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Attitudes of Police Officers on the Implementation of Body Worn Cameras in the Police of Serbia

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Abstract: Police organizations in the United States were among the first to implement body-worn cameras more than a decade ago. Shortly thereafter, law enforcement agencies across Europe also started to adopt body-worn cameras as part of their operational practices. These devices have been widely regarded as effective tools for addressing specific challenges in policing and improving overall police performance. In line with global trends in modernizing policing practices, the Serbian police launched a pilot project for the implementation of body-worn cameras in September 2023. Prior to the initiation of this pilot phase, a research study was conducted to examine the attitudes and perceptions of police officers toward body-worn cameras. The research was conducted through a survey questionnaire in five organizational units of the Serbian police, with the participation of 343 police officers. The findings of this study are intended to provide valuable insights for planning and decision-making related to the implementation process.

Keywords: body-worn cameras, police organizations, police reform, police accountability.

INTRODUCTION

Police organizations encounter numerous challenges in their daily operations, including emerging threats to public safety, increasing crime rates, strained relations with communities, and risks to officer safety. To address these issues, police organizations have implemented a range of programs and projects focused on prevention, introduced innovative methods and tools, and adopted various other measures (Milidragović & Milić, 2024).

In the United States, deteriorating relations between police and minority communities reached a critical point in the early 2010s. In response, police organizations began adopting body-worn cameras (hereafter referred to as cameras) as a strategy to address these tensions. Cameras were promoted as a tool for addressing issues of unlawful behaviour and discriminatory practices by police officers, particularly against Black citizens. Additionally, they were intended to document police actions, especially during high-profile

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incidents that attracted significant media scrutiny and heightened public suspicions about unprofessional or unlawful conduct (Coudert et al., 2015; Hansen & Backman, 2021). The primary objectives for implementing cameras in the United States included reducing police violence against citizens, minimizing citizen complaints, enhancing the legitimacy and transparency of police work, and securing evidence during arrests (Ariel et al., 2015).

Similarly, European police organizations began adopting cameras in the second decade of the 21st century to address their own specific challenges. Incidents of harassment and attacks against police and other government officials were particularly significant concerns in countries such as Germany, Sweden, Spain, Switzerland, and the Netherlands and cameras were introduced primarily to protect police officers from violence perpetrated by citizens (Lehmann, 2020; Hansen & Backman, 2021; Meyer, 2020; Timan, 2016).

In France, the rationale for adopting cameras focused on the need to document interactions between police officers and citizens, partly in response to the increasing prevalence of citizen-recorded videos captured on mobile devices. By implementing cameras, police organizations aimed to promote positive changes in police-community relations (Coudert et al., 2015). In Austria, the dual objectives of camera implementation were to protect police officers from violence by citizens and to safeguard citizens from unlawful or unprofessional conduct by police officers (Lehmann, 2020).

In alignment with global modernization trends and in response to emerging policing challenges, the Serbian police initiated a pilot phase for the implementation of body-worn cameras in September 2023. During this phase, cameras were deployed by officers from two organizational units within the Traffic Police Directorate. The primary objectives of implementing cameras in the Serbian police include documenting and monitoring police activities, assessing the validity of citizen complaints, preventing misconduct and corruption, improving operational efficiency, supporting data-driven analyses and enhancing police training.

Prior to the commencement of the pilot project, a research study was conducted to evaluate the attitudes and perceptions of police officers regarding body-worn cameras. This represents the first study conducted with police officers in the Republic of Serbia and the broader region, aimed at exploring their attitudes and perceptions regarding the use of cameras. The findings of this study, along with insights from the pilot project and other relevant data, are expected to support police leadership in decision-making and in planning the broader implementation of cameras.

METHODS

In September 2021, a research study was conducted within the Police Departments of Novi Sad, Belgrade, Niš, Kragujevac, and the Traffic Police Directorate. The study utilized a survey questionnaire to examine police officers' attitudes and opinions regarding body-worn cameras. The questionnaire consisted of general questions (e.g., organizational affiliation, years of work experience, job title, and education level) and seven questions related to the research topic. The respondents were asked to select one of three predefined answers for each item.

