Measuring trust in the police
an international comparative perspective

A presentation to the
Policing Authority
July 24th ,2019

Public Attitudes Toward Policing

Confidence and Trust

Society-wide factors

Fairness

PATP

Police-related factors

Satisfaction from Performance
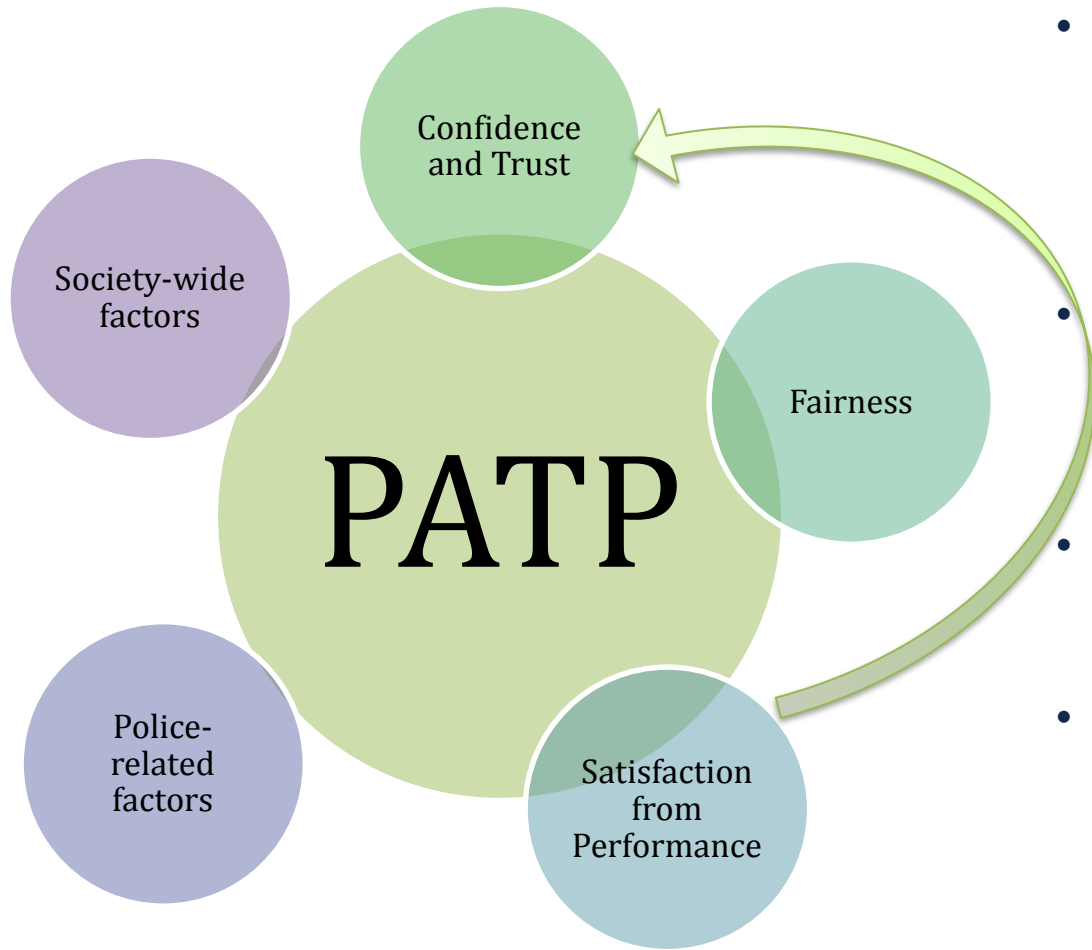
- Public attitudes toward the criminal justice system in general and toward the police in particular have become a key area of research
- Public attitudes towards the police are a complex construct, often measured by multiple dimensions
- **Trust is one of those dimensions** and it relates to procedural justice and police legitimacy
- Other dimensions are police fairness, perceptions of police performance and others

References: (1) – (3)
(References at end)

What is public trust in the Police?

- It is a complex attitudinal phenomena and there are [various models](#) to explain and measure trust in the police within and across countries

- It contains *individual* aspects AND *contextual* aspects and dependent on a series of factors

- There are problems with measuring it with single-item indicators.

> To say we trust you, means we believe you have the right intentions toward us and that you are competent to do what we trust you to do

- Extending this definition to policing, public perceptions of police trustworthiness imply that the police would display the right intentions toward citizens and are capable of carrying out various tasks expected by the public.

