

## **WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION IN POLITICS IN SOUTH EASTERN EUROPE**

### **Quotas and the Importance of Party Differences**

*Abstract. Quotas are determined to be the main and most effective tool in promoting gender equality. We examine six Southeast European countries where quotas have been either reintroduced (following the abolition of communist-era quota systems) or introduced for the first time. Presenting original data on the descriptive representation of women in parliament, we find significant within region variety. Unlike in Western countries, where women's representation tends to be higher among center and left parties, center-right parties have in some cases staged the most women. We look into quotas, as well as cultural and historical contexts, in order to examine this region-specific phenomenon and account for the within-region variation.*

**Keywords:** *gender and politics, descriptive representation of women, quotas, Southeastern Europe*

### **Introduction**

In a time when same sex marriages, social heterogeneity, openness and equality, and acceptance of the 'other' are increasingly hot topics, gender equality may often pass as something granted, something normal, something that we already have. Paradoxically, however, it is neither granted, nor achieved, despite the fact that women make up about half the population of the world. While the number of women and men is relatively equal, the gender balance in politics is much to the favor of men. According to latest data from IPU, the world average for percent women in the lower house of parliament is 23.3 – a number far off from parity and varying even further when we look at regions individually (IPU, 2017). As can be expected, the more developed and longer established democratic regions of the world, such as Europe and the Americas, tend to have higher rates of women participation, especially the Nordic countries. What is interesting, and to an extent puzzling, is the reported greatest progress by the Balkan counties of

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Southeast Europe. At the same time, Southeastern Europe remains a region with heavy patriarchic and macho mentality where the role of the woman, albeit changing, still remains largely understood in the traditional way – as a mother and a housewife (Simic, 1969; Buchanan, 2002). This continuing perception of the role of the woman, coupled with the highest increase over the last decade in the number of women in parliament within Europe, presents an intriguing puzzle that calls for further examination. One explanation for this phenomenon is what Dahlerup (2006) refers to as the ‘fast track to gender balance in politics’ or the adoption of legislated candidate quotas as an attempt to influence gender equality. Gender quotas have been implemented worldwide (Hughes et al., 2015) with the aim of increasing women’s representation in political institutions. While a majority of the predicted effects of gender quotas refer to our expectations of better descriptive, substantive and symbolic representation of women, there are many scholars who put into question the certainty of such predictions, especially in different contexts (Dahlerup and Freidenvall, 2010). This suggests that one of the major challenges in quota research which still remains is to evaluate the effectiveness of gender quotas. Krook (2016) notes that although quotas have diffused rapidly around the world, evidence of political practices having changed little, points to the fact that the adoption of quotas may be just the beginning of a long and contested process of empowering women as political actors. This, coupled with Dahlerup’s (2005) observation that Nordic countries, which have traditionally included the highest number of women in political posts<sup>1</sup> have never adopted legislated candidate quotas, brings the question of the effectiveness of gender quotas to the forefront.

Building on previous research on the subject, we strive to add to the work on gender quotas in two ways. First, we propose that the effectiveness of gender quotas is a party-level question, and second, we argue that significant differences can be expected between the projected effects of quotas in West and East European parties. The importance of a smaller unit of analysis (party-level as opposed to system-level) is brought by the fact that many countries do not have legislated candidate quotas, while some of their political parties adopt voluntary party quotas. The need to distinguish between East and West is emphasized not only by the limited number of studies dealing with Eastern Europe (Antic and Lokar, 2006; Dubrow, 2010), but also by the recognized (Krook, 2015) influence of specific contexts in shaping the effectiveness of gender quotas. Missing out on these two new perspectives, especially in comparative studies, significantly decreases our understanding of how gender quotas work. Most recent scholarship on quota effectiveness

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<sup>1</sup> *Recently, Rwanda has also gained a significant share of women in politics, the highest in the world.*

