

INTEGRATED TRAFFIC TICKETING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

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We only measure what we care about and we only care about what we measure (1)

Diverse reports and corruption indices demonstrate the intrinsic relationship between the degree of a countries' economic development and the levels of corruption (2, 4). Healthy sustainable development is disrupted by wars, poverty, terrorism and other factors that enable corruption across all levels of government, including police departments and transportation agencies. Therefore, measures against corruption in any sector are usually carried out through general policies (such as national or macro regional strategies) in an attempt to reach globally across all governmental and societal sectors. Nevertheless, the implementation of local efforts in subsectors is still possible and might establish a precedent as well as benchmarks for wider national strategies. This essay presents the idea of creating an Integrated Traffic-ticketing Management System (ITtiMS). The main goal of the system will be to manage, monitor, and promote a healthy and transparent traffic ticketing process controlled by a joint agency. By implementing an integrated system, the corruption would be reduced gradually and in the long run; this system might generate additional synergies with other control systems. The steps for the implementation of this system, which are directly related to the steps to reduce traffic police corruption, are discussed next.

The first step will be the creation of a pilot project in which all the logistics and plans will be laid down in order to build the Integrated System (ITtiMS) for a specific region. To this end, it is necessary to assume that local agencies such as Departments of Transportation and police departments can establish cooperation links or reinforce existing ones. This agreement would include the allocation of resources and personnel from both sectors (transportation agencies and police departments) centralized in a joint supervision office that will be in charge of implementing and managing the system. Additional resources, such as academia and public involvement, can be used to enrich this stage. Initially, the main goal of this office would be the creation of a timeline and master plan for the system's implementation that would show all steps clearly. ITtiMS will have to adopt a holistic approach that takes into account all essential stakeholders and processes involved in the traffic-ticketing systems. The stakeholders include the driver, the authority (police officers), the ticketing tools, and current policies. The system will have specific components addressing each of the elements and their current limitations, with a special focus on control measures to avoid police corruption. The master plan will include each system component in the following order: Training and Branding, Salary and Rewards, Enforcement, Ticketing System, and Drivers Education. Additionally, since the system requires a mechanism for quantifying the degree in which the objectives are being achieved (5, 6), performance measures (PM) will be assigned to each step.

Once the master plan has been created and approved, then the first stage, Training and Branding program, can be implemented, again as a pilot project in a specific location. This step focuses on the most important stakeholder of this system, the authority figures. The Training part aims to reinforce the education of police officers in both ethical practices and the role of their profession in society. Furthermore, training will teach them how the new ticketing system will work as part of the master plan. This program would be implemented in the local police academy so that future traffic police officers will install the information provided as part of their core values and obligations. Meanwhile, the Branding aspect of the program will aim to create a new image for both current and future police officers and, in some contexts, eliminate the possible stereotype of police officers as corrupt. This is expected to have an impact on how society perceives officers as well as how

police officers perceive themselves. To this end, media, open houses and special events inside and outside police departments will be implemented (e.g. creating marketing commercials about policemen rejecting bribery or creating awards for police who have outstanding ethical conduct). However, this step might require diverse sources of funding. A possible source is proposed in the following section. The PM for this step might include periodical written questionnaires for policemen, public opinion surveys, and the amount of money spent in marketing commercials, among others.

Parallel to the effort in changing the conduct and public perception of police officers, efforts to financially support the program and allow for supplementary salary improvements for officers must be implemented (since a common factor in places with high corruption levels is the low salaries policemen receive). This effort would be part of the Salary and Rewards program, which would be implemented parallel to the first step. The reason is because it is easier to justify this component when some initial successful outcomes are obtained as part of the stage started previously. The salary improvements as well as the financial resources for the system will come not only from government subsidies and taxes, but also from a fixed percentage of the traffic-ticket revenues. The latter might be especially effective for police officers because they would be able to receive a percentage of the revenues from the total amount of traffic tickets they issue. The performance measures for this step include the aggregated and disaggregated number of tickets issued in a given period of time. Additionally, monthly financial reports of the tickets revenues should be issued periodically.

