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## THE PURSUIT OF A REMEDY FOR GENDER INEQUALITY IN WIDER EUROPE: COMPARISON OF POLICIES AND INDICES IN THE EU, NORDIC COUNTRIES, AND SOUTH EAST EUROPE

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**ABSTRACT:** *This paper explores the differences between gender regimes in Europe, with an emphasis on EU policies, the Nordic women-friendly welfare states, and the former socialist policies of South Eastern European (SEE) countries. The main premise is that culture and differing institutionalization of gender equality contribute to different perceptions of women's role in society and to a different perception of gender equality in general. The paper examines the theoretical standpoints and historical background of different gender regimes in Europe. Gender equality indices are analyzed in order to investigate if any patterns exist among European countries with distinct cultural, political, and social backgrounds. Nordic countries are overachievers in gender equality in*

*Europe, mainly due to the prevailing egalitarianism and institutionalization of women-friendly welfare policies, which can serve as a good benchmark for wider Europe, especially for countries from South East Europe. However, cultural differences exist between Scandinavian and other European countries, which cannot be considered homogeneous. The paper raises important issues of gender equality such as multiculturalism and immigration, questioning to what extent future EU enlargements will increase the risk of greater gender inequality in the EU.*

**KEY WORDS:** *gender inequality, labour market, glass ceiling, developed market economies, economies in transition*

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

*Equality between women and men is a fundamental value of the European Union enshrined in the Treaties and is one of the objectives and tasks of the European Union, and mainstreaming the principle of equality between women and men in all its activities represents a general aim for the Union.<sup>1</sup>*

Gender equality is a complex and multidimensional phenomenon, which engages theoreticians, practitioners, policymakers, and the broader public. Even though policymakers in the European Union (EU) address the importance of gender equality, Europe is still far from achieving equality between men and women. The progress in individual member states is noticeable but can be slow due to the different cultural heritages and national, subnational, and supranational standards and objectives. Plantega et al. (2009) shows that most new member states have distinct historical heritages concerning work-family balance. This influences gender equality policies on a national level.

Searching for ways to cope with the crisis and recession, in 2010 the European Council adopted the Europe 2020 Strategy, which aims to achieve a high level of competitiveness, productivity, growth, and social cohesion by focusing on three pillars: 1) new-job creation, 2) smart, sustainable, innovation-driven growth, and 3) social cohesion. The Europe 2020 Strategy's main objective is to raise the employment rate to 75% for men and women aged 20 to 64 years. To meet this objective it is crucial to address the issue of gender equality in the labour market and the participation of women in all industries.

According to an expanded definition by the European Commission's Women's Charter (2010) (COM(2010) 78 final), gender equality focuses on: life choices and economic independence, the full realization of women's potential and the full use of their skills, a better gender distribution in the labour market, the promotion of genuine opportunities for both women and men to enjoy a work-life balance, human dignity, the right to life, and the right to the integrity of the person (Gender Equality Index Report 2013, p.7). The European Commission also introduced the Strategy for Equality Between Women and Men 2010-2015, emphasizing the following priorities: equal economic independence, equal pay for equal work of equal value, equality in decision-making, dignity, integrity, an end to gender-based violence, and gender equality in external actions.

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<sup>1</sup> Articles 2 and 3 TEU and Article 8 TFEU

The Council of the European Union adopted the European Pact for Gender Equality (2011-2020), acknowledging gender equality as a fundamental value of the European Union and emphasizing that gender equality policies are vital to economic growth, prosperity, and competitiveness.

Regardless of the numerous definitions of the term, it is noticeable how gender equality issues remain under-represented in the public domain, and a precise understanding of what gender equality issues are and to whom they are addressed is lacking. What are the obstacles to gender equality in the EU and wider Europe, and can they be overcome? How will potential EU candidate countries deal with gender equality issues on their path to EU accession? How will the EU deal with gender equality, taking into consideration immigration, multiculturalism, and the rising paradox of minorities within minorities? Numerous reports show women from ethnic minorities within the EU face greater risk of social exclusion in comparison to men from their communities and women from the ethnic majority. Furthermore, there are other disadvantaged communities in the EU not recognized as ethnic minorities: third-country immigrants, asylum seekers, and stateless persons such as the Roma.

Finding answers to these and many other questions is a challenge in itself.

The Europe 2020 Strategy includes a SEE2020 Strategy, which “provides a framework to assist governments in the region to implement their individual development strategies, including EU accession-related goals, by enhancing national efforts through regional cooperation on those specific issues that can benefit from a shared approach”. The governments of South East European countries embraced this new regional policy in order to attain the levels of “socioeconomic growth necessary to improve the prosperity of all (its) citizens and to facilitate eventual integration with the EU” (European 2020 Strategy).

By accepting the new regional policy the transition countries of the SEE region are given the opportunity to overcome the political, economic, and social burdens of post-socialism and transition in order to accelerate accession to the EU. One of the objectives of the SEE2020 Strategy is to add 300,000 highly qualified people to the workforce in the region, which coincides with the objective of the Europe 2020 Strategy (raising the employment rate to 75% for women and men). Although the Europe 2020 strategy (along with EU institutions) addresses gender equality issues, the SEE 2020 Strategy does not focus on the importance of women’s participation in the highly qualified labour force by the year 2020. It rather notes how “the objective of the Inclusive Growth pillar is to enhance

employment through skills development, employment creation and labor market participation by all, including vulnerable groups and minorities”.

The aim of this paper is to focus on the fundamental concepts and indices of gender equality in the EU and the SEE transition countries, and to emphasize the Scandinavian model of a women-friendly welfare state as a possible pathway to gender equality. Since SEE countries share similar cultural, political, and socio-economic legacies from socialism and share the same goal of accession to the EU, it is imperative to analyse if they share any specific gender-equality patterns.

The first step in the process is to review the literature on gender equality in the EU, Nordic countries, and the SEE region. Then the analysis of gender equality indices for Europe will illustrate how far the SEE region is from the EU in terms of gender equality. Finally, the recommendations for improving gender equality policies will hopefully offer a broad new perspective for governments, policymakers, educational institutions, and NGOs dealing with gender equality issues.