(Krook, 2015) presents three factors on cross-national variations of the effect of gender quotas – details of the measures, the fit with other political institutions, and the political will. To these, we add a fourth factor – historical political legacy. We argue that the political history of a country will have a strong intervening effect in how quotas are perceived, and hence, whether and to what extent they will be implemented. Furthermore, we stress the importance of examining the effectiveness of quotas at a party, as opposed to a national, level, particularly due to the fact that we expect parties with different ideology and relation to a previous political regime, to have different strategies both in terms of adoption, as well as, implementation of gender quotas. In particular, we theorize that in Eastern Europe, Left political parties would adopt gender quotas more often than Center-Right and Right political parties as a result of their historical past and the gender quotas which existed during communist time and which were abolished at the beginning of the transition period, and that if political parties of the Right adopt gender quotas (as we see in Romania for example), it is often a result of a contagion effect or an attempt to mimic their counterparts in the West, rather than as a form of affirmative action. In addition, we would expect the effect of quotas to be limited for the following reasons – first, because of the different quota adoption and nomination strategies among parties (we argue that women in Center-Right and Right parties are recruited and nominated based on merit more so than gender, a distinction made by the parties themselves); second, because quotas are designed to affect the nomination of women and not the representation of women (and paths in satisfying the first, while negatively affecting the second, are increasingly found by crafty politicians); and third, due to the low non-compliance costs that parties have to pay if they do not abide by the quota.

Building on existing research on the descriptive representation of women, we examine women's representation in six Southeast European states (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Kosovo, Montenegro, and Romania). Our goal is twofold. First, we present detailed data on the involvement of women in parliament within the Southeast European region; second, we examine whether and to what extent quotas have played a role in achieving a greater gender balance. In doing that, we broaden the empirical base of gender scholarship to a largely under-studied region. Furthermore, contrary to expectations derived from extant scholarship, we show that the effect of quotas is largely contingent on other factors – such as the cultural and historical past – and that, albeit useful in some contexts, such measures do not prove to be effective in all environments. Thus, our work here suggests that other institutions, such as specific rules for competition, may have a strong effect on the incentives that parties have when nominating their representatives and overrule adopted gender quotas. On the other

hand, if engineered in a certain manner, rules that guide party establishment and competition, may offer stimulus for greater gender balance.

The paper proceeds with a section on the political and historical context and women's activism in the region in which we also draw our theoretical expectation. Next is a section on data and method, which presents and analyzes the empirical data on women representation across the party system in each individual country for the last 25 years. The final section summarizes our findings, and concludes by offering guidelines for future research.

### **Southeast European Women in Political and Historical Context**

All countries in our sample were at one-point part of the Ottoman Empire and, thus, carry the Ottoman legacy of a deeply engrained patriarchic culture. Although the extent of such patriarchy in private life has been questioned (Simic, 1999), public life was largely dominated and organized according to patriarchic principles. While the communist experience, accompanied by women emancipation policies, has undermined patriarchic structures, patriarchic culture and mentalities persist. Machismo – the valorization of overt displays of virility – has been found to be prevalent in Southeastern Europe (Simic, 1999), creating a powerful image in the communal psyche that continues to define gender roles and identities. Despite such cultural limitations, women activism in the region emerged in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Initially an elitist movement of educated and upper class women, its activities moved beyond charity and towards advocacy for rights to education and work. Political rights also figured in these early agendas, though, it was not until after World War II that all Southeast European countries enfranchised women. Common cultural and historical characteristics notwithstanding, there is significant regional variation in the status of women in the region and in the development trajectories of women activism. All countries in our sample experienced communist emancipation policies aimed at integrating women in politics and in the labor force. Gender quotas with a target of 30 percent significantly increased the proportion of women in politics and for the first time women accessed ministerial positions (Forest, 2011). Yet, women's engagement was limited to lower and local level positions and women hardly figured in supreme party bodies. Moreover, socialist emancipation policies were viewed as 'state feminism or feminism from above' (Antić Gaber, 2005) and came to be detested for their forced character and ulterior motives of achieving economic and demographic targets (Harvey, 2002: 30). Yugoslav women were particularly pro-active in their criticism. Having greater access to the West, Yugoslav feminists were heavily influenced by radical Western feminism in the 1970s and started organizing independent feminist organizations that transcended ethnic and national

differences and challenged official communist ideology. In Bulgaria, by contrast, the communist women's movement was hostile to Western feminist ideas and focused on cooperation with development countries and on broader social issues, priding itself in offering an alternative forum for women's issues (Ghodsee, 2012). Similarly to Bulgaria, Romania and Albania never experienced second wave feminism and women's organizations were limited to those established and controlled by the Party. Anti-feminism remains strong across the region even today, as feminism still carries a negative connotation and is seen as connected either with militant suffragettes or with strong women communist politicians (Antić Gaber, 2005).

