

# **Women in Politics**

## **In Western Balkan Countries**

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Elena Nacevska

POLITIKA



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# Abbreviations

AP Vojvodina	Autonomous Province Vojvodina
BCHR	Belgrade Centre for Human Rights
Beijing 5+	Beijing Platform for Action
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CEE	Central and Eastern European Countries
CESI	Centre for Education, Counselling and Research
COE	Council of Europe
CPRPO	Centre for Political Research and Public Opinion
DA	Democratic Alternative
DOM	Democratic Renewal of Macedonia
DOS	Democratic Opposition of Serbia
DPA	Democratic Union of Albanians
DS	Democratic Party
DSS	Democratic Party Serbia
DUI	Democratic Union of Albanians
DZS (HR)	Croatian Bureau of Statistics HR
EC	European Commission
ECHR	European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)
ECHRFF	European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms

EEC	European Economic Community
CEE	Central Eastern European
EU	European Union
Eurostat	European Statistical Office
EVS	European Values Survey
FAW	Forum of Albanian Women
G17plus	Political Party in Serbia G17+
GDP	Growth Domestic Product
GEA RS	Gender Equality Act in the Republic of Serbia
GEA HR	Gender Equality Act in the Republic of Croatia
GEO	Gender Equality Ombudsperson
HDI	Human Development Index
HDR	Human Development Report
HDSSB	Croatian Democratic Alliance of Slavonija and Baranja
HDZ	Croatian Democratic Union
HGS	Croatian Civic Party
HNS	Croatian National Party
HR*	Croatia
HSLs	Croatian Social Liberal Party
HSR	Human Security Report
IDS	Istrian Democratic Assembly – Pula
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IPU	Inter-Parliamentary Union
IRFR	International Religious Freedom Report
LCY	League of Communists of Yugoslavia
LDP	Liberal Democratic Party
LEO	Law on Equal Opportunities in the Republic of Macedonia

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\* The countries are abbreviated (HR, RS, MK) according to the EU's rules (with the exception of Macedonia). For sources from the WB, data and figures, we also use the nomenclature of the WB and OECD (MKD, SRB, HRV).

LP	Liberal Party
LP	Liberal party
LSV	League of Social Democrats of Vojvodina
MWL	Macedonian Women's Lobby
MK	Macedonia
NAP RS	National action plan for improving the position of women enhancing gender equality in the Republic of Serbia
NAPGE MK	National Action Plan for Gender Equality in the Republic of Macedonia
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NN HR	Official Gazette of the Republic of Croatia (Narodne Novine)
NPAEUL MK	National plan for adopting EU legislation in the Republic of Macedonia
NPGE	National Plan for Gender Equality
NPPGE HR	National Policy for the Promotion of Gender Equality in the Republic of Croatia
NSIPW RS	National Strategy improving the position of women promoting gender equality in Serbia
NS	New Serbia
NSDP	New Social Democratic Party
ODIHR	Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OMC	Open method of coordination
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PCG	Polity coding
PDP	Party for Democratic Prosperity
PUPS	Party of United Pensioners of Serbia
RMGEP	Report about the monitoring of gender equality policies in the Republic of Macedonia

RRMMDG	Report of the Republic of Macedonia for the Millennium Development Goals
RS	Republic of Serbia
RWO	Roma Women Organisation
RZSS	Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia
SSP RS	Stabilisation and Association Agreement between the EU and the Republic of Serbia
SSP HR	Stabilisation and Association Agreement between the EU and the Republic of Croatia
CCA MK	Stabilisation and Association Agreement between the EU and the Republic of Macedonia
SDP	Social Democratic Party
SDPS	Sandzak Democratic Party
SDSM	Social Democratic Union of Macedonia
SDSS	Independent Democratic Serbian Party
SDU	Social Democratic Union
SFRY	Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
SGC	Serbia and Montenegro
SL SRJ	Official Gazette of the FRY (Sluzbeni List)
SNS	Serbian Progressive Party
SP	Stability Pact
SP	Socialist Party
SP GTF	Stability Pact Gender Task Force
SPO	Serbian Renewal Movement
SPS	Socialist Party of Serbia
SRCEDAW	Shadow Report to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women in the Republic of Macedonia
SRS	Serbian Radical Party
SRY	Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia
UCHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)
UN	United Nations

UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	The United Nations Children's Fund
UNMIK	United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo
URR RS	Gender Equality Directorate Republic of Serbia
UWOM	Union of Women's Organisations of Macedonia
VMRO-DPMNE	VMRO– Democratic Party for National Unity
WB	World Bank
WVS	World Values Survey
ŽMH	Croatian Women's Network
ДЗС (МК)	State Statistical Office of the Republic of Macedonia
ECE	Association for Equality, Solidarity and Emancipation
PM/ИМПРЕ	Report on monitoring gender-equality policies in the Republic of Macedonia, 2007
MINRZS RS	Ministry of Labour and Social Policy of the Republic of Serbia
МТСП МКД	Ministry of Labour and Social Policy of the Republic of Macedonia
Сл. Весник на РМ	Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia (Sluzben vesnik na Republika Makedonija)
Сл. гласник РС	Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia (Sluzbeni Glasnik Republike Srbije)
Сл. лист АПВ	Official Gazette of AP Vojvodina (Sluzbeni List Autonomne Pokrajine Vojvodine)

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## About the Author

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Dr. Elena Nacevska



*I dedicate this book to my gorgeous son'*  
*mama*



# 1 INTRODUCTION

Since the fall of socialism and during the course of the great regime transformation, countries in Central and Eastern Europe, especially those in the Balkans, have articulated and introduced several democratic changes. The ideological transition from socialism to post-socialism has led to various definitions of women's role in society, and thus to different approaches in the attempts to introduce democratic reforms. The process of the transition<sup>1</sup> and changes in the social and political structure are mainly reflected in the normative and legal approach and establishment of a formal framework. These alterations have triggered changes to the legal, economic, social and political system, seen in the establishment of a parliamentary democracy, multiparty system and political pluralism, numerous democratic values, democratic elections and so on. These countries' economic and political systems were underpinned by their civil concept, based on the idea of the freedom of speech, civil and individual rights. This is especially shown in which values in the system are seen as fundamental.

Given that the democratic development of countries implies respecting the principles of equality, presence and representation, the central postulate is based on the equal presence of all citizens and their active involvement<sup>2</sup> in public and political life.<sup>3</sup> This leads to a

- 
- 1 The term transition has been explained from many points of view, from structural (macro) to individual (micro) levels of action. Use of this term leads to two main points: establishment of a pluralistic parliamentary democracy and a market economy. The fulfilment of these two criteria leads to the modernisation of former socialist societies (Jogan, 2000; 2011).
  - 2 Active involvement in public and political life considering the formal and legal democratic rights and freedoms which belong to all citizens, regardless of the levels of specific elements within the population such as women or minority groups (Hughes, 2011).
  - 3 Feminists point out the 'political', setting it in public instead of private life.

correlative ratio of the degree of presence of citizens in public life as a necessary condition for establishing a democracy.<sup>4</sup> Understanding gender differentiation means analysing the extent of women's presence in political life, as reflected by the main indicators such as openness, democratic rule and the development of societies (Hughes, 2011; Antić Gaber, 2011; Lovenduski, 1993). This leads to the need to incorporate gender perspectives in political processes (Lovenduski and Norris, 1993). The modern ideal of European democracy, unlike antique democracy, intends to promote the principle of universalism in the basic human rights and freedoms.<sup>5</sup>

Despite institutional changes and the elimination of legal barriers for the political exclusion of marginalised groups, the underrepresentation of women in political life remains a problem (Hughes, 2011; Bird et al., 2011; Cederman et al., 2009; Paxton and Hughes, 2009). On one hand, a key issue is the degree of overcoming the institutional prerequisites for encouraging women's presence in political life (also including descriptive and substantive representation) (Pearson and Dancey, 2011a; Mansbridge, 2011). On the other hand, issues concerning the continuing gender imbalance in decision-making structures and power positions on the national level are once again re-actualised. The androcentric<sup>6</sup> definition of women's status from marginalisation to emancipation and involvement in the public space directs the issue towards establishing the institutional basis for solving the problem (Jogan, 2000). Even though women account for half the world's population, and thus half the electorate, it is noted that they still represent a marginalised group in decision-making structures (Burnet, 2011; Bicquelet et al., 2012; Antić Gaber,

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Political life usually entails activities taking place in the public sphere, governmental institutions, political parties, interest groups, public debates.... Private life includes family life and personal relationships which usually belong to the private sphere (Heywood, 1992: 242).