## **2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE ON A VARIETY OF EUROPEAN GENDER REGIMES**

Gender equality is a complex and multidimensional concept that encompasses economic, cultural, and social dimensions. Verloo and Lombardo (2007) explore the diverse meanings of gender equality and note that it is necessary to look not only at the theoretical debates on gender equality but also the geographical contexts in which these debates take place. They explore the different meanings of gender equality in different settings in relation to the different cultural values, traditions, and policies.

Rubery (2002) observes that in some EU member states where women are seen as primary carers, “the bulk of policy aims at supporting women in those roles”. On the other hand, in EU member states in which women occupy roles other than just being primary carers, “the focus is on challenging gender roles with a policy framework that tends to focus on changing the behaviors of both women and men”.

Verloo and Lombardo (2007) point out, “the public/private division is presented as a key dimension of the conceptualizations of the main structures that contribute to maintain and reproduce gender inequality, such as the organization of labor, intimacy and citizenship”.

As a consequence of the organization of labour, women face occupational and horizontal segregation in the labour market, and it is presumed (and actual statistical data shows) that women work in worse paid sectors such as education, health, and social services. Magnusson and Neramo (2009) show how this type of segregation influences the labour market in a general manner, contributing to the gender pay gap and impacting career advancement, access to training, and mentoring. Women also face vertical or hierarchical segregation (hierarchical inequality) in the labour market, with men dominating the highest-status occupations (Charles and Grusky 1995). Research by Arulampalam et al. (2007) shows that in the public and private sectors in Europe there is a tendency for the gender pay gap to be higher at the top of the wage distribution than in the middle, indicating how the glass ceiling effect is likely to occur. The obstacles in the labour market intertwine with women's disadvantage in the allocation of non-paid work undertaken in the household (Francavilla et al. 2010).

Inequalities in the economic independence of women and men in EU member states are rooted in the stereotype of 'the male breadwinner model', in which men take primary responsibility for earning and women are secondary earners. Even though the model was abandoned after World War II, it helped to create the gender stereotypes that support the occupational (horizontal) segregation underlying other types of gender inequality.

Nordic countries are an exception to the European male breadwinner model and are known for being in the forefront of gender equality, as they support gender-equalizing reforms and have high participation of women in the labour market, small income differences between men and women, high fertility rates, and 'women-friendly' welfare policies. The values of gender equality in Scandinavia have been institutionalized for decades and are part of tradition and the public discourse. As Cox (2004) observes: "the core values of the Scandinavian (welfare) model are not only important to the scholars who observe the model, but they are widely shared by the citizens of Scandinavian countries and constitute an important component of national identity in those countries". The traits of Scandinavian gender regimes will be addressed later in this paper.

In European socialist and communist regimes policymakers challenged the western breadwinner model by motivating women to enter the labour market, because women's labour was crucial to economic development after World War II. The dual-earner model in socialist regimes was the starting point for the emancipation of women. The participation of women in the labour market was enabled through education, workplace social provision, state-guaranteed

maternal leave and benefits, kindergartens and nurseries, and marriage and family laws that treated women as equals to men (Fajth 1996, cited in Pascal and Lewis 2004, Brunnbauer 2000). As a result, in 1989 the female employment rate in socialist and communist regimes ranged between 70% and 90% of working-age women (15-55 years of age), while in the EU-15 the female employment rate was 50% for women aged 15-64 (Pollert 2005).

Although socialist and communist regimes motivated women to become educated and participate in the labour market the gendered character of labour remained, so that occupational segregation also existed in socialism. The majority of women were employed in education, healthcare, the textile industry, social services, etc. As Grapard (1997) notes,

Although propaganda might show stereotyped images of women driving tractors, in reality women were more likely to be in the overstaffed clerical and low-grade administrative sectors of the industry. Female employment thus tended to be concentrated in light industry, textiles, retail trade and the service sector.

This is consistent with the findings of other researchers dealing with gender equality in socialist countries. As Brunnbauer (2000) notes, the emancipation of women in socialist regimes tended to be superficial, since emancipation was not an end in itself but rather an instrument for the wider political goals of the Party. Women were also segregated in politics, so that “very few women were holding positions in the Central Committees and Politburos where the actual political power was concentrated”.

When the socialist and communist regimes were succeeded by transitional societies, there were many changes in the political, economic, social, and demographic agendas. Women were especially vulnerable to the changes imposed by the transition to a market economy. There was a tremendous decline in female employment as a result of restructuring and the privatization of the state enterprises of the old socialist regimes. The first to be hit were state-owned enterprises in light industries where the female workforce was concentrated, such as textiles, shoemaking, and food processing, resulting in many job losses and a worsening of women’s economic and social status. Brunnbauer (2000) observes how besides falling rates of employment, women faced gender pay gaps as a result of gender-based occupational segregation.

The declining GDP levels in transition countries lead to reductions in public expenditure, cutting social security benefits, rights to return after maternity leave, and public childcare facilities.

The position of women in post-socialist societies, especially in the SEE region, was made worse by the rejection of the dual earner regime and transition to the male breadwinner model (Pascal and Lewis 2004). This main reason for this was the patriarchal values that continued to dominate in the SEE region, regardless of the social policy of emancipation of women imposed by socialist policymakers. Grapard (1997) notes that women's private interests and points of view had no place in the general scheme of "patriarchal emancipation". Nationalist rhetoric in the SEE region helped develop an image of women as responsible for the nurture of new generations and the enlargement of nations.

Research in Bosnia and Herzegovina revealed this newly developed image of women. When managers were asked the reasons for the slow advancement of women in business, 43% gave the absence of social support as the main reason while 26% considered that women preferred family to a career (Šehić et al. 2010). The researchers expressed worries that women themselves often accept the role of carer, mainly due to societal pressure. The results of this study are consistent with Brunnbauer's view (2000) that in transition countries "women are not seen as individuals in their own right, but as instruments for the higher ideals of the national collective, quite similar to the discourse in socialism".

Although socialist policies in Central, Eastern, and South-Eastern European countries were similar, Javornik (2012) notes how gender policies in post-socialist and post-communist countries have developed in different directions, mainly due to the different policies imposed by the former socialist governments. In the 'totalitarian' socialism of the Eastern Bloc, the "state oppressively imposed the dual-earner family model several times, actively promoting participation of women in the labor market when needed, committing to full-time employment from time to time". However, when facing recession and economic downturns, governments would emphasize "the importance of motherhood and full-time housewifery" as the primary obligation of women and impose measures and policies to de-stimulate women from being active in the labour market. Yugoslavia was known for a softer socialist regime of workers' self-management (Kardelj 1977), a socialist version of democracy where citizens were motivated to take part in formal political debates. This regime also had an impact on the gender equality of Yugoslav women: women worked full-time, regardless of their marital or parental status (Jogan 2001, cited in Javornik 2012).