With the collapse of communism and the abolition of quotas, women's political engagement sharply declined across the region. The transition context proved unfavorable to women's issues, as they were pushed aside by more immediate concerns at the time, namely, political instability and economic hardships. While women took active part in dissident organizations and new political formations, they rarely occupied leadership positions in the early years of the transition. Former Yugoslav countries faced an additional, and by far the biggest, challenge. Rising nationalism in the late 1980's split the Yugoslav feminist movement (Zarkov, 2003). Ethnic conflict and war 'did not provide much room for deliberations on questions of gender equality or the political representation of women' (Antić Gabrt, 2005: 24) and further reinforced and polarized traditional gender roles with dichotomous rhetoric of the man-warrior and the woman-mother. What was left of the former feminist movement was absorbed into the anti-war movement, while women's organizations became focused on social issues and providing assistance to rape victims. Following the Yugoslav wars, however, women activism was revived and made its way in formal structures through the Stability Pact for Southeastern Europe and the Gender Task Force which were active from 1999-2008. Such support empowered civil society and women's organizations who were key in reinstating gender quotas and who sought cooperation with political parties in pushing the question of women representation.

### *Quotas*

The 2000s brought an improvement in women's status, largely due to external influence and international involvement. As Bulgaria and Romania became official EU candidate states, they transposed EU legislation, including gender equality clauses in various laws. External funding for the third sector further helped women NGO's to organize. Similarly, in former Yugoslavia international involvement and funding empowered women NGOs and helped raise awareness of gender issues. Women's organizations were key in reinstating gender quotas in former Yugoslav countries. Slovenia and its

Social Democrats were the first to introduce voluntary party quotas in 1995. In 1996, Croatia and its Social Democratic Party (SDP) followed suit. Bosnia and Herzegovina, in turn, was the first to institute legislated candidate quotas in 1998 after the first post-war elections in 1996 resulted in only one female candidate being elected to parliament. Women's organizations organized in the League of Women Voters and with the help of USAID were able to mobilize and push for an electoral law campaign. Yet, quotas have been offset by an open list system, allowing but a limited number of female candidates to enter parliament, as well as various party strategies to circumvent quota rules (Antić Gaber and Lokar, 2006). Moreover, requirements for ethnic and gender representation are often satisfied by the same candidate, thus, limiting the intended effect of the legislation. Albania adopted a gender equality law in 2008 that included a quota provision. Legislated candidate quotas were applied for the first time in the 2009 parliamentary elections, which more than doubled the number of female MPs. The percentage of female MPs continued to rise in the subsequent election showing a clear positive effect of quotas. Despite the fact, the numbers are far from the target stipulated in the law as parties manage to outmaneuver the law, placing women at the bottom of electoral lists. Fines have shown little effect in assuring party compliance. The cross-party Alliance of Women MPs in parliament monitors compliance and is further pushing for expansion of quotas to mayoral elections.

Kosovo adopted legislated quotas of 30 percent at the national and local level in 2000 immediately after the conflict. The quotas apply to party lists as well as to seats in parliament, i.e. reserved seat quotas, resulting in a 'best loser' system, where male candidates are removed in favor of female candidates who received the most votes without being elected. The law was introduced by the UN mission, UNMIK, and was met with great support by women's organizations, but criticized by male MPs as well as the EU. External influence was key in Kosovo's case. Challenges to applying to the law still remain, including finding female candidates to run, informal recruitment and nomination process based on male-dominated networks, lack of party support during the campaign justified by the reserved seats (NDI, 2015), as well as a preferential voting system that disadvantages women in the race. Montenegro was the last in our sample to introduce quotas of in 2011 at the national and local level. The law provides for a quota of 30 percent in party lists and an amendment from 2013 introduces a ranking requirement of every fourth candidate on the list to be of the less represented gender. The effect of the amendment is demonstrated by 2016. The case of Montenegro shows the powerful effect of diffusion with countries in the region following suit in adopting quotas. Yet, such diffusion has its limits as the Bulgarian and Romanian cases show.

Bulgaria and Romania are the two countries from our sample without legislated candidate quotas. In 2008, the Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP) adopted a 30% voluntary party quota for the party leadership bodies, but such quota is not in effect for candidate lists. There are no women caucuses, yet, the Socialist International Women organization was influential in the quota adoption by the BSP. There was also a failed attempt to organize a women parliamentary group. The short-lived Party of Bulgarian Women participated in elections from 1997 to 2005 and was even part of the 2001–2005 governing coalition, but since then has been unable to collect the necessary signatures for registration. Its platform explicitly states that it is a non-feminist organization that promotes family values. On the other hand, several of the major parties have women’s organizations and women’s representation in parliament and in government has been increasing, reaching over 33% of ministerial positions. In Romania, the two main parties on the left and the right have introduced voluntary quotas of 40% and 30% respectively. It was the Social Democratic Party (PSD) that took the initiative to introduce quotas of 25% in 2001. The Democratic Party (PD) then decided to top the PSD with a quota of 30%, which resulted in increase in the percentage by the PSD. By 2004 both parties utilized quotas, which were primarily a function of EU influence and domestic party competition as evidenced by the fact that both parties are more likely to promote women in EU parliament elections than in national and local elections (Turcu, 2009).

