



Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Women's Studies International Forum

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/wsifSurvival in an “all boys club”: Policewomen in Serbia Danijela Spasić^a, Sladjana Djurić^b, Zorica Mršević^c^a Academy of Criminalistic and Police Studies, Cara Dusana 196, 11080 Zemun, Belgrade, Serbia^b Faculty of Security Studies, University of Belgrade, Gospodara Vucica 50, 11000 Belgrade, Serbia^c Institute of Social Sciences, Kraljice Natalije 45, 11000 Belgrade, Serbia

ARTICLE INFO

Available online xxxx

SYNOPSIS

The paper is based on the results of the first qualitative research focusing on the position of policewomen in Serbia. The research was conducted from June to August 2011 on a sample of 30 policewomen of various standings as working police officers; it took into account the types of roles held, the police schools they finished, their professional experience and the size of the police organizations with which they were employed. The core questions in the analysis related to policewomen's experiences while completing their education, during the hiring process and while carrying out their police duties, as well as regarding possibilities for promotion. Although considerable improvement was noted regarding the status of women in the process of police education, most participants in the research had negative experience in the course of finding a job; they also experienced limitations with regard to their promotion as well as various sorts of harassment at work. The paper is based on the results of the first qualitative research focusing on the position of policewomen in Serbia. The research was conducted from June to August 2011 on a sample of 30 policewomen of various standings as working police officers; it took into account the types of roles held, the police schools they finished, their professional experience and the size of the police organizations with which they were employed. The core questions in the analysis related to policewomen's experiences while completing their education, during the hiring process and while carrying out their police duties, as well as regarding possibilities for promotion. Although considerable improvement was noted regarding the status of women in the process of police education, most participants in the research had negative experience in the course of finding a job; they also experienced limitations with regard to their promotion as well as various sorts of harassment at work.

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Introduction

History shows that the job market is not founded on the free will of a job seeker but on the basis of deep-rooted prejudices leading to professional segregation (Kessler-Harris, 1990). The prejudices influencing the job market have arisen from the

gender-conditioned processes of interaction among the participants in gender-conditioned institutions. These institutions are established on hierarchical symbols, segregation and occasionally on gender exclusion (Acker, 1990). Attempts to exclude women from typically male professions, which are supported by social norms urging gender distinction, often result in low levels of engagement of women, and their unsuccessful or difficult survival in male-dominated professions; ironically, this exclusion is frequently attributed to women's incompetence (Garcia, 2003). Masculine professional culture is mainly characterized through supposedly universal rules and understandings imposed by dominant males (Tomić, 2009).

[☆] The paper is the result of research within the project No. 47017, entitled *Security and protection of organisation and functioning of the educational system in the Republic of Serbia (basic precepts, principles, protocols, procedures, and means)*, realized by the Faculty of Security Studies in Belgrade, and financed by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Serbia (47017).
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The issue of masculine domination in professions has become a significant subject in anthropological study over the 2000-year history of industrially developed countries – that is, the European countries and America (Frehill, 2004; Mellstrom, 2004; Padavic & Reskin, 1990; Podmore & Spencer, 1982; Winter, 2000). Patriarchy in modern cultures reflects a social system that allocates the most power, prestige and other socially important resources to men, thus allowing male rule and domination over women. Pierre Bourdieu explains that male power in contemporary societies is based on the rule of knowledge (Burdije, 2001).

Patriarchal structures are built in social institutions and in practice. Organizations and professions are part of a social structure generating patriarchal relations. The process of creating gender identity and roles in male-dominated professions encompasses aspects clearly specifying masculinity (while the opposite is apparent in female-dominated ones, such as housecleaning or child care); for example, the choice of profession, the use of a specific communication style, attire and so forth – all are often used by male members of an organization to reinforce their masculinity and, thus, their status. Finally, everything is submitted to this type of structure, including masculine attitudes toward family, acquaintance relations and networks (Tomić & Spasić, 2010). The dominance of masculinity, as shown in most studies of work and professions, is a significant factor in the divided job and professional market, as well as on the concepts of “typical professions” – that is, “male” and “female” professions (Catano, 2003; Cohn, 2000; Faulkner, 2000; Frehill, 2004).

The masculine culture in many professions and organizational structures is influenced by the negative perception that the professional success of a woman implies the loss of her “womanly” qualities, since promotion and advancement in typically male professions supposedly requires a certain level of aggressiveness, coldness and domination. Males could historically find employment in professions from which females were by definition excluded, such as jobs requiring hard physical labor, certain professional skills and knowledge, as well as jobs for conquering new markets. Through creating fraternities, they proved themselves as males and took on jobs and professions enabling them personal and professional promotion (Tomić & Spasić, 2010). In male-dominated environments, many males demonstrate extreme animosity toward females in specific ways: by being unfriendly, sabotaging, mobbing and sexually harassing them. Less extreme non-acceptance is expressed through various forms of addressing women as outsiders, including sexual insinuations, paternalistic attitudes and other forms of discrimination (scorn, ridicule, skepticism and so on). A paternal attitude toward women implies a negative, subordinate relationship. Although women perform the same duties as men, and although they are equally qualified, work as hard as men and possess the same knowledge, masculinity does not allow women to advance because it considers them to be less capable and hard-working. Men in a male-dominated organization tend to treat women with sexually concealed insinuations, either verbal or non-verbal, by openly conditioning women’s affirmation, survival and promotion (Padavic & Reskin, 1990). The tendency toward domination in male-centered organizations is part of masculine culture, whether that domination is demonstrated against men or women. Almost all male-dominated professions tend to

maintain hierarchical relations. Although males are inclined to establish informal systems of relations both at and outside of work, authority and subordination are invariably part of masculine relational structure.

In social conditions that might be characterized formally as “social equality”, women nonetheless consistently have fewer chances for social promotion in spite of that formal equality. Women often have an inherently unfavorable social position; they are faced with a real gamut of social limits and inhibitions – the hybrid sum of mechanisms that affect various domains of social life (family, education, the labor market), keeping women on lower levels of social structures than they really deserve. Thus, women remain social outsiders. It is well-known that women in the police profession never feel like insiders. They are sometimes openly discriminated against, but more frequently stereotyped and assumed to not belong. An important element of the social context of the high unemployment rate that affects the entire population, especially women. Therefore women employed in the police gain importance within the wider family, and can count on its increased support. Support is reflected in the increased willingness of older or unemployed members of both side, the woman’s and her husband’s family, to help with the kids and other household chores. This enables women employed in police in her smooth performance of its duties. These are the traditional solutions which do not belong to the repertoire of contemporary, gender-sensitive solutions. These are the solutions that were applied always when mothers were absent, ill or disabled to perform their traditional female roles within family. Maybe even a step backward. But they are a solution to a problem that mothers employed in the police have. The situation in society as a whole is still very far away from the use of paternity leave and changed gender relation within a couple.