### **3. EUROPEAN GENDER EQUALITY IN FACTS AND FIGURES**

#### **3.1. The European Union, Gender, and the Strategy for Equality**

The EU'S commitment to gender equality has risen over the past two decades. EU policies focus on strengthening equal opportunities for both women and men as the fourth pillar of the employment guidelines, in parallel with employability, adaptability, and entrepreneurship (Rubery 2002).

Even though policymakers have addressed gender equality at the European level for more than 50 years, member states are still struggling with gender gaps in all aspects of women's lives: employment, education, politics, social inclusion, health, family, wages, etc. Thus there is certainly a need for further effort in this field. A very important aspect of the equality policy framework is the social integration process, which is predominantly shaped by a set of conflicting policy frameworks between national states and the EU. The social integration process of the EU is a challenge, as the enlargement of the EU includes member states from Central and Eastern Europe (Stratigaki 2004) and candidate countries from South East Europe.

These efforts can be improved through systematic gender mainstreaming in all areas of human activity. Gender equality issues are required to be built into official policy programmes, and have "the potential double benefit of ensuring that gender effects are taken into account in the initial design and (provide) a basis for new and transformative approaches to policy making" (Rees 1998, Rubery et al. 1999, cited in Rubery 2002). However, it is important to note that the EU only serves as a catalyst, by putting gender mainstreaming on the political agenda within the Union. The majority of the work has to be carried out at the national level and is a political matter dependent on the interests of parties, meaning that gender-mainstreaming policies will vary between EU member states. Consequently, gender equality indices will also vary.

Even though gender equality policies on the international and national levels are defined by EU institutions and institutions in member states, gender equality still remains under-represented in the public arena. One possible explanation for this may lie in the diffusion of norms within official policies. Krook and True (2010) analyse the diffusion of international norms and their effect on policy and political behaviour. They analyse the lifecycles of two global equality norms: gender-balanced decision-making and gender mainstreaming. They come to the conclusion that constitutive norms such as gender-balanced decision-making,

which define the identity and role of the state by specifying the actions necessary for the state to be recognized internationally, tend to be easier to diffuse. The authors find that these “norms are measurable and able to be monitored and verified”: therefore states/governments put more emphasis on such norms as they see them as necessary for their international recognition. On the other hand, regulative norms like gender mainstreaming “that prescribe certain standards of behavior but do not have a deep impact on state identity leave more room for local reinvention of norm content, attracting widespread – albeit varying and inconsistent – adoption”.

In 2012 the European Commission (Directorate-General for Justice) published *Women in Economic Decision-Making in the EU: Progress Report*, as a part of the Europe 2020 initiative. The report addresses the discrepancy between the high number of female graduates and their underrepresentation in top-level positions. Women enter the labour market better educated and skilled than men, but their level of representation declines in senior positions, indicating the existence of a glass ceiling. The data show that for many years women have accounted for around 56% of people in tertiary education and for the majority of tertiary-level graduates, indicating that “women’s skills are not being used to their full potential” (p.9). According to January 2012 data, the boards of the largest listed companies in the EU-27 have only 14% women. Progress remains very slow, since more than six out of every seven board members of the largest listed companies in the EU-27 are men (86.3%). The advancement of women on the corporate ladder over the observed 10-year period is very slow, at 0.6% per year, indicating that women face many obstacles in pursuing a career.

The pace of advancement of women as presidents/chairpersons of large companies is also very slow. In around 600 of the largest companies listed in the EU, the number of women occupying the top position of chairperson or president fell slightly, from 20 in October 2010 to 19 in January 2012, or from 3.4% to 3.2%.

The Gender Equality Index (GEI) presented in the Gender Equality Index Report 2013 illustrates the gender equality issues in the EU. The dimensions of the GEI are Work, Money, Knowledge, Time, Power, and Health, and two sub-dimensions, Violence and Intersecting Inequalities.

In the ‘work’ domain the analysis of gender gaps shows that women are always over-represented in education, human health, and social work, indicating occupational segregation. The gender gap reached 22% on average in the EU-27. In the ‘money’ domain the presence of the gender wage gap is also evident and

it is 20% on average in the EU in 2010. There is also segregation in education ('knowledge'): the report notes: "Patterns of segregation in educational fields remain very widespread in the EU, with some very strong under and over-representations in some disciplines. Consequences of these patterns include greater gender gaps in labor market segregation, as well as pay" (p.76). Female students are over-represented in education (77%) and health and welfare (74%), but are under-represented in engineering, manufacturing, and construction (25%).

The 'time' domain shows the disproportion in the amount of time spent caring for and educating children and grandchildren, with an average percentage point difference of 16 in the EU-27 in 2010. Similarly, on average women spent 1.3 more hours daily than men on domestic tasks.

The 'power' domain "focuses on the representation of women and men in decision-making positions" (p.87). In the EU-27, 25% of ministerial positions were occupied by women and 75% by men in 2010. On average, 23% of members of parliament in the EU were women, while in Finland and Sweden the percentage of women holding parliamentary seats reached 47% and the percentage of women in ministerial positions reached 40%.

In 'health', data showed that women outlived men across all member states, with an average gender gap of over six years.

'Intersecting inequalities' data showed that men born in foreign countries are more likely to find jobs than women born in foreign countries, indicating another gender gap. The average difference for the EU-27 was 16%. This is an example of the paradox of minorities within minorities and is a consequence of multiculturalism issues in the EU.

As the data in the report showed unsatisfactory results in gender equality in business decision-making, the EU, together with national governments, EU social partners, individual businesses, and other stakeholders, has undertaken new initiatives to accelerate the progress of women in business. These initiatives include legislative measures (binding quotas with sanctions, quotas without sanctions, rules concerning state-owned enterprises) and voluntary initiatives (setting voluntary targets, corporate governance codes, charters that companies sign, business initiatives, and other instruments).