- 4 The development of modern countries leads to the development of political bodies, institutions that lead to the further liberalisation of political development and democracy, which Dahl identifies with the term "polyarchy" that he uses to precisely explain the pluralism of the political sphere (Dahl, 2000).
- 5 The essence of the universalism ideal is overcoming the individual identity, replacing it with a universal abstract form.
- 6 Androcentrism is an orientation or a collection of beliefs which culture, history and social relationships estimate exclusively from a male point of view and completely ignore women's perspective and relationships (Jogan, 2011).



1998). The index of women's presence in political and public life is a basic index for measuring the degree of democratic development, whereas women's absence in these areas questions the existence of democratic society<sup>7</sup> (Phillips, 1995). Gender balance in political structures is crucial to the development of democracy and a subject of international actors' interest in terms of imposing policies and good practices. International documents as a form of external pressure stress gender balance as one of the main principles of establishing a democracy (Baldez, 2011).

Nowadays, gender equality in Western Balkan countries is positioned highly, backed by a formal and legal guarantee. Yet this has simply not been enough to change or retraditionalise the existing relationships in a society with a dominant male culture. In the new political circumstances, it is necessary to change women's position in public and political life.

This book examines the factors influencing women's political presence in post-socialist (i.e. transition) countries from the Western Balkans<sup>8</sup> between 1990 and 2009.

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<sup>7</sup> Representative democracy in which there are no (or very few) women candidates is not a real democracy or is qualified as incomplete democracy. The absence of women in politics comes from the social circumstances of male domination in patriarchal societies, economic power or unequal education (Antić Gaber, 1998).

<sup>8</sup> The Balkans includes the region from west to east: Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo, Albania, and Macedonia. All of these countries were part of the Former Yugoslav Federation (SFRY), with the exception of Albania (Antić Gaber and Lokar, 2006). The term Western Balkans is used by the EU to define the countries from the SFRY, minus Slovenia, plus Albania, in a political sense from South-eastern Europe, i.e. the countries that are not members of the Union. These countries all have a different status regarding EU membership. Croatia was given EU candidate member status in 2004, started the accession negotiations in 2005, signed an accession contract in 2011 and membership as of 1 July 2013 (Ministarstvo vanjskih i europskih poslova, 2013). Macedonia received the status of candidate member in 2005 (CEII, 2013) but there is still no date for negotiations (due to the name dispute of RM with Greece; CEII, 2013 – European Commission – Bilateral relations – the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, 4 June 2008). Serbia commenced the accession process in 2005, but due to the unfulfillment of the criterion for collaboration with The Hague Tribunal, it signed its Association and Accession Agreement in 2008, which became valid in 2012. Serbia became an official candidate member in 2012. The Council adopted the negotiating framework in December 2013 (Vlada Republike Srbije, Kancelarija za Evropske integracije, 2013).

Even though most of these countries have established a formal/legal framework for the fair and equal participation of all citizens in the political process, almost 20 years later (some already being EU members while others are candidates) are still confronting the phenomenon of gender inequality in the public sphere, in politics, and especially in political representative bodies on various levels (local, national and European) at a time of democratic consolidation. Gender balance in political structures is vital to the development of any democracy and a matter of interest to international actors in terms of imposing policies and good practices. International documents as a form of external pressure emphasise gender balance as a main principle in establishing a democracy. In recent years, all Central and Eastern Europe countries have faced both internal pressures (e.g. developing government and non-governmental organisations and strengthening civil society through a market economy) and external pressures (Europeanisation, and harmonisation with European legislation), for women's equal presence on political representative bodies. On one hand, these transformations and democratic developments are linked to modern democracies while, on the other, the pressure to adapt to the patterns of a market economy and democratisation following the collapse of socialism and in some instances the outbreak of war has limited women's opportunity to achieve any bigger presence in public life and political processes. Formal equality, simply involving the 'adding of women' to the existing paradigms is an inadequate response to women's inequality, and insufficient for changing the cultural, traditional and religious beliefs that typecast women as inferior to men. Despite the existence of a significant framework of institutional changes in post-socialist countries, equality in the law in itself is insufficient, albeit vital. The historically inferior position of women, the all-too-often unfavourable cultural and traditional context, and social roles must all be taken into account. The visible paradox is that these countries permanently deal with the problem of incorporating mechanisms for equal opportunities according to the requirements of the EU, CE, OSCE and UN, yet the results and effects remain unsatisfactory, sometimes even disappointing.

