

## TRUST BETWEEN SECURITY AND RIGHTS. AN ANALYSIS BASED ON THE SECURITY CULTURE BAROMETER

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**Abstract:** *The main purpose of this paper is to discuss certain correlations, particularly between people's trust in government and government officials and their opinion on personal security. This paper also approaches a widespread subject in the media in the past few years: cell phone listening. The main purpose was to study the degree to which public opinion affects some socio-demographic variables. The concept of conspiracy theories has also been analysed here in order to identify how it further affects the statistics. All analysis presented here is based on the data gathered by LARICS – Inscop Research at the beginning of 2018 for the Barometer of Security Culture.*

**Keywords:** *trust, privacy, rights, security culture, conspiracy theories.*

### *The Barometer of Security Culture*

In this article we aim to analyse data already collected by the LARICS/Inscop Research in February 2018 for the Barometer of Security Culture, and see if there are any patterns or correlations to be found when we observe the average Romanian's opinion on the government and the way it handles public security and citizen rights; we also wanted to see if there are any ties to be found between trust and distrust in the government and the overall public opinion on security.

*The barometer of security culture* is a study conducted in February 2018 by LARICS/Inscop Research through a sociological survey. The survey was conducted between the 9<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> of February 2018; the sample size is 1000 people and is statistically representative for the population of Romania.

The barometer investigated the security culture in 7 dimensions, which are represented by 35 questions, 5 questions for each dimension. These dimensions are used to evaluate the security culture of the questioned person. We'll describe them as they were explained by LARICS/Inscop<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> LARICS, *Barometrul culturii de securitate*, 2018, at <http://larics.ro/barometrul-culturii-de-securitate/>; Inscop Research, *Barometrul culturii de securitate – raport de cercetare*, Bucharest, February 2018; D. Cristea, *Neîncrederea în instituții domină cultura de securitate a românilor*, 2018, at <http://larics.ro/neincrederea-instituțiilor-domină-cultura-de-securitate-românilor/>.

1. Trust/Distrust. Within the first dimension, there were questions about state institutions, institutions that ensure public order and security, Romanian politicians and European politicians.

2. Localism/Globalism. In this dimension there were questions related to the Romanian/European identity, the intentions of the Romanian/European institutions, the European Union as a federal state or as a union of national states, quality of life in Romania vs. foreign countries and if people trust the security provided by NATO.

3. Realism/Liberalism. The indicators for this dimension were linked to the importance of military power and economic power, UN effectiveness, competition and national interest, defence budgets vs. budgets for health, education and other current issues and international support vs. national resources.

4. Optimism/Pessimism. The topic here is about Romania's ability to defend itself in case of a threat, the likelihood of a military conflict in Romania, the extent of the terrorist threat in Europe, the effects of EU and NATO integration on geopolitics, and the existence of neighbours with unfriendly intentions.

5. Security/Rights. The inquiries in this dimension were about conceding some rights for increased safety, listening to phones and the way this information is used, the unauthorized gathering of personal data by banks, corporations and supermarkets; there is also a question related to the rights of criminals and how those rights affect safety and public order.

6. Involvement/Apathy. This dimension contains questions about availability and willingness to enrol in the army when needed, the involvement of Romanians in political and social life, international politics, volunteering, but also taxes and duties.

7. Conspiracism/Rationalism. In this dimension there were questions about what type of news the respondents watched, news credibility, mass-media manipulation, the existence of a global government that controls the entire planet and the idea that the bigger states lead the small ones.

### *Trust versus Distrust and Security versus Rights*

We have dedicated this article's study mainly to dimension 5 (security/rights) but also to the first dimension (trust/mistrust). *We see that dimension 5 correlates negatively with dimension 1* (Table 1). This means that people who do not trust the Romanian Government or the politicians tend to prefer having more rights instead of security. So, mistrust in the Romanian government can be observed through the unwillingness of people to entrust their security in the hands of the government. This is easy to understand if we look at answers given to questions posed in the two aforementioned dimensions.