Table 1. GENDER QUOTAS

Country	Electoral system	Legislated Candidate Quotas	Voluntary Party Quotas	Sanctions for non-compliance
Albania	Close-list PR	33% (2009) National and local Ranking: YES	None	1,000,000 ALL (€7120)
Bosnia & Herzegovina	Open list PR	40% (1998) National and local Ranking: YES	None	Replace candidates
Bulgaria	Closed list PR	None	BSP – 30% (2008)**	None
Kosovo	Open list PR + RS for ethnic minorities	30% (2000) National and local	None	None
Montenegro	Closed list PR	30% (2011) National and local Ranking: YES	None	Denying electoral entry
Romania	MMP	None	DP – 30% (2004); PSD – 40% (2004)	None

Sources: Antic and Lokar (2006).

Notes:

\* 40% to be achieved within the third election after the adoption of the law.

\*\* For party leadership bodies.

## Data and Method

As argued above, there have been attempts to influence the gender balance in all six countries – legislative gender quotas have been introduced in four of the six countries, and the countries without legislative quotas have voluntary quotas of center-left parties, constitutional texts address the equality between men and women, as do Party Laws and other transformed or newly adopted legislation. Moreover, all countries have a history of women activism. Yet, as we have seen neither the regulatory framework, nor the cultural and historical legacies are uniform or have led to similar outcomes. Having examined such factors, we now turn to the descriptive representation of women in parliament in the six countries from the 1990s onwards, examining trends across countries, across time, and across parties within each state. Data has been collected by us from primary sources, including the parliamentary and governmental sites of each country, as well as from the sites of respective electoral commissions and individual political parties. We use qualitative methodology to determine whether gender quotas have played a role in the proportion of women elected to parliament.

### *Across countries and over time*

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Overall, women representation is increasing in all six states, albeit at a different level and with different speed. While the share of women in parliament was in the single digits in the early 1990s, currently women represent between 14 (Romania) and 32.5 percent (Kosovo) of MPs. We notice the highest rate of increase in Albania which had 3.2 percent women in its 1991 parliament and currently has 22.9 percent. Montenegro and Romania have relatively lower, although increasing, percent of women in parliament (around 14 percent) compared to the rest of the countries in the sample, all of which thread above 20 percent. Our findings clearly show the effect of quotas, especially when looking at Albania where the percent of women in parliament sharply increased following the introduction of quotas. We similarly notice high percentage of women in Kosovo and Bosnia and Herzegovina where quotas came along with independence. At the same time, we find that top-down approaches, such as legislated candidate quotas, have their limits and are not the sole driver of women's representation. We have witnessed an increase of women representation in the absence of legislated quotas, as is the case in Bulgaria, which represents a rather interesting case, having reached the highest percent of women in government – 35.3 percent and 33.3 percent in the previous two governments – far beyond the figures in the rest of the countries. We similarly notice high representation of women in the Romanian governments of 2008 (23.8 percent) and 2001

(21.2 percent), that are coupled with twice as low levels of representation in parliament – 11.6 and 10 respectively. By contrast, a high percentage of women representation in parliament is often coupled with much lower representation in government. Consider, for example, Kosovo and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Although the current percentage of women in parliament is 32.5 in Kosovo and 23.8 in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in government we see a mere 8.8 and 17.6 percent respectively. Such differences between representation in government and in parliament show, on the one hand, that legislated candidate quotas have little impact outside of their scope (i.e. parliamentary representation), and, on the other hand, that certain parties can unilaterally improve the gender balance in government even if not able to do so in parliament. This turns us to our examination of gender representation across parties that we consider key to the understanding of gender representation in the region and beyond.

