

# Contemporary Contexts of Establishing Trustful Relations between a Police Officer and Citizens

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**Keywords:** Psychology of law-enforcement intelligence operations, trust, trustful relations, sense-bearing activity.

**Abstract:** The article is related to the phenomenon of trust during communication between a police officer and various groups of citizens. Trustful relations between police officers and citizens normally exist within the framework of cultural traditions, running upon values and senses, and in situations of sense bearing interaction they function in the form of sense manifestation activity of the parties.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

The background of surveys of a phenomenon of trust goes back to more than a century. It has also become a common practice today for various sides of trust and trustful relations to be an object of scientific and practical interest of economists, sociologists, psychologists and educators, lawyers and social philosophers. The common subject of such kind of surveys is an intention to find out the reason why trust is declared to be ambiguous and contradictory in various types of activities and cultural and historical contexts. At the moment in the Russian and international publications there is no single approach to interpreting the issue of establishing trustful relations between a police officer and citizens. However, philosophers mainly refer to the area of concepts, while social psychologists and educators rest upon the field of practical actions and social relations. After turning to a new, partnership model of relations between police departments and civil society the phenomenon of trust has become a core issue in the psychological and legal discourse, while searching for state-of-the-art technologies to establish trustful relations between police officers and various groups of citizens has become a crucial task.

## 2 MATERIALS AND METHODS

Empirical data to prove the provisions of the conceptual idea were collected via tests and

questionnaire surveys using psychodiagnostic methods (Jung questionnaire (level of extraversion/introversion), A.B. Kupreychenko's technique of assessment of personal trust/mistrust to other persons, Rosenberg's Faith in People approach, method of measuring trust developed by R. Levitsky, M. Stevenson, B. Bunker, test to assess motivation for success by T. Ehlers, proprietary questionnaire to investigate trust between police officers and citizens (developed by D.V. Popov and Y.A. Sharanov) and the expert evaluation method. After processing all questionnaires, the total number of respondents amounted to 195 persons.

## 3 RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION

Trustful relations are triggered by mutual perception of subjects, when possibilities of further development of their communication are found and forecast. Outrunning reflection and proper arrangement of these relations eliminate the parties' concern of their misunderstanding.

Among the criteria of trustful behavior are positive attitude, mutual assistance, safety, desire to communicate again, self-benefit, satisfaction. The process of meeting these desires and needs goes in different ways in different contexts.

The possibility to control the limits of trust for a police officer means to deal with the process of transformation of his/her own experience and be

ready to design new experience of his/her professional cooperation. However, his/her professional thinking, i.e. images, ideas, values and beliefs, constitutes the resource of establishing solid trustful relations. At the level of language competence it is proficiency in various references, connotations, meanings, as well as in percept images and ability to mutual emotional experience with the other part of communication. There are no other studies over the last five years specifically focusing on trustful relations between a police officer and citizens either in Russian or in foreign publications.

Moreover, there is no complete consent in the scientific community in terms of essence, structure, functions and regular dynamics of trust in various social contexts. Even in one single scientific branch we can hardly find out a consensus in interpreting and defining the scope and limits of that term. The reason of disagreements is often the languages of descriptions and methods of surveys, as well as various psychological and legal practices of using a concept of "trust" (Meents S., Tan Y., Verhagen T., 2003). Accordingly, S. Castaldo pointed out that a variety of typologies could be found in all surveys of trust; however, there was no distinct and clear definition of trust.

A.B. Kupreychenko, the Russian psychologist, also demonstrated a wide approach in interpreting the concept of trust.

Some authors offer to consider the trust not as a property of a situation of interaction between the persons, but as a property of a person as a subject, that is as an independent, active, responsible, good at self-reflection, with its own position and capable of its own decision-making.

T.P. Skripkina offers to distinguish between three types of trust, which were found when analyzing various branches of the science of psychology, which anyhow considered trust as a condition of existence of the other social and psychological concepts self-trust, trust to the others, trust to the world.

Thus, the Russian and foreign authors interpret trust as a complex dialectics of shape and contents, since it combines faith and rational assessment of the fact that another person, group or organization will act in the way the person expressing trust expects them to act; that *subject of trust* is in the risky and ambiguous situation, as justifying trust would lead to the rises of the person who expressed trust and to the falls in case if the trust was betrayed.

