

WOMEN'S INTEGRATION INTO THE POLICE: AN EXAMINATION OF GENDER PERCEPTIONS IN THE FIELD OF LAW

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Abstract:-

This study focuses on women's integration in "male" (perceived) professions, and seeks to determine whether affirmative action also affects the way members of the Police Legal Unit perceive one another. The research examines whether the legal profession has become gender indistinct at the personal, perceptive level.

The findings show no gender differences in professionalism. The conclusion is important for women in the Police force in particular, and women professionals in general. However, what is of equal significance is that it is also of value for male professionals, as outdated stereotypical myths are exploded. One implication of the findings is that given identical roles, women and men are perceived as professionally similar.

Keywords:- Male profession; gender; police; attorney; prosecution

INTRODUCTION

In 1965, US President Lyndon B. Johnson signed Executive Order 11246, prohibiting discrimination based upon race, creed, color, or national origin. In 1967, this EO was amended by Executive Order 11375 to prohibit discrimination on sex basis, as well. The landmark American Affirmative Action Act of 1972 followed these Orders. The working assumption is that not all groups in the labor market are equally represented in all positions, such that some enjoy most of the power while others are gravely marginalized. These orders and laws have been continuously updated by follow up laws, orders and acts.

Although the pay gap between men and women has narrowed over the last several decades in most western venues, available data shows that women still earned less than their male counterparts. This strongly suggests that discrimination may still exist, even in so-called 'advanced societies'. Clearly, performance monitoring is grossly insufficient and robust effort requires reliable enforcement data to obtain a complete and accurate picture of how well antidiscrimination laws are enforced - not all such venues have appropriate laws, and not all such existing laws are enforced. Absence of effective internal controls also undermines data reliability. However, and not the least in importance, the aforementioned Executive Orders and Law, and concomitant such in other venues, do not limit discrimination issues only to pay.

Discrimination is a complex issue, in many cases, deeply rooted in cultures and social structures. As such, enforcement policies are of importance; but are such policies sufficient? Just as discrimination is not only an issue of equal pay, though this is perhaps the easiest statistic to gather and evaluate, cultural exigencies are not trivially recognized, measured or evaluated, and are much more difficult to ameliorate. The United States Government Accountability Office found that obtaining feedback directly from persons involved in discrimination amelioration is an important tool for assessing effectiveness (United States Government Accountability Office, 2008).

Research milieu

Israel is one of the most advanced Western countries in terms of labor equity legislation. The Israeli Equal Opportunities Act of 1988 was designed to empower disenfranchised populations who did not benefit from equality until then. However, enlightened legislation proved insufficient to ensure real opportunity equality, of promotions, pay and conditions. The failure of a formal principle of ensuring 'equality in practice' led to enactment of the Israeli Affirmative Action Amendment of July 1995. Affirmative action is a systematic way of combating systemic discrimination, which tends to be pervasive, and must be systematically neutralized is a byproduct of psychological and socio-cultural attitude. The 1995 amendment made reasonable representation of both genders in public service *compulsory*. It also charged the Civil Service Commissioner with acting on the principles and with the measures of affirmative action (Regev & Dalal, 2000). This pair of changes added a control mechanism and enforcement.

The legal profession is considered among the most prestigious in Western society. Traditionally, it has also been heavily gendered. Twenty years ago, for example, it was an almost exclusively male domain, with women accounting for only 3% of all lawyers (Chiu & Leicht, 1999). This extreme ratio represents a clear case of *professional segregation* (Israeli, 1994). The legal profession has made significant gender progress over the past thirty years. Indeed, twenty years are sufficient to assess whether it has completed the process and truly become gender indistinct or desegregated so that women's representation in it reflects their relative participation in the work force in general.

In order to evaluate this desegregation process in the Israeli legal profession this research focused on the Prosecution Department of the Israeli Police. The Israel Police Prosecution Department is part of the Investigations Department, is represented in all police districts and is charged with indicting perpetrators of a variety of crimes such as theft, drugs and violence.

Over the past years, the Prosecution Department has mobilized a high number of women, attaining numerical gender balance (parity). In practice, this means that the percentage of women serving in the department is higher than the overall participation rate of women in the Israeli labor force.

