

GAUGING OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF LEGAL RULES¹

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Abstract

The paper presents the measuring of the effectiveness of legal rules. There has been and is being taken steps so far in three dimensions: on the ground of law-making, in the sphere of application of law, and with respect to legal consciousness.

The first part of our study shows the gauging of the effectiveness of law-making in some fields, from the experiment related Donald Campbell and Laurence Ross to Carbonnier's opinion about measuring the effectiveness of criminal law.

The second part of the paper demonstrates the gauging of the effectiveness of judicial application of law.

Last but not least, the third part of the study is the gauging of the effectiveness of legal consciousness and in connection with it, we are submitting the so-called Chicago examination and Barna Horváth's survey on people's acceptance of the newly introduced legal rules.

Key Words: *gauging, effectiveness, law-making, judicial application of law, legal consciousness*

JEL Classification: [K33]

Considering our theme there has been and is being taken steps so far in three dimensions: on the ground of law-making, in the sphere of application of law, and with respect to legal consciousness.

1. Gauging of the effectiveness of law-making

In empirical examination of the effectiveness of law-making the English language literature that analyses the accident reducing effect of the so-called drink driving acts is considerable.²

The experiment related to the name of Donald Campbell and Laurence Ross is also famous.³

The researchers compared the death statistics of freeways in Connecticut State before the order prescribing speed limit became effective and after it; they also compared the experience found in Connecticut to the neighbouring states.

¹ „The study was made in the framework of OKTK research titled as „Methods for examining the social and economic effectiveness of legal rules.”

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² See: eg. C. Robinson, *Drink-driving. Social and Legal Considerations*. In Roman Tomasic (ed): „Legislation and Society in Austria”, Sydney, 1979, pp 284-298.

³ D. T. Campbell/H. L. Ross, *The Connecticut Crackdown on Speeding: Time Series Data in “Quasi-Experimental Analysis. Law and Society Review”*, 3, 1968, pp. 33 and following.

In Germany the Parliament requests report about the experience of applying the new acts. If from them it turns out that legislative actions are necessary, then the federal government must make a proposal on it. For instance, on the field of youth assistance in all legislative periods the reports to be submitted must include the possible deficiencies and proposals for adjustments. The reports obtained this way provide rich information for further work. The reporting obligation at the same time forces the officials of ministries to clarify the effects of orders brought by them (or by their predecessors). The result control has already been being applied in this field for long time.⁴

In Rhine-Pfalz province for instance there was introduced the method that certain legal rules are made only for 5 years *ab ovo*, and after this period they become invalid automatically, unless they have not been prolonged – for another 5 years the most.

The periodical, institutionalised examination of the effectiveness of legal rules are modelled by the Hungarian regulation as follows:

„Before making the legal rule – leaned on the achievements of the science – there must be analysed the social and economic relations, which are intended to be regulated... there must be examined the expected effect of regulation and the conditions of execution. On this the law-maker must be informed.” [Para 18 (1) of Act Noo. XI. of year 1987.]

„The law-making and law application organs must follow the effects of application of legal rules with attention, they must reveal the circumstances that prevent them from prevailing, and the experience must be utilised also in law-making. It is the duty of the consulting minister to keep on examining the validation of legal rules – with the assistance of the interested ministers and organs with nation-wide competence – and to make the necessary actions on the base of the result of examination. This obligation does not concern the sphere of authority of the President of the Supreme Court of Justice and of the Attorney General. On the experience of the validation of legal rules the consulting minister informs the Minister of Justice during the preparation of legal rules and at preparation of the law-making program.” (Para 44-45.)

In addition, formerly the Research Organising and Analysing Major Department of the Ministry of Justice, while at present the National Council of Jurisdiction performs effect-examinations regularly.

The measuring of the effectiveness of law-making naturally may be done not only „from official considerations”, but also from scientific considerations. And there is no doubt about the usefulness of these latter ones, either.

Ziegert for instance made an empirical examination on the issue of effectiveness of the German and Australian law-making.⁵

⁴ H. Schneider, *Gesetzgebung*. Heidelberg, 1991. Pp. 105-106.

