

## Police Officers' Opinions about Some Effects of the Use of Body Worn Cameras

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**Abstract:** In the last ten years, many police organizations around the world have been approaching the implementation of cameras that can be placed on the body of a police officer. By implementing these cameras, police organizations strive to prevent and suppress crime, to improve officer safety, officers' performance and police-community relationship. In September 2023, the Serbian Ministry of Internal Affairs started with the pilot project of implementing body worn cameras (BWC) in two organizational units of the traffic police. The research presented in this paper was carried out before the idea of implementation of BWCs in Serbian police practice was born. The research included police officers from five organizational units of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The aim of the research was to explore the views and opinions of police officers related to implementation of BWCs. Research results and the authors' conclusions may help the decision-making process related to the BWC implementation in Serbian police practice.

**Keywords:** body worn cameras, police reform, officer safety, community policing, police officers, police organizations.

### INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of the 21st century, police organizations worldwide faced both new and old (unresolved) problems and challenges. These included emerging forms and sources of threats to community safety, rising crime rates, threats to the safety of police officers, officers' hiring and retention issues, unsatisfactory relations between the police and the community, etc. In response to these challenges, police organizations implemented numerous prevention programs and projects, introduced new methods and strategies into their work, and undertook various measures and actions to enhance efficiency, accountability, and responsiveness to citizens' concerns (Vuković, 2020; Peterson & Lawrence, 2019). For instance, in the United States of America (USA), a chronic problem was the high number of accusations related to stopping, searching, controlling, and sanctioning drivers and pedestrians based on the individual's race, ethnicity, religion or national origin

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(“racial profiling”). Actions such as stopping, questioning, conducting searches, detention, or deprivation of liberty were taken solely due to a person’s racial or ethnic affiliation, gender, or sexual orientation, rather than on factual evidence supporting the necessary degree of suspicion for police action (Stoughton, 2018; Risse & Zeckhauser, 2004). The 2014 incident involving the shooting and killing of 18-year-old Michael Brown by a police officer in Ferguson, Missouri, USA seemed to be a tipping point. This event attracted significant media attention, highlighting long-standing police violence against minority communities. Subsequently, there were numerous civil disturbances across the USA leading to the establishment of social movements addressing the significance of Black lives and the unequal treatment of police officers towards them (Lum et al., 2020; Peterson & Lawrence, 2019; Braga et al., 2018; Nowacki & Willits, 2018). In response, the then US President Barack Obama formed the Task Force on 21st Century Policing. The Task Force addressed the issue of “racial profiling” in the historical and current context and proposed body-worn cameras (BWC) for police officers as a solution to problems in relations between the police and minority communities. The belief was that cameras would increase transparency and build citizens’ and communities’ trust in the police (President’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing, 2015). The essential reasons for implementing BWCs in the USA were grounded in the need to reduce police violence against citizens, decrease citizen complaints about police work, strengthen the legitimacy and transparency of police operations, and provide evidence, especially in cases of arrest (Ariel et al., 2015).

In Europe, police organizations began equipping their officers with BWCs shortly after their US counterparts, but for different reasons. In Germany, Sweden, Spain, and Switzerland, police organizations implemented cameras to protect police officers from citizen violence. Attacks and harassment against police and civil servants were significant problems in these countries (Mohler, 2018; Lehmann, 2020; Coudert et al., 2015; Hansen Löffstrand & Backman, 2021; Meyer, 2020).

Police organizations decide to implement BWCs under the assumption that recording interactions between police officers and citizens will positively impact their behaviour and actions. By deterring both police officers and citizens, BWCs will contribute to reducing illegal actions by police officers and decreasing violence by citizens against law enforcement. By achieving constant surveillance, BWC is expected to positively influence police officers to engage in more preventive and repressive activities during their shifts, thereby increasing overall productivity and the efficiency of the police organization. Due to these expectations, BWC has rapidly become one of the fastest-adopted technologies in the history of modern policing within a short period (Lum et al., 2020).

Starting in September 2023, the Police of Serbia initiated the pilot phase of BWC implementation. During this phase, BWCs are utilized by police officers from two organizational units of the traffic police. The primary purpose and goal of implementing BWCs in the Serbian Police are to document and control the work of police officers, improve law enforcement and work performance, assess the validity of citizens’ complaints, prevent abuse and corruption, and enhance police training.