### **3.2. Scandinavian Women-Friendly Welfare States – Universal Model of Gender Equality?**

*...female employment is one of the most effective means of combating social exclusion and poverty. All this implies that 'women-friendly' policy is, simultaneously, family- and society-friendly. If it yields a private return to individual women, it also yields substantial collective return to society at large. It should, accordingly, be defined as social investment.*

(Gösta Esping-Andersen et al. (2002). *Why We Need A New Welfare State*, Oxford University Press, p.94)

Female representation in Scandinavian parliaments is above the West European average (Edling, Farkas, and Rydgren 2013). The Nordic countries (Iceland, Finland, Denmark, Norway, and Sweden) occupy the top positions in the Global Gender Gap Index (World Economic Forum 2013), as shown in Table 1. This raises the question of what lies behind the better scores of the Nordics in comparison to other West European countries.

In the 1970s and 1980s social democratic parties in the Nordic countries adopted policies aimed at alleviating class differences. The feminist movement took part in the public discourse and political debate, with a special focus on integration of women into the labour force. As a result of efforts made by social democratic parties and feminist organizations, numerous policies devoted to strengthening women's access to public life were adopted, such as generous parental leave incentives, public care services for children, and intensive political representation of women (Borchorst and Siim 2008). In the light of these social changes, Helga M. Hernes, a Norwegian politician and diplomat, introduced the concept of the woman-friendly welfare state. Hernes (1987, cited in Borchorst and Siim 2008) defines the woman-friendly welfare state as a:

state that would enable women to have a natural relationship to their children, their work and public life...a state in which women will continue to have children, yet there will also be other roads to self-realization open to them. In such a state, women will not have to choose futures that demand greater sacrifices from them than are expected of men.

By introducing the concept of the woman-friendly welfare state, Hernes challenges the Anglo-Saxon neo-liberal male-breadwinner model, based on a public-private sector split, which empowers the patriarchal order. Hernes' theory puts the

emphasis on universal social rights in Scandinavia, implying the importance of the interaction of women’s roles as mothers, workers, and citizens.

**Table 1:** Scandinavian Countries and GGG Rankings and Scores

<i>Country</i>	<i>Country score in comparison to sample average</i>	<i>Model by Fraser (1996)</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>GGGI score (0.00 – inequality; 1.00 – equality)</i>
Iceland	Above average	-	1	0.873
Finland	Above average	-	2	0.842
Norway	Above average	Ambivalent – Trend to universal caregiver	3	0.842
Sweden	Above average	Universal caregiver	4	0.813
Denmark	Above average	Universal breadwinner	8	0.778

**Source:** Adapted by author, Global Gender Gap Index Report (2013), World Economic Forum, available at: [http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF\\_GenderGap\\_Report\\_2013.pdf](http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GenderGap_Report_2013.pdf)

Borchorst (2009) observes how Hernes’ concept was used in order to “nurture the image of Scandinavian countries as laboratories of gender equality which could serve as models for other countries”. Even though Hernes’ vision of women-friendliness laid the theoretical ground for much-needed debate on gender equality in the public discourse in Scandinavian countries and worldwide, the model is often criticized for being static and neglecting the interaction of gender inequality with other types of differentiation such as ethnic, cultural, and religious background and class differences. Borchorst and Siim (2008) note how immigration issues were not considered as a key political problem at that time. However, growing immigration issues pose a serious obstacle to the Nordic model of the woman-friendly welfare state, indicating how differences in women’s cultural and ethnic backgrounds tend to undermine the premise of women’s collective and common interests.

Nordic countries’ immigration policies can be considered “a blind spot” in Scandinavian welfare political strategy. Nordic countries have “different experiences with multiculturalism and they have adopted different approaches and policies towards migration and integration”. The greatest challenge for Scandinavian countries will be to reformulate welfare and gender equality policies according to ethno-cultural and ethno-religious diversity (Siim and Stolz 2013).

Siim and Skjeie (2008) draw attention to the fact that not all women are treated equally in woman-friendly welfare states. In their research they focus on multicultural challenges to state feminism in Denmark and Norway, introducing the “gender equality paradox”, described as “the simultaneous inclusion of women from ethnic majority backgrounds and exclusion of women from ethnic minority backgrounds in core political institutions such as parliament and government” (p.339).

In the literature and also within public discourse there is a tendency to cluster the Scandinavian countries as social-democratic, as Esping-Andersen (1990) noted. Clustering countries results in their social policies being perceived as the same or similar. However, even though these countries have many things in common, when analysing gender equality their cultural and other differences must not be overlooked. When considering the ‘Nordic Nirvana’ in relation to gender, citizenship, and social justice in the Scandinavian countries, Lister (2009) points out that it must not be forgotten that these countries are also dealing with their own struggles on social agendas. Lister notes how these countries differ in institutions, history, culture, and gendered patterns of agency and citizenship engagement, despite sharing the common etiquette of “social welfare countries”. Bernhardt et al. (2008), Teigen and Wangnerud (2009), and Jakobsson and Kotsadam (2009) support the view of Scandinavian countries as not homogeneous by default in gender equality policies.

Borchorst and Siim (2008) illustrate these differences with reference to Fraser’s classification of gender equality models (Fraser 1996). Fraser elaborates three possible gender equality models, based on the gendered division of care and breadwinning and characteristics of the market, state, and family life. The models are observed through several prisms: anti-poverty, anti-exploitation, income equality, leisure-time equality, equality of respect, anti-marginalization, and anti-androcentrism.

The first model is the universal breadwinner model, which aims to externalize caregiving as the “sole workable path to women’s equality with men” (Elgarte 2008). The model is justly criticized for its androcentrism, in which “men’s current life patterns represent the human norm and....women ought to assimilate to them” (Fraser 1996). Borchorst and Siim (2008) observe how this model tends to “turn women into citizen workers like men, by, among other things, moving care work from the family into the market and the state”.