⁵ K. Ziegert, *The Theory and the Measurement of the Effectiveness of Legislation*. “Rechtstheorie”, 1983. Vol. 2.

After defining the legal purposes, norms, values, roles, procedures and legal programme (legal structure) he applied the following method.

For measuring the effectiveness of the German bankruptcy law the following were used: 273 questionnaires for bankruptcy courts; 565 questionnaires for the personnel of courts; 1882 bankruptcy court records; 345 questionnaires for bankrupt trustees; 234 questionnaires for banks; 275 records on bank bankruptcies; 1015 questionnaires for the dismissed employees of companies which became bankrupt; 120 questionnaires social security authorities; analysis of their 550 bankruptcy records; 50 questionnaires for employment bureaux; 11 questionnaires for county central offices; 35 questionnaires for tax authorities; analysis of their 165 bankruptcy records; 385 questionnaires for creditors; 3 questionnaires for credit insurance companies; and analysis of their 300 bankruptcy records.

For measuring the effectiveness of the German labour law he leaned on the following: 93 questionnaires sent to local courts of labour; 1191 dismissal case records; 294 questionnaire interviews with judges of labour and 857 questionnaire interview with associate judges of labour; 13 questionnaires sent to the regional courts of labour; analysis of the records of their 202 cases; analysis of the records of 157 cases from federal courts of labour; 224 questionnaire interviews with lawyers; 195 questionnaire interviews with trade union counsel; 366 questionnaire interviews with employer's company representatives acting in court cases; and the same with 1057 business organisations, 740 workers' councils and 879 dismissed employees.

The gauging of the effectiveness of the German consumer credit law was performed as follows: 1451 verbal interviews with persons having a family; 371 questionnaire interviews with different banks; analysis of 2000 debated and 2000 non-debated credit agreements; 333 questionnaire interviews with non-paying debtors; analysis of 182 consumer credit related judgements brought on 3 level court forum; analysis of 182 consumer credit related judgements.

Finally, he assessed the effectiveness of the Australian family law on the base of conclusions drawn from 382 cases proceeded in front of courts of family law.

The survey brought the following major results:

Legislation did not reach its goal on the field of bankruptcy law; legislation set a doubtful aim and did not achieve it in labour law; legislation had no goal on the field of consumer credit law; and legislation achieved well its goal in the Australian family law. However, he does not state about these legislations, that they had no effects at all in real life, he rather argues, that the effects in question can be attributed to the legal structure as a whole!

For measuring the effectiveness of legislation there is not sufficient an empirical effect-examination, which compares the social data before and after legislation, but there must be structurally analysed the legal programme, the supporting legal structure and the related social network!

Carbonnier⁶ has a pretty sceptic opinion about measuring the effectiveness of criminal law. He distinguishes the apparent crime (which is known by the police), the judicial crime (the sanctioned criminal acts) and the real crime (criminal acts committed actually). He does not examine this latter category, but he states, that the apparent crime is about one fourth of the judicial crime, that is 75% of the criminal acts remain unexplored.

Thus, the criminal law – if we consider it as system of sanctions – is socially ineffective in three-quarters!

This view is debatable even from two respects. On one hand side, criminal law is only one of the means used in the fight against crime, and on the other hand 100% absolute efficiency can be assumed in none of the branches of law.

2. Gauging of the effectiveness of judicial application of law

Regarding gauging of the effectiveness of judicial application of law there has been made empirical examinations in U.S.A. already in the 50s and 60s.

Several surveys demonstrated that the application of criminal law was not effective in case of serious, subsequent offenders, *e.g.* in the fight against forged cheques.⁷

One accepted method from gauging the effectiveness of judicial operation is that draws consequences from the charges in the appealed judgements in terms of each judicial unit, and from the number of approving or charging, or possibly quashing decisions of the Court of Appeal.⁸

Several methods can be used for measuring the effectiveness of the operation of courts of appeals.⁹

The first is the so-called direct observation. For instance at the end of the 60s in the U.S.A. a research team was studying at three juvenile courts the validation of those decisions of the Supreme Court, that provided formal procedural rights for a circle of juvenile defendants (Gault case, 1967). The result was not very shining: out of the 148 juveniles only 59 were informed about having a right for a lawyer, and out of those 121 not having a lawyer 101 were not informed about their exemption from self-incrimination.

