

Self-legitimacy of Police Officers in Slovenia - A Comparison between Studies in 2013 and 2016

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The paper presents the results of a study of self-legitimacy of Slovenian police officers comparing two studies on legitimacy and self-legitimacy of police officers that were conducted in 2016 (n = 478) and 2013 (n = 529) at the same Slovenian police stations, using the same measurement instrument. The main objective of this paper was to examine the views of police officers regarding their legitimacy and importance to society and to gain insight into the dynamics of the self-legitimacy concept over time. The results showed that perceptions of distributive justice (police officers' satisfaction with their salary) in 2016 increased in comparison with the year 2013.

Nevertheless, this factor is still the lowest among all other included indicators. Statistically significant and positive differences were identified in the assessment of supervisors' procedural justice and in the area of loyalty to the police organisation. Police officers also highly assessed their procedural justice, although this factor in 2016 slightly decreased. An interesting dynamic emerged mainly in self-legitimacy; in both periods police officers have very highly assessed moral justification of their powers, but in the recent study this belief has been significantly reduced. The results of the study in 2016 also show that police officers are more convinced of having enough authority to perform their duties and the ability to legally and legitimately exercise police powers. In the discussion of this paper, findings of our comparative study are placed in the context of recent social and institutional changes.

Key words: self-legitimacy, procedural justice, pro-organisational behaviour, police officers, Slovenia

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