Another of Fraser's models is the caregiver parity model, which places care work within the family while the state provides caregiver allowances, thereby supporting the informal care work. Gender equality is therefore promoted through informal care work, "enabling women with significant domestic responsibilities to support themselves and their families either through care work alone or through care work plus part-time employment" (Fraser 1996 p.55). This model is criticized for poor income equality and poor anti-marginalization. For Fraser both of these models are "highly utopian visions of a postindustrial welfare state...presupposing major political-economic restructuring, including significant public control over corporations, the capacity to direct investments to create high-quality permanent jobs, and the ability to tax profits and wealth at rates sufficient to fund expanded high-quality social programs" (p.59). While the universal breadwinner model sets equal standards for both women and men but at the same time sets obstacles to women becoming breadwinners to the full extent, the caregiver parity model tackles income equality and prevention of women's marginalization. Fraser further stipulates that neither of these models promotes women's full participation in politics and society. The key to gender equality in the post-industrial welfare state must be in imposing women's life patterns as the universal norm for all. In this light, Fraser proposes the universal caregiver model, whereby men do the same as women, with the state ensuring the redesign of institutions in order to eliminate the difficulties in the process. Fraser notes how the "universal caregiver welfare state would promote gender equity by effectively dismantling the gendered opposition between breadwinning and caregiving" coded as masculine and feminine (p.61).

Borchorst and Siim (2009) illustrate how the Scandinavian welfare states (focusing on Sweden, Norway, and Denmark) are heading in different directions according to Fraser's definitions of gender equity models. For instance, in Denmark the universal breadwinner model is the dominant type, supported by the establishment of extensive childcare facilities. Coincidentally, Denmark is the worst rated Nordic country according to the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index presented in Table 1. In Norway, policies tend to be ambivalent "since all three approaches to gender equality have coexisted". However, recent advances in setting a 'daddy quota'<sup>2</sup> for parental leave imply that Norway is heading towards the universal caregiver model. Sweden implemented the universal breadwinner model for many years but in recent decades advances

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<sup>2</sup> In Norway, *fedrekvote* or daddy quota is one of the policy measures, proposed by the minority Labour Government in 1993. This policy measure gave fathers an exclusive right to four weeks of paternity leave. The main aim of this policy measure was to redistribute caring time from women to men.

have been remarkable in comparison to other countries in the region, indicating the state's focus on the universal caregiver model. Jakobsson and Kotsadam (2009) elaborate the results of numerous studies on differences in attitudes towards gender equality in Norway and Sweden, noting that Swedes tend to be more egalitarian than Norwegians. Explanations for the differing attitudes mainly focus on the institutionalization of gender equality issues through various policies, but also on differing cultural paradigms.

### **3.3. Gender Equality in South East Europe**

When reflecting on women's position in socialism, Ferge (1998) concluded:

In public life, work, studies, culture and politics, women had become (almost) equal, and they may have felt (almost) equal. But in the private sphere, in partner relations, within the family and the interpersonal arena, traditional ways of constructing men and women's roles remained, by and large, untouched.

So, was the emancipation of women in socialism a mere aesthetic change? The difficulties of advancing in the organizational hierarchy and the limited access to political power, both then and now, certainly point to a cosmetic change in social policy, where women were and are an object of change rather than an agent of change. The transition from socialism to a market economy and democracy only made the situation more obvious, overloading women with the social and economic burdens of transition.

As Pascall and Lewis (2004) observe, former communist and socialist countries face "the risk of being absorbed within western paradigms" that generally do not support the socialist practice of generous provision for childcare and maternity leave. According to Brunnbauer (2000), this absorption already began in the post-transition years when former communist and socialist countries came closer to "capitalist normality" in terms of rate of employment, gender pay gap, and political representation.

#### **3.3.1. The economic perspective of gender equality in the Western Balkans**

The economic dimension of gender inequality encompasses many forms of inequality between men and women in the processes of production, distribution, and consumption, which are relevant to the improvement of the quality of life for individuals, households, and society. Therefore, gender inequalities observed

through an economic lens can appear in the form of inequalities in labour market participation, unequal distribution of resources, and inequalities in the private sphere regarding economic decisions within households (Babovic 2010).

In this part of the paper we will focus on inequalities in labour market participation, as the strongest drivers of economic difference between genders.

In order to investigate and explain the characteristics of the SEE region today, when addressing gender equality issues from an economic perspective it is important to emphasize the differing institutionalization and contextualization and the heterogeneity of countries. Although countries in the SEE region share cultural and other similarities due to their historical legacy and their experience of socialism, it is necessary to use a comparative perspective, both among SEE countries and between the SEE region and the EU, in order to understand and comprehend the structural patterns of discrimination against women (Brunnbauer 2000). Avlijas, Ivanovic, Vladislavljevic, and Vujic (2013) note how, specifically in terms of gender inequality in the labour market, it is not possible to view Western Balkan countries as homogenous, regardless of historical and cultural similarities. The authors explain that different institutional frameworks and historical backgrounds have a tremendous influence on gender equality in general, and especially in the economic sphere.

The levels of male and female employment in the SEE region and the EU are similar, as is the political representation of women in parliament. However, this information should not be taken at face value and a proper interpretation requires a more precise analysis. A more detailed investigation of the nature of gender pay gaps in the SEE region can improve the knowledge and understanding of gender inequality issues in the specific context of post-communist countries. Dobrotic, Matkovic, and Zrinscak (2013) address the issue of the europeanization of post-communist countries as the most important process in the post-communist transformation in Europe. Gender equality is one of a wide range of policy areas within the europeanization process.

In the initial stages of transition or transformation in the 1990s the political and socio-economic consequences of transition were the priority in post-communist countries, and the gender equality agenda was left behind (Dobrotic, Matkovic, and Zrinscak 2013). The political dominance of right-wing parties during the 1990s in Croatia and other ex-Yugoslav countries like Bosnia and Herzegovina meant that gender equality was not on the agenda due to their nationalist ideologies and pro-natalist discourse, in which women were “mothers of the nation” and their

primary role was in the homelooking after children (Brunnbauer 2000; Dobrotic Matkovic and Zrinscak 2013). Gender equality was ignored and was absent from the public discourse.

In the 2000s the post-communist governments made EU accession their priority. This political shift resulted in the gender equality agenda becoming more visible and public as the EU initiated policy discussions with a special emphasis on gender equality. However, while not undermining the role of the EU as an important actor in addressing gender equality issues, Dobrotic, Matkovic and Zrinscak (2013) express concerns regarding the weak power of the EU vis-à-vis its gender equality agenda. Their concerns, based on a review of the extant literature and the experiences of post-communist countries that have already joined the EU, focus primarily on: a) the limited power of the EU to promote gender equality practices; b) ambiguities which arise in the way the gender agenda in the EU is constructed; and c) the complexities arising from the different historical, socio-economic, political, and cultural circumstances of the post-communist countries. The authors conclude that the relatively high level of political instability in the SEE region could undermine EU membership prospects, thereby limiting the influence of the EU on social policies and socio-political and economic development.

