

# LEGAL STATUS OF WOMEN IN PATRIARCHAL HOUSEHOLD COOPERATIVES IN THE BALKANS AND IN THE DANUBE REGION (HUNGARY AND CROATIA)

**Summary:** *The development of women's rights in Serbia, in Balkans, Croatia and the Kingdom of Hungary was not unique, as women living in the territories under the Austro-Hungarian Empire enjoyed much greater rights under the patriarchal system than under the cooperative system or the customary law regime of the Dinarides. The former had rights guaranteed by law, including the right to education, employment and inheritance. Although they were not equal to men, they became literate in large numbers from the 19th century, and some of them, like other Central European women, were educated and emancipated. In contrast, Serbian women remained largely illiterate and existentially dependent on their husbands. On the other hand, women in Kosovo, Montenegro and North Macedonia were subject to customary law, as stipulated in the Kanunja of Leka Dukagjinja, which "concretized" women's rights to the level of tacit law<sup>1</sup>. Some of them preferred to become "manly women", virgins, staying at home, so as not to have to submit to the authority of their fathers and husbands or to avoid unwanted marriages arranged for them by their gobi očevitelili. Of course, there were also those who decided to do so in order to preserve their "name", i.e. their collective identity, their "house", their family, their clan. In Croatia, and especially in Hungary, there was no "prčija" as personal property for women, but the practice of personal property in the form of "štar", equipment that the bride brought with her to the marriage, was widespread. Cooperatives were gradually abolished in Croatia and Hungary towards the end of the 19th century, which gave women in their separate families equal rights, especially in matters related to property.*

**Keywords:** *Serbian Civil Code of 1844, KLD, Dalmatians-Bunjevci in the Danube region, rights and obligations of women, "zadruga" (cooperatives)*