The phenomenon of trust is of particular importance in the field of legal relations and law-enforcement activities. Positive interaction between citizens and police officers can result in new

principles and technologies of practicing trustful relations, which would provide for not only more efficient detection of crimes, but also for promotion of positive influence on other powerful and law-enforcement bodies of the state.

Within the scope of police activity, trust can be defined as a specific way of interaction with citizens based on experiencing joint responsibility for maintaining public order and safety. In terms of legal aspects, trust is a part of public, legal consciousness of citizens a police officer rests upon and controls. Here a well-known opinion is meant, which is widely spread in the society that in order to keep the social order, possibilities of that disruption should be blocked beforehand. This is the reason why trustful relations between law-enforcement bodies and civil society are integrated into different formal and informal structures in charge of maintaining social order and providing safety of citizens.

Within the framework of our concept, trustful relations between police officers and citizens are mediated by a joint sense bearing activity. It is the semantic context of trustful relations, which demonstrates the importance of law for the subjects, which connects the minds of subjects with the legal reality.

Manifestation of sense is the main functional aspect and value of the system of trust. It is in the process of manifestation of sense when the professional mind of a policeman meets the mind of a carrier of latest important information, when the values of goals of legal activities are realized, each party finds their own place within the limits of trustful relations, without which it would be impossible to achieve a common result. However, the primary sense of trustful relations inevitably gains an ideological content, which functions as a resource of bearing a secondary sense and strengthening the motives of behavior of the parties.

In our survey we have detected one of the psychological tools of trustful interaction between a citizen and a police officer, which provides for the critical need of a citizen to consider a police officer as his/her own truster, as a continuation of themselves. The process of transferring the legally relevant information to the policeman is the way the citizen seems to put into practice his/her own intentions, own goals and aims, which could not be reached in any other context using any other means. If the primary sense does not acquire secondary forms, this system would be volatile and too many resources would be required to maintain it. Volatility of the system of trust is caused by incompleteness, termination of sense bearing process, since one of the

parties does not want or cannot come to the institutional, formally legal level of confirming trustful relations. In terms of this criterion, all citizens can be conveniently classified into three groups:

*Group 1* of citizens is the largest one and actually includes all citizens of the country. These are the persons who anyhow cooperate with police officers in their daily lives, however there is no actualization of the values of senses of trust. So there are no legal consequences of such cooperation.

*Category 2* of citizens, in terms of lack of legal consequences of trustful relations could be also added to the first group, but it differs by a visible process of transformation of psychological senses, by psychological readiness to continue and strengthen their trust.

*Group 3* is the main one, as it combines transformations of psychological and moral senses of trust with awareness of the fact that possible legal consequences may occur within the course of trustful relations, as well as with the readiness to confirm its legal status.

Thus, trustful relations between police officers and citizens normally exist within the framework of cultural traditions, running upon values and senses, and in situations of sense bearing interaction they function in the form of sense manifestation activity of the parties. Moreover, trustful relations could be considered as a project and result of building trustful relations by the subjects, as well as in terms of self-projection and self-development, which is connected with the goals of sense bearing activity. Such kind of sense manifestation activity of the parties exists within the framework of the laws of selective perception, determinism of building up an image of communicative situations based on the experience of the interacting subjects. It is the experience of subjects of trustful relations, which is of interest for us, mainly since it includes transformed personal values, ideals and views. Contents of experience normally constitutes a unique formation of a human mind, which results in individual variability of ways and methods of building up trustful relations.

The problem is in overcoming the excessive variability of behavior of psychological types among police officers and citizens, in limiting variability of forming the images of each other to ethical and legal norms in order to transform the unique features of each party into a resource of building up trustful relations.

The analysis of the practice of police activities demonstrates that in terms of its goals and results trust, to its great extent, is defined by contextual nature of communication between the subjects. In

particular, the results of interaction between the subjects may be or may not be subject to formalization, i.e. be transparent, containing a certain level of conviction of the parties that they have individually contributed to something important, transpersonal, which is out of a situation.

