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GENDER AND SALW CONTROL

Legislative and Policy Frameworks in SEE

Introduction

SALW (*small arms and light weapons*) control policies aim at increasing the general security of citizens through the planning and implementation of various measures to curb the proliferation and misuse of SALW. While some security concerns are common to all members of society, others affect different people in different ways depending on their sex, gender, age, ethnicity etc.

A growing body of research has significantly contributed to the increased visibility of linkages between gender and SALW, and has clearly demonstrated that the use, misuse and effects of SALW are heavily gendered and have differentiated impacts on women and men (Farr and Gebre-Wold 2002, Schroeder et al. 2005, Farr et al. 2009, Alvazzi del Frate 2011, Bastick and Valasek, 2014).

In order to increase the effectiveness of SALW control policies and ensure that their implementation improves security for both women and men, these different perspectives have to be made visible, integrated into SALW control policies and addressed appropriately.

GENDER

Gender refers to the social roles and behaviors which, in one society, are understood as appropriate for women and men. It is about social differences (not biological ones) between women and men which are changeable over time.

Gender does not refer only to women, but to women and men, girls and boys, and the relationship between them.

Gender determines what is expected from, permitted and valued in women and men in a given context. It also determines the activities undertaken between women and men, access to and control over resources, as well as decision-making opportunities based on stereotypical sex-related attitudes.

(Source: UN Women, OSAGI Gender Mainstreaming Concept and Definitions, 2001)

Gender

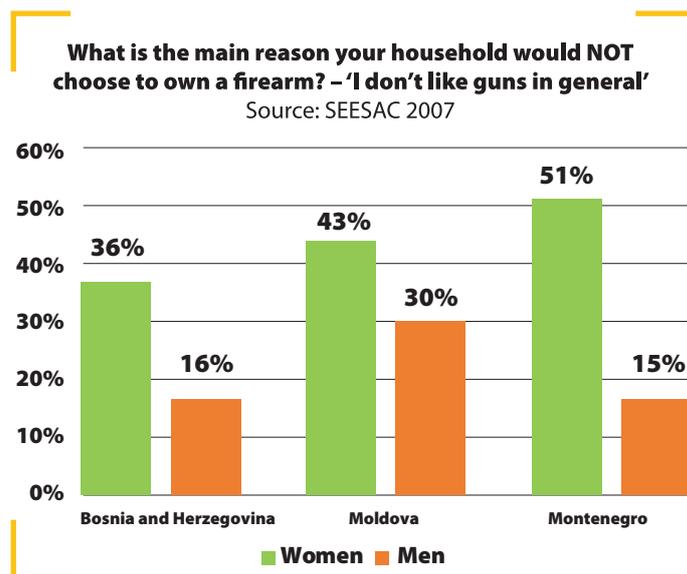
dimension of SALW

The gender perspective plays an important role in shaping and understanding various aspects of SALW, such as (Cukier and Cairns 2009, p. 19):

Ownership and Access

Men make up an overwhelming majority of firearm owners – 98 per cent in Montenegro, 95 per cent in Serbia, 96 per cent in Moldova, 96 per cent at a Europe-wide level (SAS 2014b). Men dominate both professions with easy access to firearms (police, military, private security companies) and firearm-related activities, such as hunting.

Figure 1: Gender and attitude to firearms



Effects

Men constitute an absolute majority of both perpetrators - and victims in firearm-related incidents. Women are mostly victims and very rarely perpetrators. Bearing in mind their low share among firearm owners and perpetrators of firearm-related incidents, women experience a disproportionately higher frequency of victimization than men (Cukier 2002).

Domestic Violence

While men are more often at risk of firearm misuse by their non-intimate acquaintances or persons they may not know, **women are more at risk in a domestic context from their intimate partners** - the presence of SALW in the home dramatically increases the risks and likelihood of a lethal outcome in domestic violence incidents.

Masculinity, Cultural Norms, Gun Culture

Through their use and misuse, **small arms are closely linked with specific expressions of masculinity in society**, i.e. certain roles, behaviours and expectations attributed to men which encourage risk-taking behaviour among them.

