

Women's Legislative Representation in the Post-Soviet Space in 1991-2017: Macro-Level Analysis

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Abstract

The problem of female political representation has been of a particular salience in the recent decades. In 2017, the world average percentage of women in legislatures was 23.4% for the single or lower house. Having in mind that women constitute roughly a half of the world's population, we can clearly see that they remain highly underrepresented in the national parliaments. Moreover, the situation with women's legislative representation varies considerably among world's regions and between individual countries. However, there is still no consensus among scholars on factors influencing female legislative representation in particular world's regions. Therefore, I would like to build the paper on this gap in the literature and to identify macro-level factors that have had an impact on women's legislative representation in the post-Soviet space in 1991-2017. The results of the conducted statistical analysis, an OLS regression with "fixed effects", show that more women get elected to the less "prestigious" national parliaments in more authoritarian countries where traditional attitudes towards gender equality prevail in the society. Institutional factors – proportional representation and national gender quotas – do not play a significant role in the post-Soviet region, while the general socio-economic development substantially increases female legislative representation. Thus, the sample of the post-Soviet countries confirms the existence of Matland's "development threshold" (1998) below which women cannot organize and take advantage of institutional opportunities. But, at the same time, analysis shows that the "top-down" increase of female descriptive representation in more authoritarian countries proves to be efficient, raising substantial questions for the future research.

Introduction

The process of women's enfranchisement, started in European and Anglo-Saxon countries in the beginning of the XX century and continued throughout the world till the end of the century, eventually drew attention to the issue of women's political representation. According to the data of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the global average percentage of women in national legislatures has grown over time but remains quite low, 23.4 percent¹ by June 1st, 2017 (Women in National Parliaments). The global trend masks the variations on the lower levels. On the regional level, the

¹ All the percentages of women are given for the single or lower house, if other is not specified.

leaders in female legislative representation are Nordic countries (41.7 percent), followed by both Americas (28.2 percent) and Europe (25.2 percent, excluding Nordic countries). Sub-Saharan Africa (23.8 percent), Asia (19.7 percent), and Arab states (18.2 percent) are located in the middle of the list. The world's laggard is Pacific where the average level of women's legislative representation is only 15 percent (Women in National Parliaments).

The global average percentage of women at the ministerial level is even lower, 18.3 percent. Moreover, there are only 19 women in the position of the Head of the State or Government (Women in Politics 2017 Map). However, the variation among regions is considerable as well. The percentage of women at the ministerial positions ranges from 8.8 percent in South Asia to 28.8 percent in the European Union states (The World Bank Gender Statistics).

Female representation is slightly better in the sphere of national judicial powers. The most recent data of 2009 shows that the global average percentage of female judges is 27 percent. However, percentage of judges who are women ranges from about 50 percent in Central-Eastern Europe and Central Asia to less than 10 percent in South Asia (Progress of the World's Women: In Pursuit of Justice, p. 60).

Looking at these differences in the percentages of women in power between the world regions, we can make two main conclusions. Firstly, despite the fact that women constitute roughly a half of the world's population and majority of them has already gained political rights, they remain highly underrepresented in the states' authority bodies. Secondly, regional context clearly matters for female political representation by influencing the way certain factors affect it.

Since the second half of the XX century social scientists have started to investigate what factors have an impact on female political representation. The biggest part of the research covering this topic is devoted to the representation of women in national parliaments and to the investigation of factors explaining why the percentage of women serving as national representatives is higher in some regions or countries than in the others. The focus of this paper is on female legislative representation as well.

From the great bulk of literature on the representation of women in national legislatures, most studies are based on samples of developed countries with consolidated democracy. According to their results, the main factors facilitating women's legislative representation are proportional electoral system (Bird, 2004; Darcy, Welch, & Clark, 1987, 1994; Duverger, 1955; Hughes, 2009; Hughes & Paxton, 2007; Krook, 2010; Kunovich & Paxton, 2005; Matland, 1998; Matland & Studlar, 1996; McAllister & Studlar, 2002; Norris, 1985, 1997, 2004, 2006; Paxton, 1997; Paxton & Kunovich, 2003; Paxton, Kunovich, & Hughes, 2007; Reynolds, Reilly, & Ellis, 2005; Rule, 1987; Schwindt-Bayer, 2005; Siaroff, 2000; Studlar & McAllister, 2002; Welch & Studlar, 1990), gender quotas (Dahlerup, 1998; Fallon, Swiss, & Viterna, 2012; Inglehart & Norris,

