers to help people and the level of safety and responsiveness of police organizations. The same author also claims that performance of police organizations can be measured by response time to certain events, response to calls of citizens, cleanness of patrol

cars, financial costs of running the organization and satisfaction of public observing complaints and public opinion research.

Deutsch and Malmborg (1986) discuss the following criteria when talking about measuring police performance: accessibility of police organizations, fairness, politeness, reliability of police officers in police procedures, level of proficiency of police officers for work, response time to calls of citizens, level of satisfaction among employees inside police force, level of satisfaction among residents and level of inner satisfaction of police workers.

According to Molnar and Rogers (1976), police performance should be determined, measured and evaluated above all regarding achieving the goals of police organizations (effectiveness), effective operation (use of resources) and legality of activities.

Molnar and Rogers (1976), focus on five criteria for measuring the level of successfulness of police organizations: levels of crime, levels of solved crimes, public opinion about successfulness of police organizations, employee self-evaluation of successfulness and superiors' evaluation of successfulness.

More, Wegener and Miller (1999) state six criteria for evaluation of police officers and consequently the evaluation of police organization: daily police officers work report, police officers self-evaluation of successfulness, internal police surveillance, public view of police successfulness, public complaints on police work and monthly police officers work report.

Pagon and Lobnikar (2001) claim that police performance in Slovenia is unfortunately still measured according to old, classical criteria which are in contrast with the nature of police work itself. The traditional and conventional criteria are the ones that are still in use nowadays for measuring the police organization's performance in all aspects of police work.

3. PEOPLE'S SATISFACTION WITH POLICE ROADSIDE PROCEDURES

The conditions of road safety have been slowly improving since 1994. This is a result of all the activities police have been working on in the past along with other improvements in road safety. From another perspective, an increase of repressive measures influenced the public's negative response which is shown mostly by an increase of informal pressure on police and its activities. It also resulted in an increasing number of complaints against police procedures and increased number of legal means invested. The aforementioned facts and the consideration of the quality as the basic control of roadside procedures involve continuous improvements in professionalism, legality and efficiency of police activities and also the reputa-

tion in this field. With a covenant choice of correct procedures and methods of policing, legitimate and tactically suitable direction of procedures, the reputation of police organization can without any doubt improve the organization's functioning. Considering the above, the detection of the worst traffic offenders and taking actions against them can guarantee long-term positive effects. The police have to perform strict repressive measures against offenders while at the same time they have to contribute to the beliefs that there is much less chance of making an offence without being punished. For this kind of measures a wide public support needs to be gained. All of this is stated among other things in the Guidelines for Police Work in the Area of Road Traffic Safety for 2004 (Usmeritve za delo policije na področju varnosti cestnega prometa za leto 2004, 2003).

By noticing and realising that police officers detect, determine and penalise offences at routine traffic stops, the reputation of police as an organization will increase without any doubt in the eyes of the public. It is important to understand that there is a great difference if a police officer penalizes a senior driver who exceeded the speed limit by 6 kilometres per hour or if a police officer penalizes a young driver who exceeded the speed limit by over 30 kilometres per hour, driving extremely drunk or under the influence of other drugs.

It is very important for the police that citizens are willing to cooperate with police officers, to report and share information about severe traffic violations since police officers cannot be present at any given moment to detect violations by themselves. Police officers do have to react in these cases and perform procedures that have been emplaced. The actual dealing with public's reports will without any doubt raise the reputation of the police as an organization and also increase the level of satisfaction among people with police performance and also the level of their willingness to cooperate with the police. The police are aware that these repressive measures are not enough and that more time needs to be given in order to achieve the preventive measures that will bring a long-term solution.

At this point it should be mentioned that maintaining and increasing of reputation of police organization, as well as the satisfaction of public with police work are, to a large extent, part of the responsibilities of police officers themselves, since this is also stated in the Police Ethics Code (Kodeks policijske etike, 1998).

4. DESCRIPTION OF SAMPLE AND USED METHODS

This paper analyzes the level of satisfaction among residents with police roadside procedures in the area

of Slovenj Gradec police directorate. Therefore, the goal is to determine the level of satisfaction with these procedures in the before mentioned area.

The population involves all residents that live in the area of the following police stations: Dravograd, Slovenj Gradec, Ravne na Koroškem and Radlje ob Dravi. Within this population a sample of 250 residents was randomly selected and to all of them the same questionnaire was sent via mail on 15 September 2006, with a request to fill them out and return them before 1 November 2006. On this date we had 120 questionnaires that were returned.