Even though the SEE post-communist countries must be regarded as heterogeneous, there are certain socio-economic issues that tend to be widespread in the region: high unemployment, the grey economy, corruption and bribery, political turbulence and instability, low female employment rate, under-representation of women in certain occupations and sectors, vertical and horizontal segregation, etc.

The general participation rate of women in the labour market in the Western Balkan countries is below the EU average (58.5%). In 2011 the general participation rate of women was 47% in Croatia<sup>3</sup>, 38.3%in Serbia<sup>4</sup>, 32.8%in Bosnia and Herzegovina<sup>5</sup>, 43% in Montenegro, and 43%in Macedonia<sup>6</sup>. The rate of women working part-time is also significantly lower than the EU average of 31.6%: in 2011 it was 9.6%in Croatia and 9.7%in Serbia, according to Somun-Krupalija (2011), while in 2010in

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3 The current situation of gender equality in Croatia – Country profile 2012, European Commission

4 The current situation of gender equality in Serbia – Country profile 2012, European Commission

5 Women and men in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Agency for Statistics in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2013

6 [http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.TLF.CACT.FE.ZS?order=wbapi\\_data\\_value\\_2013+wbapi\\_data\\_value+wbapi\\_data\\_value-last&sort=asc](http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.TLF.CACT.FE.ZS?order=wbapi_data_value_2013+wbapi_data_value+wbapi_data_value-last&sort=asc)

Bosnia and Herzegovina it was 13.1%, in Montenegro 4%,<sup>7</sup> and in Macedonia 6.7%<sup>8</sup>. Women in the SEE region face both horizontal and vertical discrimination in the labour market. However, indicators vary from country to country, showing that heterogeneity does exist. In Macedonia in 2011 the top three female sectors were manufacturing (22.6% female employees), agriculture, forestry and fishing (18.1%), and wholesale and retail (16.3%). In the same year in Serbia the top three female sectors were agriculture, forestry and fishing (20.8% female employees), wholesale and retail (16.4%), and manufacturing (12.5%). In the Croatian labour market the top three female sectors were wholesale and retail (16.4%), agriculture, forestry, and fishing (13.6%), and manufacturing (12.6%)<sup>9</sup>. Bosnia and Herzegovina is somewhat specific, as more than half of all employed women work in the service sector, with less than one-fifth female employees in industry (Somun-Krupalija, 2011). Somun-Krupalija (2011) also notes that according to the estimates of the Labour Force Survey (LFS) 2009 for Bosnia and Herzegovina, 71% of women employed in the formal economy worked in wholesale and retail, education, healthcare, and social work. Education, healthcare, and social work are predominantly state sectors and women's participation in the private sector remains low. According to statistical data, education, health care, and social work are heavily feminized with an over-representation of women.

In Western Balkan countries a gender pay gap is evident in both public and private sectors. Avlijas et al. (2013) studied the gender pay gap in three Western Balkan countries, Serbia, Montenegro, and Macedonia. In these countries women experience difficulties entering the labour market and on average need better qualifications than men in order to access employment. In Serbia the unadjusted gender pay gap is higher in the private than in the public sector: in the private sector women on average earn 9.4% lower wages than men. In the public sector the difference was not statistically significant (1.6%). However, the adjusted gender pay gap, controlled for a range of personal characteristics that may differ between men and women, widens to 7.5% in the public sector and grows to 11% in the private sector.

In Macedonia women with the same qualifications as men earn 17.9% less. Decomposition revealed that only 31% of the gap can be attributed to discrimination. 'Unobservable' differences, often referred to in the literature as

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<sup>7</sup> <http://w3.unece.org/CountriesInFigures2013/Montenegro.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> The current situation of gender equality in the Former Yugoslav Republic Of Macedonia – Country profile, European Commission, 2012

<sup>9</sup> The current situation of gender equality in Croatia – Country profile 2012, European Commission

“unobserved heterogeneity” (labour market characteristics, psychological factors influencing behaviour such as motivation and ability, etc.), are contained in the largest part of the adjusted gap (69%) and seem to discriminate against women (Gangji, Orsini, and Sissoko 2010). When observing the wage gaps in public versus private sectors, the results show that the unadjusted gap is higher in the private than the public sector (17.7% versus 4%). When the wage gap is adjusted it widens to 18.6% in the private sector and 11.4% in the public sector. The study finds a “glass ceiling” effect in Macedonia, where in both sectors the gender gap increases as the person moves up the wage distribution and reaches its peak at the highest levels of distribution. Another important aspect revealed in this study is that high-skilled women (high level of education and work experience) can access better-paid jobs and sectors in Macedonia and Serbia but not in Montenegro. Following from this, the gender wage gap at the level of the entire economy is lower than the gap between men and women with the same characteristics (13.4% versus 17.9%), so that if there were no discrimination women would earn more than men, since they have better overall qualifications.

Nestic (2007) elaborates how women in Croatia face much lower returns, especially at the upper parts of the wage distribution. The gap is largest at the middle of the distribution (20%), indicating the ‘glass ceiling’ effect, which results from the interaction of differing returns and women’s educational advantage in high-paid jobs. In another study, Nestic (2010) finds that “women in Croatia receive much lower rewards for their labor market characteristics than men and that such practice even worsened between 1998 and 2008”. Nestic focused on the counterfactual gender wage gap, which tends to isolate the effect of male/female differences in rewards for otherwise identical labour market characteristics. This gap increased from an average of around 20% in 1998 to 22% in 2008, and this measure more clearly reflects the disadvantaged status of women in terms of wages since it is conditioned on the same observable characteristics for both men and women. Furthermore, the counterfactual gap is largest at the middle of the wage distribution, indicating that the ‘glass ceiling’ and ‘sticky floor’ effects are not relevant for Croatia.

In Montenegro the unadjusted gender wage gap is 16% in favour of men. Interestingly, when adjusting the gap and controlling for men and women’s labour characteristics the gap stays the same, so that women with the same labour market characteristics earn 16% lower wages and would need to work an additional 58 days a year in order to earn the same annual wages as men. Wages are higher in the public than in the private sector; for men the difference is 2% and for women 17%. Unadjusted and adjusted gender pay gaps are higher in the private sector.

