

THE MEDIA IMAGE OF WOMEN IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE AND SERBIAN ARMED FORCES

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The modern concept of security and the policy of equal opportunities have created the potential for significant participation of women in security sector. Their participation in the armed forces corresponds to social reality because women make up half of the society and represent a necessary resource for defence. In the process of security sector reform, women in the armed forces also contribute to changes in military organization and adjustment to modern military missions and tasks.

The media presentation of women in the military can be an indicator of dominant orientation on issues important to the society and can influence the patterns that will be considered desirable in a culture.

This paper deals with the media image of women in the Serbian Armed Forces and Ministry of Defence through the analysis of mass media reporting on women officers, professional soldiers, girls who opt for voluntary military service, cadets, as well as women employed as civilians.¹ The analysis provides an answer to the question of how visible and in what way women in the Ministry of Defence and Serbian Armed Forces are presented in newspapers, television and radio in the period from 2016 to 2018, what are the dominant topics, textual and visual messages and value context. The results of the research are important due to the fact that the second National Action Plan for the Implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2017-2020)² is

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¹ Hereinafter women in the MoD and SAF.

² The National Action Plan for the Implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 - Women, Peace and Security in the Republic of Serbia, reaffirms Serbia's previously expressed intention to actively contribute to peacebuilding, stability and security processes, the promotion of women's human

in force in Serbia, according to which, like the previous one, the number, content and value orientation of the media reports on women, peace and security, can be an important indicator of the degree of projected, and also achieved goals.

Key words: media content about women in the military, gender equality, content analysis, mass media

Introduction

The presentation of reality in mass media has intrigued the scientific and professional public since their beginning. The realization that they are not just a mirror of reality, but that their expressive possibilities and other features significantly influence the shaping of what they send as messages to a wide audience, with the inability to consider the number of those exposed to them, has become their clear potential to influence opinion, behaviour and people's attitudes. Having in mind that numerous theoretical considerations and empirical research have confirmed the complex relation between the media and society or, as Lorimer says, „the intertwining of media content and life reality”, it is obvious that it is not unimportant how mass media will present phenomena, events and people, and how to interpret them.³ The treatment of the media in public can depend on the manner they present certain aspects of reality. This paper studies the media content about women in the Ministry of Defence and Serbian Armed Forces because they indicate the degree of achieved goals, can affect the increase in the number of women and girls who apply for military schools and military service, and also the reputation of the Serbian Armed Forces in the society.

Theoretical framework

The development of radio, newspapers, film and television has encouraged numerous research and reflections on the role and importance of mass media, which served as the basis for many theories that have appeared in which, as a common denominator, appears the evaluation of the media impact and effects on the public, with differences in the evaluation of the impact scope, the way in which they are carried out and their reach. This is also considered by four theoretical models of the theorist Denis McQuail, in which many theories of mass media are classified.

rights in the immediate environment and Europe through the European integration and in the world, by the participation of Serbian representatives in multinational operations and international conferences dedicated to peace, the position of women and security. On the link: <http://www.mod.gov.rs/lat/11050/novi-akcioni-plan-za-primenu-rezolucije-1325-11050>, accessed November 17, 2019.

³ Roland Lorimer, *Masovne komunikacije*, Klio, Beograd, 1998, p. 312.

In the transmission model, the predominant theoretical problem is the question of the impact of mass media on people. Thus, for example, in the theory of institutional presentation, it is stated that the media „structure the world of events and thus form institutional presentations of reality which then become value orientation of most recipients”.⁴ According to ritual, i.e. expressive model, communication is not only the spread of messages through space, but is also aimed at maintaining a society in time, which is an integrating factor for the society and relations in it and „transmission of symbolic, value and normative structures, in other words – the culture as the human world of sense”.⁵ Within the model of publicity distribution, the primary goal of mass media is to gain and retain attention, i.e. publicity, which is what agenda-setting theory is about. According to this theory, mass media give a status to social actors, which provides them with significant social power or, as Bernard Cohen put it: „the press may not be so successful in imposing on people what to think, but it is definitely successful in imposing on readers what to think”.⁶ The theory emphasizes that the media assign a status to some topics, issues and problems by talking about them in a certain way or not at all, and also a hierarchy of their status is established – by order, scope and form of messages, as well as editorial interventions that „suggest norms and values, which are in accordance with the normative order and prevailing value system in the society”.⁷ In this way, the media, as a whole of their content, suggest a certain system of values, rules, norms, point of view of things, behaviour and cultural patterns and thus legitimize the importance of a certain aspect of social life. According to the fourth model, the receptive one, mass communication is considered with the focus on many recipients of messages whereby the meaning of a message is not the same for all of them. The starting point is in the attitude that „the media message is open, has several meanings and is interpreted in accordance with the context and culture of the recipient”.⁸ The recipients of messages do not have to read a message as it is encoded, actually the interpretation of a meaning depends on their experience. The theories on the media cultural action emphasize different ways in which the media influence a collective audience, more than an individual, with the dilemma and division among researchers as to whether the function of the media in this definition is to „impose the value of the ruling class to the subordinate one (Marxist view) or reinforce harmonized norms and values (liberal-pluralist opinion)”.⁹

⁴ Mirosljub Radojković, Mirko Miletić, *Komuniciranje, mediji i društvo*, Učiteljski fakultet, Beograd, 2005, p. 85.