A total of 343 police officers participated in the study, distributed across organizational units as follows: City of Belgrade Police Department: 116 (33.8%), Kragujevac Police Department: 59 (17.3%), Niš Police Department: 78 (22.7%), Novi Sad Police Department: 80 (23.3%) and Traffic Police Directorate: 10 (2.9%).The respondents were assigned to the following job positions: police officer/traffic police officer 206 (60.1%), sector leader/deputy sector leader 21 (6.1%), shift leader/assistant shift leader 23 (6.7%), intervention unit member 75 (21.9%), and other positions 18 (5.2%). At the time of the research, 227 (66.2%) respondents had a secondary education, 36 (10.5%) had higher education (basic vocational studies), 69 (20.1%) had higher education (basic academic studies), and 11 (3.2%) had a master's/specialist degree.

Respondents' work experience ranged from 1 to 35 years, with an average of 14.8 ± 9.14 years of service. The data collected during the study were analysed using the statistical software package IBM SPSS Statistics 20. The results are presented as absolute numbers (N) and corresponding percentages (%), while work experience is expressed as mean ± standard deviation. Significant differences in responses were determined using the χ^2 test, with statistical significance set at $p < 0.05$.

RESULTS

This section presents the study's findings, specifically the respondents' answers to the survey questions (Table T–1)[4]. Additionally, responses were analysed in relation to the respondents' demographic characteristics, including organizational unit, educational level, job position, and years of work experience (Tables T–2, T–3, T–4, and T–5).

Table T–1. *Questions and Respondents' Answers on the Body Worn Cameras Implementation*

	Yes[a]		No[b]		Not sure[c]	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
1. Do you think citizens will be more cooperative when they know the intervention is being recorded?	123	35.9[c]	145	42.3[c]	75	21.9
2. Do you believe the use of body worn cameras and recording interventions can distract you during the intervention?	209	60.9[b, c]	97	28.3[c]	37	10.8
3. Do you believe the introduction of body worn cameras is a means for monitoring your work by supervisors?	223	65.0[b, c]	81	23.6[c]	39	11.4
4. Do you believe recordings of police interventions captured by body worn cameras can improve the training process for less experienced colleagues?	162	47.2[c]	137	39.9[c]	44	12.8

4 Tables T–2, T–3, T–4, and T–5 contain only the responses to the questions.

5. Do you think body worn camera recordings can improve the quality of written documents (e.g., reports, records, notes) you prepare daily?	94	27.4[c]	200	58.3[a, b]	49	14.3
6. Do you think the introduction of body worn cameras enhances the safety of police officers?	143	41.7[c]	153	44.6[c]	47	13.7
7. Do you support the introduction of body worn cameras into police practice?	169	49.3[b, c]	111	32.4[c]	63	18.4

Note. Chi-square test of independence ($\chi^2 = 171$; $df = 12$; $p = 0.000$); chi-square goodness-of-fit test; $p < 0.001$: a – statistically significant compared to 'Yes'; b – statistically significant compared to 'No'; c – statistically significant compared to 'Not Sure'.

Respondents' Answers by Police Organizational Units

The police organizational units involved in the study differ in terms of territorial size, security challenges, the nature of their tasks, and other specific characteristics. These organizational differences, along with security concerns, may influence the respondents' attitudes and opinions, warranting separate analysis of responses by organizational affiliation (Table T–2).

Table T–2. *Overview of Respondents' Answers by Police Organizational Units*

Questions	Answers offered	Belgrade Police Department N (%)	Kragujevac Police Department N (%)	Niš Police Department N (%)	Novi Sad Police Department N (%)	Traffic Police Administration of the Police Directorate N (%)
1.	Not sure	25 (21.6)	10 (16.9)	16 (20.5)	19 (23.8)	5 (50)
	No	47 (40.5)	29 (49.2)	38 (48.7)	30 (37.5)	1 (10)
	Yes	44 (37.9)	20 (33.9)	24 (30.8)	31 (38.8)	4 (40)
	Total	116 (100)	59 (100)	78 (100)	80 (100)	10 (100)
2.	Not sure	11 (9.5)	4 (6.8)	12 (15.4)	9 (11.3)	1 (10)
	No	34 (29.3)	17 (28.8)	22 (28.2)	20 (25)	4 (40)
	Yes	71 (61.2)	38 (64.4)	44 (56.4)	51 (63.8)	5 (50)
	Total	116 (100)	59 (100)	78 (100)	80 (100)	10 (100)
3.	Not sure	13 (11.2)	3 (5.1)	11 (14.1)	8 (10)	4 (40)
	No	35 (30.2)	21 (35.6)	13 (16.7)	10 (12.5)	2 (20)
	Yes	68 (58.6)	35 (59.3)	54 (69.2)	62 (77.5)	4 (40)
	Total	116 (100)	59 (100,0)	78 (100,0)	80 (100)	10 (100)
4.	Not sure	11 (9.5)	10 (16.9)	12 (15.4)	8 (10)	3 (30)
	No	47 (40.5)	25 (42.4)	38 (48.7)	26 (32.5)	1 (10)
	Yes	58 (50)	24 (40.7)	28 (35.9)	46 (57.5)	6 (60)
	Total	116 (100)	59 (100)	78 (100)	80 (100)	10 (100)