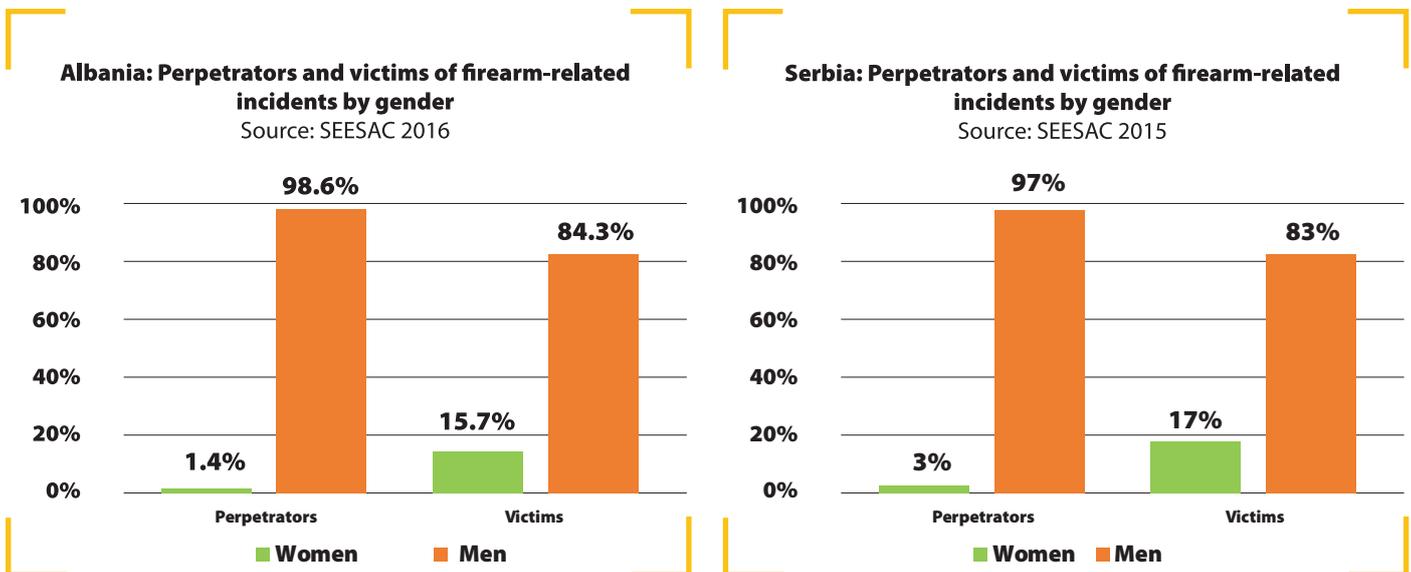
Attitudes

Women and men often have different attitudes to SALW and women more often perceive the presence of firearms as a threat to their security than men. Hence, women tend to opt for stricter SALW control.

Policy Making

Balanced representation of women and men is a precondition for bringing a diversity of perspectives and gender concerns to the policy making cycle. However, challenges to the full and meaningful representation of women in the development and implementation of SALW control policies are persistent. Women are rarely in decision-making positions in bodies that shape SALW policies, and SALW control processes still tend to be male dominated (Cukier 2009).

Figure 2: Perpetrators and victims of firearm-related incidents in Albania and Serbia



FEMICIDE

According to the Geneva Declaration Secretariat Database for the 48 countries for which reliable data on femicide were available for the period 2007 - 2012, among the SEE countries, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia comes on top and is ranked twelfth, with more than 40 per cent of female homicide committed with firearms. It is followed by the Republic of Serbia taking the seventeenth position, while Moldova ranks at the bottom of the list as the forty-second. (Geneva Declaration Secretariat, 2015, 104). In respect to intimate partner violence, in Serbia, in 2015, as many as 45.7 % of female victims of intimate-partner violence were killed with firearms (Mreža "Žene protiv nasilja" 2016). Data for other SEE societies were not available. The high share of women murdered using small arms reflects the high lethality of firearms and makes a strong case for their control, particularly in the context of domestic violence.

How is gender treated in SALW control legislative and policy frameworks in SEE?



Analysis conducted by SEESAC shows that:

1. Despite the highly gendered dimensions of SALW, the gender perspective is not addressed by or integrated into policies regulating SALW control in SEE.
2. If attempts are made to address existing gender aspects of SALW, they are being tackled in a fragmented way, primarily in the form of limited measures targeting domestic violence.
3. Gender differences in indicators relating to ownership, use and misuse of firearms, differentiated effects of firearms on women and men, as well as mechanisms in which gender roles shape dominant SALW practices in SEE, are not being addressed.
4. The lack of gender disaggregated data or comprehensive research on linkages between gender and SALW, represent a hindering factor for the development of gender-responsive SALW control policies.
5. Although still in the very initial stage, some steps have been taken to incorporate the gender perspective into the SALW control policy response. For example, efforts have been devoted to promoting women's participation (civil society groups) in the development and implementation of policies and involving gender equality mechanisms in establishing a strategic framework. In addition, attempts have been made to take into account the differentiated impact of SALW on women in the research design, as well as to have measures in place to ensure balanced inclusion of female and male personnel in the training process for the management of ammunition and explosive ordnance.