2003; Matland, 1993, 2005; Paxton, Hughes, & Painter, 2010; Thames & Williams, 2013; Tripp & Kang, 2008; Yoon, 2004), and the inclusion of women in paid workforce (Kenworthy & Malami, 1999; Matland, 1998; Moore & Shackman, 1996; Oakes & Almquist, 1993; Rosen, 2013; Rosenbluth, Salmond, & Thies, 2006; Rule, 1987; Schwindt-Bayer, 2005; Thames & Williams, 2013). However, the growing body of literature on developing countries sometimes shows that the factors affecting female legislative representation in advanced democracies do not have the same strength or direction of influence in developing countries (Htun, 2005; Krook, 2010; Matland, 1998; Moser, 2001; Rosen, 2013; Saxonberg, 2000). Some scholars argue that a country should reach a certain threshold of political as well as socio-economic development before “conventional” factors come into force (Matland, 1998; Rosen, 2013; Viterna, Fallon, & Beckfield, 2008).

Of course, discrepancies in the results are partially due to the particular sample’s choice, degree of missing data in the analyzed indicators, different operationalization of the main variables, and the chosen method for analysis. However, I argue that regional context is of particular importance because it shapes the way certain factors affect female legislative representation. Therefore, mid-N studies analyzing representation of women in parliaments in a particular world region have an advantage over case-studies by providing a general picture of a situation with women in legislatures in the region’s countries and over large-N studies due to the possibility to keep the regional context constant.

A region that has not been vastly studied in regard to female legislative representation is the post-Soviet space. Although there are some case studies describing the situation with women in politics in a country in general or in a particular electoral cycle (Bagratia & Badashvili, 2011; Hankivsky & Salnykova, 2012; Mejere, 2012; Shahnazaryan, Aznauryan, & Saghumyan, 2016; Stefańczyk, 2015; Thames, 2014), there is no systematic research on factors affecting representation of women in the national parliaments over time in this region. However, the countries of the post-Soviet space constitute an interesting sample for the analysis for several reasons which will be considered in the second section of the paper.

To investigate factors that had an impact on female legislative representation in the fifteen post-Soviet states over time, I conducted a time-series cross-sectional analysis by running an OLS regression with “fixed effects”. The results give us some interesting insights not only about the situation with women in politics, but also about the general political environment in the region. Although the most famous hypothesis in the field that proportional representation increases the number of women in parliament is confirmed, its impact is moderate. Legislated gender quotas do not have a noticeable influence on female legislative representation in the region as well. On the contrary, the level of country’s socio-economic development is an important factor substantially raising the number of female representatives. However, in opposition to many previous findings,

participation of women in the paid workforce has a consistent negative impact on the percentage of women in the national parliaments in the post-Soviet states. Finally, religious beliefs of the population do not seem to affect the representation of women in legislatures. Moreover, in general more traditional attitudes towards gender equality do not prevent people from voting for female candidates in the post-Soviet region.

Obtained results enable us to make a bigger conclusion that women are represented better in the less powerful and “prestigious” national parliaments of more authoritarian countries where traditional attitudes towards gender equality prevail among voters, albeit with a relatively high level of economic development, than in the democratic states with more egalitarian values. Socio-economic development seems to play a more important role in promoting female legislative representation than political factors. Therefore, Matland’s argument (1998) about the existence of a “development threshold” below which women cannot use existing institutional opportunities to enhance their representation seems valid for the post-Soviet space. These results raise broader questions for both social scientists and practitioners that need to be considered: Can we consider powerless representation as desirable and valuable? Should female descriptive representation without decision-making power be increased anyway? How does parity without equality affect the empowerment of women in general and their substantial representation in particular? Can the higher number of women elected in more authoritarian countries promote democratization?

Thus, the structure of my paper is the following. First, I give a general overview of the macro-level factors of female legislative representation based on the existing literature. I also present a brief literature review of the studies trying to identify which of these factors can be applied to the explanation of female legislative representation in the post-Communist states of Central and Eastern Europe. Secondly, I proceed to the research design of my study describing features of the post-Soviet sample which make it worth investigating, hypotheses that are tested, operationalization of the main variables, and method of analysis. The third section of the paper presents and discusses the results of the statistical analysis. The last part includes concluding remarks and points for further consideration.