5.	Not sure	15 (12.9)	13 (22.)	9 (11.5)	8 (10)	4 (40)
	No	65 (56.0)	38 (64.4)	50 (64.1)	44 (55)	3 (30)
	Yes	36 (31.1)	8 (13.6)	19 (24,4)	28 (35)	3 (30)
	Total	116 (100)	59 (100)	78 (100)	80 (100)	10 (100)
6.	Not sure	15 (12.9)	6 (10.2)	11 (14.1)	12 (15.0)	3 (30)
	No	49 (42.2)	33 (55.9)	36 (46.2)	34 (42.5)	1 (10)
	Yes	52 (44.8)	20 (33.9)	31 (39.7)	34 (42.5)	6 (60)
	Total	116 (100)	59 (100)	78 (100)	80 (100)	10 (100)
7.	Not sure	22 (19.0)	8 (13.6)	13 (16.7)	19 (23.8)	1 (10)
	No	39 (33.6)	11 (18.6)	25 (32.1)	30 (37.5)	6 (60)
	Yes	55 (47.4)	40 (67.8)	40 (51.3)	31 (38.8)	3 (30)
	Total	116 (100)	59 (100)	78 (100)	80 (100)	10 (100)

The chi-square test results show no statistically significant difference between police departments in responses to the first question ($\chi^2(8) = 9.88$, $p = 0.274$). No statistically significant difference was found between police departments in responses to the second question ($\chi^2(8) = 4.13$, $p = 0.845$). A statistically significant difference was found between police departments in responses to the third question ($\chi^2(8) = 25.56$, $p = 0.001$). The results indicate no statistically significant difference between police departments in responses to the fourth question ($\chi^2(8) = 14.92$, $p = 0.061$). A statistically significant difference was observed between police departments in responses to the fifth question ($\chi^2(8) = 17.81$, $p = 0.023$). No statistically significant difference was found between police departments in responses to the sixth question ($\chi^2(8) = 9.30$, $p = 0.317$). The results indicate a statistically significant difference in responses to the seventh question among police departments ($\chi^2(8) = 15.84$, $p = 0.045$).

Educational Level and Respondent Insights

Police organizational units employ officers with varying educational backgrounds. It is well-established that education influences the formation of attitudes and opinions; therefore, responses were analysed based on the respondents' level of education (Table T–3).

Table T–3. *Overview of Respondents' Answers by Educational Level*

Questions	Answers offered	High school diploma N (%)	3-year college degree N (%)	4-year college degree N (%)	Master studies/ specialist studies N (%)
1.	Not sure	49 (21.6)	7 (19.4)	17 (24.6)	2 (18.2)
	No	104 (45.8)	12 (33.3)	26 (36.2)	4 (36.4)
	Yes	74 (32.6)	17 (47.3)	27 (39.1)	5 (45.5)
	Total	227 (100)	36 (100)	69 (100)	11 (100)
2.	Not sure	26 (11.4)	5 (13.9)	5 (7.2)	1 (9.1)
	No	64 (28.2)	11 (30.6)	9 (27.5)	3 (27.3)
	Yes	137 (60.4)	20 (55.6)	45 (65.2)	7 (63.6)
	Total	227 (100)	36 (100)	69 (100)	11 (100)