Trustful relations is a controlled process. In case of establishing trustful relations using the *police officer - citizen* model a police officer will be greatly responsible for keeping the trustful relations. It is caused by the tasks settled by law enforcement bodies and by the level of communicative competence of the police officer.

Trust constitutes one of the psychological phenomena with all its reach essence as an integral system exposed by means of a content of cooperation, assistance, acceptance, transparency, predictability and reliability shown in relations between police officers and different groups of citizens.

Empirical data to prove the provisions of the conceptual idea were collected via tests and questionnaire surveys using psychodiagnostic methods (Jung questionnaire (level of extraversion/introversion), A.B. Kupreychenko's technique of assessment of personal trust/mistrust to other persons, Rosenberg's *Faith in People* approach, method of measuring trust developed by R. Levitsky, M. Stevenson, B. Bunker, test to assess motivation for success by T. Ehlers, proprietary questionnaire to investigate trust between police officers and citizens (developed by D.V. Popov and Y.A. Sharanov) and the expert evaluation method. After processing all questionnaires, the total number of respondents amounted to 195 persons. The results of techniques were aggregated and given in Tables 1-3.

Using M. Rosenberg's method, we have studied a rational part of trust. The results obtained by means of this method for police officers and citizens are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Comparative analysis of mean values of M. Rosenberg's test in groups of police officers and citizens.

Test criteria	Groups of respondents		P<
	Police officers n=86	Citizens n=79	
	M ± m	M ± m	
Faith in people (M. Rosenberg's technique)	1,23±0,06	1,41±0,07	0,05

According to the data given in Table 1, the level of trust shown by the citizens to the others (faith in people) is adequately higher than the level of trust

shown by the police officers. Actually, this value demonstrates the rational level of trust according to the conceptual idea of trust, which we have proposed. Therefore, it is possible to suppose that citizens originally more tend to cooperate and assist than police officers. Such result can be caused by specific aspects of professional activity of police officers related to prevention and investigation of law infringements, which provides for prosecutorial bias to the others and original mistrust to them.

Using the technique developed by A.B. Kupreychenko we studied the second, emotional part of our conceptual idea of trust describing the emotional feelings of persons related to trust and mistrust.

Table 2 specifies the results of comparison between the values by means of A.B. Kupreychenko's technique related to "the person you trust most of all".

Table 2: Comparative analysis of A.B. Kupreychenko's test criteria related to "the person you trust most of all" in the groups of police officers and citizens.

Test criteria	Groups of respondents		P<
	Police officers n=86	Citizens n= 79	
	M ± m	M ± m	
Reliability of "I trust"	12,85 ± 0,21	12,99 ± 0,21	-
Unity of "I trust"	11,62 ± 0,22	10,71 ± 0,34	0,05
Awareness of "I trust"	11,38 ± 0,22	11,95 ± 0,21	0,05
Positive attitude to "I trust"	11,53 ± 0,25	12,80 ± 0,27	0,001
Expectation of "I trust"	11,63 ± 0,23	11,66 ± 0,28	-
Disadvantages of "I trust"	10,6 ± 0,46	10,00 ± 0,39	-

As a result of comparative analysis of the criteria of A.B. Kupreychenko's technique related to "the person you trust most of all" show significant differences between three scales: Unity of "I trust", Awareness of "I trust" and Positive attitude to "I trust". Unity of "I trust" scale demonstrated significantly higher values among the police officers, which means that if they already trust to a person, their trust is greater and more stable compared to the citizens. Moreover, police officers provide for similar views of life and unified principles with the persons they trust.

Awareness of "I trust" and Positive attitude to "I trust" scales showed significantly higher values

among the citizens compared to the police officers. This result means that trust of the citizens is mainly based on their idea that they know the person very well and can predict his/her behavior in this or that situation. Moreover, the citizens feel more positive emotions to the persons they trust and suppose to have common interests with the person they trust.

Analyzing the criteria which did not show any significant differences, we can notice that in terms of an absolute value, Disadvantages of "I trust" scale demonstrated higher values among the police officers, while the citizens demonstrated higher values for Reliability of "I trust" and Expectation of "I trust" scales. Higher values of the police officers for Disadvantages of "I trust" scale prove their greater reluctance to create their reputation as persons who always keep their promises which is probably connected to their reluctance to establish stable relations and to the fact that they believe that they do not need such reputation. On the other hand, higher values expressed by the citizens for Reliability of "I trust" and Expectation of "I trust" scales mean more confident attitude to themselves as a reliable person and greater intention to follow that type of behavior, as well as greater intention to predictability in their behavior and wish to meet expectations of the persons who trusted them.