The second method is the so-called secret observation, *e.g.* in connection with the work of policeman, social workers, school employees, in terms of how the judgements of the Supreme Court prevail in it.

The next opportunity constitutes the secret observation of natural situations. For instance Levine pointed out, that the experience gained during his

⁶ J. Carbonnier, *Flexible droit*. Paris, 1969. p. 98.

⁷ F. K. Beutel, *Some Potentialities of Experimental Jurisprudence as a New Branch of Social Science*. Lincoln, 1957.

⁸ Cf. *eg.* Shetreet (ed), *The Role of Courts in Society*, Dordrecht/Boston/ Lancaster, 1988.

⁹ J. P. Levine, *Methodological Concerns in Studying Supreme Court Efficacy*. In: "Compliance and the Law". (Ed by Krislov et al.) 3rd ed. Beverly Hills/London, 1972, pp. 99-125.

visits in the obscene bookstores in 42th Street, New York were more successful, than a costly and time-consuming survey with questionnaires.

If for example we would like to measure the effectiveness of Supreme Court decision that assures equal consideration for the races on the real estate market (Jones v. Mayer, 1968.), then black and white skin researchers must be sent to the real estate owners, and lessors.

Analysing the documents and archives of the governmental and private institutions is not costly and they are available, in short it is an effective method. If for instance we look at – writes Levine – how much the budget allocates for the labour management of the juvenile courts: „money will speak”.

Finally, the effectiveness of the Supreme Court decisions can also be followed with attention in the mass media. *E.g.* whether the newspaper reports on crimes take into consideration the decision of the Supreme Court (Sheppard v. Maxwell, 1966), which states that „storying” before the hearing prejudices the defendant’s right to a fair hearing and proper legal proceedings.

But that approach is also special, which measures the effectiveness of application of law with economic profitability. Richard Posner, one of the leading figures of the „Economic Analysis of Law” trend examined the effectiveness of negligence and of the guiltiness system of accident responsibility built on it on a sample consisting of 1525 American Supreme Court decision brought between 1875 and 1905.¹⁰

Posner reconstructs the measure of negligence on the basis of Judge Hand’s formula as follows: the defendant (injurer) is responsible, if the product of the probability that the accident happens and the loss caused by the accident would have been avoided.

He highlights that the common law treated the claims of the injured person and of the injurer in a fairly equal way. His final consequence is: that the negligence related legal practice being on the carpet served the achievement of effective (justified cost) level of the accidents and safety, or rather the approach of this level.

Finally, that model is more wide-spread than the former ones, which measures the effectiveness on simplicity, quickness, cheapness, consistency and thoroughness of the proceeding.¹¹

3. Gauging of the effectiveness of legal consciousness

As far as the sphere of legal consciousness is concerned, there has been performing empirical researches in this field for decades.¹²

¹⁰ R. Posner, *A Theory of Negligence*. “Journal of Legal Studies”. 1992. 1. pp. 29-96.

¹¹ Cf. eg. P. Gilles (Hrsg.) *Humane Justiz*, Hannover, 1977.

¹² See about these: K. Kálmán, *Jogszociológia*. Bp. 1997. passim – (K. Kulcsár, *Sociology of Law*, Budapest. 1997. passim). S. András, *Jogkövetés és társadalmi magatartás*. Bp. 1980. 228-306. o. (A. Sajó, *Compliance with Law and Social Behaviour*. Budapest. 1980. pp. 228-306).

First there must be mentioned, the „classic” examination of Aubert about the social acceptance of the Norwegian Act of year 1948 on domestic servants¹³, as the result of which it turned out that the knowledge of the legal rule does not accompanied by also complying with the legal rule in all cases (especially in areas dominated considerably by traditions). Aubert pointed out (in his examination executed about two years after the introduction of the legal rule), that the provisions of the act have not been realised to a great extent. (About half of the examined households violated the provisions of the legal rule, and altogether 10% of them complied with it precisely.)

