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CONTENTS

SECURITY SCIENCES

EDUCATION FOR SECURITY: A GENDER PERSPECTIVE IN THE CURRICULA OF POLICE SCHOOLS IN SERBIA

Danijela Spasić, Dr.Sc
University of Criminal Investigation and Police Studies, Belgrade, Serbia
danijela.spasic@kpu.edu.rs
Ivana Radovanović, Dr.Sc
University of Criminal Investigation and Police Studies, Belgrade, Serbia
ivana.radovanovic@kpu.edu.rs

Abstract:
International documents ratified by Serbia, as well as the progress made at the local level in the last ten years, have led to the issue of gender equality becoming one of the most important for the future development of the country, and such a trend is present in the security sector. Implementing gender equality policy through education is one of the methods necessary in this sector. This is indicated, among other things, by the two action plans adopted so far (in the period from 2010 to 2020) for the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 "Women, Peace and Security" in Serbia. This paper analyses the degree of implementation of gender equality issues, i.e., gender perspective in educational programs on the example of the curriculum of the University of Criminal Investigation and Police Studies and the professional development program of trainees in the Center for Basic Police Training.

Based on the analysis of the content of textbooks and language used in the curricula for education and training of police officers, we came to the conclusion that, despite the fact that certain steps have been taken to introduce a gender perspective in security education programs, this issue remains peripheral and the language used often contains words that emphasize gender stereotypes. In conclusion, it was recommended that the gender perspective is not only an integral part of these programs, but also reflects on the content of educational programs and the language in which they are written, which would promote gender equality in the security sector.

Keywords: *gender equality, gender perspective, security sector, educational programs*

1. INTRODUCTION

Serbia is a very patriarchal and traditional society, which directly impacts the achievement of gender equality. Namely, women are still discriminated against in all fields of their public and private life. Although demographic aspects indicate that in the estimated number of residents in Serbia in 2020 (6,899,126, based on data retrieved from the results of statistics on natural movement and internal migration), most of the population are women (3,538,820 or 51.3 percent), while 3,360,306 are men (48.7 percent), **Invalid source specified.**, social, political and security context shows gender imbalance and inequality. In Serbia, structural inequalities are shown in various areas, such as: political and economic

participation; property access, income, and services; participation in the economy; standard of living and quality of life.

There is no social consensus in Serbia today on the need for equal treatment of women and men, and "patriarchal syndrome", stereotypes and prejudices are still largely present, which significantly affects the functioning of social mechanisms and the achievement of gender equality standards. All forms of women's inequality are not easily noticeable, and on the social scene the actions of various social actors that influence the solution of inequality, implementation of international and domestic legal acts, ethical standards and introduction of measures and mechanisms for women's equality in the society (Stjepanović-Zaharijevski, Gavrilović), & Petrušić, 2010). One of the most important preconditions for overcoming these difficulties is the system of education and educational content that documents inequality and promotes the idea of gender equality) (Gavrilović, 2008). Education, its contents and practices are powerful instruments for the reproduction of gender relations, but they are also a key mechanism of social change.

At the same time, education is the main instrument for promoting and achieving change and development (UNDP, 2005). Many human resources experts believe that college education has a significant impact on business success. If we assume that state institutions base their actions on achieving gender equality on the consensus on the need to establish it, then we can label the system of education in society as key to transmitting the value of gender equality to younger generations. Agreeing on the idea of gender equality as a form of achieving well-being in society is a prerequisite for reaching consensus and social actors and individuals, and this, in turn, is a condition for successful implementation of measures to achieve women's equality.

There is a social consensus that education is of paramount importance in the professional training of personnel for the security sector (Huisman, Martinez, & Wilson, 2005; Bennette, 1998). In a study entitled "Faculty Education and Successful Policing: A Ten-Year Survey," Bennette (1998) argues that education has a crucial impact on successful policing. Values are transmitted and strengthened through education. The same applies to the implementation of gender equality policy and the education of new generations on gender equality. In this context, gender sensitivity needs to be introduced into all curricula, including security education. The school curriculum in the security sector should identify, develop and use approaches, mechanisms and examples of best practice to increase sensitivity to gender issues and to respond more effectively to the needs of the community - women and men alike. The purpose of all this would be not only to transfer appropriate values and offer services that take into account the diversity of the community, but also to strengthen and more successfully implement the legislative framework governing this area (Dhembo, 2011).