Accompanying this process has been by processes and events which paved the way to placing women in the department; processes related to the Israel Police Organization specifically, and the legal profession in particular. Macro-level developments which have enabled more women to become lawyers include the overall increase of women's participation in the labor force, from 277 to 585 per thousand over the past thirty years, increasing their relative rate of participation from 28.6% to 38.9% (Israeli, 1994). At the same time, expansion of both the private and public services sector, particularly private financial services, has opened up new executive positions for women lawyers, who have constituted the most readily available pool of educated labor force (Israeli, 1994).

In the early seventies, education began to be perceived as valuable human capital, and employers emphasized professional knowledge and skills in employees' selection, more than in the past. This emphasis of management academization opened up an important upward social mobility track for women. Beside legal studies, management and business administration studies showed the greatest increase in women's participation during the nineties. The new generation of legal academics became a force to reckon, reemphasizing importance of professionalism as opposed to gender identity in job selection.

With expansion of labor market opportunities following these developments, women were not only increasingly evaluated on their professional merits but also began to show an increasing interest in developing a career, rather than settling for whatever job happened to be available. The legal profession is a prime example of this differentiation between a job and a career in that it is relatively more demanding than other careers, but also offers greater promotion opportunities. Moreover, its prestige contributes to women's sense of identity and self-worth, which in the past was mainly associated with their social and family roles.

As a result of these processes, more organizations tend to recruit fresh university graduates and train them within the organization, with gender becoming an irrelevant consideration in many professions. The legal profession, in particular, has become desegregated or gender indistinct.

On a more micro level, similar processes have occurred in the Israel Police organization. Although its employees are still predominantly perceived as *policemen*, with stereotypically masculine characteristics and attitudes, the Israeli police force is part of Israeli society and as such, it has been affected by the changes described above.

The focus organization

As of 1995, one perceives a change in the Israel Police's formal hiring practices, which opened the door for massive employment of women in one of the most stereotypically masculine organizations in Israel (Yekhezkel, 1998). In June 1997, a police committee was nominated to review gender discrimination in recruitment and placement and the Police Commissioner and the Ministry of Homeland Security approved its conclusions. The committee's main action item was to require recruiters to employ at least one policewoman for every three policemen (Report of the Committee on Recruiting and Placing Women in the Israel Police, 1997). Before this reform, the Prosecution Department was overwhelmingly composed of men. Note also until 1995, only policemen who'd served in the Investigations Department could be promoted to the rank of prosecutor. These were mostly men who succeeded as investigators but had no legal academic credentials (Yekhezkel, 1998). Following the reform, it was decided to put an end to this practice and revise recruitment and promotion practices in the Prosecution Department. From then on, the police began recruiting legal academics, members of the Israel Bar, enticing them with an attractive salary and various benefits such as automatic officer rank (without course requirements) and tenure. This "fast track" system, as Bradley (1999) called it, replaced the former system in which men had slowly climbed to the top of the hierarchy while women stayed at the bottom, relegated to routine secretarial duties. Since 1995, the percentages of women in the Prosecution Department have increased dramatically: 114 women have been recruited, compared to only 57 men.

In order to assess this issue, one must account not only affirmative action processes, but also psychological and socio-cultural aspects of the Prosecution Department. Physical desegregation is insufficient to change a profession's orientation, for if it is just a numbers game, then an existing state is ephemeral and can change back at a whim. In other words, one must enquire whether having become gender indistinct has changed the legal professionals' *perceptions* of one another.

We evaluate this more subtle aspect of the desegregation process using gender stereotypes. According to the social roles approach, gender stereotypes derive from the various social roles performed by women and men; with the fact that men and women usually perform different roles makes people assume they also have innate characteristics and skills preparing them for these roles. It then logically follows that when women and men perform similar roles, they are perceived as more similar (Dubeck, 2009).

Studies based on the social roles approach consistently showed that stereotypically "masculine" traits can be categorized as performance-oriented while "feminine" traits can be categorized as *expressive*. Men were consistently described as self-reliant, aggressive, competitive, dominant and leading, while women were described as empathetic, with better human relations than men. Significantly, the masculine traits were also perceived as more socially desirable (Cohen Israeli, 2015).