Empirical research<sup>9</sup> indicates that gender equality has proven to be more by way of formal equality "*de jure*" as opposed to the "*de*

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9 (CIDA, 2010).

*facto*” real presence of women in political and public life. The true social differentiation, the actual socioeconomic and political circumstances in post-socialist, i.e. transition, countries, has a different reality. A reality expressed through deep differences in the extent of different social groups’ presence and an unequal gender presence in political life and the movement cycle (Antić Gaber and Lokar, 2006). It appears that the transition, better known as “transitional destruction” in post-socialism (Hann, 2002), is a phenomenon which added to the Balkans’ poignant disintegration. Therefore, a fact dominant in all countries in this area is their reluctance to change in a positive direction, bearing in mind that even the most basic social factors that followed triggered destructive processes which have greatly impacted the atomised, primary family communities (Đurić-Kuzmanović, 2002). On one hand, the political transition was an impetus for establishing a democratic system. Yet unemployment and the huge economic problems overshadowed the intended effect of these changes. The wars occurring in the territory of former Yugoslavia became the strongest factor influencing all aspects of social life, with economic, social, demographic and political consequences (Ramet, 2002; Byrne and Baden, 1995; Davidović, 1999; Cederman et al., 2011; Angrist, 2012). The connection to the democratisation processes and the shift from the dominant socialistic authoritarian regime to a democracy determine the level of democratic development, a country’s economic stability and its level of democratic transition (Ansell and Samuels, 2010; Przeworski et al., 2012). Fink-Hafner (2005) points to several factors (non-institutional – socioeconomic environment, social division, dynamics of shaping power; and institutional – constitutional election of political systems, type of electoral systems etc.). These all influence the transition from socialism to democracy or the models of transition that determine the success level of the countries. On the other hand, religious and ethnic intolerance and acts of war in these state members of the so-called Stability Pact Region,<sup>10</sup> the transition and the democratic

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<sup>10</sup> The Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe was formed in 1999 in order to prevent conflict regions and provide an encouragement strategy for the countries from South-Eastern Europe for them to be able to establish democracy, peace, the rule of law, respect of human rights, and economic stability. The stimulative frame for regional cooperation and the integration of these countries into the EU and NATO is crucial (Stability Pact, 2013).

consolidation<sup>11</sup> as well as the challenges of globalisation, have all impacted the new development efforts.

Regarding the female gender, the post-socialist period is marked by “enormous reduction of the political presence of women in public life, increased feminization in the processes of impoverishment, refugees’ crises due to war conflicts, clear changes in the reproductive politics and cultural identity” (Kligman, 1992). Relationships change very slowly in the Balkans, especially concerning gender/sex roles (Lokar, 1992; Hann, 2002). According to Lokar (2001), the political exclusion of women in these countries leads to the following issues: lower level of education, smaller share of employment, economic dependency, the model of patriarchal enclosure within the home and the family is dominant, affecting almost 90% of the female population there.

It is obvious that the patriarchal political culture, traditionalism, the dominant collective ideology as a remnant of the socialist regime, nationalism, a democratic deficit in terms of institutional solutions: all of these were the starting points of the transition, seeking to modernise the ‘patriarchal’ Balkans. Women’s position in these post-socialist countries is reflected negatively, not only in political life, but also in other spheres of social life. The barriers created by stereotypes and prejudices must be overcome so that both genders can contribute equally to and benefit from the economic, social, cultural and political development of society. The socio-cultural consequences remain as part of the future civil social transformation of these societies. Across the Western Balkans, women continue to face discrimination and their smaller political presence in various areas, such as: unequal employment, education (in some ethnic groups), domestic violence, politics, and decision-making bodies. These issues have also been noted by UN monitors and been mentioned in UN Reports and the HDR since 2011 (UNDP – HDR, 2011).