- A trustworthy police force is seen by the public to be effective, AND to be fair, to hold shared values and interests and to have a strong commitment to the local community.

References: (2) – (6)
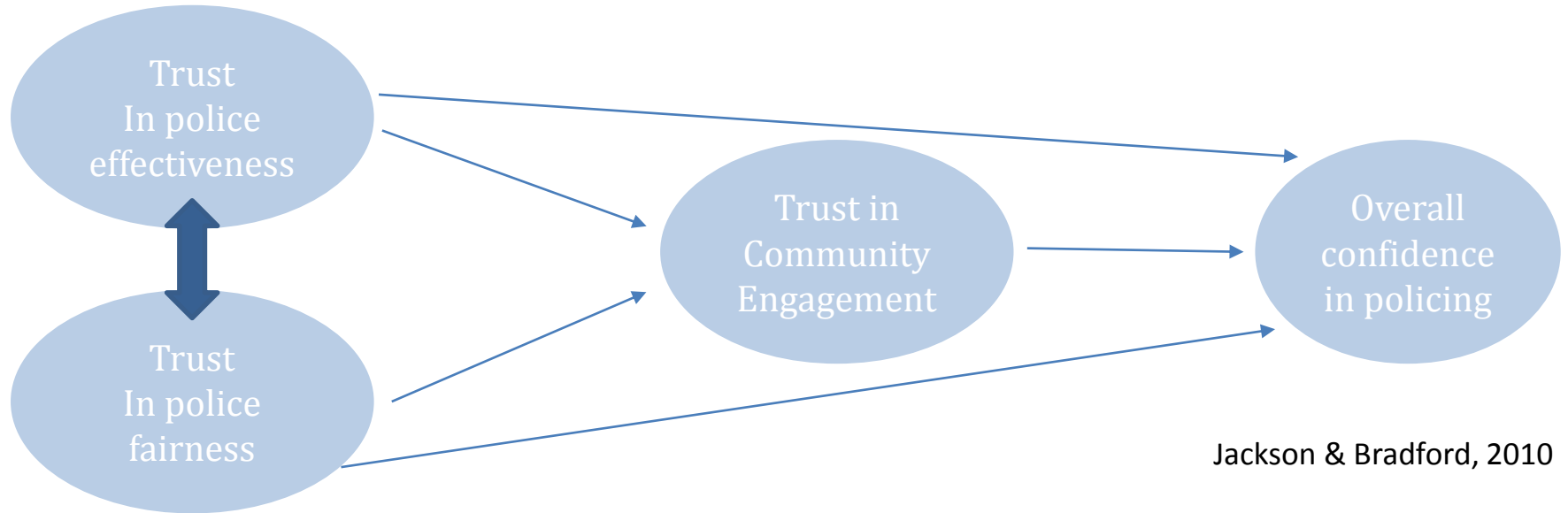
Trust in the Police as a complex construct

- Trust in the police is influenced by a series of variables:
  - Trust in public bodies in general
  - Public assessments regarding procedural justice and interventions from the police
  - Public assessments regarding police competence
  - Public assessments regarding contextual aspects, such as perception of level of corruption within the organization and behaviors of police officers
  - Sociodemographic characteristics
    - Age, gender, race
    - Disadvantaged background and socioeconomic status
  - Prior encounters with the police
    - Positive/negative, quality
    - Contact type and initiator
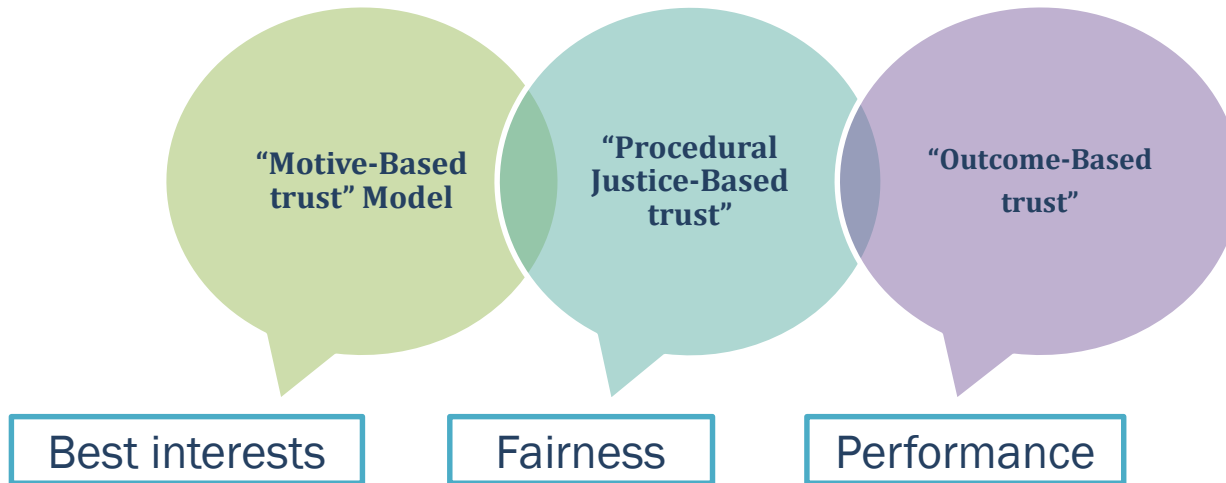
References: (2) - (6)