Table 3 specifies the results of comparison between the criteria of A.B. Kupreychenko's technique related to "the person who lost your trust".

Table 3: Comparative analysis of A.B. Kupreychenko's test criteria related to "the person who lost your trust" in the groups of police officers and citizens.

Test criteria	Groups of respondents		P<
	Police officers n=86	Citizens n= 79	
	M ± m	M ± m	
Reliability of "I do not trust"	6,47 ± 0,23	6,04 ± 0,24	-
Unity of "I do not trust"	6,30 ± 0,24	6,67 ± 0,23	-
Awareness of "I do not trust"	7,87 ± 0,29	8,54 ± 0,28	-
Positive attitude to "I do not trust"	6,33 ± 0,25	6,46 ± 0,33	-
Expectation of "I do not trust"	7,83 ± 0,28	7,90 ± 0,31	-
Disadvantages of "I do not trust"	16,03 ± 0,47	15,73 ± 0,48	-

As a result of the comparative analysis of the criteria according to A.B. Kupreychenko's technique



related to “the person who lost your trust”, no significant differences were found between the citizens and the police officers. Such result indicates similarity of their emotional attitude to the persons who lost their trust. However, we can see that in terms of the absolute value, the citizens demonstrated lower values for Reliability of “I do not trust”, Disadvantages of “I do not trust” scales, while the police officers showed lower values for the other scales.

Higher values of the police officers for Reliability of “I do not trust” and Disadvantages of “I do not trust” scales mean a higher level of mistrust and unreliability to the person who lost their trust and lack of awareness of the fact that such loss of trust would cause larger losses than possible benefit from fraudulent conduct.

As for Unity of “I do not trust”, Awareness of “I do not trust”, Positive attitude to “I do not trust” and Expectation of “I do not trust” scales, higher values were shown by the citizens compared to the police officers. That means that the citizens experience greater difference in their view of life compared to the person they do not trust, as well as their different principles of life and interests, their poor knowledge of that person and impossibility to absolutely suppose about the way that person would act in this or that situation, his/her unpredictable behavior.

During our survey we have detected significant differences between the citizens and the police officers according to the proposed conceptual idea of trust incorporating two conceptual parts (levels): rational and emotional. According to the obtained data, the citizens compared to the police officers have a higher rational level of trust expressed in their greater intention to assistance and cooperation. The significant differences we have found at the emotional level of trust mean that trust of the citizens compared to the police officers is more based on their conviction that they know the person very well and can predict his/her behavior in this or that situation and they also have more positive attitude to the person they trust and suppose that they have common interests with that person.

A specific feature of the emotional level of the police officers, unlike citizens, is that if they have already formed trustful attitude to a person, the level of their trust is much higher and more stable. A high level of trust of police officers is based on their expectations from the other person of a similar view of life and commitment to the same values and principles.

Generally, we can note that the proposed conceptual idea of trust can be used to study the

phenomenon of trust in relations between citizens and police officers, while the structural elements of the conceptual idea, which we have mentioned, i.e. rational and emotional level of trust, substantially differ between the groups of respondents.

Trustful relations are triggered by mutual perception of subjects, when possibilities of further development of their communication are found and forecast. Outrunning reflection and proper arrangement of these relations eliminate the concern of misunderstanding of each other.

Among the criteria of trustful behavior are positive attitude, mutual assistance, safety, desire to communicate again, self-benefit, satisfaction. The process of meeting these desires and needs goes in different ways in different contexts. The most important is not to lose the essence of relations.

The possibility to control the limits of trust for a police officer means to deal with the process of transformation of his/her own experience and be ready to design new experience of his/her professional cooperation. However, his/her professional thinking, i.e. images, ideas, values and beliefs, constitutes the resource of establishing solid trustful relations. At the level of language competence it is proficiency in various references, connotations, meanings, as well as in percept images and ability to mutual emotional experience with the other part of communication.

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