The process of transmitting values, breaking stereotypes and building gender-sensitive training and education systems for the needs of the security sector is based on the content of the program and the language used in it. Language is used, among other things, to establish and maintain gender order, gender categorization, and gender discourse (Shitemi, 2009). By interpreting the use of linguistic resources, social goals are achieved (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2005). In the Republic of Serbia, the gender perspective in textbooks has been analysed since the 2000s (Stjepanović-Zaharijevski, Gavrilović, & Petrušić, 2010). Gender analysis of study programs and professional development programs for future members of the security sector, i.e., the police, has not yet been conducted in the Republic of Serbia, although every year security sector educational institutions report to the competent governments (Gender Equality Coordination Body) and the Ministry of Interior

for the implementation of the National Action Plan for Resolution 1325 "Women, Peace and Security") on specific activities in the field of introducing a gender perspective in curricula and specialist training. Curricula of all levels of study at the University of Criminal Investigation and Police Studies contain subjects, i.e., teaching contents that deal with issues of human rights, discrimination, domestic violence, human trafficking, violent crime, primary and secondary victimization, but are only since 2021 within the new master's study program, accredited courses that specifically deal with gender issues in the security sector.

In this regard, this paper is an initial attempt to analyse the curriculum of the University of Criminal Investigation and Police Studies, i.e., the program of professional development of students of the Center for Basic Police Training, gain insight into the current state of gender perspective, gender equality and gender sensitive language, the content of teaching subjects, i.e., teaching contents in the education of personnel for the needs of the security sector.

2. METHODS

As a model for conducting research, but also as an opportunity to use a comparative approach in the analysis of its results, we used the research conducted in 2011 by Elona Dhembo. As a case study, she conducted a gender analysis of the curriculum of the Police Academy in Tirana, Albania (Dhembo, 2011).

In accordance with the goal set, we did a case study, i.e., an analysis of the curriculum of the study programs of the University of Criminal Investigation and Police Studies for the school year 2020-2021.

Elements that Susan Shaffer and Linda Shevitz consider important in the analysis of any curriculum from a gender perspective were used in the analysis (Roussow & Wehmeyer, 2001). Those are:
- omission / invisibility - omission or under-representation of members of one sex and their contributions, although relevant to the context;
- use of stereotypes - attributing traditional or strictly defined roles to girls and women and / or boys and men;
- imbalance / selectivity - giving only one interpretation of an issue, event or situation.
- unreality - unrealistic description of a historical or life experience, often omitting controversial topics;
- fragmentation / isolation - separating women's topics or articles from the main body of the text, showing women separately from other groups;
- language bias - the use of language in an indefinite way or in a way that reinforces stereotypes.

Subject contents of all levels of studies at the University of Criminal Investigation and Police Studies and contents of the professional development program of the students of the Center for Basic Police Training were used in this analysis as a set of data.

3. ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

A comparative analysis of the findings of the case study of Elona Dhembo (2011) and the results of the analysis we conducted, shows a high degree of agreement. Therefore, we followed the same matrix in presenting the findings and analysing them, i.e, we took into account the same elements used in the Dhembo (2011) study. The following text presents the results of the curriculum analysis of all levels of study at the University of Criminal

Investigation and Police Studies and the contents of the professional development program of the Center for Basic Police in relation to each of the elements described in the methodological approach of Suzan Shafer and Linda Sevic **Invalid source specified.**.

3.1. Omission / invisibility

In the curriculum of all levels of studies at the University of Criminal Investigation and Police Studies, and in the contents of the professional development program for students of the Center for Basic Police, there is a noticeable shift in solving the problem of omission or invisibility of women and gender issues. 10% of the content of these programs deals exclusively with this topic. On other topics in the contents of the curriculum and program, gender insensitivity is observed. Despite the fact that gender issues are generally present in various contexts, in these programs it is most often related to other topics such as human rights, discrimination against vulnerable groups, primary and secondary victimization of victims of domestic violence, victims of trafficking, prostitution, etc.

Another indicator that confirms that there is evidence in the programs for the existence of omissions, i.e., invisibility, is the citation of the contribution of men and women in the security sector (Spasić, 2008). Women are hardly mentioned in this regard. This could be explained by the lack of tradition and history of women's engagement in the security sphere. In addition, it is very difficult to determine from the content of the program whether authors of both sexes are equally represented in the creation of the program.

3.2. Use of stereotypes

There is clear evidence that efforts have been made to minimize stereotypes and prejudices in curriculum development. In one thematic unit, this issue is addressed with the intention of increasing the sensitivity of students to the creation of prejudices and stereotypes. Stereotypes are discussed in the context of diversity issues. However, although gender is a key component of identity inherent in everyone (such as race, age, culture that builds on gender identity), the program does not talk about it as much as it should. The main criteria of identity that are individually processed are race, culture and values. The only part that specifically talks about gender stereotypes is the following: "Stereotypes: A stereotype is a set of ideas (clichés) about a certain category of people or a certain issue that has no basis in reality. For example, women cannot work in the police; all men are aggressive."