This is as expected, since the wage distribution tends to be more compressed in the public than in the private sector. A glass ceiling is also visible in both sectors, since the adjusted wage gap is higher at the top of the wage distribution (Avlijas et al. 2013).

According to data from the Statistics Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the employment rate is much higher for men than for women (41.3% versus 23%). In 2011 women in the 16-64 age group accounted for only 3.8% of the active labour force, the lowest level of representation of women in the labour market in the region (Women and Men in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2013, p.31). There is relatively little data on the gender pay gap in Bosnia and Herzegovina. According to an industrial relations profile by Eurofound (2012), the gender pay gap reflects similar trends to those of Western countries and is estimated at 20%. However, there are no details of whether this estimation is based on unadjusted or adjusted gender pay gap methodology and no further conclusions can be drawn. Somun-Krupalija (2011) explains that in 2006 approximately the same number of women and men were employed in the highest wage grade, likely reflecting the high number of women with better educational qualifications. The trend is similar in the lowest wage grade. However, the number of employed men was higher in all wage grades. Study by Penava and Sehic (2007) encompassed 100 largest companies in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The results of the study indicate that glass ceiling effects exist in these companies, since female managers are predominantly concentrated at operational and middle management levels, unable to reach top managerial and/or board positions. The percentage of women with higher education working in the companies encompassed by the study is higher than their participation in managerial positions. In the education sector the glass ceiling effect is also apparent. According to Hughson (2014), in 2011 98.3% of employees in pre-primary education, 69.8% in primary education, 57.1% in secondary education, and 39.8% in higher education were women. University education, as the most prestigious and best paid, tends to be closed to women.

### **3.3.2. Indices on Gender Equality**

Since SEE countries are not included in the EU Gender Equality Index (GEI) as a composite index, three indices will be observed in order to draw general conclusions: the Gender Empowerment Index (GEI) presented by Socialwatch as a composite index, the Gender Inequality Index (GII) as part of the United Nations Development Program's Human Development Index (HDI), and the Global Gender Gap Index presented by the World Economic Forum.

**Table 2:** Overview of Gender Empowerment Index (GEI) for countries of SEE region

Country or area (alphabetical)	Education			Economic Participation			Women Empowerment			GEI Dimensions Total			Ranking			
	Primary School Enrollment	Secondary School Enrollment	Tertiary Education Enrollment	Adult Literacy Rate	Labour Force Gap	Non-vulnerable Employment	Estimated Income Gap	Seats in Parliament	Legislators, Senior Officials and Managers	Professional and Technical Workers	Women in Ministerial Positions	Education		Economic Activity	Women Empowerment	
Bosnia and Herzegovina	1.00	n/a	1.00	0.95	0.75	n/a	0.61	0.17	n/a	n/a	0.00	0.98	0.68	0.09	0.58	105
Albania	0.91	n/a	n/a	0.96	0.63	n/a	0.52	0.19	n/a	n/a	0.07	0.94	0.57	0.13	0.55	115
Bulgaria	1.00	0.95	1.00	0.99	0.73	1.00	0.71	0.25	0.43	1.00	0.20	0.99	0.81	0.47	0.76	29
Croatia	0.98	1.00	1.00	0.98	0.71	0.98	0.69	0.29	0.32	0.97	0.17	0.99	0.79	0.44	0.74	37
Montenegro	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Serbia	0.95	1.00	1.00	0.96	0.66	1.00	0.59	0.27	0.55	1.00	0.23	0.98	0.75	0.51	0.75	34
Romania	0.98	1.00	1.00	0.98	0.70	0.99	0.70	0.10	0.38	1.00	0.06	0.99	0.80	0.39	0.72	49
Turkey	0.91	0.85	0.73	0.82	0.18	0.70	0.13	0.10	0.09	0.48	0.08	0.83	0.34	0.19	0.45	130

**Source:** Adapted by author from Socialwatch 2013 available at: [http://www.socialwatch.org/sites/default/files/IEG\\_2012\\_en.pdf](http://www.socialwatch.org/sites/default/files/IEG_2012_en.pdf)

The data presented by Socialwatch for 2012 show that the values of GEI dimensions vary across the region, with Turkey ranking worst and Bulgaria ranking best. In general, women are under-represented in parliaments and ministerial positions, as they have limited opportunities to gain political power.

All SEE countries have similarly high scores in the education dimension, which can be related to the socialist legacy of women’s emancipation through education. However, the economic activity dimension varies significantly, with Turkey, Albania, and Bosnia and Herzegovina scoring the worst.

Table 3 gives an overview of the GII and its subcomponents for countries of the SEE region. That SEE countries occupy a better position in the Gender Inequality Index than other countries with similar economic development and rank higher in the GII than in the HDI is due to the positive aspects of socialist policy on women’s emancipation.

**Table 3:** Overview of Gender Inequality Index and its subcomponents for SEE countries

<i>2012 HDI rank</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>2012 GII rank</i>	<i>2012 GII value</i>	<i>2012 seats in national Parliaments (% Female)</i>	<i>2006-2010 population with at least secondary education (female)</i>	<i>2006-2010 population with at least secondary education (male)</i>	<i>2011 labour force participation rate (female)</i>	<i>2011 labour force participation rate (male)</i>
47	Croatia	33	0.179	23.8	57.4	72.3	46	59.7
52	Montenegro	n/a	n/a	12.3	97.5	98.8	n/a	n/a
56	Romania	55	0.327	9.7	83.4	90.5	48.6	64.9
57	Bulgaria	38	0.219	20.8	90.9	94.4	48.6	60.3
64	Serbia	n/a	n/a	32.4	80.1	90.7	n/a	n/a
70	Albania	41	0.251	15.7	78.8	85	49.6	71.3
78	FYR Macedonia	30	0.162	30.9	72	85.3	42.9	68.9
81	Bosnia and Herzegovina	n/a	n/a	19.3	n/a	n/a	35.2	58.6
90	Turkey	68	0.366	14.2	26.7	42.4	28.1	71.4

**Source:** Adapted by author, available in UNDP Gender Inequality Index 2013: <http://data.undp.org/dataset/Table-4-Gender-Inequality-Index/pq34-nwq7>

In 2012 all SEE countries rank higher in the GII than in the HDI. Nevertheless, when analyzing the subcomponents of the GII, it is possible to draw certain conclusions. As in the Socialwatch GEI, women are under-represented in parliaments and lack political power, meaning inclusion policies must address

this issue. Labour force participation figures in the GII are also unpromising in terms of gender equality. These figures together with the labour force gap and estimated income gap of the GEI reflect the marginalization of women in the labour market. The constant struggle to balance work and family life negatively influences the ability of women to find work and remain employed (Pollert 2011).