3.	Not sure	25 (11.0)	7 (19.4)	7 (10.1)	0 (00.0)
	No	55 (24.2)	8 (22.3)	15 (21.7)	3 (27.3)
	Yes	147 (64.8)	21 (58.3)	47 (68.2)	8 (72.7)
	Total	227 (100)	36 (100)	69 (100)	11 (100)
4.	Not sure	26 (11.5)	4 (11.1)	13 (18.8)	1 (9.1)
	No	106 (46.7)	13 (36.1)	17 (24.7)	1 (9.1)
	Yes	95 (41.9)	19 (52.8)	39 (56.5)	9 (81.8)
	Total	227 (100)	36 (100)	69 (100)	11 (100)
5.	Not sure	31 (13.7)	6 (16.6)	6 (16.6)	1 (9.1)
	No	143 (63)	19 (52.8)	19 (52.8)	3 (27.3)
	Yes	53 (23.3)	11 (30.6)	11 (30.6)	7 (63.6)
	Total	227 (100)	36 (100)	36 (100)	11 (100)
6.	Not sure	28 (12.3)	4 (11.2)	13 (18.8)	2 (18.2)
	No	112 (49.3)	16 (44.4)	20 (29.0)	5 (45.5)
	Yes	87 (38.3)	16 (44.4)	36 (52.2)	4 (26.3)
	Total	227 (100)	36 (100)	69 (100)	11 (100)
7.	Not sure	39 (17.2)	8 (22.2)	14 (20.3)	2 (18.2)
	No	66 (29.1)	10 (27.8)	29 (42)	6 (54.5)
	Yes	122 (53.7)	18 (50)	26 (37.7)	3 (27.3)
	Total	227 (100)	36 (100)	69 (100)	11 (100)

The chi-square test results show no statistically significant difference between educational levels in responses to the first question ($\chi^2(6) = 4.63$, $p = 0.592$). No statistically significant difference was found between educational levels in responses to the second question ($\chi^2(6) = 6.23$, $p = 0.398$). The results show no statistically significant difference between educational levels in responses to the third question ($\chi^2(6) = 4.11$, $p = 0.661$). A statistically significant difference was found between educational levels in responses to the fourth question ($\chi^2(6) = 17.55$, $p = 0.007$). The results indicate no statistically significant difference between educational levels in responses to the fifth question ($\chi^2(6) = 10.53$, $p = 0.104$). No statistically significant difference was found between educational levels in responses to the sixth question ($\chi^2(6) = 9.47$, $p = 0.149$). The chi-square test results show no statistically significant difference between educational levels in responses to the seventh question ($\chi^2(6) = 9.15$, $p = 0.165$).

Workplace Specificity and Respondent Insights

The respondents also perform diverse duties depending on their positions within the police organization. For instance:

- Police officers/traffic police officers are responsible for maintaining public order and ensuring traffic safety.
- Sector leaders as a lowest hierarchy managers handle less complex tasks related to maintaining order and organizing police work at the sector police station jurisdiction area.
- Shift leaders coordinate activities among police officers during the shift.

- Members of intervention units aside from general police duties engage in more complex interventions, including high risk arrests, maintaining public order and securing public events.

The specific responsibilities associated with each position may influence the respondents' attitudes and opinions regarding the subject of the study; thus, responses were analysed by job position[5] (Table T–4).