⁵ Ibid, p. 86.

⁶ BernardCohen, *The Press and Foreign Policy*, Political Science Quarterly, 1963, according to France Vreg, *Društveno komuniciranje*, Centar za informacije i publicitet, Zagreb, 1975, p. 55.

⁷ Mirko Miletić, Nevena Miletić, *Komunikološki leksikon*, Univerzitet Džon Nezbit, Beograd, 2017, p. 342.

⁸ Denis McQuail, *McQuail's Mass Communication Theory*, SAGE, 6th edition, London, 2010, on the link:

https://www.academia.edu/36529032/Mass.Communication.Theory.6th.Edition_Mc_Quails_, accessed October 19, 2019, p. 66.

⁹ Devid Mek Kvin, *Televizija medijski priručnik*, Klio, Beograd, 2008, p. 246.

Women in the media

Women's rights in Serbia, as in many other countries, originate from feminist movements and the struggle for gender equality as modern initiatives that appeared more than two centuries ago. To this day, feminists criticize the presentation of women in the media and believe that it is closely related to the overall patriarchal orientation of the society. For example, the US feminist Betty Friedan, in her book "The Feminine Mystique", criticized the popular presentations of women in the 1960s in the media, believing that they directly encourage the idea of a typical American woman, who should be satisfied with her role as a happy housewife.¹⁰ Similarly, Andy Zeisler argues that television comedies from the mid-1940s to the early 1960s were responsible for the way the US population thought about the role of women in that period because viewers accepted that the role of a woman was only to look after home and raise children.¹¹

The media also create the collective image of women and their position and role in the society and thus influence their position and (in)equality. For example, one of the contemporary studies on how the print media in Australia presented women in the military from 1997 to 2017 states that the media participate in maintaining gender stereotypes that then form and maintain gender inequalities.¹²

The contemporary contents about women in the Serbian media, and also at global level, do not create a picture of gender equality in the society. The media discourse is, at the same time, both „a prisoner and one of the main world guardians of outdated, dominant, fixed and homogeneous gender identities and relations”.¹³

The elimination of gender stereotypes in the media and the promotion of gender equality has been identified as one of the goals in building the equality between women and men. The efforts made in the past period, however, did not lead to visible progress in terms of gender sensitive reporting and non-discriminatory presentation of women in the media. According to the National Gender Equality Strategy,¹⁴ the Code of Ethics of Serbian Journalists, which obliges male and female journalists to avoid reporting the discrimination based on, inter alia, gender in public, is insuffi-

¹⁰ Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique*, W.W. Norton and Company, New York London, 1963, on the link: <https://archive.org/details/TheFeminineMystique>, accessed November 30, 2019.

¹¹ Andy Zeisler, *Feminism and Pop Culture*, Seal Press, Berkeley, California, 2008. On the link: http://www.academia.edu/25566515/Andy_Zeisler_Feminism_and_Pop_Culture_Seal_Studies_Seal_Press_2008, accessed November 30, 2019.

¹² Dona Bridges, Ben Wadhan, „Gender under fire portrayals of military women in the Australian print media”, *Feminist Media Studies*, Vol.20 (2), 2020, pp. 219-237. On the link: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/332129348_Gender_under_fire_portrayals_of_military_women_in_the_Australian_print_media, accessed April 20, 2020.

¹³ Vladimir M. Počuč, „Reprezentovanje žena u medijima”, *Vojno delo*, 2/2015, pp. 279-287.

¹⁴ „Nacionalna strategija za rodnu ravnopravnost od 2016. do 2020. sa akcionim planom 2016–2018”, *Rodna ravnopravnost u medijskoj sferi*, p. 25.

ciently respected. The media continue to express and encourage patriarchal cultural patterns and stereotyped gender roles of women and men. Sexism is present in the media speech, especially when it comes to presenting women who are in office and decision-making positions in the political, public and economic sphere. The cases of family and partner violence are often presented in a sensational way, further victimizing the women and girls who are the victims of violence. There are few media that use gender sensitive language and thus additionally make women invisible in the public, while the so-called „women's media” mainly deal with problems related to a woman's physical appearance, and address them as housewives.

Realistically, the fields such as politics, economics, science or cultural creativity are male-dominated spheres. However, the increase in the number of women, their political, managerial and entrepreneurial engagement, particularly their engagement in security sector, emerges as a phenomenon to which the media should give place and devote time.