Literature review

a) Concept of representation

Before proceeding to the factors of female legislative representation, it is important to clarify what I mean by representation of women. Hanna Pitkin in her seminal work “The Concept of Representation” (1967) discusses different forms of representation distinguishing it into four interconnected subdimensions. Formal representation refers to the institutional rules of the game, according to which women, and men, are elected to the state authority bodies. Descriptive

representation shows whether representatives “stand for” or similar to their voters in terms of their essential characteristics such as gender and race. In the framework of this paper, it means that an ideal parliament’s composition should reflect the proportion of women and men in the population, which is roughly 50/50. Substantial representation is “acting for” people who are represented. Thus, more women should be elected to the parliament in order to represent women’s interests. Finally, symbolic representation refers to a representative’s “<...> power to evoke feelings or attitudes <...>” of the represented (Pitkin, 1967, p. 97). A woman is perceived as a role model and encourages other women to run for an office (Gilardi, 2015). Thus, female representatives increase people’s perception of a parliament’s legitimacy.

Pitkin considers substantial representation to be at the core of the overall concept of representation, and some scholars do find a connection between the level of female legislative representation and parliament’s responsiveness to women’s issues (Bratton, 2002; Carroll, 1994b; Dodson & Carroll, 1991; Kittilson, 2008; Lovenduski & Norris, 2003; Schwindt-Bayer, 2006; Thomas, 1994). Substantial representation implies the existence of some universal women’s issues shared by all women (Sapiro, 1981). However, there is no collective political identity among women and they cannot be considered as a homogeneous group (Celis & Childs, 2012). Moreover, applicability of the “women’s interests” thesis can be limited by party discipline (Bratton, 2002; Childs & Withey, 2004; Dahlerup, 2006; Studlar & McAllister, 2002). For instance, it is more likely that a position of a woman from a left party on abortion will be closer to a position of her male party mate than to a position of a woman from a right party (Bird, 2004; Lovenduski & Norris, 1993). Some scholars also claim that a relationship between female descriptive and substantial representation is not linear and a certain threshold of the number of female representatives, or “critical mass”, should be achieved before women can start acting in women’s interests (Bird, 2004; Kanter, 1977). However, a concept of “critical mass” itself is problematic (Childs & Krook, 2009; Dahlerup, 1988; Studlar & McAllister, 2002).

In one of the few studies that test the relationship between all four types of representation, Schwindt-Bayer and Mishler analyzing female political representation in 31 democracies come to a conclusion that four Pitkin’s subdimensions of representation are indeed interconnected. However, they also show that “<...> descriptive representation, rather than substantive representation, emerges from this analysis as the keystone to the representation of women. The percentage of women in the legislature is a principal determinant of women's policy responsiveness and of women's confidence in the legislative process. Descriptive representation also mediates virtually all of the impact of formal representation on both policy responsiveness and symbolic representation.” (Schwindt-Bayer & Mishler, 2005, p. 422).

Therefore, I focus on the concept of descriptive representation as on the most important subdimension of representation which serves as a foundation for both substantive and symbolic representation. Somewhat exogenous to all other forms formal representation is also taken into account as one of the main independent variables. The variables are discussed in the section two of the paper. Substantial and symbolic representation of women in the post-Soviet space are left out from the analysis for the future research. Thus, henceforth I use the concept of female legislative representation meaning only the descriptive component of the concept.

b) Macro-level factors of female legislative representation

The literature on factors of female legislative representation is vast. Some scholars adhere to the demand- and supply-side approach arguing that women's election to the parliament is depended upon the pool of eligible female candidates, "supply-side", - whether there are ambitious women willing to run for an office with a necessary level of education and political experience – and the willingness of parties' gatekeepers, "demand-side", to recruit and nominate women. These two sides of the electoral equation per se and the interaction between them are determined by the structural characteristics of a particular political system (Hughes & Paxton, 2007; Krook, 2010; Krook & Schwindt-Bayer, 2013; Norris, 1997; Paxton et al., 2007). "Supply-side" mainly consists of micro-level factors – women's ambitions, family situation, educational and professional background – which are not in the framework of this paper. Therefore, I prefer to apply a more common approach distinguishing macro-level factors into political, socio-economic, and cultural.