Police context: domination of masculinity

Police services have always been among the traditionally male professions. Organizationally, it is a professional system: On the one hand, police services involve those organs and institutions that perform policing duties as a public service; on the other hand, they also involve those who perform police duties as their occupation. Police functions include keeping public peace and order by using the law as their source of authority. Taking into account all aforementioned characteristics, the police could be defined as a complex professional system organized for the purpose of keeping public peace and order in a society by using legal powers and necessary means, including force (Milosavljević, 1997).

The foundation of police culture in determining police officers’ conduct at and off work is laid in accordance with the organizational and functional specificities of the police as part of a system. It represents a specific set of values, attitudes and beliefs that police officers acquire regarding their work, management and certain categorizations of citizens, as well as toward the judiciary, law and other social phenomena influencing their work.

The origin and maintenance of this cultural conduct is conditioned by feelings of social isolation, occupational risk factors, specific powers and accountabilities, the necessity of mutual solidarity in joint actions, frequent job-related contact with individuals that exhibit asocial behaviors, the internal system of education and “learning the ropes” of their jobs in

practice, the character of information used at work, and so on. However, there is no doubt that the so-called *Badge of Office* of the police, when regarding the general public, is considered a factor of extreme importance for the maintenance of police culture among the uniformed officers. According to American sociologist Rosabeth Moss Kanter, “badges” are those people who make less than 15% of any police organization. Therefore, they are not perceived as individuals, but as the representatives of a certain group (Hazenber, 1996). According to Moss Kanter, this is also the very position of women employed in law enforcement.

Reiner has noted eight key and frequently emphasized features of police culture that are important not only for ascertaining the level of openness of police organizations to employing women on all levels and in all structures of police forces, but also for comprehending the possibilities for women's successful adaptation and integration into the police system in general. He emphasizes the following features: a dedication to the mission, cynicism, reservation, social isolation and solidarity, conservatism, machismo, racial prejudice and pragmatism (Reiner, 1985, 1992). According to Nickels, the police profession defines its culture as follows: the presence of danger, the possibility of the legitimate use of force, discretionary powers, the detachment of police officers from citizens and general public, bureaucracy, shift work, routine contact with “problem people”, and antagonism between police officers and management (Nickels, 2008).

Masculine culture in the police profession is burdened by a negative attitude that the success of a woman deems her less feminine. Desirable female professions are defined as “traditionally” female and generally require typically female characteristics, such as the ability to render assistance and care, give support, and so on. The imagery of the “housemaid” generally inhibits women from being promoted to chief and management positions, which are exclusively reserved for men.

The situation in all the so-called men's professions is similar. The difference is in favor of women in the police, because the police are much more than armed forces in contact with the citizens. Therefore, there are many more reasons for the willingness of the police to abandon traditional gender roles. This is reflected in the increasing number of women in the police force, increasing job duties performed by women within the police.

As numerous studies around the world have shown, the police profession entails an environment that purposely exerts enormous influence on police officers' personalities and authority-oriented relations among officers, as well as perpetuating role conflict, alienation and a consciousness of having power over others (Verma, 1999; Brewer, Guelke, Hume, Moxon-Browne & Wilford, 1996; Dick & Jankowitz 2001; Fairchild, 1988; Reiser, 1983; Marks, 2000; Verma & Das, 2002; Ganapathy, 2002; Carter & Marenin, 1980; Liu, Zhang & Messner, 2001). Such an environment discriminates toward the women employed in such work. All forms of discrimination, either verbal or physical, based on stereotypes and/or prejudices are generally structural (Mršević, 2011) because they have their origins in a deep-rooted notion of gender differences and definitions of gender identities through traditional patriarchal socialization.

Certain functional issues are constantly on the agenda of police departments worldwide. They are as follows: concern

about any unequal abilities of men and women, discrimination and sexual harassment. Although police systems may change on structural, organizational and personnel levels, there has been relatively little research (with the exception of the US and Great Britain) on the experiences of women in law enforcement. The reports suggest that policewomen, when compared with their male colleagues, are more exposed to sexual harassment, violent and threatening situations at work, and various forms of discrimination (Brown, 1999; Brown & Heidensohn, 2000; Collins, 2004; National Center for Women & Policing, 2002). During our research on gender and the ethical aspects of social interactions among police officials, women reported a number of negative interactions, especially with regard to verbal and sexual harassment and gossiping.

The number of female police in Serbia can be compared with police organizations in other countries. According to the data from November 2009, 21% were women (when compared with the total number of employees), 7.5% were uniformed police officers and 20% were authorized officials. In India, the number of women in police, regardless of rank, is comparatively small (2.9%). And in Canada, for example, women were 14% of all officers in 2001, while in 2011 they made up 20%. The presence of policewomen is rather evident among low-ranking but not among high-ranking officers. In the course of the last decade, the percentage of policewomen among low-ranking almost tripled, while the percentage of women in high ranking officers rose from 18 to 22%. In Ukraine, however, they make only 8% of the Ukrainian police and out of this, only 7% are in the rank of lieutenant colonel, 1% are colonels, none of them is a general, while most of the others, particularly young women, have the rank of probationary police officer (Ukrainian Ministry of Internal Affairs, 2000). This data can be compared with 14.3% women out of the total police force in the US and 13% in Great Britain (Brown, 1998; Price, 1996). In the US, 1.4% of women are highly positioned uniformed police officers, and women represent between 2.5 and 3.7% of lower-ranking police officers (from lieutenant to sergeant).

The fact that Serbia is the post-conflict society, still influences many social relationships and flows, although it has been fifteen years since the democratic changes at the beginning two thousands which marked the end of the conflict. This led, among other, to the opening of the police (and armed forces) to women, because the new democratic conditions placed on new tasks before them. However, a post-conflict society is still burdened by economic difficulties as a result of a decade of conflict, the disintegration of the country and the international community imposed sanctions. The official published unemployment rate for women in recent years increases and is over 35%. This contributed to increased attractiveness of police calls for women who are trying to take advantage of the opportunity created by open possibility for women to have police careers.

The research dealing with the position and professional experiences of policewomen in Serbia are rare and fragmented. In a wider context, we should mention the research on the discrimination of women in the Serbian job market as part of the project *Mapping of the Distribution and Characteristics of the Discrimination of Women on the Job Market and the Society's Response to It*, conducted by the Serbian Society of Victimology in April 2011 (Nikolić-Ristanović, Sanja, Nikolić & Šaćiri, 2012). The results of this research show that women in Serbia are faced

with various forms of discrimination in the job market, both while trying to find a job and once at work (Nikolić-Ristanović et al., 2012). The most common form of discrimination women found while trying to find a job was employers' enquiries about their private lives. Women were also exposed to comments on their physical appearance that were sometimes followed by requests with regard to attractive and provocative dressing. According to the experiences of the participants in the research, men are not exposed to such treatment. Therefore, such conduct can also be regarded as gender-based discrimination. The data obtained by the research shows that the advancement of women is frequently impeded, particularly in organizations managed by men. While the women participating in the research readily shared their experiences regarding harassment at work, especially sexual harassment that created a hostile work environment (sexist comments and unwanted physical contact), they were not so eager to talk about sexual intercourse as a means of a blackmail (*quid pro quo*) and indirect humiliation by being exposed to pornographic material. Furthermore, as in other countries, women in Serbia are similarly exposed to sexist comments from both the men in power and their colleagues (Crouch, 2001).

