

## **Suppression of women in modern society – socio-economic aspects**

### **Abstract**

*Along with creating the conditions for progress and emancipation of women in society, they developed the instruments and methods of preventing the exercise of these conditions. Although it is evident legally equating women with men in all spheres of life in modern society there are various forms of self-suppression of women (psychological, economic, cultural, acceptance of women “without rebellion” of values and rules that are set by men and the like.). The increasing presence of women in the public sphere, their subjugation, discrimination and subordination are moved from private to public sphere - (in) ability to access public services, employment, wage levels and the like. The causes of this suppression are, usually, in the character of social relations - are still rooted in the patriarchal patterns - the imposition of “masculine” principles and rules of everyday life which suppress women from important segments of social relations.*

**Keywords:** *modern society, the emancipation of women, patriarchal patterns, suppression of women, self-suppression of women*

### **Introduction**

The basis of the modern socio-economic development is neoliberal concept. Existing inequalities are increasingly deepening, thereby, the possibility of achieving equitable and sustainable development for all is being reduced - the discrimination of marginalized groups, particularly women (increasing ex-

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<sup>1</sup> Associate professor of Sociology at the Faculty of Economics of the University of Banja Luka. E-mail: dragana.vilic@efbl.org.

posure to poverty, exploitation, social exclusion, etc..) is expressed.<sup>2</sup> Women, children and other disadvantaged groups, particularly in the developing part of the world, have limited access to health insurance (regular check-ups, care during pregnancy, child immunizations and the like).<sup>3</sup> In the second half of the twentieth century there has been significant progress in the emancipation of women, but that does not mean that women have fully gained equal status with men. “They are still excluded from mainstream society in many countries of the modern world. The cause of this situation is the uneven distribution of power in society, and the source is largely in traditional culture, patriarchal consciousness and economic underdevelopment of the society.”<sup>4</sup>

In terms of gender inequality and still present patriarchy there are different ways of repression of women in modern society - the “psychological” suppress through the desire for male child to be born, the marriage sometimes appears as a negation of the freedom and autonomy of women, the suppression in political life, the inequality in culture and education, various types of economic repression and the like. The increasing presence of women in the public sphere, their subjugation, discrimination and subordination are moved from the private to the public sphere - (in) ability to access public services, lack of access to educational institutions in some parts of the world, the division into “feminine” and “masculine” schools and colleges, segregation in employment, asymmetrical relations of labor and power, the stereotyping of so-called female jobs, hampered mobility to better paid jobs and the like.

In the transition countries of Central and Eastern Europe women are facing many problems and are in very difficult socio-economic position. The major changes that have taken place in these countries have left consequences that are manifested in the increase of unemployment, poverty, job insecurity and the like. The experience of many countries show that in dealing with the negative consequences of these processes, women are more affected than men, and that the risks and opportunities are unevenly distributed.

In addition to the suppression of women whose causes are in the nature of social relations, we can also talk about different forms of self-repression of women - social, cultural and value (self) isolation in modern society - the permanent stopping, pushing and squeezing women from important segments of

<sup>2</sup> Mirjana Dokmanović., *Economic globalization and Paradoxes*, in: *Victims and Globalization*, Women’s Center for Democracy and Human Rights, Subotica, December 2003, page 15. pdf

<sup>3</sup> United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF), *The Progres of Nations*, UNICEF, New York, 1994. in: Jork Bredšo, Majkl Valas., Wallace, M., *Actual Inequalities: Stories From Around the World*, in: Vladimir Vuletić (ed.), *Globalisation – Myth or Reality: Sociological Chrestomathy*, Institute of Textbooks, Belgrade, 2003, page 294.