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<sup>11</sup> The term consolidation is used regarding the different roads of democratic and political development via the processes of transition, transfer from authoritarianism to democracy, from a one-party to a multi-party system (Matland and Montgomery, 2003). Within the EU, consolidation is used to denote the adoption of new legal instruments: Vertical direction of incorporating the new instruments within the basic; Horizontal direction, a parallel line of incorporating the new instruments relating to the same matter within a single instrument (EP, 1993).

In short, this book examines the effect of the socioeconomic, cultural and institutional factors that impact women's position in public/private spheres in three selected case studies from the Western Balkans (Macedonia, Serbia and Croatia), as well as the impact of globalisation and Europeanisation processes by way of bringing positive changes in women's political presence in these countries. Further, the main thrust concerns the influence of the variables, especially the impact of cultural and socioeconomic factors, as the key determinants of gender inequality in post-socialist countries. The following are considered important variables influencing women's position and role in the public and private sphere in the three case studies: specific tradition; historical, economic and political conditions; dominant political culture; and the influence of war.

The transition process and changes in the selected countries are primarily reflected in the normative and legal approach and the establishment of a formal framework. Despite the institutional changes and processes of eliminating the legal barriers to marginalised groups' political inclusion, the problem of women being under-represented in political decision-making bodies remains. A key issue is attaining the institutional prerequisites for encouraging women's presence in political life. When taking account of the socio-cultural composition, multi-ethnic societies, historical and transitional contexts and the development of democracy, the Western Balkan countries are very similar. Although there is progress in terms of the institutional and positive changes made due to the impact of Europeanisation, the Western Balkan countries still need to re-organise their societies in addition to overcoming the traditional perceptions and gender divisions. There are deep differences in the presence of different social groups and an unequal gender presence in political life. These dissimilarities are certainly determined by socio-cultural and economic factors, which prevail over the institutional factors. As a result of the political exclusion of women in these countries, several outcomes follow: a lower level of education; a lower rate of employment; economic dependency; a patriarchal model in the home and the family; and the transition as a process that is characterised by a connection between the processes of retraditionalisation and repatriarchalisation of women's political status. From the other side, during the disintegration of the SFRY, and the ensuing conflicts and wars, gender equality and gender rights were overshadowed for almost a decade. As a result, women were politically excluded from

public life in general and from the decision-making processes in political life.

The book begins by outlining certain specific theoretical concepts connected to the individual variables regarding the influence of different factors on the political presence of women. A special focus is a comparative analysis of three countries of the Western Balkans, paying attention to several aspects that are especially important such as, the transition from socialism to a democracy, the effects and influence of the transition processes, the influence of war and historical developments in the post-socialist Balkans, as well as EU integration processes and the influence of external players on former socialist republics by way of external pressure to introduce democratic values.

This book analyses several factors influencing women's political presence, namely: institutional (electoral systems, political strategies – electoral and voluntary quotas; the influence of political parties); socioeconomic; and cultural. An especially important aspect is the change in electoral systems – proportional representation as well as the introduction of legal and party quotas to promote a stronger female presence. Despite the generally positive effects, the institutional changes are nevertheless overshadowed by the still dominant culture in all three countries. Given that the democratic experience has been quite short, the influence of socioeconomic factors has been quite strong. The positive influence of institutional factors has still been unable to alter the patriarchal matrix of established relations and role-division in these societies. The actual inclusion of women in decision-making processes remains determined by the existing dogmas, dominant perceptions and the local culture. Nowhere in the Western Balkans can a gender balance be seen at a higher decision-making level in government structures; even if the new liberal democracies have managed to include gender issues on the social agenda, typically as part of EU integration. The institutional changes shown in the researched case studies of Macedonia, Serbia and Croatia reveal the promise of greater women's inclusion in politics. The increase in the political presence of women so far is due to ongoing legal efforts – legislative changes, positive strategies, institutional changes, as mainly imposed by different declarations and directives of international bodies. Along these lines, the strategies of introducing electoral quotas along with electoral system changes away from majority representation to proportional representation have provided a mechanism for encouraging women's stronger