Legislation

There is the legal framework for establishing equality in the society in the Republic of Serbia, and also in security system. In addition to the main document - the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia, which guarantees human rights, the equality of women and men and the development of equal opportunities policy, then the Act on Gender Equality,¹⁵ the Act on the Prohibition of Discrimination,¹⁶ and also the Gender Equality Strategy with action plans (2010-2015 and 2016-2020), the Serbian Government adopted in 2010 the first (2010–2015), and in 2017 the second National Action Plan for the Implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 – Women, Peace and Security in the Republic of Serbia.¹⁷ These plans are the basis for the activities aimed at improving the equality between women and men in security sector. The National Action Plan for the Implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 from 2010 to 2015 dedicated a special chapter to specific activities for providing the media support to achieving the goals of the mentioned Plan. The National Action Plan adopted in 2017 also defines numerous many activities aimed at the media affirmation of the improvement of women's safety in the society.

¹⁵ „Službeni glasnik RS”, br. 104/09

¹⁶ „Službeni glasnik RS”, br. 22/09

¹⁷ The conclusion of the Government and NAP, on the link:

http://www.mod.gov.rs/multimedia/file/staticki_sadrzaj/dokumenta/akcioni_planovi/2017/Zakljucak%20Vlade%20o%20usvajanju%20NAP%20za%20primenu%20R_1325%20SB%20UN%20u%20R_Srbiji.pdf, accessed October 17, 2019.

The media content research on women in the Ministry of Defence and Serbian Armed Forces

The attention is paid to the issue of gender equality in the MoD and SAF not only through the implementation of national action plans, but also through scientific and research activities, scientific conferences and publications.¹⁸ They present contemporary views on the role and position of women in the Armed Forces, participation, representation, as well as the possibilities for further improvement of gender equality in the defence system.

Today girls and women in Serbia apply for jobs in the Serbian Armed Forces on an equal footing with their male colleagues, as well as for positions in the military educational institutions: the Military Academy (since 2007), the Military High School (since 2014) and the Military Vocational School (since 2016). This data, as well as the high percentage of girls among professional soldiers in the first years of the professionalization of the Serbian Armed Forces, has certainly contributed to the increased media reporting on women in the military.

Due to the importance of the way in which mass media present some aspects of reality, the objective of this research is to gain insight into the characteristics of the media content about women in the MoD and SAF, on the sample of the print and electronic media in Serbia. In literature, mass media content is most often treated as a message, which, according to one of the definitions, is a symbolically composed informative content, i.e. a form of symbolic presentation of human experiences, regardless of the code system used to send it.¹⁹ In order to study the characteristics of the media content, the method of its analysis will be used. It will be studied whether and to what extent the media deal with the topic of women and girls in the MoD and SAF, what is the reason to publish such articles, what is the value context in which they are presented, as well as textual and visual messages.

The research evaluates the general assumption that, having in mind that the Ministry of Defence and Serbian Armed Forces implement strategic documents and laws in the field of gender equality, the presence of women from the MoD and SAF in the media is expected, i.e. their visibility in the media.

The content analysis method used in this research is defined by Berelson as the research technique for objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication.²⁰ The research of documentary material, created by the activities of institutions or individuals, Pajović believes, „is the record of a certain

¹⁸ Since 2007, several conferences with international participation have been held, four collections of papers have been published, the research by the Strategic Research Institute has been presented, as well as a number of publications on women in the military.

¹⁹ Toma Đorđević, *Teorija informacija i teorija masovnih komunikacija*, OOUR „Izdavačko-publicistička delatnost“, Beograd, 1979, p. 15.

²⁰ Bernard Berelson, *Content Analysis in Communication Research*, Glecoe, Free Press, 1952, New York, p.18.

type of communication between the past and the present and with implications for the future, choosing the right method, which includes a set of basic scientific and logical rules, techniques and procedures, the unknown facts are revealed and new knowledge is acquired on the basis of the existing one or previous knowledge is revised and a new view of reality is proved and explained".²¹

The research has a longitudinal character because the analyzed period covers three years (from 2016 to 2018), thus it is possible to compare the obtained data, and also to compare them with similar findings from previous years, and draw some conclusion on the trend of this important social topic. The longitudinal research of the media content, as Elezović says, „also offers an interesting view of cultural transformations: the appearance of some topics, their refinement in professional discussions, disappearance in front of other topics, the appearance of new participants in defining and discussing social problems and disappearance of some others, can be the evaluation of how to construct and deal with social problems at a social level.”²²

In this research, the quantitative and qualitative analysis will be used because, as Danilović says, „these are the two aspects (approaches) to the analysis of the content of the documents that complement and combine each other in research“.²³

From the daily press clippings, made on the basis of the media sample on the articles related to the Ministry of Defence and Serbian Armed Forces, those newspaper articles and radio-television inserts in which women in the Ministry of Defence and Serbian Armed Forces appear, have been singled out.²⁴ The unit of analysis is the content unit - a newspaper article that includes the content with the entire equipment of the article, i.e. a radio-television insert (report), in which women in the MoD and SAF are thematically present.²⁵

For the purpose of this research, a code and a form for the explanation of the results have been developed. The units of analysis are classified according to the type of media and time of publication, and then by categories: 1. dominant reason for publishing articles, 2. the value orientation expressed by a journalist or editorial office, and 3. a person who is the interlocutor or the one whose statement is transferred, i.e. the institution whose views are stated.