<sup>4</sup> Ivan Šijaković i Dragana Vilić, *Sociology of Contemporary Society*, Faculty of Economics, Banja Luka, 2010, pages 321 – 322.

the social relations by men and adherence to the values imposed by the “trends” of everyday life (for example, accepting the values put by men in connection with physical appearance - “standardized beauty,” women becoming “hostages” of their own bodies).<sup>5</sup>

For all these reasons, the question arises: How to change and improve the position of women in modern society? How to expand the actual space of emancipation of women? Whether this can be achieved through collective actions (movements, citizens’ initiatives, associations) and consistent application and enforcement of the legal provisions governing women equal status with men? Here we will outline the directions of possible answers to these questions, because the more complete analysis exceeds the requirements of a single article. We will first outline the basic forms of suppression of women, using sources and data from more developed countries of the West, then we will add a few specific elements of the suppression of women from mainstream society in post-socialist transition countries. Finally we will point to several elements that can assist in finding directions to overcome the inequality of women in modern society, such as domestic and international institutional activities, social movements, and new theoretical discourses recommended by Alain Touraine.

### **Forms of repression of women in modern society**

Safe instrument of presence and maintaining women in mainstream social trends - to achieve its social and cultural promotion, the rise and emancipation (inverse correlation between female literacy rates and fertility rates in underdeveloped countries), is a learning process. However, this is not easily passable way for the woman, as in education there are principles and mechanisms that stop the rise and progress of women, and enable the creation of gender differences in education (targeting women through the education process to the “less difficult”, less recognized professions, the less chance of progress in career, poorly paid jobs, etc..).<sup>6</sup> Although the curriculum in schools makes no gender differences, though some studies in developed countries show that teachers have different expectations of girls and boys, and that there are forms of hidden curriculum that help maintain gender differences and stereotypes through the educational process. “Although the impact of those rules is gradually weakening, legislation that requires the girls to wear dresses or skirts to school is one of the most obvious ways to report gender stereotypes. The consequences are not just

<sup>5</sup> *The same*, page 323.

<sup>6</sup> *The same*, pages 322 – 323.

skin deep, because of the clothes they wear, girls do not have the liberty to sit in a relaxed manner, to participate in the harder games or the ability to run as much as they really can.”<sup>7</sup> In the UK, for example, there are schools which are attended only by members of one sex, while others are attended by both sexes. Students to 16 years old usually go to classes that are attended by the same sex.<sup>8</sup> However, before they become ripe for formal education, girls and boys, are more or less, in connection with the role assigned to them - the behavior in the “feminine” and “masculine” way. Later, the school only further shapes / firms these patterns and ensures their survival in society. Also, often the knowledge, experience and achievements of men are more valued and achievements of women are overlooked - for example, the contribution of women’s unpaid work in world economy<sup>9</sup>, the women who have made significant contributions to the advancement of humanity are being forgotten (Augusta Ada King, Countess of Lovelace who participated in the development of computer software), and the like.<sup>10</sup> Also, until the end of the 80-ies of the last century, girls were less frequently than boys enrolling at the university, so their number in institutions of higher education was less than the number of boys. In recent years, in developed countries, similar trends were observed in terms of reducing gender gap in schools in relation to educational achievement, and diversity of girls / young women and boys / young men in all areas and at all levels of the education system (equal or better performance of girls increasing the number of girls, more boys leave high school, etc.).<sup>11</sup> This is explained by the fact that on the increase in self-esteem and expectations of the girls had a great influence the feminist movement, cue from successful mothers employed outside the home - examples that cast doubt on traditional stereotypes of women as housewives, eliminating gender stereotypes in classrooms - encouraging girls to explore school subjects that were “reserved” for the boys, the promotion of educational material liberated from gender bias and the like.<sup>12</sup> However, the results of research on women in higher education around the world have shown that, although in the period after the

<sup>7</sup> Antoni Gidens, *Sociology*, Faculty of Economics, Belgrade, 2005, page 523.

<sup>8</sup> Caroline Benn and Clyde Chitty, *Thirty Years On: Is Comprehensive Education Alive and Well or Struggling to Survive?*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, p. 88. in: Michael Haralambos, Martin Holborn, *Sociology - Themes and Perspectives, Part II*, Golden Marketing, Zagreb, 2002, p. 776.