On one side, those who said that they fully trust the state institutions and the law enforcement officials were the ones who said that they prefer overall security over rights. *Therefore, the people that are prone to trust Romanian politicians, law enforcement officials and government institutions are also more likely to accept and even have a preference in the restriction of certain rights to stay safe.* This can be explained by the fact that they are certain that the state and government

will fully protect them even if they do so by restricting citizen rights. On the other side, the ones who said they don't trust state institutions and law enforcement officials were also the ones who said that they prefer to have unrestricted rights rather than security. The more people distrust the politicians and ruling government, the more they tend to forgo personal security over maintaining certain rights. This can be explained by the idea that losing trust in the state and its abilities will also lead to the belief that renouncing civil rights will not increase security. It can be observed that the majority of individuals are certain that giving up their rights won't bring them more security; on the contrary, it will make them vulnerable.

		Dimension 1	Dimension 5
Dimension 1	Pearson Correlation	1	-.128**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
Dimension 5	Pearson Correlation	-.128**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

In order to visualize how the subjects responded we decided to draw a Table that shows percentages for each answer. We found out that on Dimension 1, the one that asked questions about trust in the Romanian state, the majority of answers were negative. The only question where the results were mixed was question 3 (45,3% and 44,1%).

Question 3 debates the status of law enforcement officials, whether they would be more efficient if they had better legislation versus the idea that they would fail to be efficient even if the legislation existed. We believe that the reason behind the mixed results on this particular question is the fact that it's not something that is frequently asked or discussed, and therefore it is not easy to answer. All the other questions actually fit well in the background of today's society.

For dimension 5, related to rights and security, the majority picked the first option over security. There is the exception of question 5, where they favoured security. Question 5 was related to the fact that criminals have too many rights and this is affecting security and public order, a statement that most subjects agreed with (64,8%). This favourable answer might be part due to the media since there is a growing trend of news and debates about criminals and how they are treated. These discussions in the media have led to the public opinion being more favourable towards harsher punishments against criminals.

Another exception is question 4 which trifles with the idea that banks and corporations are illegally collecting consumers' personal data or that, on the contrary, they are simply gathering information that is commercially relevant. (42,9% and 41,5%). Very similar to question 3 from Dimension 1, this is something that is not actively discussed in the media and as a result the subjects didn't have a very well-defined opinion compared to other topics that are widely engaged in the public space.

		N %				N %	
Dimension 1- Question 1	B	63.40%		Dimension 5- Question 1	a	34.80%	
	c) NS/NR	10.20%			c) NS/NR	12.20%	
	a	26.40%			b	53.00%	
Dimension 1- Question 2	b	67.00%		Dimension 5- Question 2	a	35.30%	
	c) NS/NR	8.10%			c) NS/NR	10.80%	
	a	24.90%			b	53.90%	
Dimension 1- Question 3	b	45.30%		Dimension 5- Question 3	a	27.80%	
	c) NS/NR	10.60%			c) NS/NR	15.70%	
	a	44.10%			b	56.50%	
Dimension 1- Question 4	b	54.00%		Dimension 5- Question 4	a	42.90%	
	c) NS/NR	10.20%			c) NS/NR	15.60%	
	a	35.80%			b	41.50%	
Dimension 1- Question 5	b	50.30%		Dimension 5- Question 5	a	64.80%	
	c) NS/NR	23.00%			c) NS/NR	11.60%	
	a	26.70%			b	23.60%	

### *The Romanians' Opinion on Security/Rights*

Dimension 5 questions rights and security in such a way that subjects were able to choose from either preferring security over rights or risking security in order to have more judiciary freedom. *In Table 3 we can observe question 2 has a high positive correlation with question 1 (.276) and question 3 (.219).* This means that subjects who said they do not care if their phone is being listened to also said that having rights and freedoms restricted in order to be safe is pretty normal, and the ones who actually gather their personal information will never abuse it. *There is also a negative correlation with question 4 (-.150).* This means that people who don't care if their phone is being listened to also believe that banks and corporations safely gather their personal data for pure commercial use, and will not abuse it.

*Question 3 also correlates with all the other 4 questions and this is important from a statistical point of view.* Thus, those who claim that the ones who listen to their phones are fairly and legally using their information also tend to say that losing freedom and rights is to be expected when we desire security and that they don't care about the fact that their phone is being listened to. The very same people tend to believe that banks and corporations use the data gathered in a safe, commercial way and also believe that the fact that criminals have way too many rights is a lie backed by power institutions.