*Table 2. WOMEN IN PARLIAMENT AND GOVERNMENT COMPARED*

Country	1996	1997	2001	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2012	2013	2014	2016
Albania	Gov't		11.5		6.7				15.7			38.1		
	Parl		5.2	5.7	7.1				31.6			22.9		
B & H	Gov't												17.6	
	Parl					21.4				21.4			23.8	
Bulgaria	Gov't		17.6	11.8		16.7			23.5			35.3	33.3	
	Parl		12.1	26.7		20.8			20.4			25.4	20.0	
Kosovo	Gov't						11.1			11.1			8.7	
	Parl			28.3	28.1		30.8			33.3			32.5	
Montenegro	Gov't								4.8		18.2			17.4
	Parl					9.9			8.6		14.8			25.9
Romania	Gov't	0	0	21.2	16		5.6	23.8	16.7	5.9	25	19.2	26	26.9
	Parl	7.2		9.97	9.9			11.6			14.0			20.7

Source: Own calculations based on official websites. For the sources used for each country, see the tables below.

*Across parties*

In addition to looking at trends across time and across countries, we examine women representation across parties in an attempt to find additional regional specificities. We know that in Western countries, Left parties tend to exhibit higher levels of women representation compared to Right parties, despite recent increase in the representation of women in conservative parties. At same time, our previous research (Rashkova and Zankina, 2013, 2014) demonstrates that in Eastern Europe parties from the Right tend to stage no less women than parties from the Left and at higher positions.

As illustrated by the data below, this sample corroborates our previous findings.

Before examining party representation in each country of our sample, it is important to point to the specific regional context of the political spectrum in the region. Due to the communist past and the post-communist context, Left and Right take on different meanings in post-communist countries. Since the Left came to be represented primarily by former communist parties, it stands for the status quo, ties with the old regime, and is perceived, at least initially, as anti-democratic. The Right, initially associated with the anti-communist opposition which included parties and organizations from the entire political spectrum, stands for change, acceptance, tolerance, and human rights, and yet for laissez-faire economics, competition, less taxation and fewer benefits (Rashkova and Zankina, 2014). This regional specificity may explain to some extent the regional phenomenon of women representation in parties as observed in several of the countries in our sample.

*Table 3. WOMEN REPRESENTATION IN THE ALBANIAN PARLIAMENT, 1991–2016*

Political Party	Orientation	1991	1992	1996	1997	2001	2005	2009	2013
Socialist Party (PS)	Center-Left	2.4	2.6	0	6.9	8.3	9.5	18.5	26.2
Democratic Party (PD)	Center-Right	5.3	7.6	13.9	4.2	9.1	5.4	14.7	23.7
Socialist Movement for Integration (LSI)	Center-Left						0	0	22.2
Republican Party (PR)	Right		0	0	0	0	9.1	0	0
Party for Justice, Integration and Unity (PDIU)	Right							0/1	1/8 12.5
Social Democratic Party (PSD)	Center-Left		0		0	0	28.6		
New Democratic Party	Center-Right					0	0		
Green Party (PGJ)	Center-Left/ Left					0			
Liberal Center	Center					0			
Legality Movement Party (LMP)	Right/ monarchist				0	0			
National Front Party	Far-right			0	0	0			
Liberal Democratic Union	Center					0			
Alliance for Democracy						0			
Other (under 5 MPs)		0	0		0		0	0	25.0
<b>Parliament (total)</b>		<b>3.2</b>	<b>5.7</b>	<b>12.1</b>	<b>5.2</b>	<b>5.7</b>	<b>7.1</b>	<b>15.7</b>	<b>22.9</b>
<b>Government</b>						<b>11.5</b>	<b>6.7</b>	<b>31.6</b>	<b>38.1</b>

Sources: Own calculations based on the official website of the Albanian Parliament ([www.parliament.al](http://www.parliament.al)) and data made available by Afrim Krasniqi from his book, *Zgjedhjet në Shqipëri (1991–2008): proceset zgjedhore, partitë, kandidatët, fushatat elektorale: zgjedhjet parlamentare, zgjedhjet lokale dhe referendimet në shifra krahasuese*.

In Albania, it is the Socialist Party (PS) that has the highest percentage of women in parliament in recent years, though its percentages were rather low before the adoption of quotas. The center-right Democratic Party (PD) has not been far behind the PS and in the early 1990's it was the party that staged the most women in the absence of quotas. Women are virtually absent outside of those two main parties, showing the limited effect of quotas outside big parties. The comparable percentages of the main parties, in turn, indicate the positive effect of party competition in regards to women representation and the contagion effect.

Given the small size of the parliament of Bosnia and Herzegovina (42 MPs), patterns are very hard to discern as any individual female MP can bring a great difference in the party's percentage, as seen by the variation of female MPs across parties ranging from 0 to 60 percent. At various times, left and right parties, Bosniak, Croat or Serb have held the highest percentage of women. Main parties have not been more representative of women, but this may be again a function of the overall small number of MPs.