According to research conducted by the European Movement in Serbia in 2009 (Nikolić-Ristanović et al., 2012), the findings suggest the following: Serbia belongs to a group of countries with a high degree of gender inequality in the labor market; women are extremely underrepresented in managerial positions; there are inherited stereotypes related to choice of profession and the division between “male” and “female” professions; women generally wait longer for employment opportunities; women face serious exploitation in the private domain as well as the burden of the reproductive role; there are inherited patriarchal patterns related to the position of women in families and in society, and even in contemporary Serbian culture, traditionalism persists.

As for women's experiences in the workplace, the research found that a series of issues put women into unequal positions compared to men. These issues included: difficulties in getting promoted to managerial positions; the division of workplace labor into masculine and feminine tasks, through which women are forced to perform additional functions (clean, decorate, make coffee and so on) that male co-workers do not; women are belittled and undervalued by male co-workers and bosses, and there is also direct and open harassment, including sexual harassment (Nikolić-Ristanović et al., 2012).

In 2010 the Ombudsman for Gender Equality of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina released the results of its research on the position of women who work in the public sector – that is, in organizations that are under public/government ownership. Through specifically focusing on gender- and age-based discrimination, the results showed that almost two thirds of female respondents (out of 300 female employees) considered a person's biological sex to influence their employment in Serbia, and almost half of female respondents thought that men had better chances for attaining a job that corresponded to their educational level and expertise. As for workplace promotion, almost one fifth of female respondents thought that men got promotions more easily than women, but young women were also favored in this regard. The preliminary results of this research show that discrimination based on both sex and age is present in

administration and public sector jobs, and that men and young women appear as particularly privileged groups (Nikolić-Ristanović et al., 2012).

At the same time, the position of policewomen in the Serbian labor market does not differ from the position of women in other professions; this was confirmed by the results of the research conducted in 2006 by the Gender Equality Council of the Government of Serbia and the UN Development Program (UNDP) as part of a project titled *The Position of Women in the Labor Market of Serbia*. Through feedback from focus groups, the project showed the following: during job interviews, women often face unpleasant questions regarding their private life; employers often refuse to hire women for those jobs they think of as typically masculine; women face age-based discrimination; women are evaluated according to their physical appearance, and there are cases in which they were exposed to sexual blackmail during the hiring process; job descriptions are undefined, especially in small- and medium-sized enterprises, which often means that women must accept an array of tasks that are not the part of their formal job description (Nikolić-Ristanović et al., 2012).

Family responsibilities, relatively long average working hours, lack of flexible work arrangements and low market demand for female labor are the factors that contribute to the low activity and employment rates for women. Women are much less likely to start their own businesses or to advance their careers in established companies. They comprise only 28% of the self-employed and 16% of company top managers. Women's work is undervalued even if performed by top level government or corporate executives, with women managers being paid almost 20% less than men. Furthermore, women-owned businesses face a more difficult regulatory environment and are more likely to pay bribes to government officials to get things done. Lastly, women are paid less than men in all occupation groups and in most sectors. Although the wage differentials between men and women have reduced from 9.2% to 4.6% between 2008 and 2009, this decrease is most likely attributable to the effects of the global economic crisis rather than to an improved treatment of women (Reva, 2012, p. 17).

According to Anna Reva, the reasons that hamper women's employment and career advancement include “1) a disproportionate share of household responsibilities, including child care; 2) lack of flexible work arrangements (e.g. part-time or seasonal jobs) that have helped women in EU countries to combine employment with family responsibilities; 3) stereotypes about traditional roles of men and women; and 4) low market demand for female labor. It is hoped that the gender disparities highlighted in this paper will provoke further and more in depth research of gender inequalities in the Serbian labor market.” (Reva, 2012, p. 1).

Women comprise only 30% of the people in the category of legislators, senior officials and managers in public and private organizations. The data from the BEEPS 2009 survey shows that females constitute just 16% of firms' top managers. Interestingly, female-owned companies are significantly more likely to have women among top managers than male-owned companies: 41% of female-owned firms vs. 6% of male-owned firms have a woman as a top manager (BEEPS, 2009). Women are more likely to have supervisory responsibilities in public institutions than in private companies: 51.3% of women

employed in state-owned organizations, 46.4% in private institutions and 2.3% in organizations of other types of ownership supervise the work of at least one employee excluding apprentices (Reva, 2012, p. 9).

Therefore, our research deals with the position of women working in law enforcement – that is, with identifying the problems policewomen in Serbia are faced with regarding finding, getting and keeping their jobs.

The aim of the research was to define the identities of policewomen in Serbia through their subjective perception and assessment of professional experiences, describing actual situations and incidents that marked their careers.

The research raised the following questions:

- What were the experiences that the policewomen had in the course of their education in police schools?
- Did they encounter any obstacles and of what kind while in the employment process?
- With what duties have they been entrusted in their police units?
- With what sorts of chances, prospects, difficulties and limitations are they faced in the process of promotion and advancement in law enforcement?
- What types of conduct are recognized as discrimination in the work environment?
- What defense mechanisms do they use in order to overcome the obstacles to their advancement or to protect themselves from discrimination?

Methodology

Participants

The research was conducted from June to August 2011 on a sample of 30 policewomen. The participants in the research differed according to the kind of law enforcement education they gained, length of professional experience, types of jobs they perform and the type of organizational police unit with which they are employed. Ten participants had graduated from the four-year Police Academy while 20 of them had finished the Higher School of Internal Affairs. The length of their professional experience ranged from 2 to 23 years. According to the types of jobs they perform, 10 participants were uniformed police officers while 20 performed law enforcement operative and administrative jobs; likewise, 10 participants were employed in the Police Directorate; 20 were employed in the Criminal Justice Police and administrative offices. The participants worked in 11 out of 26 police departments constituting the Directorate (including police units and stations). According to the category of police units, the sample included 10 officials from police departments, eight officials working in police stations, six officials from operative units and six officials performing administrative jobs for the whole territory of the Republic of Serbia. According to the size of police units, the sample included nine officials working in police departments with more than one hundred employees; 10 officials from departments employing 50 to 100 people, and 11 officials employed in departments having fewer than fifty workers (in rural areas).

Data collection

The interview protocol consisted of open questions relating to their experience in the course of their education in police schools; their experiences during the process of getting a job and being accepted into police organizations; their integration and difficulties related to the police role, duties, promotion and advancement at work; recognition of the characteristics of their work environment and identification of certain conduct as discrimination; and patterns of conduct (defense mechanisms) they have used for overcoming barriers and opposition. The greatest challenge in the course of forming the sample was finding participants in rural and middle-sized police stations and making contact with them. The first contacts were with the women from town police agencies on the basis of personal acquaintances and files from the Police Academy that helped the researchers to make an initial list and later use the “snowball sampling” method. By using this method, the participants broadened the list with the names of other policewomen they knew or worked with, while those new participants recommended other women who had graduated from the Police Academy and Higher School of Internal Affairs.