<sup>9</sup> “Unpaid work in the home has an enormous importance for the economy. It is estimated that domestic work accounts for between 25 and 40 percent of the wealth created in the industrial countries. Domestic work supports other economic sectors, because it provides a free service on which depends the bulk of the population with paid work.” Antony Giddens, *Sociology*, Faculty of Economics, Belgrade, 2005, p. 402.

<sup>10</sup> Spender, D., *Invisible Women: Schooling Scandal*, Women’s Press, London, 1983.

<sup>11</sup> “Career opportunities”, *The Economist*, 8 July 1995. in: Antony Giddens, *Sociology*, Faculty of Economics, Belgrade, 2005, p. 523.

<sup>12</sup> Antony Giddens., *Sociology*, Faculty of Economics, Belgrade, 2005, p. 524 – 525.

Second World War, many countries increased the number of female students (in the U.S., Israel and Norway was an equal number of male and female students enrolled), the percentage of university female professors was small. In places with lower rank and fixed-term employment, women were more present than men.<sup>13</sup> Studies conducted half a century later, in the UK, can not testify to the substantial changes in this respect - at universities with a long tradition, full professors are paid more than their female colleagues in the same profession and more than 90 percent of full professors are men.<sup>14</sup>

Although the formal equality in the labor market was achieved, achieving the progress in education for women does not directly increase revenue - for the same level of education and for doing the same work women do not have the same salary as men.<sup>15</sup>

**Table 1.** *Employed full-time, over 25 years of age, United States, 1991.*

Educational threshold	The average (median) annual salary		Ratio of female to male earnings
	Men	Women	
Less than High School	19,654	13,816	0,70
Finished High School	26,515	18,323	0,69
Unfinished college	31,566	22,227	0,70
College certificate	39,115	28,042	0,72
Postgraduate degree	49,650	33,771	0,69
All employees	30,650	21,381	0,70

Source: Educational attainment in the United States: March 1990. and 1991., Current Statistical Reports, quoted by Weeks, J. R.: Population: An Introduction to Concepts and Issues, updated fifth edition, Wadsworth Publishing Company, Belmont, California, 1994, p. 274.<sup>16</sup>

This can be explained by the still present patriarchal patterns - the rights and status of women and men are defined by patriarchal ideology, as well as the value of their labor on the market. Therefore, a better education does not guarantee that women will achieve a higher income and a better position in society.

<sup>13</sup> Lie, S.S., O'Leary, V., *Storming the Tower: Women in the Academic World*, Kogan Page, London. U: 526.

<sup>14</sup> *Guardian*, 4-5 May 1999. in: Giddens, E., *Sociology*, Faculty of Economics, Belgrade, 2005, p. 527.

<sup>15</sup> In Germany in the eighties, the earning of women was 72 percent of men's earnings, and in 1991. it was 73.6 percent, in the UK in the mid-eighties it was 69.5 percent, in France, in the same period, 79 percent and 80.8 percent in the nineties. In Latin America, women's average earning is between 44 and 77 percent of men's earnings, 51 percent in Korea, 70 percent in Hong Kong, 43 percent in Japan. *UN data from 1995*.

<sup>16</sup> Retrieved from: Mirjana Bobić, *Demography and Sociology - connection or synthesis*, JP Official Gazette, Belgrade, 2007, p. 193.

“Women earn significantly less money than men, and around the world they fill only 10% of all members of the legislature at the national level and 6% of ministerial positions (UNICEF, 1994). Although ... a growing number of young women professionals are earning more money than ever, the vast majority of American women earn significantly less than men. And despite the discussion of political equality, women fill only 11% of the Senate and Congress in Washington (UNICEF, 1994).”<sup>17</sup>

Gender differences related to illiteracy are extremely high - 2/3 of illiterate people in the world are women.<sup>18</sup> This is associated with poverty, infant mortality, high birth rates, low levels of economic development, the strong influence of traditional culture in rural areas, in families with many members, for economic reasons, boys are preferred to be educated and so on.<sup>19</sup>

Since the fifties of the last century in developed countries in the world are open new jobs that require skills and traits that women express more preferences to, such as empathy, teamwork, tolerance, etc., which created an increase in women's employment. This tendency is also present later with new transformations in many sectors of the economy, particularly in the service sector of the economy and the service sector. As the number of employed women increases, proportionally the number of economically active men decreases. This changes the concept of “masculinity” in contemporary society. “There are more and more unemployed men than women, and the old conception of the role of men as the breadwinner is beginning to change.”<sup>20</sup> In the eighties of the last century, a large number of women in many European countries was hired a part-time (mid 90-ies 2/3 of employed women), and this may explain the relatively high female employment in these countries.

