

ZRÍNYI MIKLÓS NATIONAL DEFENCE UNIVERSITY

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Police Lieutenant Colonel Irén Sárközi

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WOMEN IN LAW ENFORCEMENT

Scientific Director of Studies:

Dr. Zsuzsanna Kormos Dr. Gyekiczkyne

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SUMMARY OF THE SCIENTIFIC PROBLEM

The ratio of men and women within the Police force is not an easy demographic question. Namely this ratio is very much influenced by the developments in public security strategy, and the changes in targets set out for the Police. If public rest is believed to be entirely or almost entirely the achievement of law enforcement and if in accordance with this approach the Police remains a repressive authority and physical violence will be at the focus of its activities, such an organisation is expected to be dependant almost entirely on attitudes associated with men. For years, the Police Force of the Hungarian Republic has been following a different path.

According to constitutional mentality public security is not a gift of law enforcement to society, but the product of a joint effort. Within the philosophy of community policing, law enforcement can no longer be seen as a series of repressive actions, but much more as an activity to prevent and solve conflicts. An activity, which is no longer dominated by gender-based preconceptions.

As part of the modernisation of the administration it is essential to reform the organisation's work, create a task-driven structure and management. The conventional personal management will be replaced by extensive management of human resources. In order to create and maintain an effective human resource management system that fully supports the tasks of the Police, all elements and activities have to be developed in a complex effort. One of the biggest challenges of today is to realise all this by maintaining an operable organisation and fulfilling professional tasks laid down in legal acts.

To run an actual human resource management system, one has to be familiar with the situation of Police personnel. Beside general research I find it important to separately look at the situation and progress of female commissioned police personnel.

Decades ago women appeared as members of law enforcement organisations both in Hungary and abroad. Their ability to serve is not questioned anymore. Bearing in mind the general requirements of human resource management, the means of how to best profit from and apply the abilities of police women has to be continuously examined.

The question of equal rights and chances for men and women, the accomplishment of actual equality has been the evergreen topic of the past decades and it is even today. We can often hear opinions according to which the equality of the genders is no longer an issue, it is evident, that men and women are equal. This opinion is strengthened by the fact that after thorough inspection of the legal acts of our country there is no single article that would openly discriminate any of the genders.

The principle of equal human values and dignity is acknowledged in the basic acts of human rights, in the constitutions of most nations, as well as in lower grade legal acts. It can be stated that the formal equality of the genders is a reality.

The national legal environment is a suitable framework for equal chances within the Police. In practice however, problems may arise in actually putting these legal acts across. The actual existence of equal treatment is in my opinion a crucial factor of the healthy and effective functioning of the organisation. The personnel, as well as the responsibility and commitment of the management require constant examination and analysis of the subject.

The legal act on the prohibition of the discrimination of genders is considered as a foot-stone of the European Union. Its objectives are twofold: from the economy's point of view the countries where men and women are already treated equally should not suffer from any disadvantages. In the EU, being treated equally does not restrain to the protection of women's equal rights, it is much more about eliminating gender-based discrimination.

I have been dealing with the examination of police women's situation since 1993. In 1994 I prepared a nationwide study of commissioned police women in Hungary. In 2004, 10 years after my first examination I yet again wanted to reveal the situation of police women, their role in the Police Force, the level of their acceptance, not to mention their feelings about their profession. All figures and information received from the answers during the research, as well as introducing the changes of the 10 years that have passed will help the management of the Hungarian Police to continue the modern human management activity it has been pursuing for years.

OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

Of the most significant changes to be brought with the end of the socialist era is the employment of more women in important positions. In order to learn more about the situation of police women my research had the following objectives:

- To **gather** and **bring forward** the national and international history of women employed in the Police. To **survey** and **assess** the forms of and changes in the employment of women.
- To **examine** and **analyse** the composition of police personnel, with special attention to commissioned police women. To **compare** and **analyse** the composition of police women between 1994-2004.
- **Analyse, assess and draw conclusions** from the answers given to the questionnaires. **Analyse** and **compare** the answers given to the two surveys.

- **Examine and analyse** the situation of police women within the Police, their roles in realizing the tasks of the organisation. To **draw conclusions** from these factors in order to improve the human resource management of the Police.

RESEARCH METHODS

During my research and questionnaire-survey I was aiming to: entirely uncover the subject, to discover interrelations, to find the unity of research aims, methods applied and conclusions.

Organising and analysing foreign and national studies and research materials dealing with women, especially women in law enforcement has been a basic method during my research. The materials used and applied in creating this paper include some of my earlier works, researches, statistical analysis.