Table T–4. *Overview of Respondents' Answers by Job Position*

Questions	Answers offered	Police officer/traffic police officer N (%)	Sector leader/ deputy sector leader N (%)	Shift leader/ assistant shift leader N (%)	Member of the intervention unit N (%)	Other position N (%)
1.	Not sure	44 (21.4)	3 (14.3)	5 (21.7)	18 (24)	5 (27.8)
	No	89 (43.2)	10 (47.6)	8 (34.8)	32 (42.7)	6 (33.3)
	Yes	73 (35.4)	8 (38.1)	10 (43.5)	25 (33.3)	7 (38.9)
	Total	206 (100)	21 (100)	23 (100)	75 (100)	18 (100)
2.	Not sure	23 (11.2)	1 (4.8)	3 (13)	10 (13.3)	0 (00.0)
	No	56 (27.2)	7 (33.3)	8 (34.8)	20 (26.7)	6 (33.39
	Yes	127 (61.7)	13 (61,9)	12 (52.2)	45 (60)	12 (66.7)
	Total	206 (100)	21 (100)	23 (100)	75 (100)	18 (100)
3.	Not sure	23 (11.2)	3 (14.3)	3 (13.1)	8 (10.7)	2 (11.1)
	No	51 (24.8)	4 (19.0)	3 (13.0)	21 (28.0)	2 (11.1)
	Yes	132 (64.1)	14 (66.7)	17 (73.9)	46 (61.3)	14 (77.8)
	Total	206 (100)	21 (100)	23 (100)	75 (100)	18 (100)
4.	Not sure	30 (14.6)	3 (14.3)	2 (8.7)	8 (10.7)	1 (5.6)
	No	92 (44.7)	7 (33.3)	6 (26.1)	31 (41.3)	1 (5.6)
	Yes	84 (40.8)	11 (52.4)	15 (65.2)	36 (48.0)	16 (88.9)
	Total	206 (100)	21 (100)	23 (100)	75 (100)	18 (100)
5.	Not sure	31 (15.0)	2 (9.5)	4 (17.4)	8 (10.7)	4 (22.2)
	No	121 (58.7)	12 (57.1)	14 (60.9)	47 (62.7)	6 (33.3)
	Yes	54 (26.2)	7 (33.3)	5 (21.7)	20 (26.7)	8 (44.5)
	Total	206 (100)	21 (100)	23 (100)	75 (100)	18 (100)
6.	Not sure	28 (13.6)	2 (9.5)	5 (21.7)	7 (9.3)	5 (27.8)
	No	95 (46.1)	8 (38.1)	7 (30.4)	40 (53.3)	3 (16.7)
	Yes	83 (40.3)	11 (52.4)	11 (47.8)	28 (37.4)	10 (55.6)
	Total	206 (100)	21 (100)	23 (100)	75 (100)	18 (100)
7.	Not sure	34 (16.5)	4 (19.0)	4 (17.4)	16 (21.3)	5 (27.8)
	No	62 (30.1)	8 (38.1)	9 (39.1)	21 (28.0)	11 (61.1)
	Yes	110 (53.4)	9 (42.9)	10 (43.5)	38 (50.7)	2 (11.1)
	Total	206 (100)	21 (100)	23 (100)	75 (100)	18 (100)

5 The questionnaire also provided the option to state other job positions, not provided in the questionnaire. The respondents listed alternative positions such as criminal investigator, criminal inspector, junior officer, police officer, police officer in the police department HQ, assistant commander, and deputy commander.

The chi-square test results show no statistically significant difference in responses by job position to the first question ($\chi^2(8) = 1{,}77$, $p = 0{,}988$). The results show no statistically significant difference in responses by job position to the second question ($\chi^2(8) = 4.52$, $p = 0.808$). No statistically significant difference was found in responses by job position to the third question ($\chi^2(8) = 2.60$, $p = 0.957$). No statistically significant difference was found in responses by job position to the fourth question ($\chi^2(8) = 7.72$, $p = 0.462$). The chi-square test results show no statistically significant difference in responses by job position to the fifth question ($\chi^2(8) = 4.95$, $p = 0.763$). No statistically significant difference was found in responses by job position to the sixth question ($\chi^2(8) = 6.57$, $p = 0.584$). The results indicate a marginally significant difference in responses by job position to the seventh question ($\chi^2(8) = 15.26$, $p = 0.054$).

Respondents' Responses in Relation to Years of Work Experience

Work experience, alongside education, is a critical factor in shaping professional attitudes and opinions. It plays a significant role in influencing perspectives on various aspects of the profession, including organizational structure, powers, equipment, and other job-related elements. In the case of implementation, body-worn cameras would become an additional mandatory piece of equipment for daily police operations. Given the importance of work experience in shaping attitudes and opinions, responses were also analysed in relation to respondents' years of work experience (Table T–5).

Table T–5. *Overview of Respondents' Answers Based on Years of Work Experience*

Questions	Answers offered	1–9 years N (%)	10–19 years N (%)	20–29 years N (%)	≥ 30 years N (%)
1.	Not sure	22 (20)	37 (27)	15 (20.5)	1 (4.3)
	No	53 (48.2)	51 (37.2)	31 (42.5)	10 (43.5)
	Yes	35 (31.8)	49 (35.8)	27 (37)	12 (52.2)
	Total	110 (100)	137 (100)	73 (100)	23 (100)
2.	Not sure	11 (10)	14 (10.3)	8 (11.0)	4 (17.4)
	No	22 (20)	48 (35.0)	20 (27.4)	7 (30.4)
	Yes	77 (70)	75 (54.7)	45 (61.6)	12 (52.2)
	Total	110 (100)	137(100)	73(100)	23 (100)
3.	Not sure	12 (10.9)	13 (9.5)	11 (15.1)	3 (13.0)
	No	30 (27.3)	31 (22.6)	14 (19.2)	6 (26.1)
	Yes	68 (61.8)	93 (67.9)	48 (65.8)	14 (60.9)
	Total	110 (100)	137(100)	73(100)	23 (100)
4.	Not sure	10 (9,1)	21 (15.3)	8 (11.0)	5 (21.7)
	No	55 (50)	48 (35.0)	27 (37)	7 (30.5)
	Yes	45 (40.9)	68 (49.6)	38 (52)	11 (47.8)
	Total	110 (100)	137(100)	73(100)	23 (100)