However, because of the increasing presence of women in the public sphere, her subjugation, discrimination and subordination is moved from the private to the public sphere of work and consumption - the possibility of access to public services, employment and income levels and so on. Although there is an evident increase in women's employment and their legally equalizing with men in all spheres, there is still a segregation of women in employment (employment in

<sup>17</sup> United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), *The Progress of Nations*, UNICEF, New York, 1994. in: Jork Bredšo i Majkl Valas, *Actual Inequalities: Stories From Around the World*, in: Vuletić, V. (prir.), *Globalisation – Myth or Reality: Sociological Chrestomathy*, Institute of Textbooks, Belgrade, 2003, page 294.

<sup>18</sup> KGWOMEN. International Day of Rural Women, Retrieved from: <http://kgwomen.blogspot.com/2010/10/menunarodni-dan-seoskih-zena.html> [15.10.2010.]

<sup>19</sup> “Of the 150 million children in the age between 6 and 11 years old who are not in school, 90 million are girls.” Antoni Gidens, *Sociology*, Faculty of Economics, Belgrade, 2005, p.505.

<sup>20</sup> Ulrich Beck, *Risk Society - Towards a new modern*, Filip Višnjić, Belgrade, 2001, p. 136 – 137.

clerical work, in educational, health professions, and the like.).<sup>21</sup> In developed Western countries, more than half of the economically active women are engaged in the service sector (more than 85 percent of the female labor force in the U.S. and the UK, while in the developing world, most of the female labor force is involved in carrying out activities related to agriculture (80 % of economically active women in sub Saharan Africa and 60% in South Asia).<sup>22</sup> The number of women who produce food is inversely proportional to their representation in decision-making in the household. Women in rural areas often do not own property, or those that own it, have a small percentage (5%), and therefore can not receive credit for starting their own business, expanding services that they offer, training or education.<sup>23</sup>

Despite the principled equality of women with men, women are often faced in their career with the invisible barriers that inhibit their progress and occupy key positions in public life - unequal opportunities for employment, stereotypes about weak managerial skills of women, lack of female role models, exclusion of women from informal networks and etc.. On the other hand, as a result of education and tradition, women less openly express their ambition and desire towards “leadership”. For example, in 2005. year in high management positions in the U.S. there were 8% of women (1995. - 5%) in this country, women earn 72% of the salary of their male counterparts, and 25% of the highest-paid presidents of government in Europe there is no women.<sup>24</sup> Women in almost all developed countries are in a similar situation - they make up nearly half the workforce, achieve better results in education than men, they are only about 8% on the higher levels of the hierarchy in companies, and for the same job and the same level of responsibility, women earn on average one-third less than their male counterparts (in France, for example, is among the highest managers only five percent of women, in the UK among the 400 biggest directors of companies there are only 17 women).<sup>25</sup>

In business sectors that stereotype so-called women’s work, women face difficulties in mobility to better paying jobs.<sup>26</sup> “They are usually closed in sectors

<sup>21</sup> Vlado Puljiz, *Family Policy*, in Puljiz, V. and others.: *Social Policy: History, Systems, Glossary*, Faculty of Law, University of Zagreb, Zagreb, 2005, p.326.

<sup>22</sup> Mirjana Bobić, *Demography and sociology - the connection or synthesis*, JP Official Gazette, Belgrade, 2007, p.193.

<sup>23</sup> KGWOMEN. International Day of Rural Women, Retrieved from <http://kgwomen.blogspot.com/2010/10/menunarodni-dan-seoskih-zena.html> [15.10.2010.]