Further interviewing ended as soon as the researchers estimated that the data they had collected saturated the research – that is, when no new data was obtained.

The research was conducted through direct interviews in the canteens of police stations, restaurants, parks, participants' offices and other suitable places. Although the duration of the interviews varied from 30 min to 2 h, the average duration was 1 h.

During each interview, notes were taken, and each interview was taped with the subject's consent and then typed verbatim for qualitative data analysis. Each transcript was analyzed for emerging themes, concerns, and phrases that had been presented by the participants. These were coded using an opened-ended approach. After the first reading, tags corresponding to relevant research issues were placed on the transcriptions by hand. The issues covered by the tags were very broad in nature (i.e. acceptance, resistance, coping mechanisms, and success) and left a great deal of scope for establishing variability in participants' responses that were later organized into categories that represented the participants' distinctions. In the last step, representative quotes were pulled to illustrate the major themes reported by the participants (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Rubin & Rubin, 1995; Seidman, 2006).

Results and analysis

Experiences in the course of law enforcement education

It was during the course of their education that many policewomen often recognized potential problems they would face while getting employed and with regard to their future promotion and advancement (Spasić, 2008). Hence, the participants' replies on this perception included the period from the beginning of their studies at police schools up to the present moment in their careers. The type of education they received directly influenced their replies regarding the experience acquired during their law enforcement education. The Higher School of Internal Affairs, founded in 1972, was the first

educational institution that educated women for operational work in the police forces in Serbia. However, the highest rank they could hold was captain (Spasić, 2008). The Police Academy was founded in 1993, but it started educating women (both for operational work and uniformed forces) only during the process of police reform in Serbia in 2002. After graduating, women were promoted to lieutenant colonels and had the possibility of holding commanding positions in police departments, which enabled them to advance in their profession. Most participants (80%) that graduated from the Higher School of Internal Affairs in the 1990s faced their male colleagues' reservation regarding their capabilities and reasons for choosing a law enforcement career.

Ivana (Higher School of Internal Affairs, 8 years of professional standing, police inspector): At the beginning of my studies, my male colleagues accepted me as their equal. However, in the course of studies, particularly in situations when I achieved better results than some male colleagues (I was more proficient in shooting or in classes) they often commented that we (girls) had watched too many crime TV series and that we were not aware what the real police work was.

Slavica (Higher School of Internal Affairs, 15 years of professional standing, administrative official): I didn't like my male colleagues' remarks I was faced with during my studies that the only true jobs for us, girls, were administrative jobs or that we could be just secretaries and typists.

On the other hand, fewer policewomen (30%) educated at the Police Academy recognized forms of discriminating conduct by their future male colleagues.

Dragana (Police Academy, 3 years of professional standing, police inspector): All my professors and teachers at the Academy were fair. They had never shown that they regarded us differently. We were equally treated. On the contrary, the colleagues that already worked in the police always ridiculed us, saying that we were not aware what lay ahead of us when we start working.

Based on the respondents' answers, a conclusion can be drawn that the new system of police education and the establishment of the Police Academy, along with the enrolment of the first generation of women, created conditions for decreasing discrimination. Equal selection requirements and conditions for enrolment for both men and women, as well as equal access to police training and education, created an educational ambience that took into consideration differences in gender identities and allowed their equal educational development (Spasić, 2008, 2009, 2011). It seems logical to expect that the new personnel and managerial resources, unburdened by gender prejudice, will introduce a gendered perspective in other dimensions of policing.

Experiences related to getting jobs in law enforcement agencies

The respondents' experiences showed that employment was their crucial moment in "entering the system". Being

aware of the fact that a comparatively small number of women were employed in operative positions or within the uniformed police force, they hoped that attitudes toward the women in law enforcement would gradually change and that they would be offered more opportunities. However, it turned out that their physical attributes and gender identity ("being a woman") were uncritically and irrationally regarded as objective obstacles for being employed in the police service. The procedures involved in getting a job entailed negative experiences and difficulties for many women. About 80% of those graduating from the Police Academy and about 35% of those graduating from the Higher School of Internal Affairs found out that "friendly connections" and acquaintances with some influential people were more important for entering the police system than qualifications, knowledge and qualities.

Gordana (Higher School of Internal Affairs, 9 years of professional experience, police inspector): When I applied for a job, I expressed my wish to work in the juvenile delinquency department. It had been my great wish ever since I had enrolled. When I brought the necessary documentation, they told me there were no vacancies there and that the service had no need for additional engagement of new personnel. I accepted the explanation and came to terms with the fact that I would perform other duties (suppressing drug addiction, white-collar crime, etc.). However, I was terribly disappointed later, when I met a colleague whom I had studied with and discovered that she had been assigned to perform the duties related to juvenile delinquency – the position that I desired so much – at about the same time when I applied for the job. She explained that she was lucky because "her dad had been a good friend with the chief of the department for many years." It was only three years after my application that they invited me for an interview and that I started working in this department.

Some of them (about 10% in both categories) found out that their physical attributes were "inappropriate" for dangerous police duties:

Nada (Higher School of Internal Affairs, 23 years of professional experience, secretary): I enrolled in the police school because even as a little girl, while playing with boys, I had wanted to be a police officer, to wear a uniform and a gun, to catch criminals and be brave. After graduation, during my first job interview, a senior gentleman of a high rank in the police looked at me and said: "Girl, you are not for the uniform and a gun. You are somehow skinny, thin, and fragile-looking. You are more suitable for some 'gentle' jobs. Maybe you've chosen a wrong profession. You should've been a model or an actress." All my hopes vanished at that very moment and I no longer cared where I would work. So I accepted the job as a secretary and I have been employed for 23 years now.

Some of the women (five operatives and seven uniformed officers) realized that their sex and their gender identity ("being a woman") would a priori hamper their careers and advancement.

Ljiljana (Police Academy, 2 years of professional experience, police officer): During my first job interview, I was confused by 'unusual' and unexpected questions. Besides the compulsory question related to age, the head of the commission asked me if I had a boyfriend and whether I planned to get married soon. I replied that our plan was to get married as soon as I started working. Then came the following question: "Do you plan to have a child immediately? I have to know if you are going to take a maternity leave soon and see what I should do then. I have to find a replacement, and that calls for additional employment and double expenses." Subconsciously, I understood the comment as a "recommendation": I postponed all my plans related to family and spent the next four years looking for a job in any police station no matter what duties it involved. I accepted the engagement as a uniformed officer in the road traffic safety department.

Marija (Higher School of Internal Affairs and Police Academy, 20 years of professional experience, police adviser): After I had completed my studies, I went to different police departments and police stations on a number of occasions for job interviews and I heard a lot of different excuses when they wanted to refuse me in a 'decent and cultured' way. However, I clearly remember to this day the statement of a senior police manager whose unit I applied for: "Women in police? Rubbish! If they asked me, no woman would wear a uniform and carry a gun, ever!" I believe it was this statement that caused my revolt and that it was this "female spite" that made me keep going to job interviews and finally get a job in the police administration, where I have been working for 20 years.