		D5- Question 1	D5- Question 2	D5- Question 3	D5- Question 4	D5- Question 5
D5- Question 1	Pearson Correlation	1	.276**	.087**	-.106**	-0.003
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	0.006	0.001	0.935
D5- Question 2	Pearson Correlation	.276**	1	.219**	-.150**	0.029
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	0.361
D5- Question 3	Pearson Correlation	.087**	.219**	1	-.126**	-.095**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.006	.000		.000	0.003
D5- Question 4	Pearson Correlation	-.106**	-.150**	-.126**	1	.139**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.001	.000	.000		.000
D5- Question 5	Pearson Correlation	-0.003	0.029	-.095**	.139**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.935	0.361	0.003	.000	

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

### *Mobile Phones – Security or Rights?*

Concerning Dimension 5 there is a question that seems very interesting because of the fact that it is widely discussed in public space recently. The question is actually question 2 which references the interest that people develop towards the idea that their phones are being listened to, and how the information gathered is being used. We wanted to see if this question correlates with socio-demographic data and studies; we found out it does, and it is actually very important from a statistical point of view. The question correlates statistically with age, social media accounts, internet access and level of individual studies (table 4). The impact is not strong but it is important enough to be mentioned here.

It is thus noticeable that age correlates by  $-.076$  which means that older subjects tended to answer that they do not care about their phones being listened to because they have nothing to hide, and younger subjects considered that private life is important and it must be protected. This phenomenon can be easily explained by the fact that most of the older subjects have lived quite a big part of their lives under a totalitarian regime, where having their phones taped was one of the least concerning abuses to their private life. On the other hand, younger citizens' views on phone listening are not positive due to the fact that they value their private life and wish for it to remain private.

There is also a correlation of  $.109$  between social media accounts and the question related to phone listening; internet access also correlates strongly with a positive value of  $.136$ . This means that those who have social media accounts and internet access will tend to be favourable towards protecting their private lives. Those who do not have internet access and do not own any social media accounts will mostly say that they don't care if their phones are being listened to. This can be easily explained by the fact that the first correlation shows that older citizens do not own social media accounts and their internet access is limited. On another note, this can also mean that people who do not have internet access and social media accounts can be part of an isolated rural area; thus they won't care about their private life due to the fact that their priorities are different and they are more concerned with other pressing matters in their day to day activity.

Studies will also affect people's opinion on the matter; the correlation here is  $.092$  and this means that those who have higher studies are more likely to favour protecting private life and are against phone listening even if they do not have anything to hide.

This also means that those who have lower education seem to be uncaring about intrusions into their private life or about the fact that they have their phones listened to, simply because they feel they have nothing to hide at all. This correlation is interesting because it shows how education affects people's personal views on private life; those who have higher education are more interested in protecting private life and consider intrusions, such as phone listening, unacceptable. This means that education can make people more careful when it comes to the way in which the government is interfering with their private lives.

Table 4 – Correlation between Dimension 5 – Question 2 and age, account on social networks, internet access and studies					
		Age	Social media account	Internet access	Studies
Dimension 5 - Question 2	Pearson Correlation	-.076*	.109**	.136**	.092**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.016	0.001	.000	0.004
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).					
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).					

We've added below two tables that show how people responded to the main questions (dimension 5 – questions 2 and 3) according to some of the variables that we considered important.

As a note, in table 5 there is a correlation between question 2 and the level of education of the respondents. It shows that if the level of education increased, individuals were more likely to say that private life should be protected anyways, even if there was nothing to hide (44,9% primary school, 54% middle school and 59,4% higher education). In fact, people with lower education were the ones who didn't care if their phones were taped, because they had nothing to hide (46.3% primary school, 34.3% middle school and 31.0% higher education).

On the other hand, in table 6, question 3, which is about the information obtained by listening to phones and how it is used, we did not find any pattern or connection between the respondents' answers to this question and their level of education, so we tried to see if there are other variables that could explain their answers. We have not found any significant or statistically relevant correlations between that question and any demographic variable, thereby we tried to see if there are other connections related to the questionnaire.

We found a good correlation (-.182) with question 5 from dimension 7. This question asks if people agree with this statement: "Big states control everything and make all the important decisions while the small ones have no chance to impose their points of view."