²¹ Milivoje Pajović, „Primena metode analize sadržaja (dokumenata) u proučavanju arhivske građe”, *Vojno delo*, Vol. 64, br.3, 2012, pp. 402-417.

²² Almir Elezović, „O čemu pišu novine”, *Medijska istraživanja: znanstveno-stručni časopis za novinarstvo i medije*, Vol. 18. br. 1, 2012, pp. 61-68.

²³ Neđo Danilović, *Metod analize sadržaja dokumenata sa instrumentima*, Zadužbina Andrejević, Beograd, 2015, p. 39.

²⁴ The media sample used to make press clipping in the analyzed period included the following print and electronic media: Politika, Večernje novosti, Danas, Blic, Kurir, Alo, Informer, Narodne novine, Dnevnik, 24 sata, Srpski telegraf, NIN, Vreme, Pečat, Novi magazin, Nedeljnik, Ekspres, Svedok, Afera, RTS1, RTS2, RTV, Pink, O2, Studio B, Happy, Prva, Kopernikus, N1 and Radio Beograd 1.

²⁵ The newspaper articles related entirely or partially to the topic of women in the military and television reports have been analyzed, as special shows or parts of central informative, i.e. collage type shows such as several-hours-long morning or daily programmes in which, mainly or to a certain extent, the mentioned topic is recognized.

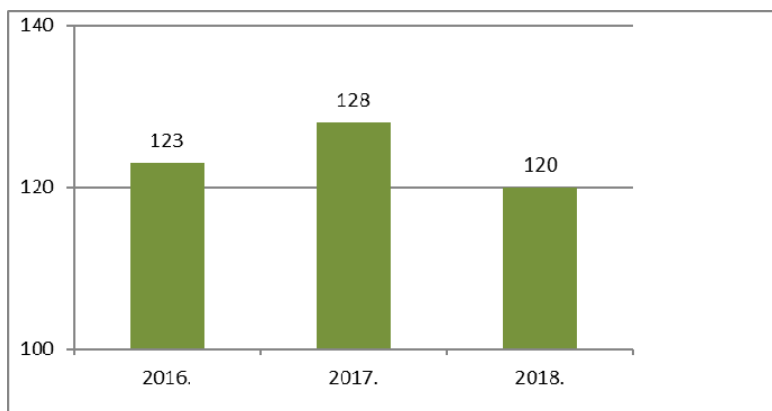
Since the most common objective of the content analysis is said to be the description of the subject of study,²⁶ the most basic method of analysis, which comes down to counting the frequency of units by categories and expressing their absolute, i.e. relative frequencies, will be used in this paper. In that sense, it will be possible to interpret the results, compare them with the available knowledge from previous years, notice possible differences in the reporting of different media, etc., because, as Stojak says, „the content analysis insists on comparative approaches in interpreting identical topics on the basis of different sources”.²⁷

Research results

In this research, 371 reports have been chosen and analyzed. During three analyzed years, the share of reports on women in the Serbian Armed Forces in relation to the total percentage of everything published about the Ministry of Defence and Serbian Armed Forces, in the media sample, was around 1%, with slightly more recorded in 2016 - 1.4%.

According to the data from previous years, the share of articles on women in the MoD and SAF in the total number of publications on the Ministry of Defence and the Serbian Armed Forces ranged from 1% to 2%, with the exception in 2012, when there was the greatest number of publications - 3.07% (in 2010 that share was 0.9%, 2011 - 1.97%, 2012 - 3.07% and 2013 - 1.62%).²⁸

Considering absolute frequencies in the analyzed period, most reports on women in the military structures was published in 2017 (128).



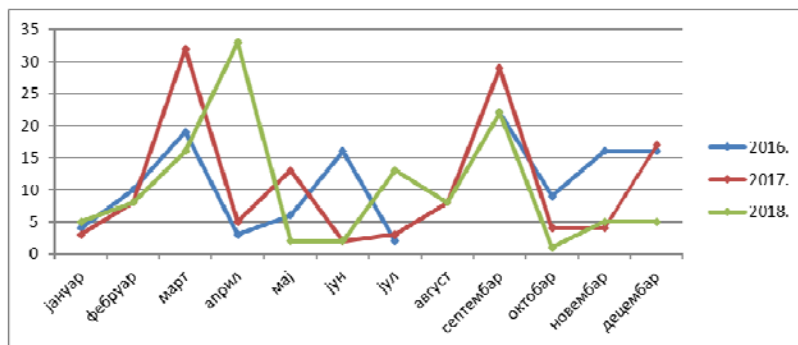
1 – The number of reports on women in the MoD and SAF (2016–2018)

²⁶ Željka Manić, *Analiza sadržaja u sociologiji*, Čigoja štampa, Beograd, 2017, p. 186.