There were twelve segments in the questionnaire that were created in order to question the interviewees about general satisfaction with police performance, satisfaction regarding information communicated by the police, satisfaction with roadside procedures, willingness to cooperate with the police in order to increase road safety, generation of opinion regarding the police that perform roadside procedures, evaluation of interpersonal competencies of police officers that perform roadside procedures, whether respondents have been penalized within past three years, how satisfied they were with roadside procedures, some general demographic data and a final question where they could explain any other situations that were not covered by the questionnaire.

The interviewees were given a 5-point Likert scale with most questions evaluating the respondents level of agreeing with certain claims that were made. Grade 1 meant that a claim was not true for the statement at all, grade 2 meant that the respondent agrees to a small extent, grade 3 meant that the respondent agrees partially, grade 4 that the respondent mostly agrees and grade 5 that the respondent fully agrees. Other claims were also evaluated on a 5-point Likert scale but here the respondents needed to evaluate how satisfied they were with a certain claim. Grade 1 meant that they were completely dissatisfied, grade 2 that they were mostly dissatisfied, grade 3 that they were somewhat satisfied, grade 4 that they were mostly satisfied and grade 5 that they were fully satisfied with a certain claim.

The sample consisted of 120 persons, 69 male (57.5%) and 51 female (42.5%). The mean age was 37.76; the youngest respondent was 18 and the oldest 73 years old. There were 67 respondents who had high school education (56.8%), 17 had professional high school education (14.4%), 11 had college education (9.3%) 10 had lower college education (8.5%), 8 had elementary school education (6%), 5 had a university degree (4.2%) and 2 respondents did not state their level of education.

In this non-experimental survey, the method of data-gathering was the questionnaire; data were analyzed with EXCEL and SPSS for WINDOWS.

5. RESULTS

5.1 Analysis of some general data

In this part we focused on the first 5 questions of the questionnaire connected with general satisfaction with police performance, satisfaction with police performance within road traffic safety, whether police officer's attitude of roadside procedures had any influence on general opinion about the police, whether police officers perform routine controls often and whether police officers do enough in order to increase road traffic safety. Results are shown in Table 1.

Table 1 - Results of answers to the following questions

Question	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation
1. How do you evaluate your general satisfaction with the police?	3.38	0.86
2. How do you evaluate your level of satisfaction with police officer's performance for road traffic safety?	3.28	0.95
3. Does the police officer's attitude in roadside procedure influence your general opinion about the police?	4.11	0.88
4. Do you think that police officers perform routine traffic stops often enough?	3.29	1.14
5. Do you think that police officers do enough to increase road traffic safety?	2.90	0.90

From the Table above it can be seen that the interviewees evaluated question number 3 on the highest level, followed by question number 1, then question number 4, followed by question number 2, and the lowest evaluated question was question number 5.

5.2 Generating unified variables

From the answers six unified variables were formed. The first unified variable was entitled "Satisfaction with informing", and the questions in this variable all referred to the respondents' opinion on how well the police inform general public about various matters. The second one was entitled "Satisfaction - traffic", questions in this variable referred to how well the police perform their tasks in controlling road traffic. The third one was entitled "Help - traffic", questions in this variable all referred to helping the police with traffic matters – informing police about traffic

matters. The fourth unified variable was named "Forming the opinion", with questions in this variable referring to how the respondents formed their opinion regarding the police. The fifth unified variable was named "The evaluation of police officers", and the questions in this variable referred to how the respondents would evaluate police officers in roadside procedures within the last three years if they had any encounters with them. Finally, the sixth unified variable was named "Interpersonal competencies", where the respondents had to evaluate police officers' interpersonal competencies at the roadside procedures. Table 2 shows some values of these unified variables.

Table 2 - Arithmetic means of unified variables

Unified Variable	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation
Satisfaction with informing	3.30	0.79
Satisfaction – traffic	3.15	0.72
Help – traffic	3.17	0.93
Forming the opinion	3.65	0.69
Evaluation of police officers	3.61	0.92
Interpersonal competencies	3.40	0.91

Table 2 shows that on the average the interviewees evaluated as the highest unified variable the "Forming the opinion" (3.65), followed by "Evaluation of police officers" (3.61), "Interpersonal competencies" (3.40), "Satisfaction with informing" (3.30), "Help - traffic" (3.17), and as the last one the "Satisfaction - traffic" (3.15).

5.3 Statistically important correlations

5.3.1 Pearson's correlation coefficient

Statistically important correlations between the age of interviewees and individual unified variable

were calculated by means of Pearson's correlation coefficient. Results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3 - Statistically important correlations between the age of interviewees and some individual unified variables

Unified Variable	Age
Satisfaction with informing	.258**
Help – traffic	.334**

** = $p < 0.01$

It can be seen that the age correlates positively with "Satisfaction with informing" ($r = .258^{**}$) and "Help - traffic" ($r = .334^{**}$).