Most studies investigating factors of women's legislative representation are based on samples of developed, both politically and socio-economically, countries. They stress the importance of institutional political factors, especially proportional electoral systems (Bird, 2004; Darcy et al., 1994; Lovenduski & Norris, 1993; Rule, 1987, 1994). A body of the literature on developing countries, in turn, argues that socio-economic and / or cultural factors play a more prominent role in promoting gender parity in the legislatures (Krook, 2010; Matland, 1998; Oakes & Almquist, 1993; Paxton, 1997). Consequently, scholars started arguing that different factors are at work in developed and developing countries (Krook, 2010; Matland, 1998; Rosen, 2013; Viterna et al., 2008).² Why is it the case?

The answer is that context matters. Country and region's specific political, socio-economic, and cultural contexts interact in different, and sometimes unexpected, modes with particular factors and change the way they work. For instance, the level of democracy and party system's development can be an intervening variable between electoral rules and female legislative representation (Moser & Scheiner, 2012). Or, political culture prevailing in a society can mediate

² (For another view see, e.g., Kenworthy & Malami, 1999; Paxton, 1997; Yoon, 2004).

the effects of gender quotas and party's ideology on the number of women nominated and elected (Norris, 2004). On the whole, countries from one region usually have its own "profile" determined by the regional context and similar historical development which makes them distinct from the countries in other world regions, e.g., in terms of attitudes towards gender equality, cultural heritage, and socio-economic development (Dahlerup, 2006). Therefore, Bird claims that "[t]he relationship between either of these factors and the representation of women <...> is not automatic, but is influenced by many intervening variables. <...> There is no single approach that is a panacea for the political under-representation of women <...>." (Bird, 2004, p. 11) Consequently, I argue that it is of a particular importance to analyze female legislative representation cross-nationally in a specific world region to receive a broad picture of the situation with women in politics in its countries, but, at the same time, to keep the regional context constant. Having this in mind, I proceed to the consideration of the most important macro-level factors of women's legislative representation supplementing it with examples of their impact in particular world regions. A separate section is devoted to the influence of these factors on the number of women elected to the national parliaments in the post-Communist countries, which is substantial for deriving hypotheses for my study of the post-Soviet states.

c) Country's political system

Starting from the seminal work of Maurice Duverger "The Political Role of Women" (1955), electoral system is identified as the major factor influencing female legislative representation by many scholars. Studies of established democracies found that proportional representation (PR) is more advantageous for women than majoritarian (SMD, single-member district) (Bird, 2004; Darcy et al., 1987, 1994; Hughes, 2009; Krook, 2010; Kunovich & Paxton, 2005; Matland, 1998; Matland & Studlar, 1996; Norris, 1985, 1997, 2004, 2006; Paxton, 1997; Paxton & Kunovich, 2003; Paxton et al., 2007; Reynolds et al., 2005; Rule, 1987; Schwindt-Bayer, 2005; Siaroff, 2000).³ Under PR, district magnitude (DM) – the number of seats allocated in an electoral constituency – is higher than one, as in SMD, and parties can nominate more candidates. Since the aim of political parties is to win elections and to get more seats in the legislature, their leaders can be inclined to ticket-balancing by nominating candidates from a broader spectrum of population – not only men, but also representatives of the usually marginalized groups: women, ethnic minorities, etc. SMD, in turn, is candidate-centered and based on the zero-sum political game where "the winner takes all" by gaining the majority of votes. Under these circumstances, political leaders tend to nominate men rather than women because men are usually perceived as stronger and more competitive candidates (Kostadinova, 2007; Norris, 1987).

³ For narrower differences between electoral systems and their effects on female legislative representation see, e.g., (Millard, Popescu, & Toka, 2011).

The positive effect of PR on female legislative representation was also confirmed on samples of developing (Jones, 2009; Matland, 2003) and of both developed and developing countries (Kenworthy & Malami, 1999; Paxton, Hughes, & Green, 2006; Paxton et al., 2010; Paxton & Kunovich, 2003; Reynolds, 1999; Tripp & Kang, 2008; Viterna et al., 2008; Yoon, 2004). However, some scholars do find that this impact is more prominent in developed countries (Norris, 2004; Rosen, 2013) and even within them the strength of the PR's effect varies (McAllister & Studlar, 2002).