²⁷ Rudi Stojak, *Metoda analize sadržaja*, Institut za proučavanje nacionalnih odnosa, Sarajevo, DP Grafičar, Tuzla, Sarajevo, 1990, p. 140.

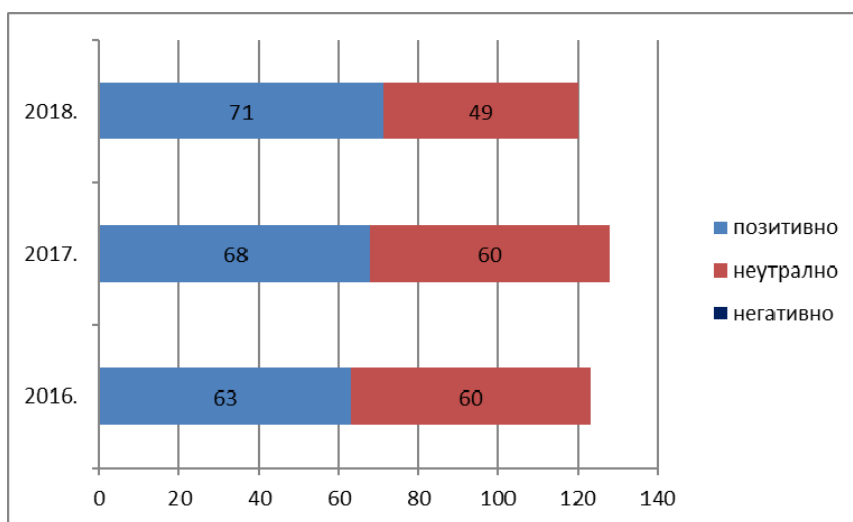
²⁸ Sanja Savić, „Značaj i uloga medija u ostvarivanju ciljeva rodne ravnopravnosti” in Biljana Stojković (ed.), *Žene, mir i bezbednost – rodna analiza 2010–2015*, Ministarstvo odbrane, Sektor za politiku odbrane, Uprava za stratejsko planiranje, Beograd, 2016, pp. 167-189.

Considering the number of reports by months, during all three years, there is greater presence of reports in March, during the competition for military schools, and in September, when the promotion of the Serbian Armed Forces lieutenants is traditionally held in front of the House of the National Assembly. A great number of reports was also registered in April 2018, on the occasion of a tragic event - the suicide of the Serbian Armed Forces female member.



2 – The comparative number of reports on women in the MoD and SAF by months (2016–2018)

The reports published in all analyzed years are characterized by an extremely favourable value orientation, according to which reports of positive (54%) and neutral value orientation (46%) predominate. Negative value connoted publications have not been recorded.



3 – The value orientation of reports on women in the MoD and SAF (2016–2018)

Rather favourable orientation of published articles in all analyzed years refers to journalistic qualifications that the Serbian Armed Forces female members are characterized by a high level of professionalism, a satisfactory level of the harmonization of professional and family obligations, and then achieving exceptional results professionally. Furthermore, newspaper and television reports are dominated by the assessments that the Serbian Armed Forces female members show noble and exemplary behaviour,²⁹ and that they have the same treatment as their male colleagues.

Out of the total number of reports about women in the military (371), daily newspapers published 54%, weeklies 2%, television 42% and Radio Belgrade 2%.

Most articles were published by Radio Television of Serbia - 44 (12%), followed by the newspapers Dnevnik - 41 (11%), Blic 35 (9%), Večernje novosti 26 (7%), Politika 21 (6%), Alo 20 (5%), then TV Happy and Kurir 19 each (5%), RT Vojvodina 18 (5%), TV Pink 16 (4%), TV Kopernikus 13 (4%), Danas 12 (3%), TV STB 11 (3%), Informer and TV Prva 10 each (3%), TV N1, Serbian Telegraph and Radio Belgrade 9 each (2%), etc.

4 – *The percentage of published articles on women in the MoD and SAF in the media (2016–2018)*

The media with the highest percentage of published articles				
	Print		Electronic	
1.	Dnevnik	11%	RTS 1	12%
2.	Blic	9%	RTV 1	5%
3.	Večernje novosti	7%	TV Happy	5%
4.	Politika	6%	TV Pink	4%
5.	Alo	5%	TV Kopernikus	4%
6.	Kurir	5%	TV Studio B	3%
4.	Danas	3%	TV Prva	3%

Within the category of “the predominant reason”, by gaining insight into the material for the purpose of this research, 10 appropriate subcategories have been classified, which the analyzed reports could be included in. It should be said that this has also been one of the most difficult tasks. Having in mind the number of the units of analysis, one should ensure that the number of subcategories is neither too large nor too small, that they are neither too narrow nor too wide, to provide discrimination and emphasize what has been the point of their establishment - noticing the prevailing reason for publication. These are the following subcategories: 1. competitions for military schools, 2. promotion of the Serbian Armed Forces lieutenants, 3. voluntary

²⁹ For example, in July 2018, a great number of reports were published about the case of the Serbian Armed Forces female member, Milica Đekić, who saved a woman from a swollen stream.

military service, 4. participation of the MoD and SAF female members in multinational operations, 5. dynamics of the NAP implementation in the MoD and SAF, 6. marking various holidays - March 8, the SAF Day, units days, etc., 7. suicide of the Serbian Armed Forces female member in April 2018, 8. personal stories, which are not time related to previous occasions, 9. critical and analytical reports and 10. miscellaneous (individual texts that could not be classified in any of the previous categories are included in this section).