There have been shown large differences according to age: the older people tended more to have an attitude that deviates from the act, than the younger ones did, and *e.g.* compared to the differences in age there was much less important the knowledge of the legal rule were connected significantly.

The role that people’s relation to rights plays in the effectiveness of law is revealed and surveyed excellently by the survey proceeded in spring of 1984 in Chicago. In the course of it there was made a 25 minutes telephone interview with 1575 people, then one year later it was repeated with 804 people of them.¹⁴ There was examined on one hand side the relation of the law related attitudes and behaviours to each other and, on the other hand the connection of changes resulted in them.

In the first stage of the survey, they wanted to learn the opinion of the interviewed people regarding the police and courts in Chicago, and the level of their law-compliance attitude. Well, 47% of the interviewed people (733 people) had at least one experience concerning the authorities in the past year. The 311 people, who get into contact with the police or court more than once talked about 284 situations, namely about calling the police (52%), 202 people were stopped by the police, and 147 people (20%) turned to the court.

In the second stage of the survey 329 interviewed people (41%) reported to have got into contact with the police or court during the year after the first interview. Out of them 120 people (36%) had more than one experience, namely 192 people (58%) called the police, 64 people (19%) were stopped by the police, and 73 people (22%) went to the court.

The most striking difference between the results of the two stages of Tyler’s examination is that while during the first survey 47% of the people got into contact with the authorities, during the second survey only 41% of the people reported so.¹⁵

One important objective of the Chicago survey was to measure the degree of legitimation from one hand side in term of the obligation to comply with the law, and on the other hand in terms of support given to the legal authorities.

¹³ V. Aubert, *Some Social Functions of Legislation*, “Acta Sociologica” 1996. Vol.1-2.

¹⁴ See: T. R. Tyler, *Why people obey the law*, New Heaven and London, 1990.

¹⁵ T. R. Tyler, *Ibid* p. 14.

There was striking the high rate (42% and 41%) of those who questioned the honesty of the Chicago police and courts.

The apparent connection between legitimation and compliance is also influenced by other attitude-type factors, namely the fear from sanctions, moral considerations, the feeling that infringement of lawful rights is not correct morally, and the opinions about the way as the authorities are operating.

The most important lessons of the Chicago examination are as follows:¹⁶

Those citizens who consider the legal authorities legitimate tend more to comply with the law.

Among the factors influencing the compliance with law normatively it has overriding importance how much people's opinion in „right” and „wrong” corresponds with legal regulations.

The next factor is the people's feeling about obligation to comply with law and loyalty to legal authority. They are in direct proportion to each other.

In general people feel: that infringement of lawful rights is wrong morally and they have to comply with the law strongly even if they do not agree with it. (Looking from the viewpoint of the legal authorities the approach to the moral opinion of the population is problematic, since in the U.S.A. there is no generally accepted moral codex; there are morals existing.)

The final outcome of the Chicago survey is that the individual morality influences more the compliance, than the legitimation does. The most trenchant evidence of it is that the people who lost their faith in the legal authorities would still comply with law from moral conviction.

The legal authorities' legitimating made by the population is influenced to a great extent by the fact what experiences they gained in connection with police officers and judges. About 5% of them said this.

Refining further the former, the Chicago survey also pointed out, that the kind of the experience is influenced strongly by the honesty/fairness of the police or judicial proceeding. And the proceeding, which is finished with non-favourable outcome, is considered to be unfair by several people.

The relevant lesson of the survey is: that courts and police organs must aim at fair proceeding!

A strong correlation was shown between the dividing fairness and the compliance with law, in contrast with the procedural fairness, this is not saturated through legitimation. As is could be seen even so far, Tyler who assessed the survey believed not the instrumental, but the normative theory of compliance, which says that the behaviour of people is directed by value (*e.g.* legitimation, individual morals), and the voluntary compliance with legal rules and legal authorities develop on the base of them.