5.3.2 Analysis of variance

The analysis of variance helped to evaluate whether there are any statistically important differences among respondents who were stopped by the police once, twice or three and more times. The results are shown in Table 4. The calculation was made by an analysis of variance.

It can be noticed that there are some statistically significant differences among respondents that were stopped by police officers one, two or three and more times with unified variables "Satisfaction with informing" and "Evaluation of police officers". The interviewees that were stopped by the police only once evaluated the "Satisfaction with informing" as the highest (3.50), those that were stopped three or more times evaluated the same variable as the lowest (3.05). The interviewees that were stopped only once evaluated the variable "Evaluation of police officers" as the highest (3.87), those who were stopped three and more times evaluated the same variable as the lowest (3.31).

Furthermore, we evaluated whether there are any statistically important gender differences in connection with unified variables. The results are shown in Table 5.

Table 4 - Statistically important differences considering how many times the interviewee was stopped

Unified Variable	Times of Being Stopped by the Police	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	F	p
Satisfaction with informing	1	3.50	0.80	3.19	0.046
	2	3.17	0.77		
	3 or more	3.05	0.73		
	Total	3.25	0.78		
Evaluation of police officers	1	3.87	0.90	3.28	0.042
	2	3.63	0.83		
	3 or more	3.31	0.96		
	Total	3.61	0.92		

Table 5 - Statistically important differences among genders

Unified Variable	Gender	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	F	P
Help - traffic	Male	2.97	0.95	8.39	0.004
	Female	3.45	0.85		
	Total	3.17	0.93		
Evaluation of police officers	Male	3.43	0.90	6.23	0.014
	Female	3.90	0.89		
	Total	3.61	0.92		
Interpersonal competencies	Male	3.24	0.91	4.36	0.040
	Female	3.64	0.88		
	Total	3.40	0.81		

Table 6 - Statistically Important Differences Considering The Level Of Education

Unified Variable	Level of Education	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	F	P
Help - Traffic	Elementary	3.50	1.14	3.090	0.012
	Occupational High School	3.64	0.93		
	High School	3.39	0.84		
	Lower College Diploma	2.80	0.81		
	College Diploma	2.95	0.99		
	University Diploma Or More	2.55	1.24		
	Total	3.17	0.94		
Evaluation Of Police Officers	Elementary	3.93	0.67	3.671	0.005
	Occupational High School	2.46	1.15		
	High School	3.68	0.86		
	Lower College Diploma	3.83	0.53		
	College Diploma	3.56	1.09		
	University Diploma Or More	3.83	0.24		
	Total	3.60	0.92		
Interpersonal Competencies	Elementary	3.69	0.86	3.687	0.005
	Occupational High School	2.26	0.48		
	High School	3.47	0.94		
	Lower College Diploma	3.45	0.37		
	College Diploma	3.53	0.73		
	University Diploma Or More	3.74	0.74		
	Total	3.38	0.90		

It can be seen that females tend to evaluate all the upper unified variables, "Help - traffic", "Evaluation of police officers" and "Interpersonal competencies", higher than males.

We also wanted to see whether there are any statistically important differences regarding education of interviewees and unified variables, results are shown in Table 6.

It can be seen from Table 6 that unified variable "Help - traffic" is evaluated as the highest among respondents with occupational high school level of education (3.64) and as the lowest among the respondents with university diploma or more (2.55). The unified variable "Evaluation of police officers" is evaluated as the highest among those with elementary education (3.93) and as the lowest among those with occupa-

tional high school education (2.46). The last unified variable "Interpersonal competencies" is evaluated as the highest among interviewees with university diploma or more (3.74) and as the lowest among those with occupational high school (2.26).

Furthermore, we have determined that there is no statistically important difference considering marital status, occupational status or individual police station that covers the area where the interviewees live.

6. CONCLUSION

On the basis of this study we found out that residents tend to value the behaviour of police officers when forming their opinion of the police (4.11). A little bit lower but still very high on the scale, the respondents evaluated their general level of satisfaction with police performance in their directorate positively. With an average grade of 3.29 the residents evaluated that police officers perform roadside control in the area where they live often enough. Just slightly lower (3.28) on the scale the respondents evaluated the level of satisfaction with police performance with road safety. The lowest grade (2.90) is accounted for by police efforts towards road safety. Consequently, it can be concluded that the residents demand and expect from police officers a higher level of motivation and activities in ensuring road safety which seems to be mostly a job for the leadership. Motivation could be achieved with the availability of promotion, availability of additional education and training and with fair evaluation. An important role falls also on the leaders of police districts and shift managers of police that need to work on various preventive activities in communities such as discussions, debates, counselling and round tables.