<sup>24</sup> *Women in top management is still endemic*, Leader, 05/05/2006, retrieved from 17/12/2007, <http://www.liderpress.hr/Default.aspx?sid=2921>

<sup>25</sup> *Equivalent - Regional Women’s Web Portal*, [www.ekviva.net](http://www.ekviva.net)

<sup>26</sup> Irena Gabrić Molnar, *Presence of the Patriarchal Pattern in the Market Economy and Business Sphere*, in: Mirjana Dokmanović (ed.), *Transition, Privatisation and Women*, Women’s Centre for Democracy and Human Rights, Subotica, 2002, p. 179.

with no prospect of improvement, which justifies lower salaries, and supports the view that their salaries are just an extra income to household. Ideology in terms of women, who are seen as passive and flexible and looking a paid job like that, which leaves plenty of time for family, giving an excuse to be limited to the lowest-paying jobs, and those salaries are understood only as additional wages.”<sup>27</sup> However, when women have the opportunity to enter a managerial position, they in most cases choose jobs whose performance allows the reconciliation of family and professional liability claims, which is difficult to achieve in terms of modern economics - the imposition of male models of work organization, which leads to expression in extending working hours, putting his full time to the company’s disposal, including holidays and weekends. In such circumstances, even though they have high levels of education, women can not in large numbers come to the senior management positions. Achieving equality in the work seems still impossible, since regulatory variable in marriage remains the work of women.<sup>28</sup>

Also, a phenomenon that is widespread in modern society is sexual harassment in the workplace. Due to the fact that men usually hold leadership positions in organizations, the imbalance of power provides harassment of women, although there are the reported cases, in smaller numbers, that women sexually harassed their subordinates. Although in most European countries, sexual harassment is prohibited by law, within the organization or in the workplace, men can use their position of power to force a woman to have sexual intercourse. “That can take the forms of attack, such as in cases when the woman is threatened to be redundant if she does not engage in sexual contact with her boss. However, most forms of sexual harassment is more subtle nature. There are indications that with the consent to sexual intercourse woman will be improved or that, if she does not agree to that, it will soon be followed by some punishment, like delay improvement.”<sup>29</sup> Women who are sexually harassed often do not report the harassment because of the pressure on them not to do so (by pointing out the “failures” of the work, moving to the lower-paying jobs, or moving on to some better positions in an attempt to forestall the reports of cases of harassment and the like.) or they do not do it for fear that it can not be proved or fear of reprisal.

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<sup>27</sup> Martin Segalan, *Sociology of the family*, Clio, Belgrade, 2009, p.370 - 371.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid*, str. 376 - 377.

<sup>29</sup> “Sexual harassment refers to unwanted or repeated attempts of sexual approach, as manifested through the offensive remarks and behavior, which may cause inconvenience to those which are referred or affect working performance. According to a survey conducted in the UK, one in ten women is a victim of sexual harassment in the workplace.” Antony Giddens, *Sociology*, Faculty of Economics, Belgrade, p.362 – 363.

In some countries, cultural traditions prevent women to perform high-paying jobs, to vote, to refuse sexual intercourse with her husband, and even to drive a car.<sup>30</sup>

In the hierarchy of the great religions (churches, denominations), especially in Christianity, as in other spheres of social life, women are excluded from the government.<sup>31</sup>

In addition to the suppression of women whose causes are in the nature of social relations, we can also talk about different forms of self-repression of women - social, cultural and value (self) isolation in modern society - the permanent stopping, pushing and squeezing women from important segments of the social relations by men and adherence to the values imposed by the “trends” of everyday life (for example, accepting the values put by men in connection with physical appearance - “standardized beauty,” women becoming “hostages” of their own bodies).<sup>32</sup>