Table 4. WOMEN REPRESENTATION IN THE PARLIAMENT OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, 2006–2016\*

Political Party	Orienta- tion	Ethnicity	1996	1998	2000	2002	2006	2010	2014
Party of Democratic Action (SDA)	Center-Right	Bosniak	0	14.3*	0	30.0	11.1	0.0	10.0
Croatian Democratic Union of BiH (HDZ BiH)	Right	Croat	0	40.0	0	20.0	0.0	0.0	60.0
Party for Better Future of BiH (SB BiH)	Center-Right	Bosniak						25.0	0.0
Democratic Front (DF)	Center-Left	Croat							60.0
Alliance of Independent Social Democrats (SNSD)	Center-Left	Serb			0	33.3	28.6	22.2	33.3
Social Democratic Party of BiH (SDP BiH)	Left	Bosniak		25.0	11.1	0	40.0	33.3	0.0
Serb Democratic Party (SDS)	Right	Serb	0	0	0	50.0	33.3	40.0	20.0
People's Parties Coalition	Right	Mix					0.0	0.0	
Party for Bosnia and Herzegovina (SBIH)	Right	Bosniak	50.0	–	20.0	33.3	25.0		
Other (with less than 3 MPs)							0.0	50.0	0.0
Parliament (total)							21.4	21.4	23.8
Government									17.6

Sources: Own calculations based on the official website of the Parliament of Bosnia and Herzegovina ([www.parliament.ba](http://www.parliament.ba)) for the 2006–2014 parliaments. Data for 1996–2006 provided by Nermina Zaimović-Uzunović.

\* In coalition with SBIH.

Table 5. WOMEN REPRESENTATION IN BULGARIAN POLITICS, 1991–2016.

Political Party	Orientation	1990	1991	1994	1997	2001	2005	2009	2013	2014
BSP/Coalition	Center-Left	11.4	19.8	16.8	12.1	10.4	18.3	17.5	22.6	12.8
BBB	Right	-	-	7.7	0.0	-	-	-	-	-
PU/BZNS+	Center/Agrarian	6.3	-	5.6	12.5	-	-	-	-	-
Euroleft	Center-Left	-	-	-	13.3	-	-	-	-	-
NDSV	Center/Center-Right	-	-	-	-	40.5	37.7	-	-	-
BNS/BZNS+	Center/Agrarian	-	-	-	-	-	7.7	-	-	-
UDF	Center-Right	6.2	8.2	8.7	14.5	17.6	20.0	-	-	-
DSB	Right	-	-	-	-	-	23.5	13.3	-	4.3
RZS	Right	-	-	-	-	-	-	20.0	-	-
MRF	Center/Ethnic	0.0	12.5	0.0	6.3	5.0	8.8	7.9	13.8	10.5
ATAKA	Far Right	-	-	-	-	-	24.3	14.3	21.7	27.3
GERB	Center-Right	-	-	-	-	-	-	27.6	33.0	35.7
ABV	Center-Left	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9.1
PF	Far Right	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10.5
BBTs	Right	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13.3
<b>Parliament (total)</b>		8.5	13.8	12.1	12.1	26.7	20.8	20.4	25.4	20.0
<b>Government</b>		*	6.7	5.6	17.6	11.8	16.7	23.5	35.3	33.3

Sources: Kostadinova (2003) and own calculations based on the official Bulgarian parliament website ([www.parliament.bg](http://www.parliament.bg))

Notes: \*Appointed, not elected government. ABV = Alternative for Bulgarian Development; BBB = Bulgarian Business Block; BBTs = Bulgarian Without Censorship; Blue Coalition = SDS + DSB; BNS = Bulgarian People's Union; BZNS = Bulgarian Agrarian People's Union; DSB = Democrats for Strong Bulgaria; GERB = Citizens for European Development of Bulgaria; PF = Patriotic Front; PU = People's Union; RZS = Law, Justice and Order; UDF = United Democratic Forces (SDS+).