Research Hypotheses

The empirical part of this study was designed to examine gender perceptions in the legal profession, in the Israel Police Prosecution Department, to assess the success of its desegregation reform. However, this alone is still insufficient because it does not accurately account for a precautionary principle, which states that quantitative judgment is a cost-benefit analysis. Hence, our objective was to determine whether the profession has indeed become gender indistinct, also in terms of the department's latent psychological and socio-cultural structure. The department could be judged desegregated if no gender differences were found between *perceived* qualities required by the legal profession. In other words, if the actual participants perceived both a lack of discrimination and a lack of a desire for discrimination, then the desegregation process had indeed occurred. It should further be noted that the perception difference must be by both males and females (United States General Accounting Office, 2003).

A program logic model is an evaluation tool used to describe a program's components and desired results and explain the strategy — or logic — by which the program is expected to achieve its goals. By specifying the program's theory of expectations, a logic model can help evaluators define measures of the program's progress toward its ultimate goals (United States General Accounting Office, 2002).

Our hypotheses are grounded in Brouerman's theory (1972). Brouerman found that the group of masculine traits is stereotypically "performance-oriented" including characteristics such as independence, aggressiveness, competitiveness, dominance and leadership, which are compatible with leadership and performance dimensions. Conversely, the feminine stereotypically "emotional-oriented" traits are empathy, human relations and self-control, which parallel human relations and self-control dimensions. Based on this classification, the research hypotheses were as follows:

H1 Compared to their male peers, policewomen will be rated lower in the *leadership* and *performance* dimensions.

H2 Compared to their male peers, policewomen will be rated higher in the *human relations* and *self-control* dimensions.

H3 No significant gender difference will be found in the *professionalism* dimension.

To measure gender perceptions within the department, a *peer test* was used. This test had five dimensions: leadership, self-control, professionalism, performance and human relations. The self-control and human relations dimensions are interpersonal, while the other dimensions are performance-oriented.

Method

Social interactions, particularly in a high intensity, emotionally-charged environment such as a Prosecution Department, constitute a complex, imperfectly understandable and “chaotic” system, subject to numerous influences interacting in imperfectly understood ways and where response to change in a variable may not be ‘linear’. The gender discrimination “debate” is a reduction as absurdum instance and many alarmists (but not many skeptics) invest their undoubtedly sincere arguments with an unmistakable tinge of previous bias. This interferes with feedback mechanisms. Operation of secondary effects, feedback mechanisms, can never be taken for granted and need to be audited. Additionally, in a politicized subject (such subject matter, is generally exposed to large amounts of ‘system noise’) it is difficult to differ between ‘cause’ and ‘effect’; supposedly just what lawyers do, to ‘make a case’ for which is the cause and which the effect.

A *peer test* was used to measure gender perceptions within the department. This test was developed in 1990 by the Israeli Police Department and has been used on a yearly basis to evaluate staff. The peer evaluation scale ranges from 1 (very low) to 7 (very high). The *reliability* of peer evaluation was tested through inter-rater agreement, and was found to be generally satisfactory. The peer rating technique, using a 1-7 Likert scale, was found to be highly reliable. The findings' stability level was also found to be fairly reasonable.

Until now, no *validity* test of peer evaluations in work environments has been conducted, usually due to a lack of appropriate criteria. The Israel Police Behavioral Sciences Branch have attempted to cope with this measurement difficulty and presented data which refer mainly to construct validity. Their data show relatively high construct validity (Epstein 2000). Importantly, their database consists of peer test results from the entire Police, from 2014; this report discusses only one district, that of the Negev Prosecution Department.

This peer evaluation requires group members to assess the performance or human relations of their peers. This instrument plays a critical role in human recourses decision making concerning such matters as employee evaluation, placement, and promotion and employee feedback. From the peer test results of 2013, this research is based on the professionally relevant traits and behaviors as categorized in the five following dimensions:

Leadership: The ability to command one's peers in order to achieve the department's predetermined objectives.