YOUNG MEN

Young men generally represent a disproportionately high share of both perpetrators and victims of firearm-related violence.

Small arms violence is often seen by young men as a means of achieving social and economic status they believe they deserve. Therefore, small arms can be of particular appeal to young men as they frequently associate weapons with individual pride, masculinity, and enhanced social status. (Bevan and Florquin 2006). Data collected in Albania through the media analyses showed that among firearm-related incidents involving male perpetrators, 55.7 per cent were carried out by those between the ages of 19-35. With regard to victims, men aged 19-35 comprised 38.1 per cent of the overall number of victims (SEESAC 2016).



What do we gain from integrating the gender perspective?

Integrating the gender perspective into SALW control is not simply counting women and men, but using gender disaggregated data to recognize and respond to gender-specific risks women and men face with respect to SALW. This information adds a dimension to the understanding of the problem which usually goes unnoticed but significantly affects the efficiency of interventions. Integrating gender into all cycles of SALW control and management increases the understanding of the complexity of the problem and, therefore, enables the creation of more adequate and effective SALW control policies better suited to the challenge at hand. The ultimate aim is a more secure society that is equally safe for both women and men. This can only be achieved if the different needs of women and men are taken into account.



What do experiences from other countries show?

Legislative reforms with respect to ownership and licensing implemented in certain countries, such as Canada and Australia, proved to be efficient in reducing both the overall homicide rate (15 per cent in Canada and 45 per cent in Australia) and the femicide rate in particular (45 per cent in Canada and 57 per cent in Australia). This proves that there is a strong link between introducing tougher firearm control measures and a decrease in lethality of the outcome in cases of intimate partner violence. Gun control and domestic violence legislation introduced in South Africa contributed to a decrease in the femicide rate from 8.8 in 1999 to 5.6 in 2009 (Amnesty International, the International Action

Network on Small Arms (IANSA) and Oxfam International, 2005).

Reports on policies targeting young men in the USA provide evidence that specific and proactive programmes, coupled with behavioural intervention programmes have been effective in reducing gun violence among young men (Abt and Winship, 2016).



Steps forward: How to integrate the gender perspective into the SALW control legislative and policy frameworks?

In order to ensure that SALW control frameworks are gender responsive, the gender perspective has to permeate the whole cycle of SALW control and management: design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Taking the following concrete steps facilitates the translation of commitments to gender equality into practical measures:

Step 1: Ensure there is consensus on the importance of gender for SALW control. The shared understanding of the role gender plays in shaping SALW-related behaviour, practices and specific risks for women and men is the basic prerequisite for the effective and sustainable integration of the gender perspective in SALW control frameworks. It is therefore necessary to ensure that all involved stakeholders share this knowledge or have received training in gender equality, gender mainstreaming, gender analysis and linkages between gender and SALW. Balanced representation

of women and men among stakeholders is an essential part of the integration of the gender perspective into SALW control, while bringing women's organizations and gender experts on board is necessary to facilitate the process.

Step 2: Make gender perspective visible - Collect gender disaggregated data. Gender disaggregated data is a prerequisite for understanding the linkages between gender and SALW and for the design of evidence-based gender responsive policies. Therefore, all the data on the victims and perpetrators of firearms-related incidents, firearm owners, persons holding a license to acquire/carry firearms and other relevant data have to be consistently disaggregated by gender. In order to fully grasp gender aspects of SALW, it is also necessary to understand how gender intersects with other demographic characteristics such as age, race, ethnicity, place of living (urban/rural) etc.

Step 3: Identify gender patterns and concerns - Conduct a gender analysis. Include these data in the situation analysis, making sure it informs its conclusions. Explore how gender differences relate to SALW control issues and identify and define specific gender-related risks and challenges. A broad toolbox of practical methods, such as manuals, checklists and instructions for gender analysis, has been developed and is easily available.

Step 4: Address identified gender patterns - Set gender-responsive goals and indicators and define practical and innovative measures based on gender-disaggregated data to address the gender aspects of SALW appropriately. Design activities that meet the security needs of both women and men and tackle the risks they face.

Step 5: Track progress - Monitoring and evaluation. Make sure that the monitoring plan fully captures the implementation of measures set to address identified gender concerns. An evaluation should determine if gender-specific risks for both women and men have been addressed/reduced and provide clear recommendations for further actions.

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