The fourth component and probably, the most difficult to implement and manage in the system is Enforcement. Because corrupt agents might be in both streets and police department offices, ITtiMS will have a supervisory committee composed of members not only from the police department and transportation agency but also external collaborators such as the division of police investigators or third party auditors. These investigators or auditors will be expected to coordinate operatives and contra-intelligence strategies to detect corrupt agents or suspicious conduct. Depending on the seriousness of the culpability, they might generate warnings or initiate administrative and/or judicial processes. The performance measures include periodical reports of the number of suspicious cases under investigation, and the number of agents processed or found guilty. They might also report the number of operatives they performed.

Once all previous steps are being implemented, a fifth program can be put in place. This involves the Ticketing System. It would be important to establish a new and transparent scale of fines for each violation. For example, the first fine would be a warning and then the fines will increase gradually according to type and frequency of the violation. Also, it is proposed that police do not establish the amount of the fine at the moment they issue the infraction ticket. This amount should be calculated by the agency based on the frequency and type of the violation, as explained above. The collected data through ITtiMS would enable comparisons on the type and quantity of tickets given as a function of time or geography, and can be used to generate appropriate performance measures. For instance, reports on geographical location and type of violation would help to identify zones with specific issues such a corridor with inappropriate speed signage.

All measures discussed above focus on police officers, but also affect the other stakeholders in the ticketing process. The role a driver plays is equally important. If there are corrupted agents, there have to be drivers who try to bribe them to avoid the fines. For that reason, an Education and Enforcement tandem program needs to be implemented. The Education component is a preventive measure that would aim to create civic consciousness and educate drivers about the consequences of bribery. The Education program has to be implemented as a requirement for drivers when they acquire their licenses or as a way to reduce the record of the drivers' violations. Enforcement, on the other hand, could be implemented as the gradual ticketing system, in which there is a scale of penalties, such as suspension of one's driving privileges and court appearances for repeat offenders. One performance measure would be the reports of drivers' violation records. The database would enable the easy identification of repeat offenders and those processed for bribery. Additionally, since

the judicial processes are independent of the system, the time and status of each case in court can be traced and reported aggregately. These statistics can be used to promote or encourage changes in bribery prevention policies and laws at governmental levels. For instance, promoting expedited court processes for those who commit bribery.

As mentioned above, all steps, including those focused on policemen and drivers, will be provided with PM to track its effectiveness. But they will lack of usefulness if ITtiMS is not provided with a mechanism to manage and sustain a record of all PM collected in each step. Moreover, this mechanism will also record all drawbacks and issues encountered. Since this constitutes a pilot project, a formal process for feedback and improvement in all processes should be provided. This will enable ITtiMS to be adjusted to specific conditions in an iterative process, and later on, extended to different regions.

In the context of developing countries, there are additional barriers and difficulties that will have to be overcome for a successful implementation of this system. These include the limited availability of resources in the public sector. Therefore, external sources such as non-governmental organizations or bank loans might be evaluated. Lack of technology constitutes another important factor since it limits the application of certain strategies. For example, police departments might not be able to provide video recording devices and wireless audio transmitters in police cars. Also, it is known that many developing countries have high levels of bureaucracy that may bring additional delays to the master plan. Another important aspect would be the sustainability of the system, especially due to political risks. Many of these projects are dependent on the goodwill of the policy-makers, for that reason the project must develop a strong organizational structure with low sensitivity to political changes. Finally, it is expected that the implementation of the system would encounter a lot of opposition from other political parties and even from corrupted agents in the government.

In conclusion, traffic police corruption is a problem that cannot be addressed with a single program. These joint strategies are feasible to implement since many of the aspects proposed herein are already undertaken at different levels or scopes by different agencies. However, the author is convinced that the idea of having a coordinating local agency (ITtiMS) in charge of the whole ticketing system is essential for the success of such efforts. ITtiMS would manage the system and track its effectiveness thought performance measures. Moreover, it will create a basic platform for the implementation and adjustment of various different strategies, not only to reduce police traffic corruption, but also increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the whole system.

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