In Bulgaria, the party which has staged the highest number of women historically is the center-right National Movement Simeon II (NDSV)<sup>2</sup> with 40.5 percent female deputies in 2001. The likely reason for the high percentage of women in the NDSV is the participation of the Bulgarian Party of Women as NDSV's partner in the 2001 election. The Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP) maintained the highest percentage of women in the early 1990s, even when in opposition, but was surpassed by parties from the Center-Right in the late 1990s and the 2000s. This is due on the one hand to an increase in the number of women in the parties from the Right, and, on the other, to a decrease in women representation in BSP, particularly in the 2014–2016 parliament. The BSP quota for leadership bodies have not resulted in an increase in female MPs, though for the first time the BSP has appointed a female party leader in 2016. The centrist ethnic Turkish party, Movement for Rights and Freedoms

<sup>2</sup> Now renamed to National Movement for Stability and Progress, but retaining its original initials in Bulgarian (NDSV).

(MRF), has an overall lower percentage of women than most other parties in parliament (not surprising for an ethnic party), with the exception of 1991, when the high percentage is a function of the low number of MPs from the MRF. The nationalist, ATAKA, on the other hand, has unexpectedly high percentage of women, again a function of the low number of MPs. The overall trend which we observe in Bulgaria is that the incumbent party has the highest percentage of women – a function of the ruling party having the most seats and the lower ranking of women in candidate lists.

In Kosovo, center and center-right parties have competed to represent women with overall very high percentages of over 30. The two largest parties, the Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK) and the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) have competed in staging the most female MPs in different parliaments, with the party having the most MPs having the higher number and percentage. Few parties in Kosovo identify with left or center-left ideology, therefore it is hard to argue for differences across parties based on ideological divisions.

Table 6. WOMEN REPRESENTATION IN THE KOSOVAR PARLIAMENT, 2001–2016.

Party Name	Orientation	2001	2004	2007	2010	2014
PDK	Right	30.8	26.7	32.4	32.4	34.3
LDK	Center-Right	31.3	<b>31.8</b>	32.0	33.3	30.3
AAK (Aleanca për Ardhmërinë e Kosovë)	Conservative	22.2	27.3	30.0	33.3	25.0
AKR (New Kosovo Alliance or Aleanca Kosova e Re)	Center			30.8		
SLS (Samostalna Liberalna Stranka)	Center			33.3	<b>37.5</b>	
LDD-PSHDK (Lidhja Demokratike e Dardanisë-Partia Shqiptare Demokratiane e Kosovës)	Center-Right			<b>36.4</b>		
SLKM_GIS Group	Minority		25.0			
ORA Group	Center-Left		28.6			
Grupi i LDD-se			16.7			
KP (Koalicija “Povratak”)	Minority	<b>31.8</b>				
NISMA	Center-Left					33.3
New Kosovo Coalition (Koalicioni për Kosovë të Re)					<b>37.5</b>	
VV (Lëvizja Vetëvendosje)	Nationalist				35.7	35.3
Lista Serbe	Minority					<b>36.4</b>
Others (including ethnic minority parties and independents)		13.3	26.7	23.8	29.4	30.0
<b>Parliament (total)</b>		<b>28.3</b>	<b>28.1</b>	<b>30.8</b>	<b>33.3</b>	<b>32.5</b>
<b>Government</b>		<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<b>11.1</b>	<b>11.1</b>	<b>8.7</b>

Sources: Own calculations based on the Kosovo Parliament official website ([www.kuvendikosoves.org](http://www.kuvendikosoves.org)).

In Montenegro, the center-left Coalition for a European Montenegro has had the highest number of women, though being the largest party, this has not always translated into the highest percentage. On the contrary, right and center-right parties have consistently had higher percentage of female MPs, despite overall lower numbers of female MPs. In other words, right and center-right parties have practiced a more gender-balanced distribution of seats, even though the center-left coalition has had the highest number of female MPs.

*Table 7. WOMEN REPRESENTATION IN THE MONTENEGRIN PARLIAMENT, 2006–2016.*

Party Name	Orientation	2006*	2009	2012	2016
Coalition for a European Montenegro Koalicija za Evropsku Crnu Goru); DPS+SDP+LPCG	Center-Left	9.8	6.3	10.3	27.8
Democratic Front	Right			15.0	22.2
SNP (Socialist People's Party); Key Coalition	Center-Left	0.0	18.8	22.2	22.2
Democratic Montenegro	Center				25.0
PCG (Positive Montenegro)	Center			28.6	
PzP (Movement for Changes)	Center-Right	18.2	20.0		
NOVA (New Serb Democracy)	Right		0.0		
SL (Serbian List)	Minority	16.7			
LP-BS (Liberals and Bosniac Party)	Center-Left	0.0			
LSCG (liberal Alliance Montenegro)	Separatist				
Others (ethnic minority parties, independents, under 5 MPs)		0.0		16.7	10.0
<b>Parliament (total)</b>		9.9	8.6	14.8	25.9
<b>Government</b>		n/a	4.8	18.2	17.4

Sources: Own calculations based on the Montenegro Parliament official website (<http://www.skupstina.me>). Data for women in government are not available.