Why is trust in the Police so important?

- It is a key indicator of the legitimacy of local governance - It implies that the police are viewed as a legitimate authority with the right intentions and capabilities to carry out their tasks
  - This is in line with the "accountability/performance model", by which the police performance determines levels of public trust
  - It is particularly relevant to the effects of crime victimisation experience

- Trust can determine levels of involvement and cooperation with the organization
  - This will affect the organization's efficiency and ability to protect the citizens and maintain law & order

References: (2) ; (4) – (15)

Models and types of trust

Trust
In police
effectiveness

Trust
In police
fairness

Trust in
Community
Engagement

Overall
confidence
in policing

Jackson & Bradford, 2010

"Motive-Based trust" Model

"Procedural Justice-Based trust"

"Outcome-Based trust"

Best interests

Fairness

Performance

References: (2) ; (4) – (6) ; (14) – (15)

Measuring trust and confidence in the Police

There are three <u>groups of concepts</u> which are employed to capture key public assessments of the police

Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
Broad neutral terms	Focused perceptual or attitudinal constructs	Narrower concepts about perceptions of specific aspects of police performance/behaviour
✓ Opinions ✓ Views ✓ Attitudes ✓ Perceptions	✓ **Trust** ✓ Confidence ✓ Satisfaction	✓ Effectiveness ✓ Fairness ✓ Integrity
Public's general judgment about the police and their sentiments towards it	Represents the core measure on public opinions on the police in most studies	--

References: (1) – (2) ; (4)

Public attitude surveys in Europe

	Ireland 16)	England & Wales 17)	Scotland 18)
Name of survey	Quarterly Public Attitudes Survey	Public perceptions of policing in England and Wales	Scottish Crime and Justice Survey (SCJS)
Surveying company	Amárach Research	BMG Research	Scotland's Government, Justice and Analytical Services
Year first survey conducted	2002 (until 2008) Re-launched: end of 2014 Q1 2019 Bulletin	2015-2017 by Ipsos MORI 2018/9 first year by BMG	2008 (2017/8 key findings)
Topics covered in the survey	Public perceptions of crime; Victimization; Fear and worry about crime; Policing priorities for the Garda Síochána; Garda visibility; Satisfaction with the Garda Síochána	Overall satisfaction with local police force; Police visibility; Crime; Public confidence in police; Police conduct; Top types of crime respondents think police should prioritise	Violent crime; property crime; Public perceptions of crime; Public perceptions of the police; Public perceptions of the justice system
Sampling method	Random sample	Recruit through online research panel	Random sample of households
Sample size	6,000 annually (1,500 per quarter)	17,043	6,000
Age of participants	18+	16+	16+
Data gathering	Face-to-face interviews	Online survey + 748 face-to-face interviews	Face-to-face interviews

References: (16) – (18)

Public attitude surveys outside Europe

	New Zealand 19)	Canada	
Name of survey	Citizens' Satisfaction Survey	Canadian Public Opinion Poll, 2016 20)	Canadians' Views of RCMP Policing Services 21)
Surveying company	Gravitas Research and Strategy LtD	Angus Reid Institute	RCMP
Year first survey conducted	2008	2012	2017
Topics covered in the survey	Trust and confidence in the Police; Perceptions of community safety and the Police's community involvement; Levels of service satisfaction for those citizens who had contact with Police	Confidence in elements of the justice system - The RCMP, local municipal police, the Supreme Court, Criminal Courts	Attitudes to the RCMP; Core values; Relationship with the RCMP; Contact with the RCMP; Responsiveness; Priorities
Sampling method	Random general population survey Targeted survey Random electoral roll survey	Representative randomized sample from the Angus Reid Forum	Random sample
Sample size	9,676 (2017/18 survey)	1,505 (2016 survey)	3,040
Age of participants	16+ (except for the Roll survey – 18+)	18+	--
Data gathering	Telephone survey Online survey/Paper (Electoral roll survey)	Online survey	1,324 – Phone interviews 1,716 – Online survey