Numerous studies all over the world (Balkin, 1988) have reported on situations in which most higher ranking police officers (in some cases as many as 95%) explicitly stated that they would never have accepted the engagement of women in law enforcement if it had not been for political and external pressures to do so. Our respondents also confirmed that their male co-workers frequently felt they should help their female colleagues doing patrol duties and "rescue" them from "dangerous situations" because they are not capable of protecting themselves (such statements by male officers were quoted by 35% of the respondents from the uniformed police and 15% of respondents among the operatives; Vučković, Spasić & Antić, 2011).

Working assignments and engagement

After being employed within their police organizations for several years, the respondents noticed certain patterns that applied to their professional standing: they were rarely assigned to commanding posts, and seldom took part in field operations and patrol duties; they were assigned to fewer tasks related to traffic control, and were mostly engaged in administrative duties and the so-called support duties (dealing with juveniles, victims of violence, etc.). At the time of the survey, the respondents had already noticed certain regularities that applied to the assignments and duties most frequently entrusted to women in the police departments, sections and stations.

The largest number of them (25) stated that women rarely took the commanding posts within police units. This is illustrated by the fact that only 12.7% of women out of the total police force in Serbia are in managerial positions at the strategic level (Tomić & Spasić, 2010).

Mirjana (Higher School of Internal Affairs, 22 years of professional experience, police adviser): Women almost never take managerial positions in the uniformed police. I have no knowledge of any of my female colleagues being a commander of a police station or leading a police unit. I suppose they believe we are incapable of making prudent decisions in dangerous and stressful situations or of commanding a unit consisting mostly of men. At least, this has been my impression for more than 20 years.

All 10 respondents observed that women seldom took part in dangerous field operations/actions and that they were rarely assigned to duties that presented a "challenge". Five respondents said that in their professional environments, women rarely participated in patrol duties.

Sanja (Higher School of Internal Affairs, 15 years of professional experience, police inspector): We are usually given tasks of the "social nature". This means that we are "in charge" when the need arises to talk to a victim of domestic violence or a juvenile, when a family is to be informed about the killing or arrest of its member, but we are not engaged when criminals are being arrested or when chasing a dangerous, armed offender. The chief had for many years avoided assigning us to patrol duties. I remember that a long time ago, when I started working as an inspector, a colleague told me as he was going to make an arrest: "There is no need for you to come with us, we'll finish it. I can't protect you and think whether something's going to happen to you."

Fifteen of the respondents from the uniformed police force noticed that the women employed in their agencies were less frequently assigned to jobs related to regulating road traffic safety.

Gorica (Police Academy, 4 years of professional experience, police officer): I work in the road traffic safety department/division. I have noticed that there are few women here who actually regulate traffic, who work in the street. Some of the female colleagues are engaged from time to time, but since they have experienced insults, threats, and verbal abuse by male drivers, they are no longer assigned to such jobs. The women mostly sit in the offices doing administrative work related to road traffic safety.

All the respondents stated that the work of typists and/or secretarial tasks in their working environment was exclusively performed by women. The highest percentage of employees engaged in administrative duties (over 70%) in all of the departments and divisions were women. At the same time, the highest percentage of women in managerial positions (at high and intermediate levels) included the women in administrative services.

Marija (*Higher School of Internal Affairs and Police Academy, 20 years of professional experience, police adviser*): Where I work, the highest percentage of employees dealing with administrative work, such as the work of typists and/or secretarial work, is made up exclusively of women, and I have an impression that it is the same in all police units elsewhere. It is only in the departments of this kind that there are the highest percentages of women in managerial positions. This is something I have observed for the past 20 years of my work in the police. It seems to me that the police leadership has most confidence in the women who perform the duties of “clerks”.

Promotion and advancement

Possibilities and opportunities for promotion and advancement in the police service align with general attitudes regarding employment and engagement of women in law enforcement, and with the possibilities for affirmation of their qualifications for performing police duties. There is greater potential for promotion and advancement for women in urban police stations. Such a working “ambiance” and professional environment also caused higher levels of stress, depressive behavior and other psychosomatic illnesses. The possibility for promotion of women within the police in Serbia, according to the opinion of most respondents from the operative force, is directly correlated to different aspects of discrimination – reflected, for instance, in the night-shift work that demands a change of lifestyle, or is associated with fear regarding the risk of isolation and harassment. The respondents from both categories found in most cases (around 85%) that the promotion of women was negatively correlated to family obligations and child care.

Suzana (*Higher School of Internal Affairs, 23 years of professional experience, police inspector*): Opportunities for promotion? They are hard to achieve. You have to deprive yourself of so many things: family, maternity, and then work night shifts, avoid going on sick leave, accept all kinds of duties, from that of a courier to that of a secretary or a coffee-lady. You have to be “deaf” to provocation and gossip. Your career has to be your priority. Besides, you have to have someone “to push you up”, to recommend you for early promotion and to reward you.

However, according to the opinion of 70% of respondents employed in the uniformed police force, there was greater potential for promotion and advancement of women in urban police stations and local offices, where a certain number of female officers and women in leading positions had already been employed, both in positions of responsibility and in the administrative structures. At the same time, this meant there were fewer possibilities and more limitations for the women employed in rural police offices.

Milica (*Police Academy, 3 years of professional experience, police officer*): I work in a rural police office. Although I am one of the few highly educated police officers, the setting is

dominated by “male” rules of solidarity and promotion – the quid pro quo principle. There are no women in managerial positions, not even in the administration; there is no one to give you advice, to assist you. Some of my colleagues from the Academy who are employed in urban police stations have support and assistance of older, more experienced female co-workers. These colleagues help them, provide advice, propose them to be rewarded, and it is easier for them out there.

A third of respondents in both categories were of the opinion that this type of workplace climate and professional environment generated larger amounts of stress, depressive behavior and other psychosomatic illnesses.

Vera (*Higher School of Internal Affairs, professional experience of 23 years, police inspector*): There is no qualitative, numerical definition of requirements you have to fulfill in order to be promoted. There are annual evaluation reports (marks), but these are subjective estimates of the managers rather than objective assessments of situations and results of work. This often creates stressful situations among some female police officers whom I know, including instances of depressive behavior and even some psychosomatic illnesses. Being aware of this situation, many of us have given up on any possibilities of promotion or career advancement, suppressing our personal aspirations or the goals we have set.

Working environment and discrimination

The existence and persistence of such a workplace environment is directly related to the length of professional standing of some of the women employed in the police, because the respondents had not changed their working positions over the course of their careers. In the meantime, regardless of the duration of their career and the type of duties they performed, the positions and roles of women were deemed an “outsider” status within the framework of police culture (Martin, 1994). The reality is that many men want women to feel uneasy in elite legal professions. Informal interviews with women employed within the police force, primarily in the uniformed force, have led to identifying two main sources of discrimination: *working environment* (predominantly consisting of men) with established foundations of police culture, built over decades; and *various forms of verbal and sexual harassment*.