The implementation of BWC in the Serbian police practice should not rely on ready-made solutions from comparative police practices. While experiences from comparative practices must be taken into account, gaining insight into the attitudes and opinions of front-line police officers is of the utmost importance, as they can significantly influence the BWC



implementation process. This paper presents the attitudes and opinions of police officers from the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Serbia (hereinafter referred to as MOI) regarding BWCs. The study was conducted prior to the conception of pilot phase of BWC implementation in Serbian police practice which took place in September 2023.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

During September 2021, a study was conducted in the police departments of Novi Sad, Belgrade, Niš, Kragujevac, and the Traffic Police Administration of the Police Directorate. The survey questionnaire was used to explore the attitudes and opinions of police officers regarding BWC.

A total of three hundred forty-three (343) police officers participated in the study. The participation rates for each unit were as follows: Belgrade Police Department 116 (33.8%), Kragujevac Police Department 59 (17.3%), Niš Police Department 78 (22.7%), Novi Sad Police Department 80 (23.3%), and Traffic Police Administration of the Police Directorate 10 (2.9%) (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Overview of the Number of Respondents by Organizational Units

Organizational unit	Number of respondents	The number of respondents expressed as a percentage
Belgrade Police Department	116	33.8 %
Novi Sad Police Department	80	23.3 %
Niš Police Department	78	22.7 %
Kragujevac Police Department	59	17.3 %
Traffic Police Administration of the Police Directorate	10	2.9 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>343</b>	<b>100 %</b>

Data processing for this study was conducted using the statistical package IBM SPSS Statistics 20. The aggregated data are presented with the nominal number of respondents (N) and their representation (%) for clarity, while years of service are presented as the average  $\pm$  standard deviation.

The study encompassed police officers stationed in the general police, traffic police, and intervention units (kind of a SWAT unit) across the aforementioned four police departments. In the Traffic Police Administration of the Police Directorate, the research included traffic police officers engaged in traffic control tasks using unmarked police cars, commonly referred to as “interceptors”.

The police officers involved in the study at general police stations and traffic police stations were assigned to positions of a police officer, traffic police officer, sector leader, deputy sector leader, shift leader, and assistant shift leader. For intervention units, positions included team member of intervention unit (police intervention patrol member), intervention unit



team leader (intervention patrol leader). In the survey questionnaire, police officers from these units are collectively marked as “members of the intervention unit”. Police officers from the Traffic Police Administration included in the research were assigned to traffic police officer positions. The survey questionnaire allows respondents to specify other position, if their position is not covered by the options provided in the survey questionnaire (Table 2). It is expected that organizational units surveyed police officers belong to would be the primary users of BWC if they were implemented in the Serbian police.

**Table 2.** *Overview of the Number of Respondents by Workplace*

Position of the respondent	Number of respondents	The number of respondents expressed as a percentage
Police officer/Traffic police officer	206	60.1%
Sector leader/Deputy sector leader	21	6.1%
Shift leader/ Assistant shift leader	23	6.7%
Member of the Intervention unit	75	21.9%
Other position	18	5.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>343</b>	<b>100%</b>

It has been noted that a number of surveyed police officers who were assigned to positions which require high school diploma, actually possess higher education degree (3-year or 4-year college degree). Therefore, in the questionnaire, respondents were given the opportunity to declare their level of education (Table 3).

**Table 3.** *Overview of the Number of Responders by Educational Level*

Type of professional qualification	Number of respondents	The number of respondents expressed as a percentage
High school diploma	227	66.2%
3-year college degree	36	10.5%
4-year college degree	69	20.1%
Master studies/Specialist studies	11	3.2%
Total	343	100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>343</b>	<b>100%</b>

The largest number of participants in the research, i.e. 66.2% had high school diploma. The length of service of the respondents ranged from 1 to 35 years, and on average it was  $14.8 \pm 9.14$  years of service.



## RESULTS

The implementation of BWC is undertaken by police organizations with the aim of achieving specific objectives. Typically, these goals are established by either the police organizations themselves, government representatives, or jointly by both entities. The identified goals or desired effects can vary, contingent upon the challenges faced by a particular police organization or political leadership. These objectives may pertain to the improvement of various aspects related to police organizations, police officers' performance, citizens, and the interests of (local) community.