5.	Not sure	11 (10)	19 (13.9)	13 (17.8)	6 (26.1)
	No	69 (62.7)	77 (56.2)	43 (58.9)	11 (47.8)
	Yes	30 (27.3)	41 (29.9)	17 (23.3)	6 (26.1)
	Total	110 (100)	137(100)	73(100)	23 (100)
6.	Not sure	7 (6.4)	27 (19.7)	10 (13.7)	3 (13)
	No	66 (60)	52 (38)	31 (42.5)	4 (17.4)
	Yes	37 (33.6)	58 (42.3)	32 (43.8)	16 (69.6)
	Total	110 (100)	137(100)	73(100)	23 (100)
7.	Not sure	21 (19.1)	24 (17.5)	13 (17.8)	5 (21.7)
	No	25 (22.7)	50 (36.5)	25 (34.2)	11 (47.8)
	Yes	64 (58.2)	63 (46.0)	35 (47.9)	7 (30.4)
	Total	110 (100)	137(100)	73(100)	23 (100)

There is no statistically significant difference between groups based on years of work experience in responses to the first question ($\chi2(6) = 9.09$, $p = 0.1689$. There is no statistically significant difference between groups based on years of work experience in responses to the second question ($\chi2(6) = 8.61$, $p = 0.197$). There is no statistically significant difference between groups based on years of work experience in responses to the third question ($\chi2(6) = 3.14$, $p = 0.791$). There is no statistically significant difference between groups based on years of work experience in responses to the fourth question ($\chi2(6) = 9.24$, $p = 0.161$). There is no statistically significant difference between groups based on years of work experience in responses to the fifth question ($\chi2(6) = 6.00$, $p = 0.423$). There is a statistically significant difference between groups based on years of work experience in responses to the sixth question ($\chi2(6) = 25.13$, $p = 0.00032$). There is no statistically significant difference between groups based on years of work experience in responses to the seventh question ($\chi2(6) = 9.65$, $p = 0.140$).

DISCUSSION

The implementation of cameras in police organizations in the United States and Europe has influenced both police officers' conduct and citizens' cooperativeness. Police officers have become more cautious and deliberate in their actions, while citizens have demonstrated increased cooperation in their interactions with law enforcement. In the United States, these changes positively impacted police-community relationships (McClure et al., 2017; Crow et al., 2017; Meyer, 2020; Kersting et al., 2019; Katz et al., 2014; Ariel et al., 2015; Jennings et al., 2017). Inspired by these outcomes, police officers in the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Serbia were surveyed to assess their opinions on the potential influence of cameras on citizen cooperation.[6]

6 In addition to the research on the attitudes of police officers regarding cameras presented in the paper, a study was also conducted on the attitudes of students from the Faculty of Law at the University of Kragujevac and the University of Criminalistic and Police Studies regarding cameras. For more details, see Vidosavljević, 2025.

Respondents' Opinions on Citizen Cooperation

The majority of respondents (42.3%) expressed a negative opinion regarding the potential impact of cameras on citizen cooperation. Conversely, 35.9% of respondents held a positive opinion, while 21.9% were uncertain. Police officers/traffic police officers and those with lower levels of education predominantly expressed scepticism about cameras' potential to influence citizen behaviour. This scepticism, rooted in the police subculture, often reflects a general mistrust and resistance to change, even when well-intentioned. The respondents with higher education levels, greater work experience, and leadership positions (e.g., shift leaders) were more likely to hold positive views on the matter.[7] Their advanced knowledge and broader perspectives likely contributed to their recognition of the potential benefits of cameras. As it is explained by Vilić (2014), knowledge is the main and most important resource in the development of an organization, and it has always been a driving force for societal development and progress. Knowledge includes critical thinking, innovation, readiness for social change, solving complex problems, the ability to adapt and resolve issues, developing various skills, and using information and competencies that should be acquired through the educational process (Vilić, 2014).