Another element that is very visible, not only in these topics but also in those dealing with human rights, is the fact that the term "female gender" is mostly used for women. The use of the term "female gender" when referring to women / girls is problematic, because it implies understanding a woman primarily as a sexual being (if not as an object). Deborah Tannen (2006: 126) writes: "Recently, the noun 'woman' has been used more and more in the adjective form. The term 'female' has a biological connotation. I think most feminists avoid it and for the same reason they prefer the word 'woman' to 'female' (…) I avoid the term 'female' in writing because it sounds humiliating, like I am writing about mammals rather than human beings."**Invalid source specified.**.

3.3. Imbalance / selectivity

In addition to the existence of the described stereotypes, women are portrayed quite one-sidedly, mostly as victims. They are mostly written about in the parts that refer to domestic violence and human trafficking. Although it is only natural that such topics will mostly focus on women as victims of domestic violence and / or victims of trafficking, women should also be presented as contributing to dealing with these problems in order to

alleviate stereotypes and establish a better balance. Moreover, the international literature on this topic recommends that, even when it comes to domestic violence, instead of the word "victim", the term "survivor" should be used if the person managed to survive the aggression and seek the help of police, doctors, social workers, etc. (Dhembo & Kallfa, 2007).

The teaching content related to emergency safety, security risk management, community policing or the prevention of domestic violence omits the contribution that women make to the police or rescue services when it comes to providing assistance and support to victims. Also in this case, women are spoken of exclusively as victims, vulnerable groups, etc.

3.4. Unreality

One of the main findings that has to be mentioned here is the representation of the gender issue in the curriculum and professional development program. Attention is paid to obvious problems and direct gender discrimination. However, there are almost no explanations or examples of indirect discrimination. Gender discrimination, prejudice and stereotypes are mostly viewed from the perspective of domestic violence or trafficking. There are many situations in which gender discrimination occurs and examples that need to be included in the curriculum so that future members of the police can recognize and solve not only cases of direct, but also cases of indirect discrimination. As an example, we can use a partially realistic presentation of gender-based violence. Future members of the police are learning to deal with cases of domestic violence, but not cases of gender-based violence, which is much more common.

In addition to presenting a language problem, the use of generic "he" and, for example, the term "instructor" (meaning only male instructors) indicates an insufficiently realistic contribution of women to the police. It would be not only correct but also appropriate to use forms for both genders for both officers and students. Such use would better reflect the reality and positive trends of greater involvement of women in the police, and create a public image of the police as a sector in which both men and women can be officers, students and service users.

In an effort to better reflect the real situation, the curriculum should not contain information that supports stereotypes or gives space for their creation. For example, when it comes to human trafficking, students learn that "victims come mostly from poor families or rural parts of the country and that most victims have a low level of education." While describing the profile of victims is undoubtedly important, care should be taken not to reinforce stereotypes. A better solution would be to introduce tables with statistics on an annual basis to familiarize future police officers with the profile of victims of trafficking, but also to become aware of the wide range of situations in which this phenomenon manifests itself, as well as changing it in space and time. Thus, future members of the police would be better acquainted with both the etiological and victimological dimensions of human trafficking as a security, criminological, victimological and sociological phenomenon.

3.5. Fragmentation / isolation

Integrating a gender perspective into various educational curricula goes beyond addressing specific topics related to gender equality and / or women's rights. Gender equality policy should be introduced in the programs as a whole, but also in the programs of special courses (Dhembo, 2011). Gender equality issues should be viewed and analysed as part of a whole, not as isolated phenomena. Hence, the claim that some percentage of the curriculum is dedicated to this topic may mean nothing more than confirmation of the isolation of gender

and / or women's issues in relation to other topics and target groups covered by the curriculum. As noted in the section on exclusion / invisibility, there are few examples of linking gender equality issues to other topics. For example, except in the part on domestic violence and human trafficking, in areas such as the legislative framework, ethics, incidents, accidents, etc., there is almost no information from the point of view of gender equality.

Fragmentation and isolation of gender and / or women's issues are also noticeable in topics where these issues are now more important than ever, such as diversity. In the program, diversity means racial, cultural and ethical differences, and there are also stereotypes that were discussed in the previous text. Such fragmentation and isolation can lead to unrealistic goals. For example, in a lesson dealing with domestic violence, future police officers are often expected to deal with domestic violence after just one exercise. This is an over-ambitious and unrealistic request, because successfully solving problems related to domestic violence requires much more information, awareness and skills than two or three isolated topics offer. Future police officers should first be able to distinguish between basic concepts and understand them. Only then will they be able to gradually identify and find solutions to issues related to gender differences and gender discrimination.