Research by Sehic et al. (2010), conducted among managers in Bosnia and Herzegovina, shows how women are seen as mothers and wives rather than successful leaders. They do not occupy CEO positions in companies and face cultural prejudice, formal education schemes that discourage women from entering traditionally male professions, and organizational obstacles: all serious constraints that prevent women from entering management (Pološki 2001). Borozan (2006) describes how Croatian women face both visible and invisible barriers to their career advancement, which block them and prevent them from rising to the top of the organizational hierarchy.

The World Economic Forum published the Global Gender Gap Report 2013, which observes gender equality in the following dimensions: the economy, politics, health, and education. Table 4 illustrates the rankings and scores for SEE countries (excluding Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina, since the data for these countries was not available in the report).

**Table 4:** Global Gender Gap rankings and scores for SEE countries

<i>Country</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>GGG Score</i>	<i>Critical issues</i>
Serbia	42	0.712	Economy, politics
Bulgaria	43	0.710	Economy, politics
Croatia	49	0.707	Economy, politics
Macedonia	57	0.701	Economy, politics
Romania	70	0.691	Economy, politics
Albania	108	0.641	Economy, politics
Turkey	120	0.608	Economy, politics

**Source:** Adapted by author, available in Global Gender Gap Report, 2013, World Economic Forum, ISBN 92-95044-43-6, ISBN 978-92-95044-43-2

The Global Gender Gap Report covers 136 countries. The score for countries ranges from 0.0 = inequality to 1.0 = equality. As illustrated in the table, Serbia, Bulgaria, and Croatia rank the best in the SEE region. However, both the Socialwatch GEI and the UNDP GII indicate the same critical economic and political gender issues in the countries of the region vis-à-vis the involvement of women.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

The social democratic welfare regimes of the Scandinavian countries remain the highest achievers of gender equality. The universal citizenship model (Pascall 2008) based on Scandinavian social policies has the most promising potential, enabling men's lives to resemble women's in terms of balancing career and family life. But even though Scandinavian countries are a good example of gender-friendly welfare states and benchmarks for the institutionalization of gender equality they face many challenges. Regardless of their tradition of successful institutionalization of gender equality, Scandinavian women-friendly welfare policies are insufficient to cope with the complexity of today's issues imposed by globalization, multiculturalism, and immigration, which appear to be widening the gender gaps in Europe. This has to be taken into consideration when contemplating Scandinavian models of gender equality policy and social inclusion.

Furthermore, EU member states, Scandinavian countries, and SEE post-socialist countries each present a heterogeneous social and cultural context in which differing institutionalization and differing individual perceptions of gender roles shape social context, behaviour, and preferences and provide role models (Branisa et al. 2010). Social policies are a product of institutional activities and therefore have a normative character. Jakobsson and Kotsadam (2009) explain how institutions are a powerful force, influencing and shaping individuals' attitudes towards welfare and other policies.

Scholars, practitioners, and policymakers can enhance their knowledge through careful analysis of cultural and other differences within gender regimes. Cultural values and differences do matter, and, as Inglehart and Norris (2003) observe, the "perception of the appropriate division of roles in the home and family, paid employment and the political sphere are shaped by the predominant culture – the social norms, beliefs and values existing in any society, which in turn rest on levels of societal modernization and religious traditions" (p.8). Furthermore, in their book *Rising Tide: Gender Equality and Cultural Change Around the World*, Inglehart and Norris (2003) show how culture is critically important, since both women and men "adopt the predominant attitudes, values and beliefs about the appropriate division of sex roles within any society" (p.8). If a society is more conservative, emphasizing traditional norms, then women in those societies tend to limit themselves. Therefore cultural changes can happen only when "women change themselves before they can hope to change society".

Most western economies rejected the male breadwinner model after World War II, although stereotypical notions rooted in that model remain today. Statistics show that vertical and horizontal segregation of women in the EU and Scandinavia exists and is similar to the segregation women face in the SEE region. Former socialist countries of the SEE region are also tackling their own gender issues. The socialist, dual-earner model of women's emancipation proved to be only an aesthetic change, which empowered women to become educated and enter the labour market according to the interests of the Party rather than for women's sake. Brunnbauer (2000) points out that communist and socialist gender policies laid the ground for future discrimination against women after the fall of communist regimes.

Gender equality needs a systematic approach on national, subnational, and local levels. The Europe 2020 and SEE 2020 strategies can certainly serve as strong guidelines, but they need to explicitly acknowledge gender equality as a top priority, signaling to national governments that they need to be explicit in their efforts to address gender imbalances. More work needs to be done in the gender equality domain, since wider Europe is facing issues of multiculturalism, immigration, and ageing populations. Policymakers should also consider the conflicting policy frameworks of national states and the EU.

Furthermore, it is of utmost importance to emphasize how gender equality issues depend on contextualization, and that there is no universal remedy for gender inequality. Firstly, gender inequality issues are dependent on the social and cultural context. Heterogeneity of countries must be assumed when promoting a gender-equality agenda, regardless of any cultural or other similarities that may exist between countries. Secondly, an important aspect of gender equality is how it relates to other inequalities in society - ethnic, racial, educational, urban/rural, etc. The issue of 'a minority within a minority' in the EU, as an example of such a relationship, has been addressed in this paper. Lastly, a gender equality agenda is heavily dependent on the national legal and administrative framework.

Scandinavian women-friendly welfare policies can be considered as a good starting point in terms of the institutionalization of gender equality, but certainly not as a universal solution. Like other West European countries, Nordic countries face many challenges from immigration and multiculturalism that have yet to be resolved. Governments and other relevant institutions dealing with gender equality in the SEE region cannot rely on the EU and expect a miracle after EU accession. The greatest power for resolving these issues lies within national boundaries, specifically in the process of shaping the context of social policy.

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