One such goal or desired effect of BWC implementation involves enhancing the quality of police actions taken. In practical scenarios, there are instances where police officers may approach situations or interventions superficially, lacking the inclination to identify and analyse problem cause and its constituents. Consequently, the problem may persist, causing harm to individuals and/or the community, and creating an impression of the police organization's ineffectiveness. In light of this behaviour exhibited by police officers, the respondents were asked: *“Do you believe that recording the actions of police officers with BWC can improve the quality of police actions taken?”*

**Table 4.** Respondents' Answers about the Possible Influence of BWC on the Quality of the Police Actions Taken

Answers offered	Number of respondents	Result in percentage
1. Yes	144	42.0%
2. No	140	40.8%
3. I'm not sure	59	17.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>343</b>	<b>100%</b>

One of the reasons citizens file complaints against police officers is officers' conduct during police-citizen interaction. At times, the communication between police officers and citizens exceeds the bounds of professional treatment and respect for citizens' rights. Through these interactions citizens often form opinions about the police (organisation) and their perceptions can influence the trust in the police. Depending on their perceptions of the police, citizens decide whether to cooperate further with police which could significantly impact police-community partnerships. The quality of police-citizen communication is a well-recognized issue in police practice, as effective communication plays a crucial role in resolving interventions without resorting to escalation and coercive measures. Recognizing the pivotal role of communication in police work, respondents were asked regarding the potential impact of BWC on improving communication with citizens. The specific question asked was: *“Do you believe that recording the actions of police officers with BWC can enhance communication between police officers and citizens?”*



**Table 5.** *Answers of Respondents about the Possible Influence of BWC on Improved Police–Citizen Communication*

Answers offered	Number of respondents	Result in percentage
1. Yes	147	42.8%
2. No	162	47.3%
3. I'm not sure	34	9.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>343</b>	<b>100%</b>

One of the reasons for implementing BWCs in police organizations in the USA was to address the reduction of coercive measures, particularly against certain categories of citizens. Historically, coercion in the USA was frequently employed, especially against members of minority communities, often without a legal basis and in disproportionate ways (Risse & Zeckhauser, 2004; Coudert et al., 2015). In many instances, police officers claimed that coercive measures were in line with legal regulations, even when their use was excessive. Incidents were also observed in police practice where coercion occurred without follow-up reports being filed. The introduction of BWCs in police organizations aimed to increase police officers' awareness of being under constant scrutiny for their actions, with the intention of positively influencing their actions, particularly less use of coercive measures. Studies following the implementation of BWCs in police organizations in the USA indicated a reduction in the use of coercive measures (Ariel et al., 2015; Jennings et al., 2017; Yokum et al., 2019; Peterson et al., 2018). BWCs encouraged police officers to be more engaged in interventions and to undertake coercive measures only when it was necessary and legally justified. Having this in mind, respondents were asked about the potential impact of BWCs on reducing the use of coercive measures with the following question: “*Do you believe that recording the actions of police officers with BWC can decrease the number of coercive measures used?*”

**Table 6.** *Answers of Respondents about the Possible Influence of BWC on Reducing the Use of Coercive Measures*

Answers offered	Number of respondents	Result in percentage
1. Yes	102	29.8%
2. No	194	56.5%
3. I'm not sure	47	13.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>343</b>	<b>100%</b>

In addition to influencing the conduct and actions of police officers, BWCs can contribute to establishing the facts of incidents involving police actions. At the same time, studies conducted after the implementation of BWCs have noted a decrease in the number of complaints filed against police officers (Ariel et al., 2015; Jennings et al., 2015; Ellis et al., 2015; Peterson et al., 2018). The reduction in filed complaints can be interpreted as the impact of BWCs on the behaviour of both police officers and citizens. In certain cases, citi-



zens chose not to file complaints after being presented with footage of the incident (Kampfe, 2015). When complaints are filed against police officers, police managers are obligated to review the incident, determining all pertinent facts crucial for the complaint resolution process. In situations where police officers do not use BWCs, fact determination relies heavily on the examination of facts that can be found in the follow up documentation such as reports, statements, official notes, etc. However, solely relying on collected documentation sometimes proves insufficient for establishing the facts of an incident during the complaint procedure. Besides the achieved preventive and deterring effect, recordings from a BWC can facilitate a quicker and easier determination of the facts of an incident that is the subject of a complaint. Having this in mind, respondents were posed the following question regarding the potential role of BWCs in the complaint procedure: “Do you believe that recording the actions of police officers with BWC can contribute to a smoother determination of the facts of the incident in the complaint procedure and other incidents in which there is a doubt as to how they happened?”