### The position of women in the countries in transition

In the transition countries of Central and Eastern European women are facing many problems and are in a difficult situation on the labor market. The major changes that have taken place in these countries in the 90-ies of the last century (the collapse of communism and the victory of liberal capitalism, the development of democratic political institutions, the movement towards a market system of free competition, and dealing with the consequences of these changes), have resulted in increased unemployment, poverty, job insecurity, and also affected gender roles and gender relations - “there was an increase of pornography, the return of women to the private sphere, women’s unemployment, deprivation of any rights that have been achieved under socialism (eg, reproductive rights), creating dominant gender roles (hegemonic masculinity and subordinate femininity) and the like. All this has had an impact on the occurrence of violence against women, and its intense expression.”<sup>33</sup> The experience of many countries shows that in dealing with the negative consequences

<sup>30</sup> United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF), *The Progres of Nations*, UNICEF, New York, 1994. in: Jork Bredšo i Majkl Valas, *Actual Inequalities: Stories From Around the World*, in: Vuletić, V. (prir.), *Globalisation – Myth or Reality: Sociological Chrestomathy*, Institute of Textbooks, Belgrade, 2003, page 294.

<sup>31</sup> Entony Giddens, *Sociology*, Faculty of Economics, Belgrade, p 553.

<sup>32</sup> Ivan Šijaković and Dragana Vilić., *Sociology of Contemporary Society*, Faculty of Economics, Banja Luka, 2010, p323.

<sup>33</sup> Vesna Nikolić-Ristanović, *Social Change, Gender and Violence: Post-communist and war affected societies*, Kluwer Academic Publishers, Dordrecht/Boston/London, 2002.

of these processes (structural adjustment and market operation) women are far more affected than men, and that the risks and opportunities are unevenly distributed. Women are the most represented in those sectors and industries which are realizing the weakest income, and regardless of the level of education and qualification, women, on average, wait for a job longer than men. Usually for possession with lower qualifications and less work experience they earn income for 15 percent less than men. The women, in addition to the young and uneducated, are in the worst position in the formal labor market, and therefore mostly employed in the informal sector. In societies that are on the path of transition at risk of poverty are mothers with children, and women over forty years of age who lose their jobs, rural women, single mothers, the unemployed, the sick, the housewives, the uneducated and the like. M. Dokmanović explains the causes of the major consequences of transition reforms on women than on men to new technologies, the development of the private sector, creating jobs and other changes brought by the market economy.<sup>34</sup>

### **Instead of a conclusion - the action to overcome the unequal position of women in contemporary society**

The struggle to improve women's position in society and their legally equalizing with a man, the feminist movement began only in the nineteenth century (the promotion of women's rights, their interests, the need to change the role of women in the private and public spheres, open criticism of social relations that contribute to the existence of inequality and exploitation of women, fight for freedom of expression and sexuality and female sexuality, gender-identity and gender stereotypes, critical analysis of the institution of patriarchy, the study of the dominant model of power, support for the promotion of women's human rights policy, labor market, etc.).<sup>35</sup> The emergence of feminism came as a result of the industrial revolution. Conceptual pursuit and practical action of the first feminists were directed towards the institutionalization of political and economical equality of women. Then feminism appears in its "radical form" of assault on marriage and the family, pointing to the base of the patriarchal family and morality, which regulated the relations within it. Organizing women through movement was their attempt to find a way out of the situation

<sup>34</sup> More to see in: Mirjana Dokmanović, *Women and Economic Changes, 2000 – 2005.*, Women's Centre for Democracy and Human Rights, Subotica, Serbia, Electronic publication of the Institute for Gender Equality of Vojvodina "Five Years Later - The women's movement in Vojvodina 2000 – 2006", 2006.