5 – The percentage of reports on women in the MoD and SAF on certain occasions (2016–2018)

1. competitions for military schools	2. promotion of lieutenants	3. voluntary military service	4. multinational operations	5. NAP implementation in MoD and SAF	6. holidays	7. suicide of SAF female member	8. personal stories	9. critical and analytical reports	10. miscellaneous
13%	17%	12%	6%	17%	5%	5%	19%	2%	4%

Most reports refer to the personal stories of the MoD and SAF female members (19%). This category is also the most diverse, thus several subcategories could be singled out. The greatest number of reports has been recorded about three women with the rank of colonel (the reason is the fact that Serbia still does not have a woman with the rank of general) and pilots of fighter planes and helicopters - Ana Perišić and Anja Krneta. There have also been many reports about the first female lieutenant of the Serbian Armed Forces, Mirjana Novaković, who graduated from the leadership training at Fort Benning in 2017. The media have also been interested in stories about girls and women from the Guard Brigade, the special unit "Kobre", the Military Police, the River Flotilla, as well as about female athletes. On several occasions, they have also published an unusual life story of a professor from the Military Academy, Political Sciences PhD Hatidža Beriša, who the entire one-hour show has been dedicated to.³⁰ In reports, women most often talked about their motives to decide on military profession, as well as the equal treatment with male colleagues. In photographs, they have usually been shown in a uniform, on a professional assignment, with weapons or military equipment. The fulfilment on a family level has been often emphasized, i.e. the harmonization of work with family obligations.³¹ The occa-

³⁰ TV Prva in the show "Život priča" November 17, 2016.

³¹ In the supplement to the newspaper Alo "Kad se skače u bujicu, ne razmišlja se", published on July 22, 2018, among other things, it is said: "A mother of two children says that it is not always easy to reconcile family obligations with professional tasks."; then in RTV report from August 1,

sion for reports have been interesting stories about the Armed Forces female members (a girl who belongs to the third generation of officers, after her grandfather and father, a professor from the Military Academy and a female anaesthesiologist from the Military Medical Academy, who run a half marathon, then unique events (for the first time they fired with "Malyutka" and exactly two females were the best in this discipline, the drone operator is only a woman, a distinct humane gesture, etc.).

The following are the reports regarding the ceremony - the promotion of the youngest lieutenants of the Serbian Armed Forces in front of the House of the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia (17%), in all three years in approximately the same quantity (about 20 reports). The reason for that is, in addition to the fact that this event is attended by the state and military top brass, the fact that for several years in a row, female lieutenants are among the top three, which is emphasized in almost all reports, along with appropriate photographs. It is not uncommon for the media to single out some interesting moments as a special report, such as the act of proposal after the ceremony or the marriage of a male and female cadet.

Reports from various conferences and forums, where the implementation of the National Action Plan has been discussed and reported, as well as other occasions where the projects on strengthening gender equality in Serbia and the region have been discussed, such as the Final Conference of the project on strengthening gender equality in the regional armed forces, then the panel discussion Women's Platform, Women's Leadership, presenting feminist awards, constitutive discussion and the process of the NAP drafting, etc. make up 17% of the published reports. They were most often published during 2016 and 2017. In 2018, there were significantly fewer of them.

As a consequence of the fact that for years girls have the right to compete equally for the enrolment in military schools, the Ministry of Defence and Serbian Armed Forces representatives are often guests on television with national and local frequency. On such an occasion, female cadets are also guests, who, in addition to the conditions of studies, also talk about their experiences and treatment in the military. In the media reports, besides the main information about the competition, the possibility and interest of girls for enrolment are particularly emphasized. Most reports in this category was published in 2017, when for the first time more girls than boys applied on the competition for the enrolment in the Military High School, which was the occasion for many interesting reports.³²

2018, in the show Razzglednice, it is stated that Milica Kalić, a soldier serving under contract, "was fulfilled as a mother and wife, and her family has an understanding for the work she does".