Concerns About Distraction

Research in the United States highlighted potential negative effects of cameras, such as distraction during critical incidents (Ellis et al., 2015; Lum et al., 2019; Ariel et al., 2015; Hedberg et al., 2017; Owens & Finn, 2018; Braga et al., 2018; Peterson & Lawrence, 2019; Ready & Young, 2015; Ariel et al., 2017; Lum, et al., 2020; Peterson et al., 2018; Stoughton, 2018). It was observed that police officers tend to focus more on their appearance and certain formalities rather than on important details during the incident they are handling (Goetschel & Peha, 2017; Groff et al., 2020; Rowe et al., 2018). Similarly, the majority of Serbian respondents (60.9%) believed that cameras would divert their attention, while 28.3% disagreed, and 10.8% were uncertain. These concerns were consistent across all demographic categories, indicating concern about focusing on formalities and camera presence rather than operational priorities. However, as observed in the US police forces, initial scepticism was mitigated as officers began to recognize cameras as valuable tools for accountability and operational efficiency (Jennings et al., 2015; Newell, 2016). Citizens began to withdraw frivolous complaints immediately after viewing video footage (Kampfe, 2015). Additionally, citizens changed their statements after viewing footage from cameras and accepted charges they had previously denied (Newell, 2016). Once the first positive effects are realized in the police of Serbia, as in the USA, cameras are expected to be seen as allies in their work, and prejudices and negative attitudes would be pushed to the background.

Continuous Supervision and Stress

The primary motive for the implementation of cameras in police organizations in the USA was focused on protecting citizens from unlawful actions by police officers. In contrast to the USA, the primary motive for implementing cameras in European countries was

7 The positions of shift leaders require levels of education higher than high school diploma.

directed at protecting police officers from attacks and other unlawful actions by citizens (Ariel et al., 2015; Buchzik, 2016; Mohler, 2018; Coudert et al., 2015; Hansen & Backman, 2021; Meyer, 2020). However, cameras, in addition to achieving their primary objective, can also serve as a means of continuous surveillance. The potential use of cameras for the surveillance of police officers has been considered as an additional pressure on their work. Research findings indicated that some police officers were afraid of the reaction from their immediate supervisors after reviewing the footage. Police officers expressed concerns about the possibility of all day supervision and being held accountable for even minor mistakes. The burden of constant control and evaluation of their actions could increase stress and hinder officer performance (Wooditch et al., 2020; Drover & Ariel, 2015; Heumann et al., 2018; Groff et al., 2020; Katz et al., 2014). Police officers' attitudes in the police of Serbia on this matter align with the views of police officers in the USA. A significant proportion of respondents (65%) viewed cameras as instruments of supervision, a sentiment consistent across all demographic groups (organizational affiliation, level of education, job position, and work experience). As Stevanović (2003) emphasizes that while control is necessary, it should not be excessive. Cameras should be used occasionally for control purposes. Sub-legislative acts should ensure that video footage is used for oversight only in specific instances, such as use-of-force incidents or formal complaints, to balance accountability with officer autonomy. Otherwise, police officers may obstruct the use of cameras or intentionally cause damage.

Role of Cameras in Training

Camera footage can be useful in the training of police officers as it provides an opportunity to learn from mistakes or good practices. Video recordings can also be instrumental in analysing police actions (e.g. case studies), identifying educational needs, and creating more realistic, high-quality, and specific training programs aimed at improving police work and/or performance. The potential for cameras to enhance training received mixed opinions. A slight majority (47.2%) recognized their value, while 44% were sceptical, and 12.8% were undecided. The respondents with more education and experience were more likely to acknowledge the benefits of using camera footage to improve training programs. Conversely, those with lower education levels and less experience were less supportive. Negative opinions also may be caused by limited exposure to training due to increasing workload, causing training activities to be neglected.

Accuracy in Documentation of Police Actions

Police officers document their actions in every specific event by composing the appropriate writings (such as reports, criminal complaints, offense reports, etc.). In these reports, police officers should detail the event with all essential facts. Sometimes, due to lack of concentration, the influence of stress, or fatigue, it may be impossible to identify or remember all the important facts. Reviewing footage of the event can reveal facts that were not noted during the police officers' actions, thereby improving the quality of the written reports. Neglecting the important facts and circumstances may affect the classification of the event or represent crucial evidence in the following criminal or misdemeanour pro-

ceedings. The significance of reviewing video footage to verify all facts in written reports was not recognized by most respondents. A majority of respondents (58.3%) did not believe that reviewing camera footage could improve the accuracy of written reports. Only 27.4% expressed a positive opinion, while 14.3% were uncertain. This disbelief may stem from overconfidence in officers' abilities to recall details under stress. However, studies indicate that stress and fear during complex interventions can impair situational awareness and decision-making. For example, a study conducted in the Belgian police indicated that during more complex interventions, due to the presence of fear and stress, police officers lost awareness of the situation and were unable to recognize all relevant facts in the event and make correct decisions (Verhage et al., 2018). Cameras may serve as an ideal reminder and ally in their follow up work. For more experienced and educated respondents, camera footage was seen as a valuable tool for documenting the overlooked facts and enhancing the quality of official reports.