The Chicago survey proved that legitimation plays an important role in the formation of compliance.

¹⁶ Ibid, pp. 64-68.

Nevertheless, the normative approach is represented by the psychological fairness theories which says that people respond to social experience in the categories of fair results (dividing fairness) on one hand side and of fair proceedings (procedural fairness) on the other hand.

The feeling of procedural fairness plays a key role in the development of the legitimation related experience, and also in the formation of views on authority. Nevertheless, people perform both the political and work place behaviour on procedural basis.

The interpretation of fair proceeding made by the citizens also has an instrumental and a normative perspective.

In the sense of the former¹⁷ fairness means, how much people are able to influence the decision of a third party.

However, according to the normative approach (e.g. Chicago survey) it depends on great number of factors (e.g. the decision-making should be unbiased and objective and the decision should be fair.)

Anyway, people have an excellent interpreting framework in connection with fairness. For instance among the Americans there was formed a consensus with respect to what should be meant under fair proceedings, and that the compliance with law is obligatory for everyone, etc.

In contrast with certain theories – which say that behaviour adjust to reward and penalty¹⁸ – from the results of the Chicago survey it can be drawn, that the legitimation of the legal authorities and morality of law influences the behaviour the most.

There were executed instructive surveys about the social acceptance of legal rules in the German language area, too.¹⁹ One of the main lessons of the examinations was, that legislative body nowadays cannot start out from the fact any more, that the citizen accepts the law-making and putting it into force without responding. For the citizen nowadays the act (law) is not an authority any more for the reason that it is an act (law). The citizen protests against and harms certain legal regulations, in cases even quite consciously, too. However, it would be a mistake to class it among the denial of legal compliance or legal acceptance. Here, it is all about a new type of legal approach made by sustaining the differentiated approving decision.

Among those who were asked less and less of the younger people (60-62%) agreed on – even if there were more older people among the interviewed people (85) – that „before authority and law the compliance and respect are those most important virtues, that children must acquire.”

The prevention of building up the power plant in Hainburg at the time of decision was approved only closely by the democratic legitimate middle. Finally it is also interesting, that 40% of those being asked said with false certainty, that

¹⁷ J. Thibaut, L. Walker, *Procedural justice. A psychological analysis*, N. J. 1975.

¹⁸ Eg. I. Andenaes, *Punishment and deterrence*, Ann Arbor, 1984.

¹⁹ J. W. Pichler/K. J. Griese, *Rechtsaktzeptanz*, Vienna/Cologne/Weimar, 1993.

something had changed in legal regulation of abortion, though at time of the inquiry only debates were in process about this issue in Germany. All these imply that the new legal regulations are able to cause changes in the attitude of the addressees even before they are introduced.

From the special importance of the legal rule interesting consequence is derived on the changes of opinions about law, specifically on the changes of views about the correct and fair law and its compliance, and about the compliance of unfair law. Examinations made in Poland, in the Netherlands and in West Germany equally asked the following question with using slightly different words, which difference does not concerned the point at all: According to the opinion of those being asked must there be complied with those legal rules, which they consider unfair or incorrect? The „yes” answers were distributed as follows: in Poland it was 45%, in the Netherlands 47% and in West Germany 66%.²⁰ In these answers – beyond having mixed the attitude and knowledge to some extent – there appear the special features of the historical experience of the different societies.

One interesting result of the examinations concerned was that majority of the people consider certain behaviours to be crimes, though they are not crimes, and do not consider other ones to be crimes, though they are crimes. For the former an example is given by an examination in West Germany, in the course of which 51% of those being asked considered homosexuality to be a crime, 47% considered adultery to be a crime, and what is more 31% considered to be a crime, if a pharmacist gives contraceptive pill on prescription to a 15 years old girl.²¹ However, the opposite of this was revealed during a French public opinion poll, according to the final consequence of which the social gravity rank of crimes is almost entirely independent from the rank defined in Criminal Code.²²

Finally, the surveys on people’s acceptance of the newly introduced legal rules are also very instructive. Barna Horváth still in the early 40s – among others – surveyed the acceptance of the „keeping to the right” rule introduced in traffic in Szeged and Kolozsvár.²³ In Szeged, where the right hand traffic was introduced shortly before the survey, the rate of those approving it to those being indifferent was 26:62; while in Kolozsvár, that had old right hand traffic tradition the same rate was 60:25. It deserves attention, that surveys executed in similar topics

²⁰ W. Kaupen, *Public Opinion of the Law in a Democratic Society*. In: A. Podgóreczki (ed): „Knowledge and Opinion about Law”, London 1973. pp. 43 and 46.