**Table 7.** Answers of Respondents about the Possible Role on BWC in Determination of the Facts of the Situation in the Complaint Procedure and Other Incidents

Answers offered	Number of respondents	Result in percentage
1. Yes	235	68.5%
2. No	71	20.7%
3. I'm not sure	37	10.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>343</b>	<b>100%</b>

The overall performance of a police organization is contingent on the individual performance of its police officers. During their shifts, officers respond to calls for service, execute tasks outlined by their shift leaders, and undertake self-initiated activities. In practice, it is observed that officers often document a substantial number of activities carried out during their shifts. However, their reports can sometimes be called into question, leaving room for doubt about the actual output of their engagement. Sometimes they state actions that were not carried out. BWC ensures the verification of every police activity, addressing potential inaccuracies in reported activities. At the same time, the presence of BWC may encourage police officers to engage in more self-initiated activities during their shifts. Camera footage provides a tangible means of determining the extent of police officers' activities during work shifts. BWCs, therefore, have the potential to impact the achieved performance of police officers. Studies in the USA on the impact of BWC have noted both positive and negative effects on officers' performance. Some studies observed a reduction in specific activities (e.g., vehicle stops and controls), while others noted an increase in other activities (e.g., achieved contact with citizens) (Ready & Young 2015; Jennings et al., 2017; Wallace et al., 2018; Lum et al., 2020; Headley et al., 2017; Peterson et al., 2018). Respondents were asked a question about the potential impact of BWCs on the performance of police officers: “Do you believe that the performance of police officers can be improved by recording their actions with BWC?”



**Table 8.** *Answers of Respondents about the Possible Impact of Cameras on the Performance of Police Officers*

Answers offered	Number of respondents	Result in percentage
1. Yes	102	29.8%
2. No	174	50.7%
3. I'm not sure	67	19.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>343</b>	<b>100%</b>

## DISCUSSION

Equipping police officers with BWC could introduce changes in their behaviour and actions. These changes may include an increased emphasis on thoroughness and persistence during police interventions, leading to improved quality of police work. Responsible and conscientious police officers approach interventions professionally, ensuring all necessary measures and actions are taken to determine all the facts related to incident. However, in police organizations, there are officers with a different approach. Some may exert least effort principle, failing to take all necessary measures and actions, or to pass over the incident to others without determining all essential facts of an incident. In cases where there is a video footage, police managers can evaluate the quality of measures and actions taken and to initiate remedial actions.

Respondents' opinions were strongly divided on the impact or contribution of BWCs in improving the quality of police officers' actions. A slightly smaller majority of respondents (42.0%) held a positive opinion, which could be interpreted as a desire to enhance behaviour among themselves or other police officers and eliminate superficiality in their work. Conversely, almost an identical number of respondents (40.8%) expressed a negative opinion, possibly perceiving BWCs as a means of revealing superficiality in their work, leading to a negative view. Some respondents may lack a clear understanding of BWC capabilities or hold an undefined attitude, influencing their negative statements or neutral responses to the posed question.

Police officers engage in daily interactions with citizens. These interactions serve various purposes, such as obtaining necessary information for police work, providing citizens with information, notices and advice, or issuing orders for specific actions. Communication with citizens can take a formal, official tone when performing assigned tasks or an informal, unofficial tone when providing specific information, such as instructions on submitting requests for identity cards or travel documents. Inadequate communication or unprofessional treatment of citizens can provide grounds for filing a complaint. Communication plays a crucial role in shaping the relationship between police officers and citizens, and the community policing efforts hinge to a great extent on effective communication. Given the importance of communication skills in building successful interactions, the role of BWCs in improving police officers' communication becomes a prominent. Studies in the USA indicate that police officers using BWCs become more approachable, cautious, and open in their communication with citizens. Knowing their interactions are recorded encourages





citizens to establish contact without fear. Officers equipped with BWCs become more conscious of their actions and interactions with the public, as every unprofessional communication could be subject to sanctions (Wright & Headley, 2021). BWCs exert both direct and indirect positive influences on improving police officers' communication. Directly, cameras increase self-awareness and prompt behavioural adjustments to avoid unprofessional work. Indirectly, by analysing documented police actions, BWCs can reveal training needs and facilitate measures to enhance the communication skills of police officers and to improve other aspects of police work. Positive effects from good communication should result in increased trust and cooperation between citizens and police officers, vital for effectively executing police tasks in the community (Milidragović et al., 2020). With citizens' help and cooperation, it is easier for police to carry out their mandate. A slightly larger percentage of respondents (47.3% compared to 42.8%) believe that BWCs will not play a role in improving communication between police officers and citizens. This can be interpreted as either (self)confidence in their communication skills, embodied in the stance that "there is nothing that can be learned, everything is well known", or the lack of awareness of the role a BWC may have in the evaluation of their work. Conversely, there are respondents who believe that while you are under the BWC "surveillance", the lack of knowledge and skills can easily be noticed, and can be strong impetus towards self-improvement.