³² The number of reports in the media about girls applying and enrolling in military schools is directly related to the campaigns that the Ministry of Defence and Serbian Armed Forces have been conducting for years with the aim of increasing their representation in military schools. The daily newspaper Informer states on March 18, 2019 that in the last four years the number of women at the Military Academy has doubled, that four years ago girls accounted for 13% of the total number of cadets, and that in 2019 this percentage is 25% (Informer: "Žene u Srbiji sve više idu u oficire", published on March 18, 2019). Following the media reports in the coming years, it

In accordance with the dynamics of publishing public announcements for the enrolment of candidates for voluntary military service under arms, which is conducted several times a year, with the main information about the competition and reports from taking the oath, the great interest of girls is regularly emphasized. The competitions and taking the oath are the occasion for the media to publish interesting life stories.³³

It has been emphasized in the media that among the Serbian Armed Forces members, who participate in multinational operations, there are also members of the fairer sex. Particularly interesting have been the reports in which Dr Radmila Rajić Dimitrijević spoke about the experiences from the mission in the Central African Republic, along with her male colleagues. Corporal Jelena Radovanović, among others, gave a statement at the farewell ceremony in Niš of the Serbian Armed Forces members, who rotate in the UN peacekeeping mission in Cyprus in 2016, and the media reported that Serbian peacekeepers, who were sent to Lebanon in May 2016, also included five women.

About twenty articles have been published on the occasion of marking the International Women's Day - March 8, the Day of the Serbian Armed Forces, the World Sisterhood Day, the Day of the Military Medical Academy and similar occasions, when gifts and awards are presented, and there is an opportunity to remind of the contribution and role of women.

The suicide of the Serbian Armed Forces female member, who was in the fourth month of pregnancy, in April 2018, has mostly been written about by tabloid newspapers, which reported on the event for several consecutive days, with a dose of sensationalism (front pages for several days, doubt in the official announcement that it is suicide, expressions of family disbelief, photos from the funeral...). For some newspapers, this event was the only reason for publishing articles about women in the Serbian Armed Forces.

In the category of critical and analytical texts, there is the smallest number of reports (2%). There are several articles that deal with the issues why Serbia still does not have a woman with the rank of general (although the texts clarify the exact conditions for that), whether members of the military and police have mechanisms to deal with stress or possible mobbing, what is the opinion about the presence of gender-sensitive language in the military, etc.

The category "miscellaneous" includes reports on e.g. the polls of Blic – "100 most powerful women in Serbia", then "300 most powerful men", "Best woman", where the list of nominees usually includes several female members of the Serbian

has been noticed that the campaign of the Ministry of Defence and Serbian Armed Forces for enrolment in military schools in the first quarter of 2020 also resulted in a high number of the media reports on women in the military.

³³ In that category, there was also the text with a provocative title and a photo published by the daily newspaper Alo on March 13, 2016. Along with the title "Mis Alo dekolte odslužila vojni rok – Ušla bih u rijaliti da ih sve postrojim" it is stated that a girl who has done voluntary military service has been chosen for the miss of cleavage, along with a photo from the oath - in a mini dress and with a deep cleavage.

Armed Forces, then the transmission of posts from the social network of the MoD and SAF Twitter in the newspaper Dnevnik, the statement of an actress of the series "Military Academy" about women in the Serbian Armed Forces, report on women reserve officers of the SFRY aviation, etc.

Female members of the MoD and SAF have most often spoken about the status of women in the military, further encouragement and support to equality in many reports dedicated to them. As a source of information, especially in connection with competitions for military schools and voluntary military service, besides cadets, spokespersons of the Ministry of Defence and Serbian Armed Forces, the dean of the Military Academy, the statements by the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Serbia have been mentioned in many reports. The President of Serbia, the Minister of Defence, the Minister of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure, the Commissioner for Gender Equality, the Director of the Strategic Research Institute of the Ministry of Defence of Serbia and other officials have also provided information regarding these issues.

Conclusion

Starting from the complex interdependence and permeation of the media representation of women and their social status, the analysis was supposed to show whether and in what way women, after more than a decade since enrolling the first generation of girls at the Military Academy and after executing two National Action Plans for the Implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 - Women, Peace and Security in the Republic of Serbia, are present in the media and how they are presented.

The legal and normative regulation and monitoring the achievements of modern countries have resulted in their greater representation in the media, and therefore it is not unusual that in the last ten years we have encountered many newspaper reports about women in a uniform. It was certainly important that the National Action Plan, which provides for the further development of the support to the equality between men and women, also provided for the media support to the implementation of that plan.

Analyzing the mentioned reports, it can be said that the hypothesis about their presence in the media has been confirmed, and the media image is very favourable. Women in military uniforms are represented in the media, in a similar percentage as in previous years, and their presentations in a traditionally male profession have a positive value connotation. The dominant messages in the media are that the military, government officials and society as a whole insist on and support equality in security sector, which is illustrated by the fact that the most frequent communicators in the media are the Ministry of Defence and Serbian Armed Forces representatives and state officials. During all three years, continuously, apart from interesting personal life stories, with details from the profession, reports about women in the MoD and SAF are most represented in the days immediately after the promotion of lieutenants, during competition for military schools and advertisements for voluntary service.