Accepting the segregation of labor – that is, the division of duties into typically “male” and typically “female” ones – applied equally to women with high and higher levels of education, as well as to those who had completed the basic police training course, which for the former meant that the competitiveness of their educational and expert qualities were not recognized. This is the reason why many female police officers in Serbia (over 60%) are dissatisfied with the jobs they do: on the one hand, their duties are generally imposed on them, and on the other hand they have no chance to demonstrate their skills and professional abilities in those circumstances. Hostile working environments involve a wide range of verbal and non-verbal conduct that favors abusive and degrading attitudes toward women. These attitudes are manifested in the inappropriate jokes of their peers, isolation,

physical assaults, and negation of performed tasks or the so-called “female” jobs.

Vesna (Police Academy, professional experience of 2 years, police officer): Only a few days after having been employed in the police service I encountered inappropriate jokes of my colleagues at my expense and at the expense of all female officers. There were comments regarding my physical appearance, clothes, but also depreciation of the results I have achieved for the two years of my work in the police.

According to information provided by the respondents assigned to administrative duties, even while performing specifically “female jobs” of an administrative nature, women are exposed to different forms of abuse at their workplaces by their superiors – who, in most cases, are also women. This primarily applies to the departments dealing with administrative and legal work (issuing of personal documents, passports, driving licenses, etc.). Respondents suggested that the causes of abuse in such workplaces did not differ specifically from similar phenomena in other organizations and that these issues related to the personality of the manager rather than to the police organization in question.

Milena (Higher School of Internal Affairs, 13 years of professional experience, police inspector): After only a few months at work, it became clear to me that we, female police officers, were “outsiders” in this service, that it was hard to expect our male colleagues to easily accept us as their equals. However, what I found devastating was the realization that many of my female colleagues, employed in the administrative departments in rural areas, experienced degradation and insults from their chiefs, who were also women.

The women employed with the police in Serbia (who had graduated from the Higher School of Internal Affairs, employed as police inspectors) accepted the working segregation – the division of duties into typically “male” and specifically “female” jobs – as a reality. They were mostly assigned to working positions dealing with women and children as victims or to performing administrative duties – they were basically given assignments that made their status inferior.

Sloba (Higher School of Internal Affairs, 23 years of professional experience, police inspector): After many years of working in police, I have to admit that my female colleagues and I, regardless of whether we have worked in police for one, two or 23 years, have accepted the division of police duties into “male” and “female” as “normal”. We still accept to be given assignments related to dealing with children, women, victims and administration, no matter whether we have completed the police training course, college or an institution of high police education. Our working environment also accepts this as “normal”. But it is discrimination. We are often dissatisfied with the jobs we have to do, because they are imposed on us and do not allow us to demonstrate our skills and abilities.

Verbal and sexual harassment

Our respondents also testified about the various forms of verbal and sexual harassment to which they were exposed in

the police service and recognized those behaviors as specific forms of discrimination. According to the statements of our respondents, different forms of verbal and/or sexual harassment included the situations in which getting and/or keeping a job – or certain prerequisites for employment – were conditioned by providing sexual or other favors, or other forms of sexual activities. The most frequent examples, according to them, included the following:

- Suggestive stories or insulting jokes:

Milena (Higher School of Internal Affairs, Police Academy, 16 years of professional experience, police inspector): During all these years of service, I have found it more difficult to cope with various forms of verbal harassment, comments, and criticisms by my colleagues than all the dangerous and risky patrol duties I had to perform. *Suzana (Police Academy, 2 years of professional experience, police officer):* I used to find it most upsetting when male colleagues gathered in small groups, observing some of the female officers mockingly, exchanging suggestive comments and insults related to their physical appearance, makeup or clothes.

- Attempts to get women involved in discussions focusing on private life or sexual issues:

Marta (Higher School of Internal Affairs, 16 years of professional experience, police inspector): I always felt embarrassed when some of my colleagues tried to get me involved in the discussion concerning someone's private life, somebody's problems or certain topics related to sex or male–female relationships, no matter who the persons in question were.

- Offensive remarks related to physical appearance, body or sexual activities:

Gorica (Police Academy, 4 years of professional experience, police officer): I have always been upset by the topics discussed during working hours concerning physical appearance of a female colleague, especially if the comments involved the use of terms such as “dame” or “whore”. I think that the most dangerous form of discrimination or harassment – whatever we choose to call it – were threats related to working conditions in exchange for what I may as well call “sexual cooperation”.

Besides the specifically “male and hostile” working environment, female police officers in Serbia (over 90%), have recognized various forms of verbal and sexual harassment in the workplace. This means that their position is no different from the position of female officers in other parts of the world. A major study (Brown & Heidensohn, 2000), which comprised 804 female police officers from 35 counties in Europe and in America, revealed that 77% of the respondents had reported sexual harassment by their male co-workers. The study also showed that the female officers regarded the harassment by their male colleagues as a more serious problem than the violent encounters they had experienced while performing patrol duties.

Defense mechanisms and acceptance

In addition to the resistance of their male colleagues, policewomen in Serbia, whether they are employed in the operative or uniformed force, also experience the phenomenon of the “glass ceiling” with regard to promotion and advancement as a form of discrimination; in fact, they have no possibility for career development and the results of their work and professional abilities are generally denied, as well as their positive qualities and achievements. This setback gives rise to new obstacles for younger policewomen and can encourage their feeling of being ostracized within the police organization. Even the women who have achieved personal promotion in their careers (about 40%) show little or no interest in achieving a better status within the police organization. The most frequently quoted reasons for this include: family obligations or child care, conscious avoidance of the “glass ceiling” – that is, avoiding confrontation with invisible obstacles and negative experiences related to previous attempts at promotion.

The potential for isolation and discrimination was found to be more present in rural police offices (all of the 11 policewomen employed in rural areas confirmed this), where the presence of women in the uniformed police force is minor compared to police stations in urban areas. Other forms of harassment included sexist jokes and remarks about women; using offensive terms such as “dame” and “whore” during conversations with women; and inappropriate jokes, including threats related to working conditions in exchange for sexual cooperation. The policewomen stated during the interviews that they were forced to use various defense mechanisms in order to overcome discrimination and/or non-acceptance and to gain and retain their status in situations when, for fear of “retribution”, they could not use the existing possibilities created by anti-discrimination legislation.

Some of the respondents with longer working experience in the operative units of the police confirmed that it was only after 10 or more years of working in a given setting, and constant resistance, that they felt they had been accepted by their male co-workers.