References: (19) – (21)

Let's try to compare... questions about trust/confidence

	The question	The scale	results	results
Ireland	"Using a scale of 1-10 where 1 means you have no trust and 10 means you have a great deal of trust, to what extent do you trust An Garda Síochána?"	1-10	2018: 44% high trust (46% mid trust; 11% low trust)	Q1 2019: 43% high trust (47% medium trust; 9% low trust)
England & Wales[1]	"How confident are you, if at all, that the police in your local area would be: effective in dealing with an emergency...effective in dealing with a request for advice or information..."	very confident; fairly confident; not very confident; not at all confident; DK	2017: 71% police will be effective in dealing with an emergency; 47% effective in dealing with a non-emergency	2018: 74% police will be effective in dealing with an emergency; 52% effective in dealing with a non-emergency
Scotland[2]	A general measure of confidence including reference to the *effectiveness* of the police AND specific questions about *community engagement* and *fairness* (statements - level of agreement)	Different scales for the different measures	For example. In 2017/18, 53% reported very/fairly confident in police ability to prevent crime; 63% same for respond quickly; 69% same for investigate incidents; 61% same for catching criminals	
New Zealand	"Level of trust & confidence in Police"	full trust and confidence; quite a lot; some; not much; no trust and confidence; don't know		2016/17: 77% full/quite a lot 2017/18: 78% full/quite a lot
Canada[3]	Angus-Reid Survey, 2016: "how much confidence do you have in each of these elements of the Canadian Criminal Justice System..."	A complete lack of confidence; not a lot; a lot; complete confidence.; DK		66% reported having conf. in RCMP; 65% conf. in local municipal police

Notes: (1) – (3)

Let's try to compare… questions about satisfaction

|	The question	The scale	results	results
Ireland	"How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the service provided to your local community by An Garda Síochána?"	very satisfied; quite satisfied; quite dissatisfied; very dissatisfied; don't know; refused	2018: 80% reported being either "very satisfied" or "satisfied"	Q1 2019: 75% reported being either "very satisfied" or "satisfied"
England & Wales	How satisfied are you with your <u>local</u> police force?	very satisfied; neither satisfied nor dissatisfied; very dissatisfied; fairly satisfied; fairly dissatisfied; don't know	2017: 53% satisfied; 19% dissatisfied	2018: 61% satisfied; 12% dissatisfied*
Scotland	"Taking everything into account, how good a job do you think the police in this area are doing?"	excellent; good; fair; poor; very poor; don't know	2016/2017: 58% believed the police in their local area were doing an "excellent" or "good" job	2017/2018: 57% believed the police in their local area were doing an "excellent" or "good" job
New Zealand	"How satisfied are you with the overall quality of service delivery by the police?"	very satisfied; satisfied; neither/nor, Dissatisfied; very dissatisfied; don't know	2016/17: 82% reported being either "very satisfied" or "satisfied" with the overall quality of service they received from the police.	2017/18: 80% reported being either "very satisfied" or "satisfied"
Canada	"How satisfied are you with the service you received during your contacts with the RCMP?"	5-point scale	2018/2019: 71% reported agreeing with this statement (11% neutral, 17% disagree)	

Can we compare?

Different years

Different phrasing and questions

Different sampling methods

Different target groups

Different ways of collecting data
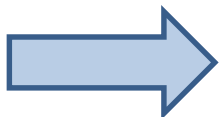
→ A comparison would require too many caveats

International Public attitude surveys

	European Commission EUROSTAT [22]	European Commission Eurobarometer Survey [23]
Name of survey	EU-SILC 2013: Module on Personal Well-being	Eurobarometer 89.1 2018 data
Surveying company	--	Varies by country, but standards apply
Year first survey conducted	2004	1970
Topics covered in the survey	11 dimensions of current well-being, including trust in institutions (police included) and satisfaction with public services.	Standard trend questions on living conditions; Important political issues; **Trust in institutions**; Democracy satisfaction, Perception of and attitudes towards the European Union and European Unification, European Union knowledge; The Europe 2020 strategy; Impact of the economic crisis on the job market; Policy measures against the financial and economic crisis; European Citizenship, Citizen rights and identification; EU budget perceptions and preferences; EU challenges and more. QA8a – trust in the police
Sampling method	A nationally representative probability sample of the population residing in private households within the country1)	Multy stage, random (probability) sampling design
Sample size	--	33,130 (from 28 EU countries)
Age of participants	16+	15+
Data gathering	Personal interviews	Face-to-face interviews in people's home in the appropriate national language