In each specific incident, officers are required to assess the situation, make lawful decisions whether to use coercion or not, and if it is necessary and justified, use coercive measures appropriately. The justification of using coercive measures after the incident is determined not only through official reports provided by police officers, but through collected documentation from other sources and statements given by other participants involved in the incident. If the incident lacks witnesses, or the existing witnesses are unable to provide answers which will clarify incident in question, determining the facts relies heavily on officers' reports which may be questioned by its subjectivity. However, there are such examples from police practice where officers use coercive means without stating it in their reports or not provide full details related to incident. The existence of video recordings in incidents involving coercive measures significantly facilitates the determination of their justification and legality (Arlov & Popovic, 2016). As both the citizens and the police know that they are being recorded, it reduces the possibility of confrontation, further escalation of the situation, and thus reduces the likelihood of the use of coercion.

The introduction of BWCs in the USA police organizations was followed up by the decrease in the number of police use of force compared to the period before their implementation. BWC also positively influenced police officers' judgments and decisions regarding the use of coercive measures. The use of BWC reduced the possibilities of avoiding the documentation of applied coercive measures (filing reports), fostering responsibility among police officers in assessing and documenting their use. A decrease in the number of complaints filed against the use of coercive means was also recorded, as well as they were used only in justified cases and in proportion to the reason for their use (Ariel, 2016; Rojek et al., 2012; Ariel et al., 2015; Jennings et al., 2017; Yokum et al., 2019; Peterson et al., 2018). Contrary to these findings, most respondents (56.5%) in the presented survey expressed a negative opinion about the impact of BWCs on reducing the use of coercive measures. They believe that introducing BWCs into their police practice would not influence a decrease in coercive measures. This may suggest that respondents consider the use



of coercive measures, either by themselves or fellow police officers, to be based on good judgment and proper legal grounds.

Taken measures and actions represent police officers' performance, which is reported and monitored on a daily, monthly, quarterly, and annual basis.<sup>3</sup> One of the ways to assess the qualitative and quantitative performance of police officers can be achieved through control activity. Control activities are carried out by immediate supervisors. This activity of managers is not an everyday activity and is not always aimed at controlling the quantity and quality of the measures taken and the actions of police officers.

By implementing BWCs in police organizations, immediate supervisors would be able to view the achieved performance by reviewing the video and comparing it with the content of the report. Probably this can be positively received by police officers who achieve average or above-average performance in their work. On the other hand, the possibility of achieving control through BWC footage would probably not "please" police officers who perform below average or have low levels of competence.

Determining the facts of an incident in the complaint procedure inherently demands time and resources to be allocated, often resulting in the neglect or postponement of performing other (priority) tasks. Police organizations in the USA and Europe that have implemented BWCs in their work recorded a decrease in citizen complaints thus using resources in a more effective way. In certain instances, in the USA, a reduction in citizen complaints reached up to 85% (Ariel et al., 2015). The decline in citizen complaints in the USA and other European countries is attributed to changes in police officers' behaviour due to BWC use and the dissuasion of citizens from filing complaints after viewing the incident footage. Experiences show that citizens quit filing complaints after viewing the incident video or promptly left police premises once the footage was shown (Kampfe, 2015).

In the presented research, the respondents were asked about the potential contribution of BWCs in ascertaining facts related to police intervention in the complaint procedure. Surveyed police officers expressed a positive opinion about the BWC contribution. Reviewing incident recordings enables police managers to direct actions and procedures for establishing necessary facts, facilitating a quicker and more resource-efficient determination of facts in complaint procedures and other events that rise doubt but not result with complaint procedure. Implementing BWCs in our police organization, beyond contributing to fact-finding, should positively impact the behaviour and actions of police officers. The cameras are expected to act as a deterrent against submitting false or unfounded complaints, consequently reducing the overall number of complaints.