At the latest Hungarian examinations on legal consciousness the concerning rate was about 90%. See: A. Visegrády, Gy-né. Schadt, *Egyetemi hallgatók jogtudata, jogismerete*, „Magyar Jog”, 2000/12. sz. (A. Visegrády, Gy. Schadt, *Legal Consciousness and Legal Knowledge of University Students*, „Hungarian Law”, 2000/ Vol.12.

²¹ Kaupen, *Ibid*.

²² L. Léaute, G. Tubach, G. Bassompierre, *Sondage sur l’estimation de la gravité comparée des principes in fractions*, *Anné Sociologique*, 1970.

²³ B. Horváth, *A közvélemény vizsgálata*, „Acta Iuridico-Politica”, 8. sz. Kolozsvár, 1942. (B. Horváth, *Examination of the Public Opinion* „Acta Iuridico-Politica”, Vol. 8., Kolozsvár, 1942.).

basically brought similar results in Sweden in the 60s.²⁴ In Sweden there was held a referendum in 1955, on which half of the total voters participated and 83% of them were opposed to the change for the right hand side traffic. In 1962 the legislation still decided for the change over, with the condition that it would be executed in 1967. In 1964 the public opinion researchers found that only 40-50% of the inhabitants are against the legal solution and 35% of them already agreed with it. By 1965 the number of those approving and those opposing became balanced. 3 days before the change over 46% of those being asked approved and 35% of them opposed to the solution. Only a few days after tea changeover of the new traffic system those who opposed it became a minority of 20%, while 55% became enthusiastic follower of right hand side traffic. According to the Hungarian and Swedish data primarily it was the practice, that evoked the changes of opinions, though it is undeniable, that a non-negligible part of the inhabitants changed their opinion on the effect of making the law. After the Danish act, that makes legal pornography, was put into effect similar process could be experienced in opinion-changing. Specifically: in 1967, before the anti-pornography acts were repealed 46% of those being asked supported liberalisation, and in 1968 already 61% of them supported it.²⁵

The presentation of the real arsenal of institutional and scientific models of measuring the effectiveness of law induces us to draw the following consequences:²⁶

From our part we are followers of the complex method, which would be composed of the combination of statistical surveys of justice, questionnaire examinations, deep interviews, and analysis of documents.

At result control of law-making we consider necessary not only the ex-post, but also the ex-ante (preparation of legal rules) examinations.

Beyond, the regular governmental and ministerial reports on the effectiveness of the acts, there must be relied also the experience of law application, results of scientific debates, and opinions of those who are concerned in execution.

We think that there must be developed a method for determining the different influencing weight of factors that mediate the effects.

Furthermore, it is necessary to have a comparative effect-examination of several acts in order that we could determine which of them are regular and which of them are profession specific at the act or at certain acts. The objective is to form a grid, which consists of effect factors that can be generalised and theoretically it can be used for the effect examination of many acts.

Last but not least, the surveys on application of law and on legal consciousness effectiveness must be performed more frequently.

²⁴ P. Blegvad, J. M. Nielsen, *Lovgivning og social forandring, betingesler og bagraensginger*, Kobenhavn, 1969.

²⁵ B. Kutschinsky, *Pornografia e crimine in Danimarca. Probleme e documenti*, Milano, 1971.

²⁶ A. Visegrády, *A jog hatékonysága*, Bp. 1997. 198. o. (A. Visegrády, *Effectiveness of Law*, Budapest, 1997. p 198.

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