3.6. Language bias

Gender bias is a problem that Serbian speakers face when trying to be gender neutral. In addition to language difficulties (such as the already mentioned "generic terms" in the masculine gender), underdeveloped awareness and sensitivity to gender issues further complicate the use of gender-inclusive terminology in textbooks and spoken Serbian. This also applies to the curriculum in security sector educational institutions. The generic pronoun "on" and the names of the occupations of the user are almost exclusively given in the masculine gender. Names like "officer", "colleague", "student" are written only in the masculine gender, probably because of the generic grammatical function. However, in Serbian, there is a possibility to add the suffix to the form of these words in the feminine gender as well.

In addition, the language used can reinforce, often accidentally and unintentionally, existing stereotypes. This is the case with certain terms used for men and women. Women are mostly listed in the curriculum and in-service training as victims of domestic violence or as victims of trafficking. In addition, women are described by adjectives, such as weak, fragile, emotional, uninformed, etc. This impression is further reinforced by the way women are talked about when discussing issues such as human trafficking. Women are often referred to as the "female sex", which reduces their identity to a sexual identity. In a similar way, inappropriate terminology is used in cases where institutionalized terms exist, for example, when the term "women's rights" exists. Rights of women have been transformed into "women's rights". Similar terminological problems exist in lectures on domestic violence, which are often mistakenly called "domestic" violence. Confusion also arises when talking about human trafficking or when terms such as "victim of human trafficking" and "prostitute" are used in the same sense. In some contents of some cases, the question arises: Should a prostitute be considered a victim or not? Necessary changes should be made here, especially when it comes to gender-sensitive language and the correct use of terminology.

It should be noted that, in general, the use of language in a gender-sensitive form is considered a means of increasing the visibility of women in public discourse. In Serbia today, gender-sensitive language is just entering everyday use, while in standardized literary language this is still not the case, although there are well-founded and elaborate recommendations for this (Savić, Čanak, Mitro, & Štasni, 2009).

4. CONCLUSION

Given the importance of education as a catalyst for the process of transition and change in society, the University of Criminal Investigation and Police Studies and the Center for Basic Police Training have made visible changes in creating a gender-sensitive curriculum. However, based on the findings of this research, we can conclude that more efforts should be made not only to include this issue as a special and important part of the curriculum at all levels of study, but also to introduce it into the content of the program as a whole, the language in which the curriculum and the professional development program were written.

There is also a conclusion that the issue of gender equality is still treated in isolation from other issues and topics, and sometimes it is observed and understood only from the angle of women's issues. The language in which the curriculum is written is still not sensitive enough to gender differences, it is not gender sensitive and often includes or excludes only one of the sexes due to traditional gender stereotypes and roles. The analysed situation requires numerous activities in terms of changing and improving the curriculum, which means that it should introduce gender equality policies, gender perspective and increase gender sensitivity, both in content and form, taking into account the need to use gender-sensitive language, also in teaching and creating textbook literature. The realization of these activities includes, first of all, the analysis of real needs and a strategic approach that takes into account the current legal framework, the specifics of the security environment, and personnel projections of the police system. Taking concrete measures and activities should be based on research and results of case analyses and studies, on cases of gender differences and gender inequalities in the security sector. Concrete changes in study programs should be based on these findings, together with the necessary changes in the language.

Also, when creating the content of textbook literature, it is necessary to:

- Use gender-sensitive and gender-neutral language.
- Avoid stereotypical representation of the professional sphere as the sphere of men in the security sector.
- Represent women in professional roles in the security sector.
- Avoid representing women in "typically" female police positions.
- Show women in leadership roles in the police.
- Use the female gender when talking about professional and managerial roles in the security sector.
- Avoid representing the public and political spheres exclusively as men's spheres.
- Represent the past of the police organization and other organizations in the security sector and from the perspective of women's contributions.
- Present success and achievement in security affairs as a result of the individual effort of both men and women.
- Avoid attributing stereotypical male or female characteristics to security sector employees.
- Within the study programs of all levels of study at the University of Criminal Investigation and Police Studies and the program of professional development of basic police training participants, include a gender perspective in all topics, wherever possible.

These processes are not simple, especially when approached strategically and targeted, but can be facilitated by sharing best practices with countries that have introduced a gender perspective into their security sectors and by using the knowledge and experience of international organizations.

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