The results of the analysis also demonstrate that the residents tend to form their personal opinion about the police (3.65) on the basis of experiences of the members of the family, media, actual preventive approaches, activities for better road safety and not only on their personal experience (3.61). The residents are most pleased with interpersonal competencies, as they evaluate this variable relatively high (3.40), followed by the satisfaction with informing about police work (3.30), willingness to help the police officers to improve road safety (3.17), and the least pleased with condition of road safety (3.15). To summarise, the activities in road safety should be given more time and resources. The management should create more transparent plans of activities that could be implemented with suitable scheduling and increase in staff members. It is also very important to emphasise that police officers need to have continuous training in ethics, because that would help them find a suitable approach to coping with residents,

which would also increase police reputation as a state institution.

Results also show that residents who were stopped once or twice tend to evaluate police work better (3.87 and 3.63) than the ones who were stopped three or more times (3.31). The same goes for the evaluation of satisfaction about information; residents who were stopped once or twice evaluate this higher (3.50 and 3.17) than the ones who were stopped three or more times (3.05).

After examining gender influences we have found that female residents evaluate police work higher (3.90) than their male counterparts (3.43). Female residents also evaluate interpersonal competencies higher (3.64) than males (3.24) and are also more willing (3.45) to help police officers in their efforts to make roads safer than males (2.97). As far as making roads safer, the residents with occupational high school are most willing to help (3.64) – least willing are the residents with university diploma or more (2.55). The residents with elementary school education evaluate (3.93) police officers' work in their roadside procedure most positive, the lowest grade comes from residents with occupational high school. The evaluation of interpersonal competencies of police officers is evaluated most positively by residents with university diploma or more (3.74) and lowest by the residents with occupational high school education.

From the described above we can conclude that police officers need to pay additional attention to all residents and participants in traffic that evaluated individual segments the lowest. We have to mark those residents that were stopped three or more times, since they need extra attention, possibly extra counselling, in order to persuade them not to break the law regarding traffic violations again. Police officers need to be extra tactical and professional with this group of residents. The offenders of traffic regulations need to be informed about the facts of area of road traffic and legislation.

On the basis of results we can state that police officers need to take into consideration their individual interpersonal competencies like politeness, fairness, professionalism, determination, persistence, responsibility, tolerance, accuracy, willingness to help and cooperate when dealing with male residents.

Special attention needs to be given to a category that concerns highly educated residents, especially males, in the sense of integrating this group in various forms of preventive activities such as lectures, meetings, presentations, etc. If they could be attracted to these types of activities, they would also be more willing to help police officers achieve increasing levels of road safety.

With the help of correlation analysis we have determined that older residents, more often than youn-

ger residents, tend to better evaluate the level of information provided by the police, and that they are more willing to help the police in their activities in improving road safety. In connection with these findings the police officers and police management should focus their attention towards younger residents, showing them what the police does to improve road safety. We can include younger residents by means of radio and television focusing on younger populations or by joining these activities with other forms of activities for younger populations.

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POVZETEK

ZADOVOLJSTVO PREBIVALCEV S POSTOPKI POLICISTOV PRI KONTROLI CESTNEGA PROMETA – ŠTUDIJA PRIMERA

Avtorja v teoretičnem delu prispevka predstavljata kriterije merjenja zadovoljstva javnosti z delom policije, pri čemer je podarek na tistih, ki so značilni za policijsko delo v skupnosti, ter o samem ugledu policije kot državnega organa, soodgovornega za stanje varnosti v državi in dejavnikov za njegovo izboljšanje.

Empirični del prispevka temelji na raziskavi, v katero sta vključila 120 občanov z območja Policijske uprave Slovenj Gradec. Anketiranci so se opredeljevali do posameznih sklopov vprašanj in trditve s področja zadovoljstva s postopki policistov pri kontroli cestnega prometa v kraju, v katerem živijo. Konkretnije proučujeta tudi, v kolikšni meri so občani policistom pripravljeni pomagati, kako ocenjujejo njihovo delo, na podlagi česa si oblikujejo mnenje o njih, ter kako ocenjujejo njihove interpersonalne kompetence.

Rezultati analize so pokazali, da je zadovoljstvo občanov s postopki policistov pri kontroli cestnega prometa na območju policijskih postaj Policijske uprave Slovenj Gradec relativno dobro, saj se večina odgovorov na vprašanja in trditve iz anketnega vprašalnika giblje med 3 in 4, nekaj tudi nad 4 ali za odtenek nižje od 3. Kljub vsemu pa avtorja v zaključnem delu prispevka podajata kar nekaj predlogov za izboljšanje stanja na tem področju.

KLJUČNE BESEDE

zadovoljstvo, občani, cestni promet, kriteriji, policija, policijsko delo v skupnosti, ugled

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