Human relations: Social popularity and the ability to cooperate and maintain good working relations with one's peers.

Professionalism: Level of theoretical knowledge relevant to one's role and actual proficiency.

Performance: The degree of effectiveness in which one carries out directions, decisions and plans.

Self-control: The ability to respond in a controlled and level-headed manner despite environmental constraints, even during verbal physical conflicts, without hurting others unnecessarily.

The self-control and human relations dimensions are interpersonal, while the other dimensions are performance-oriented.

Results

As stated above, the objective of this is to show the relationship between a ‘pure’ numerical/quantitative approach to the issues to a more balanced approach, pitting the numerical results against phenomenological consequences, in the social constructs involved. As such, we show here the quantitative study, followed by the phenomenological study.

Our macro study group includes the entire Police Prosecution Department, numbering 104 persons in 1990 and 152 in 2014 – a 46% ten-year growth rate. Our sample for the phenomenological test was of a smaller size - fifteen police officers, seven men and eight women - serving in the South (Negev) District Prosecution Department. Our quantitative study compares our macro study group over two points in time, 1990 and 2014. The evolution of the department’s makeup over this decade is highly instructive. However, as we have stated, this information, by itself, is insufficient to draw long-term conclusions.

Table 1: Overall Prosecution Department Growth patterns
Populace status

districts	No. of prosecutors				% Growth	Gender differences				
	Males		Females			Growth time	over		% Growth	
	Y'1990	Y'2014	Y'1990	Y'2014			Males	Females	Males	Femal
North	18	25	3	12	76%	7	9	39%	300%	
South	21	16	5	20	38%	-5	15	-24%	300%	
Center	23	25	16	30	41%	2	14	9%	88%	
Jerusalem	13	11	5	13	33%	-2	8	-15%	160%	
<i>Totals</i>	<i>75</i>	<i>77</i>	<i>29</i>	<i>75</i>	<i>46%</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>46</i>	<i>3%</i>	<i>159%</i>	

Table 1 shows the patterns of growth, both of the overall Prosecution Department, for the entire Police Force, and the patterns of growth, by gender and by district. The first point one sees is that while overall growth was 46% over the period, indeed, as per stated policy, growth of the masculine population was slow or negative (in two districts) while growth in the feminine population was substantial. In every district, except the Central, female population growth was significantly over 100%. In the Central district, this rate was not needed. It began in a state of relative balance and ended the period with a significant lead. Table 1 confirms that the basic policy mandate, defined by management, occurred as mandated.

Table 2 sets out the status of the population of prosecutors at our starting point, 1990, showing the figures, the averages, differences and standard deviations. It is noteworthy to view the Central district which displayed essential gender parity at the beginning. While the average percentage of the departments was 38% female, in the Central district it was already 70%.

Table 2 - 1990 Populace Status, No. Of Prosecutors

districts	Males	Females	total	Std Dev	Diff	%
North	18	3	21	10.61	15	16.67%
South	21	5	26	11.31	16	23.81%
Center	23	16	39	4.95	7	69.57%
Jerusalem	13	5	18	5.66	8	38.46%
Totals	75	29	104	32.53	46	38.67%
<i>average</i>	<i>18.75</i>	<i>7.25</i>				
<i>standard deviation</i>	<i>4.35</i>	<i>5.91</i>				

Figure 1 displays Table 1’s information in graphic form. From here, Central district exceptionality is even more striking, for we see that while it is the largest district, its differences and standard deviations are the smallest.

Figure 1 - 1990 populace status

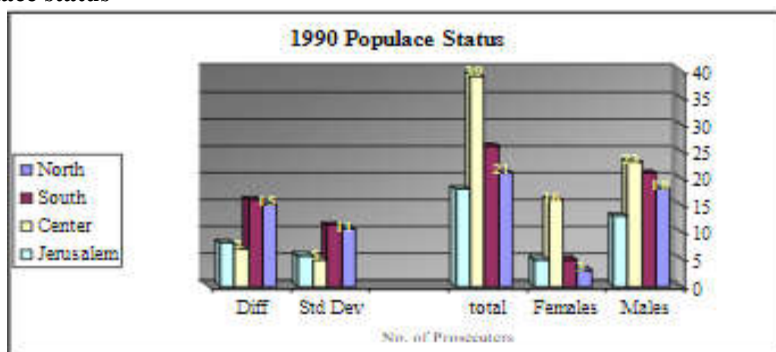


Table 3 describes the Prosecutor populace for the year 2014. The first item to note is that there are now three districts where the female population outnumbers the male population (out of four), though the total number of females do not outnumber the total numbers of males; a difference of two is statistically uninteresting. One should remember that the objective was parity, and not ‘reverse gender discrimination’.