presence in national parliaments. Legal quotas introduced in these countries have started to take effect, especially once sanctions for breaking them were enforced. However, it is necessary to take steps to eliminate the traditional perceptions of men and women's social roles in order to overcome the dominant stereotypes, dogmas, traditionalist and patriarchal views that constitute the biggest obstacles to women's stronger political inclusion. Within the political parties themselves, voluntary quotas have had a positive impact. The introduction of electoral quotas and requirement of a minimum number of females on candidate lists at national parliamentary elections have had a particularly positive influence in the Western Balkans. Apart from these changes, women holding political decision-making positions, especially in executive government, either does not happen or in some cases arises from the pragmatic requirements of political parties. Although efforts are being made, especially by the non-governmental sector, to increase women's political presence, women in these post-socialist countries are still in a relatively negative position in not only political life, but also other spheres of social life. The repatriarchalisation processes and changing reproductive roles of women in these societies otherwise moving towards the emancipation model pose a challenge for the new democracies of the Western Balkans. The situation is made particularly critical in the labour market by the overall burden of the transition, military conflicts and poverty, which have led women back into the domestic sphere. In Macedonia, despite the introduction of quotas, women still appear lower down on candidate lists. The unblocked lists in Serbia provide for a change in the order of candidates who actually win seats in parliament. In Croatia, an extended adaptation period (of the next three elections) has been granted to all parties in order to implement the legal changes/quotas. This all highlights the negative influence of cultural factors given the dominant perceptions in the Western Balkans that place women in the home and the family, or in the private sphere. In Croatia, Macedonia and then later in Serbia, despite EU integration processes entailing legislative and institutional changes that have seen the number of women in national parliaments go up, the analyses demonstrate this numerical increase still does not meet the criteria of a political presence. The influence of positive strategies is especially important. Despite theoretical arguments against the use of legal quotas, they have not had any negative effect on the presence of males in these countries with a short democratic development;

instead, they seem to be encouraging women to participate in political developments. In other words, the positive measures have tended to offer equal opportunities to both genders. Yet it is clear that prejudice concerning gender and women's position in political life generally remain to different degrees in all three case study countries. Socio-cultural factors are the product of historical and political circumstances, culture, religion and dogmas which are reflected as dominant perceptions in a given society. In these conditions of economic strife and cultural stereotypes, a certain degree of gender equality has been achieved, mainly due to the countries' international obligations and 'top-bottom' pressure, as well as social pressure, especially by the non-governmental sector and female organisations. The role played by NGOs is very important as social actors raising people's awareness which, with the help of the state and international actors, have informed the general public about women's rights while providing mechanisms to support the evaluation and implementation of gender policies. However, the pressures towards the retraditionalisation and repatriarchalisation of women's political identity and status within these societies remain in place (Jogan, 2011). More illustrative arguments are found below, starting with the research question and analytical framework, the empirical findings concerning specific factors' influence on women political presence, the conclusions and in the summary of the findings.



## 2 THE RESEARCH QUESTION AND METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Starting from the theoretical concepts of the constructivist approach<sup>12</sup> (Townsend, 2010), the concept of culture (Hannagan et al., 2012; Hansen et al., 2011a) and gender equality (Lombardo and Verloo, 2009), this book seeks to discover why women are politically less present in the post-socialist countries of the Western Balkans. According to Ann Phillips' (1995; 1998) categorisation, we use the word "presence" as the best solution for describing the numerical representation of women in authorities, as opposed to the research into descriptive and substantive representation (Mansbridge, 2011; Pearson and Dancey, 2011b). In Eastern Europe, the ideological transition from socialism to post-socialism has led to different definitions of woman's role in society, and thus different approaches in attempts to create democratic and evolutionary reforms, as opposed to the previous rules of state control and equality imposed top-down<sup>13</sup> (Leinert Novosel, 2007).

*The comparative analysis* of three case studies from the Western Balkans, starting with the historical and transitional context, and the level of democratic development, encompasses three countries: Macedonia (MK), the Republic of Serbia (RS) and Croatia (HR). Our first goal is to analyse the legal frameworks of these countries and to what extent they are in harmony with the European

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<sup>12</sup> The concepts are elaborated in the theoretical part.

<sup>13</sup> Data from 1987 show 13.2% of the women in western capitalist developed societies, as opposed to 26.6% in socialist countries, which is due to the controlled equality established by the state (Leinert Novosel, 2007: 85–102).