Impact on Officers' Safety

Cameras were found to positively influence the security culture of police officers in the United States by promoting cautious and regulation-compliant behaviour (Ariel et al., 2015; Jennings et al., 2015; Smykla et al., 2016; Rankin, 2013; Wright & Headley, 2021). However, during the survey, only 41.7% of Serbian respondents recognized the potential impact of cameras on their safety. Positive opinions were more prevalent among the respondents with higher education, leadership roles, and extensive work experience, likely due to their awareness of the risks faced in law enforcement and the preventive role of cameras. Aware that their actions are being recorded, police officers exhibited greater caution in their conduct and decision-making. The positive contribution of cameras to enhancing police officers' safety would be achieved through their impact on self-awareness. This would further mean aligning police officers' behaviour and actions with regulations, while respecting certain tactical principles ang guidelines for resolving problematic situations. Enhanced officer safety means a reduction in the number of criminal acts against police officers, particularly the most severe ones, with fatalities and body harm. However, during the survey, only 41.7% of Serbian respondents recognized the positive impact of cameras on their safety. A negative opinion is expressed by 44.6% respondents, and 13,7% were unsure about the potential impact of cameras. The respondents' answers varied within each demographic characteristic. Positive opinions were expressed by the respondents from the City of Belgrade Police Department and the Traffic Police Department. Positive opinions were more prevalent among the respondents with higher education, leadership roles, and extensive work experience, likely due to their awareness of the risks faced in law enforcement and the preventive role of cameras.

General Opinions on Body Worn Camera Implementation

When asked about the introduction of cameras into police practice, 49.3% of the respondents expressed support, 32.4% opposed the idea, and 18.4% were undecided. Negative opinions were primarily associated with higher education levels, higher job positions, and extensive work experience (30+ years of service). Resistance to implementation may be at-

tributed to reluctance to change the established practices, fear of exposure of deficiencies like lack of knowledge and other performance issues, or unfamiliarity with the benefits of cameras observed in other police organizations.

The implementation of cameras in the Serbian police could result in increased professionalism, improved incident documentation, enhanced training, and improved officers' safety. However, successful integration requires addressing officers' concerns about camera distraction, excessive supervision, and potential stress. Clear guidelines, targeted training, and positive reinforcement of cameras' benefits will be essential to overcoming resistance and fostering a more effective and transparent law enforcement system.

CONCLUSIONS

The implementation of new technologies in police organizations should be undertaken as a planned and carefully considered process. A critical component of this process is the provision of well-designed training and the integration of positive experiences from other police organizations where cameras were implemented long time ago. Educational and/or training programs, utilizing practical examples, should demonstrate to police officers how the use of cameras can enhance their safety and improve work performance.

Comprehensive knowledge of the capabilities, impacts, and contributions of cameras in policing is essential for fostering acceptance among end-users. Such knowledge can help dispel the existing prejudices and negative attitudes. Conversely, if police officers fail to recognize the advantages of camera implementation, resistance to change could jeopardize the success of the initiative. The effective introduction of new programs and technologies is contingent upon the trust and support of frontline personnel, including patrol officers, traffic police, shift leaders, and sector supervisors. Thus, any innovation must be preceded by meaningful dialogue and educational efforts with police officers to address potential concerns and reinforce confidence in the initiative's intentions. Police organizations should avoid perceiving cameras as a singular or immediate solution for resolving internal challenges or improving relationships between the police, citizens, and the broader community. Instead, cameras should be viewed as supplementary tools that, when combined with other measures such as appropriate training and/or education, clear and well devised operational procedures and established accountability can contribute incrementally to the professionalization of police conduct.

The experiences of other police organizations and the findings of this research may provide a valuable foundation for decision-making regarding the implementation of cameras and the (strategic) planning of this process in Serbian police.

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