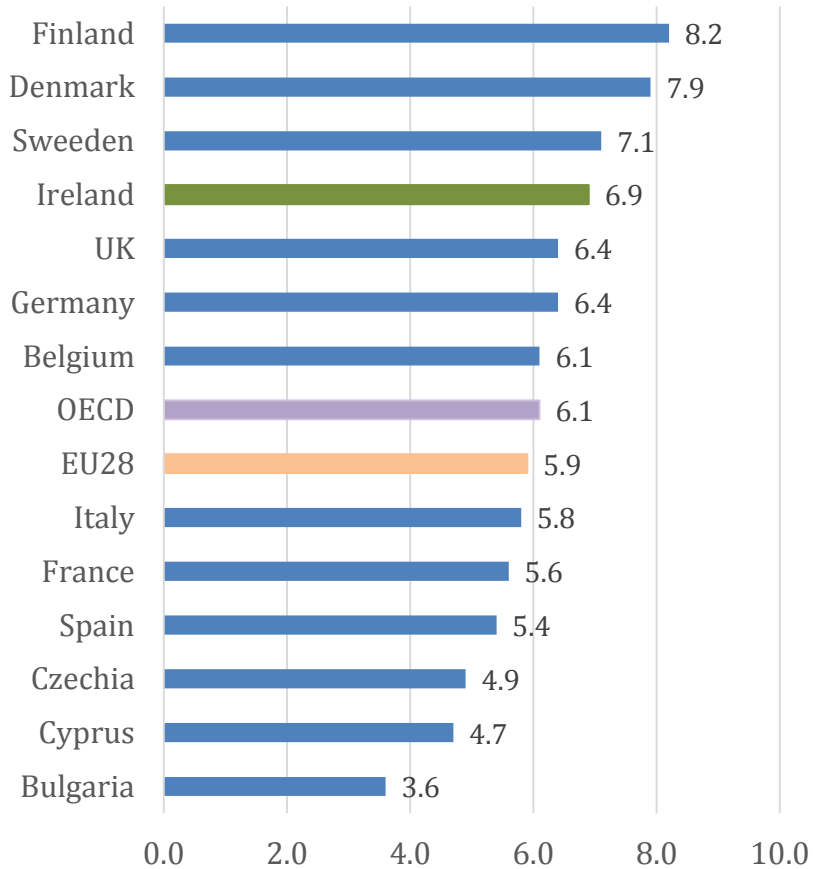1) More about the methodology and the comparability - here; description of EU-SILC; Data table
2) For more information om the methodology, see "Technical Specifications" section here
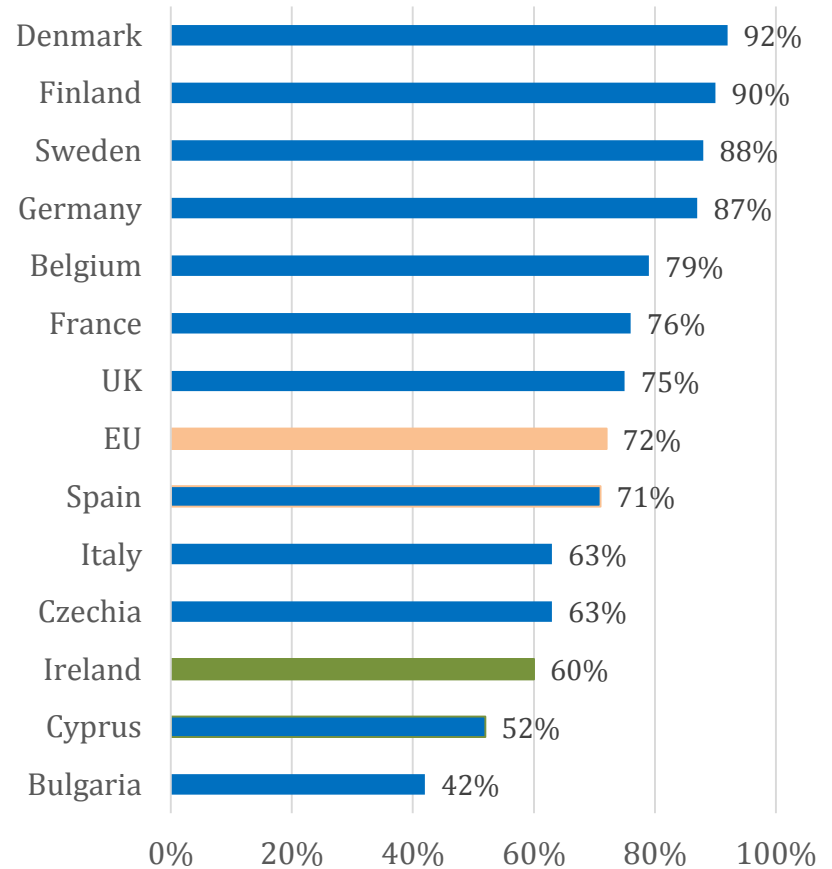3) References: (22) – (23)