Those who answered that the information gathered by listening to phones can be used as the government wishes because nobody can check were the ones who also said that big states control everything and make all the important decisions while small states have nothing to say; thus it appears that those who said that the information obtained is used according to the law tended to say that small states have the chance to be heard and to follow their interests in the world if they present their arguments effectively. This correlation is somewhat easy to understand because the questions about listening to mobile phones have a bit of a conspiracy tendency.

An interesting note here is that there are more people from all the educational categories who have chosen to say that they don't know or do not want to answer this question. A good explanation is that this question is a bit delicate because there are quite a lot of people in Romania who believe their phones are being listened to by the government.

Table 5 – Education and opinions about phones being listened								
Education								
Primary (without school, 4 grades, 8 grades, apprenticeship school)			Secondary (high school, vocational school, post-secondary)			Higher (college)		
Dimension 5- Question 2			Dimension 5- Question 2			Dimension 5- Question 2		
a	c) NS/NR	b	a	c) NS/NR	b	a	c) NS/NR	b
N %	N %	N %	N %	N %	N %	N %	N %	N %
46.30%	8.80%	44.90%	34.30%	11.70%	54.00%	31.00%	9.60%	59.40%

Table 6 – Correlations between question about the possibility of large states to control small states and how is used the information obtained from listening to phones		
	Dimension 7 Question 5	Dimension 5 Question 3
Dimension 7- Question 5	Pearson Correlation	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
Dimension 5- Question 3	Pearson Correlation	-.182**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 7 – Questions about the influence of larger states on smaller states and how is used the information obtained from listening to phones				
Dimension 7 – Question 5				
		a	c) NS/NR	b
		N %	N %	N %
Dimension 5- Question 3	a	22.90%	29.20%	40.9
	c) NS/NR	12.00%	35.70%	10.7
	b	65.20%	35.10%	48.4

### Conclusions

In the first part of the analysis we wanted to know if trust in the government is correlated with security, and mistrust with rights. As we already said, most Romanians stated that they have little faith in state institutions, politicians or law enforcement officials. So, we know that most Romanians don't trust the Romanian government, and we also know that distrust correlates with rights. This means that the distrust that people have in the Romanian government can put personal security and the security of the government at risk.

In the second part of the analysis we strictly discussed dimension 5: security and rights. This dimension forms a pattern, so those individuals who agree with security or rights in the first questions tend to choose the same variants for all questions. An exception to this existing pattern is question 5, that inquires about the rights that criminals have. This question was answered in a favourable manner by the majority of subjects (64.8%); they agreed that in Romania criminals have too many rights and this affects public order and security. We believe this is due

to the latest legislation issued by the government, and also to the fact that the media has presented this matter in an aggressive way. Some media outlets have even compared the benefits that criminals receive to those offered to children in shelters and the social support they receive. Given the turmoil created by the media around the subject, the outcome is not surprising.

In the last part of the analysis we talked about a topic that has been very popular lately: listening to mobile phones. There are two questions in dimension 5 that discuss this topic; question 2 which asks about people's interest for this topic and question 3 which discusses what's happening with the data that is gathered. Question 2 correlates with age, internet access, education and also with having an account on social networks. Question 3, however, does not correlate enough with any socio-demographic characteristics but correlates with question 2 (Pearson correlation: .219). So, individuals who said that they don't care if their phone is listened to were more likely to say that the information is used as required by the law. On the other side, those who thought their private life had to be protected were more likely to say that those who listen to phones can use that information however they want, and that nobody can control them.

Also, in this part we aimed to see how education influences people's views on this problem. We noticed that, when related to question 2, subjects with higher education were more likely to choose the answer that favours rights. The question related to personal data gathered by phone listening and how that data is used does not correlate with any socio-demographic variable. It does however correlate with the question about the influence that bigger states have over small ones: those who said that information gathered by phone listening can be used abusively also tended to say that bigger states have more power and influence over smaller ones. This also means that subjects who said that personal data gathered by cell phone tapping is used according to the law also believed that smaller states do have a chance to be heard among the bigger ones, and can follow their interests if their arguments are good and well presented.

As a closing note, our conclusion is that Romanians don't have that much trust in their government and this can cause commotions in more areas than expected. We believe that their willingness to forgo security over rights is a symptom of their distrust towards the state. This is an important theme for Romania at this given moment, since it goes through a moment in history when citizens no longer trust the political class, as it was revealed by the present analysis. It's important to observe how this affects people and their opinion on certain social issues.

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