Milena (Higher School of Internal Affairs, Police Academy, 16 years of professional experience, police inspector): While working on the police force for several years, I realized the logic of the saying “if you cannot fight against them – join them”. They were more numerous and got along with one another much better than us women, and I therefore tried to leave the impression of a strong, dangerous and uncompromising woman, and even to resort to some aggressive and violent ways when performing duties or responding to provocations. *Marija (Higher School of Internal Affairs, Police Academy, 20 years of professional experience, police adviser):* After 20 years of professional experience you come to realize that if a woman is to cope with a predominantly male environment, she can only do so by achieving a higher rank, title or working position that commands respect. A lot of my colleagues told me that they felt accepted by their male colleagues only after 10 or more years of working in the same environment and constant resistance.

They defined acceptance as less open discrimination and harassment by male co-workers and other women, the possibility to be promoted to higher ranks, but also some less visible signs of change, such as uniforms or vests specially designed for women.

Sloba (Higher School of Internal Affairs, Police Academy, 23 years of professional experience, police inspector): In my opinion, acceptance implies less open discrimination and harassment by male colleagues and other women, or a possibility to be promoted to higher ranks. I understood “acceptance” to be implied in the introduction of new uniforms and vests designed specially for women.

A significant number of respondents also testified about their jobs and the marital status of policewomen in Serbia. All those who managed to secure the so-called “male” jobs for themselves were mostly single or childless. Many of the women who have no families feel acutely isolated within the accepted police culture, mostly because they establish relations only with their colleagues at work. These facts relate to the rigorous policy of pregnancy and maternity leaves. Although 5% of the respondents are married to police officers, there were no cases of their spouse-co-workers using the possibility to take a leave upon having a newborn baby or to take care of a child of less than three years of age.

Vesna (Police Academy, 2 years of professional experience, police officer): Although I have been in the police service for only two years, I have noticed that many of the older female colleagues are single or childless. They perform typically “male” jobs, as uniformed or patrol officers. They mostly associate with one another and have few friends in other occupations. Others, who have managed to deal with various forms of resistance, are not burdened by the values and norms of police culture and have rich social lives. I have also noticed that the colleagues who are married to police officers always take maternity leaves, and their spouses never do so, although the law allows them to.

In order to overcome various forms of discrimination and/or unacceptance – that is, in order to gain and retain their status in situations when they cannot use their legal options – the policewomen frequently have to prove themselves by demonstrating their abilities and power in other ways, such as: 1) a demonstration of force (identified by 60% of the respondents from the operative task force and 40% of the respondents from the uniformed police); and 2) achieving better positions or ranks that demand respect (55% of the respondents from the operative and 30% of respondents from the uniformed police force). Demonstrations of power meant the expression of typically “male” features and models of behavior (roughness, suspiciousness, cynicism) during interventions, arresting dangerous persons or in communication with citizens. On the other hand, a number of policewomen managed to achieve a higher rank through additional training, professional success and education, which enabled them to advance in their careers and get better-paid jobs.

Correlations were also noted between the types of jobs certain policewomen were assigned to and their social life:

many of the older policewomen are single or childless, and they perform typically “male” jobs as uniformed or patrol officers. They mostly associate with one another and have few friends in other occupations. Others, who have managed to deal with various forms of resistance, are not burdened by the values and norms of police culture and enjoy a rich social life.

A large percentage of the respondents employed in the uniformed police force (over 85%) believe that their physical abilities are underestimated and that this is the reason they are assigned to less challenging duties or positions of less responsibility (Vučković et al., 2011). The reasons for the continuing conditions of various forms of harassment and underestimation, as identified by 65% of the respondents from both categories (both in the uniformed and operative forces), included three organizational characteristics of their working environment: 1) the women's refusal to complain, although the law allows them to; 2) risks and consequences (“retribution” by superiors); and 3) absence of meaningful and efficient sanctions against offenders.

At the same time, most respondents (over 70% of the operative and 65% of the uniformed task force graduates from the Higher School of Internal Affairs) found that the occurrences of verbal and sexual harassment and abuse were more efficiently curbed and prevented if the offenders were more rigorously punished within the police organization itself (by setting stricter disciplinary measures and punishments).

The limitations of the research findings

These findings should be evaluated in light of the study's methodological limitations. First, caution must be used in generalizing from these findings. The results are based on 30 interviews collected in a snowball sample. The participants worked in 11 out of 26 police departments constituting the Directorate (including police units and stations). Although snowball sampling is an efficient method for gaining access to difficult populations, this sample cannot be assumed to represent the larger population, which may limit the generalizability of the results. Additionally, the data are self-reported. While there is no obvious motivation for officers to be untruthful, self-reported data are, by its nature, subjective. Despite the limitations, the present findings are still compelling. Exploring women's accounts of their experiences in police work through in-depth interviews in multiple agencies provides a more comprehensive discussion of their integration police work, than the often utilized survey in a very few agencies.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to describe the resistance and obstacles that women have continued to face in policing, the coping mechanisms they utilized to overcome those obstacles, and their ability to integrate into the “all boys club”. Female officers' unique position in one of the most aggressive, male-dominated organizations in the world provides a unique perspective of how women “do” gender and work concurrently (Rabe-Hemp, 2009; West & Fenstermaker, 1995; West & Zimmerman, 1987).

Major studies have been undertaken in a number of countries on the position and role of women within police

organizations, including Australia (Palmer, 1996; Prenzler, 1996), Canada (Walker, 1993), the UK (Dick & Jankowitz, 2001), the US (Hickman, Piquero & Greene, 2000), Ukraine (Beck, Barko & Tatarenko, 2003) and Taiwan (Huang & Cao, 2008). Although it has been almost 100 years since women were first admitted to the police, and many of the initial obstacles to the full employment of women in policing have disappeared, research findings in numerous countries continue to show that women are not yet fully integrated, and their presence in the police service is still regarded by some as unusual (Niland, 1996; Walker, 1993).

The perception of the position and negative experiences of the female police officers in Serbia related to their careers corresponds with the experiences of policewomen throughout the world. The studies focusing on the position of policewomen have not noted negative experiences of these women in the course of their education at police institutions or during the process of employment in the police service (Beck et al., 2003). However, some progress has been noted in Serbia only in the sphere of police education. All other segments (employment, performing police duties, management, and promotion) have been reported to be marked by different forms of discrimination. One of the reasons for this is that the employment of women in the police in other countries is subject to planning, in keeping with projected personnel needs (Beck et al., 2003), whereas Serbia has no strategy of personnel employment in the security sector.

All other characteristics of the position of women in the Serbian police forces relating to the influence of police culture on jobs assigned to women, possibility of promotion and advancement, characteristics of working environment, and modalities of harassment, as well as on the mechanisms developed for overcoming obstacles, limitations and discrimination, have been recognized in studies worldwide (Bacik & Drew, 2006; Balkin, 1988; Bloch & Anderson, 1974; Brewer et al., 1996; Brown, 1998; Brown & Fielding, 1993; Brown & Heidensohn, 2000; Holdaway & Parker, 1998; Martin, 1990; Martin & Jurik, 1996; Milton, 1972; Schulz, 1995; Sherman, 1975; Symonds, 1970). Just like in the case of Serbia, negative experiences are mostly related to work environment and various forms of discrimination.