Table 3 -, No. Of Prosecutors

districts	Males	Females	total	Std Dev	Diff	%
North	25	12	37	9.19	13	48.00%
South	16	20	36	2.83	-4	125.00%
Center	25	30	55	3.54	-5	120.00%
Jerusalem	11	13	24	1.41	-2	118.18%
Totals	77	75	152	1.41	2	97.40%
<i>average</i>	<i>19.25</i>	<i>18.75</i>				
<i>standard deviation</i>	<i>6.95</i>	<i>8.30</i>				

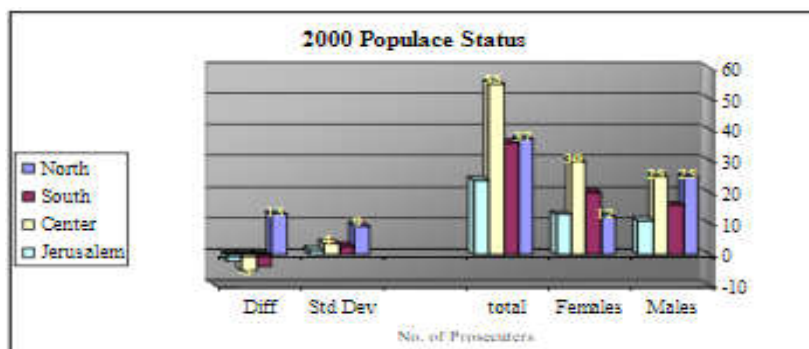


Figure 2-2014 Populace Status

All of the quantitative data show quite conclusively that the managerial mandate of gender parity occurred, and did so in the timeframe examined. However, as stated above, if this is ‘merely’ to keep the political echelons happy, then nothing serious has happened. Just as it occurred, it can unravel. Anecdotal evidence exist from some countries (one thinks of Afghanistan, for instance) where such was unraveled in short time. In order for us to agree that ‘progress’ exists, then a numerical relationship (parity) is insufficient.

Deeper associative change needed to be ascertained and measured. For this, the Israel Police Human Resources Department began the concept of deep studies of participants’ attitudes towards their co-workers. Again, one is reminded that the Police Prosecution is a highly emotionally charged environment, where many forces, internal and external come to play. This includes political pressures, though these are assiduously avoided by professionalism, they persons are influenced by human weaknesses, just as we all are. This type of chaotic system makes for a difficult test set, but one where the subjects are probably more prone to self-evaluation than most ‘information workers’ may be. In performing this analysis, and in confirming the results via a series of interviews, we feel that this has enhanced the test results’ value.

The reader is referred to the three Research Hypotheses discussed above: policewomen will be rated lower in *leadership* and *performance* dimensions, will be rated higher in *human relations* and *self-control* dimensions and no significant gender difference will be found in *professionalism*.

In order to evaluate gender differences on the various dimensions, a t-test and a significance test were conducted. The results of these tests are displayed below, in table 4.

Table 4 Peer Evaluation T-Test Findings

Values Parameters	Women's Mean	Men's Mean	Difference	T Value	Two-Tailed Significance
Self-Control	65.373	73.14	7.767	1.629	0.114
Performance	67.121	71.71	4.589	0.351	0.410
Professionalism	70.367	69.85	-0.517	-0.092	0.92
Human Relations	63.375	77.00	13.625	3.237	0.006*
Leadership	64.992	73.42	8.428	1.767	0.101

* Significant

The *first hypothesis* was not supported by the results. While men received higher average evaluations in the action-oriented parameters of leadership (p=0.101) and performance (p=0.410) these differences are not considered statistically significant. Results also do not support the *second hypothesis*. Women received lower evaluations on average in the human relations (p=0.006) and self-control (p=0.114) dimensions. The trait of human relations was not only found to be the opposite of the original hypothesis, but this result was also found to be significant. The *third hypothesis* was supported in that the professionalism dimension showed no significant gender difference (p=0.92).