<sup>35</sup> Centre for Women Studies Zagreb, <http://www.zenstud.hr/stari/FemiPocet1.pdf>

of inequality that are received as a legacy in history, and whose preservation is justified by Eve's first sin, guilt, identification with female sexuality and sin, and, therefore, treating women as lesser beings, etc.<sup>36</sup> It arose as a logical reaction to the position they had earlier granted in society, as an expression of different perceptions of themselves and need to take a more active role in public life. These social movement /s contributed to the change of consciousness towards all minority groups - enabled them to properly articulate their interests, they made significant strides in the cultural history of mankind.<sup>37</sup> However, persistent feminist struggle that resulted in formal legal equalization of women with men, improving their position in many spheres of society, taking a central place in political debates about issues that were previously ignored or were considered to belong to the non-political aspects (child care, equal workplace rights, lesbian rights, changes to the law on divorce, the possibility of abortion, etc.)<sup>38</sup>, failed to eliminate the numerous difficulties faced by women in the private and public spheres (the burden of family responsibilities, exposure to violence in the private and public spheres, poverty, taking a weaker position in society, etc.). It is still evident gender, economical and political subordination of women. Because of the rapid social changes in the countries in transition, women are faced with many problems (poverty, violence, trafficking in women for sexual exploitation, disadvantage, etc.). However, the development of women's organizations, the development of initiatives to protect women from violence and victim support services, and campaign for changes in the law, changes in applicable legislation regarding the protection of women from violence and the like. in post-socialist societies, allow to highlight the problems faced by women and to raise awareness of the need to overcome them.<sup>39</sup>

Regardless of the problems that women are still facing in modern society, according to A. Touraine, thanks to the ideological and practical aspirations of post-feminism, there has been a cultural revolution - the transition from society of men to society of women, but not through the prism of political life, but through penetration "of the subjectivity of each (and every) because they strive for creating from each individual a subject."<sup>40</sup>

In terms of improving the equality of women and men, it is the policy of promoting gender equality and taking concrete actions with a view to its imple-

<sup>36</sup> More to see in: Gizela Bok, *Women in European history*, Clio, Belgrade 2005.

<sup>37</sup> More to see in: Dragana Vilić, *The contemporary social processes and changes - consequences and reactions*, Kasper, Banja Luka, 2009.

<sup>38</sup> Antony Giddens, *Sociology*, Faculty of Economics, Belgrade, p 439.

<sup>39</sup> Vesna Nikolić-Ristanović, *Social Change, Gender and Violence: Post-communist and war affected societies*, Kluwer Academic Publishers, Dordrecht/Boston/London, 2002.

<sup>40</sup> Alain Touraine, *A new paradigm for understanding contemporary society*, JP Official Gazette, Belgrade, 2011, p.203.

mentation and the empowerment of women, the achievements of the European Union should not be overlooked. One of the five values on which the European Union stands is equality, and with the goal of its provision, and to prevent discrimination based on sex, the Charter of Fundamental Rights was brought. Its commitment to gender equality and strengthening the gender perspective into all policies, the European Commission of the EU confirmed in 2010 the adoption of the Charter on Women which defines five priority areas - equal right to economic independence, equal pay for equal work or work of equal value, equality in decision-making, the dignity, integrity and the eradication of gender-based violence, gender equality in external activities. In order to promote gender equality and empowerment of women globally, it is established the cooperation between international organizations dealing with gender equality (International Labour Organisation, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the United Nations, the African Union and the new UN body for gender equality and the like. ). All these efforts aim to increase the awareness and knowledge of equality in general, to take concrete actions and implement specific programs to achieve gender equality and to introduce gender equality in public policies in all countries.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> To mark the fifteenth anniversary of the Declaration and Platform for Action, adopted at the UN World Conference on Women in Beijing, and the thirtieth anniversary of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the European Commission adopted a Charter of Women. The Commission has developed the Strategy for equality between women and men from 2010 to 2015. This strategy represents the work program of the European Commission for Gender Equality (Plan is built on the plan of equality of women and men for the period since 2006 to 2010, and the European Pact for Gender Equality), and provides activities based on five priority areas defined in the Charter on Women and one area that deals with issues that permeate all other areas (gender roles, legislation, and management tools for achieving gender equality). It aims to encourage the development of national level and to ensure cooperation with other European institutions and all those who are interested in achieving gender equality. For more, see: European Commission, Commission Communication of the European Parliament, the European Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, Strategy for equality between women and men from 2010 to 2015, Brussels, 21.09.2010. pdf.

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