Measures and actions taken by police officers together with their outcome constitute their performance, subject to daily, monthly, quarterly, and annual reporting and monitoring. Assessing the qualitative and quantitative performance of police officers can be achieved through control supervision conducted by immediate superiors (police sergeants, police lieutenants). The implementation of a BWC allows supervisors to review the achieved performance through video footage, offering positive reinforcement for officers with average or above-average performance and potential scrutiny for those with below-average performance or have insufficient competencies. BWCs can influence the performance of police officers in various ways, as indicated by research in the USA (Ready & Young, 2015;

<sup>3</sup> In the practice of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, measuring the performance of police officers and organizational units of the police is based on statistical indicators.



Peterson et al., 2018; Headley et al., 2017; Wallace et al., 2018). Some officers with BWCs adopt more self-initiated actions, resulting in an increase in preventive contacts with citizens compared to stops and frisks on persons.<sup>4</sup> With BWC in place, officers can no longer falsely present measures or actions in reports, leading to both a quantitative increase and an improvement in the quality of performance. Police officers with BWCs are expected to take all necessary measures to determine the facts and circumstances of specific events, not only those aimed to document the problem without any insight into its cause and other relevant issues.

Despite the potential benefits, a majority of respondents expressed a negative opinion about improving work performance under the influence of BWC. This may stem from high-performing officers feeling they do not require additional supervision, or from lower-performing officers who may resist direct scrutiny through video surveillance. The implementation of BWCs, however, holds the potential to positively impact the performance of less engaged officers and may prompt a restructuring of measures and actions taken (e.g. more self-initiated preventive actions), as it is observed in the US (Ready & Young, 2015; Peterson et al., 2018; Headley et al., 2017; Wallace et al., 2018).

Implementation of cameras in the USA has raised the issue of protecting the privacy of participants in an incident. Policies on camera usage as well as how camera footage can be accessed by public have been established. Solutions for realizing the right to public access to camera footage can be classified into three groups. According to one set of solutions, camera footage is exempted from public disclosure, while other solutions prohibit the publication of certain footage, and the third allows the publication of certain footage with the blurring of participants' faces in the incident. The achieved protection of citizens' privacy in the USA represents an example of a good solution and the starting point that can be used by the Serbian Police in addressing this issue.

## CONCLUSIONS

Police organizations in the early 21st century, confronted with new security challenges and unresolved security problems from the past, are in constant search of new, evidence-based methods and means to improve its effectiveness. In response to these challenges, in the last decade, police organizations around the world have introduced BWCs. It is believed that wide spread adoption of BWCs could improve policing, enhance public safety, and foster positive relationships between law enforcement agencies and the communities they serve. Officer safety, accountability, transparency and performance evaluation were the main driver behind the implementation of the BWCs in police practice.

In a time when the idea of implementing BWCs in the Police of Serbia was not yet on the horizon, a survey was conducted to gauge the attitudes of police officers regarding cameras and their potential use in the future police work. Two years later, the Police of Serbia initiated a pilot project for camera implementation. Given these circumstances, this paper may serve as a valuable resource for the police leadership in the Republic of Serbia, aiding in the analysis of police officers' attitudes towards BWCs and the formulation of strategic mechanisms for their effective use in police operations.

<sup>4</sup> By taking preventive measures and actions, there is a low probability of the occurrence of certain conflict situations in which repressive police powers can be used.



In the Republic of Serbia, there are no strained relations between the police and citizens, and there is no discernible surge in violence by citizens against police officers. Consequently, the implementation of BWCs in the Serbian police force should be grounded in a genuine need and justified by the pursuit of already defined goals where combating police corruption and protecting human rights may be the most prominent.

Experiences from comparative police practice, perceived pros and cons of BWC implementation, as well as the attitudes of our police officers, should be taken into account when making decisions and planning the implementation of cameras. The implementation of BWCs within the Serbian Police should be executed as a systematic and well-planned process where police officers as BWC end-users should recognize benefits they have and genuinely believe that they can serve as allies in their work, particularly in proactively addressing threats to their safety.

Cameras should not be seen as a revolutionary tool in police reform, as their implementation alone cannot solve the problems of police organizations. Cameras should be viewed as a tool that, together with other measures taken to improve police work, such as training and education, can yield certain positive results. Achieving goals solely through the use of cameras, without specific training, education, programs, and projects aimed at addressing specific problems, is bound to fail in advance.

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