Having in mind the above-mentioned assessments from the National Strategy, as well as the report from the International Conference “The image of a woman in the media”, held in May 2018, according to which the media presentation of women should generally change, it can be concluded that the reports on the role and position of women in the MoD and SAF are more favourable than the overall media presentation of women in Serbia. Their profession is talked about in the media, and they are presented as successful in business and accomplished on a family level.³⁴

However, the analysis has also shown some shortcomings in the media presentation of women in the military. Most of the published articles are relatively clichéd - a woman in a uniform talks about the motives that determined her military service, equal treatment with male colleagues and harmonization with family obligations.³⁵ Some newspapers, most often high-circulation tabloids, are not responsible enough for reporting on women in the military because they either have no articles about them or put them in a sensationalist context.

The analysis has also shown that there is some stereotyping, so in that sense the topic could be more diverse. It can be concluded that the greatest number of analytical reports on women in the Armed Forces and MoD was published or broadcast in 2016, when the good results of the implementation of the first National Action Plan for the implementation of the Resolution 1325, which was aimed primarily at women in security sector, were summarized. There is a noticeable lack of reports on whether there are potential problems and difficulties faced by women in military structures, which are recorded in other armies, as well as general population, and if so, which mechanisms can solve them. There are relatively few reports on the achievements of women civilians who work in the Armed Forces. For the sake of comparison, in some foreign media the topics are more diverse, and serious problems are also discussed. Thus, for example, it is considered whether women soldiers are more often wounded in combat operations than men or whether they have a higher rate of infertility than women civilians.³⁶

³⁴ According to the report from the conference organized by the “First Wives Club” on media reporting about women in Serbia in general, it has been estimated that the media should deal more with women in accordance with their “complexity”, that media reports on women as objects are dominant, that they are simplified, that the private life and the role of a mother are insisted on, and that “it is more important how they are combed and how they put on their make up than what they say”. See in the link: <http://www.rts.rs/page/stories/sr/story/125/drustvo/3134013/potrebno-promeniti-slikuzena-u-medijima.html>, accessed on March 1, 2020.

³⁵ The family aspect is indispensable in reports, which is usually not the case when reporting on male professional soldiers, who speak exclusively about the profession in the media, which can be explained by the fact that the woman's fulfilment on a family level is still primary in these countries.

³⁶ Caitlin Foster, „Military women are 3 times more likely to suffer infertility than civilians, but the Pentagon is forcing nearly all of them to pay for their own treatment“, Business insider, December 20, 2018. On the link <https://www.businessinsider.com/military-women-suffer-infertility-at-3-times-the-rate-of-civilians-2018-12>, accessed December 7, 2019.

The influence of the media on the public and an individual, regardless of the fact that previous findings have indicated different views on the forms and strength of such an influence, is also important for women - professional female members of the MoD and SAF. The analysis of the media reports could not measure the impact of the created image on the public because other methods and further research are necessary for that.

The presentation of women in the military in mass media can encourage an increase in the level of their equal social status. The favourable media image of women in the MoD and SAF, primarily women as professional female members of the military, can also influence girls to choose military profession. At the same time, their good publicity improves the overall positive image of the Serbian Armed Forces.

There is the normative support, as well as the support of government officials, for the further process of improving the position and status of women in the defence system. In order to avoid further stereotyping in reporting, even a decline in interest, it is necessary to initiate new topics in the media in this field, perhaps first of all from the system itself. This can be provided by further informing journalists about the processes in the defence system on the issue of achieving gender equality and more intensive mutual cooperation because the relationship between media reports and prevailing cultural pattern is complex and two-way.

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Медијска слика жена у Министарству одбране и Војсци Србије

Начин на који медији и новинарство представљају и баве се одређеним темама може чврсто одражавати доминантно мишљење о питањима важним у друштву. Овај рад се бави начином на који медији описују жене у Војсци Србије. Аутори тврде да позитиван публицитет у медијима може допринети постизању веће равноправности, као и подстицању жена на избор војне професије, уз истовремено унапређење слике Војске Србије у јавности.

Ово истраживање обухвата текстове објављене у штампаним и електронским српским медијима у периоду од 2016. до 2018. године. Наше истраживање показује да су жене у Војсци Србије константно присутне у истом проценту од укупног јавног извештавања о војним вестима и темама. Такав резултат је одраз друштвеног прихватања уписа жена на Војну академију пре више од једне деценије, уз имплементацију два национална акциона плана у складу са Резолуцијом 1325 Савета безбедности УН – Жене, мир и безбедност у Републици Србији.

Аутори сматрају да се слика жена у традиционално мушким доминантним професијама, попут војске, посматра као позитивна. Уочено је да је већина текстова о женама у војсци објављена или током веома популарних догађаја, као што је свечаност промоције најмлађих официра Војске Србије испред Народне скупштине у Београду или током конкурса за упис у војне школе и добровољно служење војног рока. Свеукупно гледано, слика и улога жена у војсци се посматра позитивније у односу на чланке о женама уопште и у другим професијама у Србији. Резултати овог истраживања су такође показали да постоје одређени стереотипи у вези са заступљеношћу жена у медијима. Даља унапређења могу бити усмерена ка диверсификацији тема о женама уз активну подршку војног врха.

Кључне речи: *медијска заступљеност жена у војсци, родна равноправност, анализа садржаја, медији масовног комуницирања*