The questionnaire-survey was conducted with regard to the following research-methodological aspects:

- Similar to my research in 1994, I opted for using questionnaires for gathering information on the situation and opinions of police women. This made it possible for me to receive information from all fields of the Police. When editing the 2004 questionnaire I paid special attention to the fact that it has to be comparable to the answers given to the questionnaires completed in 1994. This allowed me to demonstrate the changes within an inspected group during a 10-year period. 10 years are long enough to trace changes and depict trends. The questions were deliberately formulated in a way that makes it possible also for men to answer them.
- The completion of the questionnaire voluntary and anonymous.
- An important element of preparing the research was planning the sampling process. It happened according to the rules of random sampling, everyone having the same chances to be included. The chosen criteria – place of service, age and education – guaranteed that the whole of the police women personnel will be represented.
- The questionnaire included 57 variables in 40 questions. The majority of the questions were closed, but the participants had the possibility to comment their own completed questionnaires. These comments revealed a lot of interesting and valuable information and are included in Annex 2.
- The bigger portion (80,5 %) of the participants were women, but in order to get the full picture, I created a control-group comprised of men.

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS, SUGGESTIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

After getting familiar with the history of women employed in law enforcement and the situation of police women between 1994-2004 it can be stated that in an adequate human resource management system – where recruitment, selection, promotion and education function as a unified system – women deliver a satisfactory performance.

In everyday work the leaders of the Police do not only have the responsibility to execute policing tasks, but also to care for and pay attention to the personnel. Hierarchic relations existing within the Police as well as the immense workload and the lack of resources should never result in neglecting the personnel.

Due to the analysis the difference between commissioned and non-commissioned officers surfaced. It has a negative effect on the organisation as a whole if one group is unsatisfied with its situation, if people belonging to this group don not see a chance for progress in their profession or if becoming a commissioned officer is the only chance for progress in sight.

NEW SCIENTIFIC RESULTS

Through the statistical analysis of the composition of police women I managed to demonstrate their presence in the difference service branches. In the observed time period there is no personnel statistic of the Police that contains ratio or analysis of genders. The research of 10 years reveals and brings forward the marks necessary for professional advancement, which are the ratio of police women within a service branch, rank, field of profession and leading positions.

Through the analysis of human resource statistics and two empiric researches I managed to reveal and bring forward the position of police women in law enforcement, the trend of their employment. I also discovered that despite their higher level of education women are still underrepresented in leading positions.

After studying the scientific literature dealing with the situation of police women in Hungary and abroad, I managed to reveal that in every country women had to and still have to fight hard to be accepted and recognized in a profession that is still considered to be masculine. The employment of

women by the police is somewhat influenced by the principles of equal chances and equal opportunities, but it is mainly determined by the labour-market.

Through an empiric survey I succeeded to reveal the responsibility of leading police officers in the personnel's relation to the organisation and service. I observed that employees have a need for evaluation by their superiors, a need for feedback. They expect to be asked for their opinions. The study showed that incorrect commanding behaviour is the reason for not having enough police officers in the capital, and for having the highest level of inner fluctuation.

Within the Police the basic HR principle of "the right person for the right position" is accepted and applied. A competency-based human resource management system can be the key to equal chances and opportunities in the future.

RECOMMENDATIONS

While completing the research I experienced that the Police is suffering from a value-crisis. A Police Force that is trapped in the anomalies of the legal system and the lack of financial resources is not able to create a value-system that would clearly specify the aims for the future expected by society. These problems result in difficulties within human resource management. A traditional, administrative personnel management is still partially operational. Human resource planning and conscious human resource management is not working well or not working at all. The organisation fails to utilize the advantages of having officers that fall under the scope of a duty-based regulation. A well-functioning, duty-based, integrated human resource management system can provide the harmonised functioning of recruitment, selection, human resource planning and management, performance-management, human resource development (training, etc.), payment and incentive system.

The experience gained from revealing the situation of police women between 1994-2004 can contribute to the development of human resource and educational strategies. In case the competency-based human resource management approach remains to be applied, women can prove their ability for holding positions in law enforcement. If an appropriately standardized requirement- and evaluation system is functional, both genders have the same chances to apply for positions and perform service.

The issue of selection, education and development of the mid- and upper level of management – not any more considered as leading positions – is not settled. This factor also contributes to the fact that the mistrust-index is very high, feedback and motivation are not everyday activities. There is a low level of willingness to cooperate, leaders and employees are not adequately prepared to accept and manage changes appearing constantly.

A problem to be solved is the development and operation of an effective communication- and information-flow within the organisation, as well as improving the openness of the out-bound communication.

The researches showed that there is an actual need for feedback on performance. The formal performance evaluation system has no effect. Caring for and listening to employees has to become an everyday management task. In trainings on the management level – including officer's training – a bigger emphasis needs to be put on teaching how to care for the colleagues.