\* Montenegro pronounced its independence from Serbia in 2006.

In Romania, we currently have the center-right parties, the National Liberal Party (PNL) and the Conservative Party (PC) having the highest percentage of women, 16.2 and 17.4 respectively. The center-left, Social Democratic Party (PSD), has traditionally staged women at a growing rate, yet lower than the center-right parties or its counterparts in other countries in the sample. The Democratic Party (PD) is tracking closely behind the PSD, having higher percentage of female MPs in some parliaments. The Romanian case shows that voluntary party quotas can have a positive effect, especially when seen as an advantage in party competition. At the same time, parties without voluntary quotas, namely the PNL, can have higher percentages of female MPs, which may be a function of a contagion effect.

Table 8. WOMEN REPRESENTATION IN THE ROMANIAN PARLIAMENT, 1990–2016

Political Party	Orientation	1990	1992	1996	2000	2004	2008	2012
National Salvation Front (FSN) / Social Democracy Party of Romania (PDSR)/Social Democratic Party (PSD)	Left/Center-Left	6.9	5.7	9.7	12.0	14.3	7.9	14.7
Democratic Union of Hungarians in Romania (UDMR)	Center-Right/Ethnic	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.8	0.0	1.0	0.0
National Liberal Party (PNL)	Center-Right	6.9						
Ecological Movement of Romania (MER)	Left	8.3						
Romanian National Unity Party (PUNR)	Right	0.0	0.0	0.0				
National Peasant-Christian and Democratic Party (PNTCD)	Center-Right	0.0	0.0	4.5				
Romanian Ecologist Party (PER)	Center-Right	37.5	0.0	0.0				
Democratic Agrarian Party of Romania (PDAR)	Center	0.0						
Romanian Socialist Democratic Party (PSDR)	Center-Left	0.0						
Democratic Party (PD)	Center-Right		9.7	11.1	7.4	10.4	12.6	
Great Romania Party (PRM)	Far-Right		7.1	15.0	10.0	9.5		
Liberal Party (PL)/Civic Alliance Party (PAC)	Center-Right		7.7					
National Liberal Party (PNL)	Center-Right			2.7	3.7	1.7	10.5	16.2
Conservative Party (PC)/ALDE	Center-Right					15.8		17.4
Progressive Parliamentary Group	Independent						25.0	
National Union for the Progress of Romania (UNRP)	Center-Left							7.4
Independents and minorities		0.0	5.3	9.4	12.1	16.1	17.2	13.7
Parliament (total)		6.1	4.5	7.2	9.97	9.9	11.6	14.0
Government*		0.0	4.8	0/0/11.1	21.2	16/5.6	23.8/16.7/5.9/19	25/19.2/26/27.7

Sources: Own calculations based on the Romanian Parliament official website ([www.cdep.ro](http://www.cdep.ro))

\*The multiple numbers here indicate percentage for each government in power during that parliament term.

## Conclusion

Our examination of women representation of six Southeast European states leads to several conclusions. We notice a positive trend across the region with growing numbers of female MPs in all countries. Such steady growth, however, has happened at a different rate in each country showing a great within region variation that cannot be explained by quotas alone. Quotas prove to be effective in some cases, but do not have a uniform effect. Quotas have had limited influence beyond women representation in parliament and little influence in countering cultural norms and gender stereotypes, as is evident in the case Kosovo and Bosnia and Herzegovina. More importantly, women representation can be influenced even in the absence of quotas, as demonstrated by the Bulgarian and the Romanian cases where it was specific parties (and different in terms of ideological orientation) that championed the staging of women both in parliament and in government, setting a trend later to be followed by other parties. Furthermore, we observe an important regional phenomenon, namely that Center and Right parties often include more women than Left parties, as is the usual trend in the West. Moreover, as examined elsewhere (Rashkova and Zankina, 2014), Center and Right parties tend to appoint women to higher ranking positions, possibly a function of the specificities of the political spectrum as noted earlier.

Our results show mixed patterns and a variety of factors that account for the level and variation in women representation in the region. The effect of quotas is visible, yet, far from uniform. Given the relatively recent adoption of quotas in the region, it would be interesting to observe whether quotas can lead to spillover effects and increase in the share of women in governments in the future.

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