Comparative data – Trust in the police

Trust in the police, EU-SILC, 2013
Mean average on a scale of 0-10

Country	Value
Finland	8.2
Denmark	7.9
Sweeden	7.1
Ireland	6.9
UK	6.4
Germany	6.4
Belgium	6.1
OECD	6.1
EU28	5.9
Italy	5.8
France	5.6
Spain	5.4
Czechia	4.9
Cyprus	4.7
Bulgaria	3.6

Eurobarometer, 2018
% "Tend to trust the police"

Country	Value
Denmark	92%
Finland	90%
Sweden	88%
Germany	87%
Belgium	79%
France	76%
UK	75%
EU	72%
Spain	71%
Italy	63%
Czechia	63%
Ireland	60%
Cyprus	52%
Bulgaria	42%

Concluding remarks

- Public attitudes toward the police, including trust in the police are a complex and hard to measure phenomenon.

- Different countries use different models, scales and items to measure the various dimensions of attitudes and trust, therefore comparison is problematic.

- If we do want to compare countries, the best way to do it would be to use international standardized surveys, such as the EU-SILC and the EUROBAROMETER.

- However, those tend to rely on single dimension questions, which also poses challenges.

References

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15) Eurofound (2018), *Societal change and trust in institutions*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.

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18) Scottish Government (2019). Scottish Crime and Justice Survey 2017/18: Main Findings.

19) New Zealand Police Citizens' Satisfaction Survey. Report for 2017/18. Report prepared by Gravitas Research and Strategy Ltd Research.

20) Canadian Public Opinion Poll, 2016. Report prepared by Angus Reid Institute.

21) Canadians' Views of RCMP Policing Services 2018-2019.

22) European Commission. EU-Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC).   Trust in the police, 2013.

23) European Commission, Brussels (2018). Eurobarometer 89.1 (2018). Kantar Public, Brussels.   Trust in the Police chart.

1) In this survey, confidence in the police is measured by peoples' perceptions of police effectiveness in a number of emergency and non-emergency scenarios. - "How confident are you, if at all, that the police in your local area would be: effective in dealing with an emergency; effective in responding to an emergency in a timely manner; easy to access/speak to if you (or someone else) needed help in an emergency; effective in dealing with a request for advice or information; discreet in using information/intelligence provided by the public; effective in providing protection during a terrorist incident".

2) When measuring confidence in the police, the SCJS includes a range of questions to capture perceptions on different aspects of policing - asking people how they would rate the performance of their local police, with confidence itself being driven by perceptions and experiences of particular aspects of policing.

general + effectiveness: "How confident are you in the ability of police in your local area to prevent crime; respond quickly to appropriate calls and information from the public; deal with incidents as they occur; investigate incidents after they occur; solve crime; catch criminals?" (Scale: very confident; fairly confident; not very confident; not at all confident; don't know).

Community engagement: a series of 4 statements to which the respondents need to state level of agreement – strongly agree; tend to agree; neither agree nor disagree; slightly disagree; tend to disagree; don't know.

Fairness: a series of 2 statements to which the respondents need to state level of agreement – strongly agree; tend to agree; neither agree nor disagree; slightly disagree; tend to disagree; don't know

3) Canadians' Views of RCMP Policing Services survey: There is no direct question, however, some statements regarding the core values of the RCM, such as the organization being accountable.

The Angus-Reid survey: "How much confidence do you have in each of these elements of the Canadian justice system: The RCMP; your local municipal police (or local RCMP detachment); the Supreme Court of Canada: Criminal Courts in your province?" (Scale: A complete lack of confidence; not a lot of confidence; A lot of confidence; Complete confidence; Don't know).