Studies have shown that in all police agencies, traditional masculine organizational norms contribute to the continual marginalization of minorities and women in law enforcement. The demands of police work often result in individual and group isolation (Dodge & Pogrebin, 2001).

According to Morash and Kwak (2006), it is notable that for both women and men, profanity and sexual jokes are related to stress. It is important to recognize, however, that not just women feel uncomfortable in environments that are marked by these elements. Although some men may find what others classify as language harassment to be confirming of their masculinity, women and men in America are increasingly moving away from extreme gender segregation and patterns that denigrate women.

Research on the experience of policewomen in Taiwan, for instance, also shows that a hostile work environment can be predicted by the extent of sexism perceived and experienced by female officers. Those who perceive gender-related deployment and transfer are more likely to experience hostile work environments and harassment. That is, those female officers

who perceive prejudice from colleagues, hostile or unsupportive attitudes from senior staff, social pressure, sexual discrimination and “men's club” networks are also more likely to experience one or more incidents of quid pro quo harassment (Huang & Cao, 2008).

Data on the position of women in the police of Ukraine found that, like their Western counterparts, women militia officers in Ukraine face these attitudes, although their circumstances are arguably like those experienced 15 or 20 years ago in the West. Male senior militia officers appear to treat female militia officers significantly differently than their male counterparts. Currently, women are entitled to six years' maternity leave, of which three are to be funded by the employer, with any incremental promotions being maintained throughout the full six years. With police resources severely stretched and no central resources made available to cover the cost of maternity leave, many male officers inevitably see female appointments as “a resource drain waiting to happen” (Beck et al., 2003, p. 560).

As in Serbia, some policewomen may simply fear reprisal for identifying with other women. Male police officers' resistance to female officers has been amply documented (Haarr, 1997; Harrington, 2002; Hunt, 1990; Martin, 1980; Rabe-Hemp, 2009) in the egregious forms of sexual harassment, sexism and discrimination, as well as in more covert forms, such as isolation, the glass ceiling, and rumors and gossip about their sexuality (Harrington, 2002; Hunt, 1990; Martin, 1980, 1990; Price, 1985; Remington, 1981).

Female police officers often experience hostility and resentment from their male peers (Balkin, 1988; Belknap & Shelley, 1992). Even in the 1990s, women officers claimed that sexual harassment was prevalent and continuous (Erez & Tontodonato, 1992). This negative treatment is thought to be a critical stress factor for women officers (Poole & Pogrebin, 1988; Wexler & Logan, 1983).

Organizational policy scholars (Connell, 1991; Gruber & Smith, 1995) have concluded that establishing formal policies against sexual harassment is crucial to lowering harassment levels (Somvadee & Morash, 2008). Some studies have found that establishing policy and grievance procedures can help reduce the prevalence of sexual harassment (Williams, 1997) and weaken beliefs that support sexist behaviors (Tinkler, Li & Mollborn, 2003). Though many women do not report sexual harassment (for a review, see Marshall, 2005), when organizations have developed more extensive methods for dealing with sexual harassment, women have been more likely to adopt assertive reactions (Gruber & Smith, 1995; Somvadee & Morash, 2008).

Numerous studies of police management have also confirmed that there is a higher probability of men verbally and sexually harassing women where the management is more tolerant of or condones such conduct (Brown & Heidensohn, 2000). When verbal and sexual harassment goes unpunished, employees are inclined to think that such conduct is ethical and socially acceptable.

Conclusion

Pronounced masculinity, in its ideal form, describes hierarchical organizational structures and it supports the following features: the sanctioning of authority, aggression, valuing technical competence, heterosexual desire toward women

and domination over them. In contrast, femininity is defined as subordinated to hegemonic masculinity. It is described as being attractive to men, the reinforcement of structures of dependence, maternity, and it is typically associated with middle- and upper-class women in Western society. Emphasizing gender dualism while studying professions is important because it reveals mechanisms that maintain the supremacy of a particular gender within a specific occupation while reinforcing certain gendered characteristics. If the survival of masculinity in a certain profession is emphasized, it happens regardless of whether women are engaged in it. Gender and other dimensions of social difference reveal the faces of working organizations, which, as such, are the places that maintain the social production of inequality. Maintaining the supremacy of masculinity within a certain profession follows the market principle of supply and demand. The higher the status of an occupation, the more lucrative it is, the more power and control there is at stake, and the harder it will be to penetrate. Male-dominated professions have a pronounced tendency to maintain gender hegemony and, although women can enter them, their survival is made hard, so that the ones who do manage can be regarded as unique.

There is a double standard present for women in the police profession: they are criticized for being women (passive, timid) but equally condemned for being “too aggressive” or “too masculine”, meaning, therefore, not “womanly” enough. Women are truly caught in double bind, often losing out, no matter which path they follow.

When a group of employees in Serbia, in this case, women – uniformed police officers – accounts for 15% of the national police force, they become very visible and draw disproportionate attention to themselves (Spasić, 2011). In such workplace circumstances, a system of professional and personal relationships arises, characterized by male domination through sheer numbers, and reflected in decision-making systems of authority, heterosexism, the subordination of women, as well as possible demonstrations of force. The breakthrough of women into the traditional system of police culture in Serbia brought about the potential to change many adopted norms and values of this cultural pattern, so it was met with great resistance by the male police officers in the uniformed police.

Overcoming stereotypes and preventing discriminatory behavior should start early in police education, through curricula that discuss gender equality, gender-based violence and discrimination, and include mandatory analysis of Resolution 1325 under the UN Council's “Women, Peace and Security” initiative. During hiring procedures, selection criteria should be gender-harmonized according to the specificities of individual jobs. During professional work it is necessary to provide mentoring and career leadership for policewomen that respects their specific gender needs. While implementing these processes, police management in Serbia should follow the example of countries that have successfully integrated a gendered perspective into their police organizations (see, for example, Norway, Sweden, Finland and Denmark).

Due to the fact that women employed in the Serbian police are unwilling or do not want to speak publicly about this (which also affected the size of the sample in this study), many forms of discrimination are either not recognized (that is, they are accepted as a normal part of relations among peers of both sexes) or are hushed for fear of losing jobs or changes in

working status. This has been confirmed by the fact that the attitudes and opinions of the respondents did not differ depending on the job they performed, the institution of police education they had attended, their professional experience or the size of police organization in which they worked. They perceived the problem as a complex phenomenon that has roots and causes. The true causes should be the subject of further research. It is hoped that the gender disparities highlighted in this paper will provoke further and more in depth research of gender inequalities in the Serbian labor market. In order to obtain the complete and objective perception of the position of women employed with the police in Serbia, future research of this problem should focus on the attitudes of their male co-workers, but also on the perceptions of the public (citizens).

The language of gender discrimination coincides with the offensive language targeting ethnic origin, because discrimination is often multiple. In fact, those who discriminate against women are the ones who discriminate against members of other minority groups, religious or sexual orientation. The first signal that somewhere is a discriminatory professional environment is use of gender discriminatory language which generally goes along with the language of contempt and discrimination based on other personal characteristics and minority backgrounds.

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