Discussion and Conclusions

This present study examined perceived and actual gender differences in the legal profession, in the Israel Police Negev Prosecution Department. Our main research hypotheses were not supported: no significant gender differences were found in the hypothesized directions in action oriented, masculine or expressive feminine traits. However, our additional concept, that gender parity is much more than a numerical concept is strongly supported.

The empirical evidence may be construed as confirmation to both success and completeness of the desegregation process among the Israel Police's legal workforce, with the emphasis here being on the latter. First, on the manifest level, women were found in numerical parity, in the macro sample and in a majority in the micro-sample. Second, and more importantly for our purposes, they were also *perceived* similarly to their male peers. This perception is witnessed both by the male and female members of our sample group.

We conclude that Police lawyers are free of biased gender stereotypes, pointing to success of the desegregation process on the latent level as well. These findings are compatible with Dubeck theory (2009), which held that when women and men undertake similar roles, they will also be perceived to be similar.

One puzzling finding is that our male participants were actually evaluated as significantly better in human relations than their policewomen peers. In a conversation with the Prosecution Department's commander, we raised the possibility that while the policewomen under his command are *expected* to act stereotypically – empathetically, softly, gently and compromisingly – the nature of his professional role *forces* them to act assertively or even aggressively. This contrast between expectations and job requirements may explain the paradoxical finding: when their female peers acted according to professional norms, the policemen in their department tended to perceived them as perhaps lacking in human relations. This suggested explanation can neither be rejected nor confirmed, at this point. However, this explanation is supported by Brouerman (1972), who interviewed more than fifty lawyers in New York.

This study found that the system had had certain expectations of women entering a maleoriented employing organization which were comprised of two parallel systems: expectations of women in terms of their professional career as lawyers and as women. These two systems made their evaluators unsure concerning this aspect. Thus, when the gender-based expectations system was dominant and female peers behaved according to professional norms, their evaluators felt hostile and confused.

A conversation with the department's commander also made it clear that in daily life, when applying the peer test to decision making, the means are not t-tested, and only standardized scores (based on individual and group means, and group SD) are used. The scores are categorized in four groups (73-100 'equals' good, 67-72 average, 59-66 low, 0-58 very low). What this means is that despite the fact that gender differences may not be significant, the test is still used judgmentally in a way biased by previous evaluations, since our findings show that men are rated higher than women in all dimensions apart for professionalism (where the difference is slight), and would thus receive higher evaluations than their policewomen peers.

The paper is unique. The study relies on a data collection approach called "peer testing", designed to evaluate employees. One data-set evaluates the system, its functioning, and typical professional relationships, to provide insights on how professional policewomen are perceived compared to their male counterparts. Few studies to date have dealt with Police, as a legal and security organization.

The ability to generalize the findings is limited. However, the results show that reliance on uni-dimensional data may, in many cases, provide skewed results. More balanced research methodologies are called for, with results triangulation techniques used.

This research shows that this is not limited to a specific country. Both of these notions support our statement that deviations from equality, what is commonly called discrimination, is unsound policy. We do not claim to have 'proven' the unsoundness of these types of policies, as stated, we believe that anecdotal evidence exists to support this, and we leave this for other researchers to show conclusive proof. What we have shown here is that, A) The problem can be addressed, effectively and inexpensively, while improving the general work atmosphere and that B) In addressing it, it is important to use data of both a basic quantitative nature and phenomenological nature to measure real progress.

Future Studies It is desirable to examine the phenomenon of integrating women into male professions in additional security organizations in Israel. In addition, we should continue to explore the phenomenon in other western countries in order to broaden our understanding of the performance of women at work and whether women who integrate in male occupations are considered to be of equal professional value like men.

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