Despite these findings, the lack of PR's substantial effect identified by other researchers (Fallon et al., 2012; Oakes & Almquist, 1993; Saxonberg, 2000; Studlar & Welch, 1991; Welch & Studlar, 1990) makes us think that the impact is contingent on other factors such as a particular DM (Engstrom, 1987; Kenworthy & Malami, 1999; Matland, 1993, 2005; Rosenbluth et al., 2006; Rule, 1987, 1994; Salmond, 2006; Schwindt-Bayer, 2005; Thames & Williams, 2013), women's positions in a party list (Duverger, 1955), women's recruitment by political parties (Lane, 1995), level of national development (Matland, 1998), strength of women's movements (Krook, 2010; Sainsbury, 1993), and electoral threshold (Matland, 2005).

The relationship between mixed electoral systems, widely-spread among the post-Soviet countries, and female legislative representation is less well studied. A few researches on this topic point to the contamination / spill-over effect between two tiers of mixed systems. Balancing the ticket under PR tier, political parties can pursue double-nomination strategy by nominating women under SMD tier as well, e.g., to decrease campaign spending (Fortin-Rittberger & Eder, 2013; Henzl & Kaiser, 2008; Herron & Nishikawa, 2001). As a result, more women are elected to the parliament. However, interdependence effect can be mitigated in a particular political context as it is the case in Russia where electoral authoritarian regime complicates incentives for candidates' nomination (Golosov, 2014a). The impact of mixed electoral system on female legislative representation also varies between mixed-member-majoritarian (MMM), as in Russia, and mixed-member-proportional (MMP), as in Germany, subtypes due to the different incentives they produce for parties and candidates (Krauss, Nemoto, & Pekkanen, 2012). It is believed that MMP is more beneficial for women (Norris, 2006), but due to the fact that all mixed systems in the post-Soviet states are MMM, I will not go into details here.

Moser argues that "[a]n electoral system only structures the context in which candidates and voters operate; it can not determine how the incentives and disincentives embedded in that context are handled by individual actors. This is particularly evident when cases from outside the group of industrial democracies are examined." (Moser, 2001, p. 358) Particularly, he finds no statistically significant differences between the number of women elected under PR and SMD tiers of mixed systems in the post-Communist countries and even identifies that women had better

electoral results under SMD tier in Russia. This brings us back to the argument about importance of interviewing variables, such as a level of a party system's institutionalization. Therefore, the introduction of PR does not automatically increase female legislative representation in all contexts and cannot explain by itself the differences in the number of women elected (Krook, 2010).

One important variable that can moderate the effect of electoral system / DM on female legislative representation is party magnitude (PM), the number of seats a party wins in the electoral district. Although Jones (2009) finds no statistically significant impact of this factor in Latin America, many scholars argue that it positively influences the number of women elected and is more beneficial than DM itself (Matland, 1999, 2005; Matland & Studlar, 1996; Matland & Taylor, 1997). However, more rigorous analysis identifies that party and / or district magnitudes have a non-linear effect. On the one hand, "[p]rior to demands for representation being raised, party magnitude has little effect. As women mobilize and representation demands are raised party magnitude plays a significant role, but once women are firmly entrenched as powerful players in party politics, party magnitude's effect decreases." (Matland, 1993, p. 737) On the other hand, DM's effect of diminishing returns (Schwindt-Bayer, 2005) can be attributed to the fact that "[b]y decreasing party magnitudes, vary large district magnitudes may actually impair women's representation." (Golosov, 2014a, p. 4) This can explain why, e.g., Engstrom (1987) analyzing elections to the lower house of the Irish parliament found that more women are elected in a DM of four rather than three, but not of five rather than four. Applying these findings to the Russian context, Golosov (2014b) argues more precisely that higher PM of a pro-government ruling party is more beneficial for women than higher district / party magnitude per se.

Another political factor affecting female legislative representation is incumbency or term limits. There is an almost unanimous consensus among scholars that incumbency impairs women's electoral success and more open seats provide more opportunities to get elected (Bird, 2004; Carroll, 1994a; Carroll & Strimling, 1983; Darcy et al., 1994; Norris, 2006; Norris & Rule, 1992; Rule, 1987; Schwindt-Bayer, 2005; Seltzer, Newman, & Leighton, 1997; Welch & Studlar, 1990). Especially strong negative influence incumbency has under majoritarian electoral system because it is more difficult for women to compete with a male incumbent who has financial and political resources (Andersen & Thorson, 1984; Darcy & Choike, 1986; Norris, Vallance, & Lovenduski, 1992; Schwindt-Bayer, 2005). However, Carroll and Jenkins (2001) argue that term limits can also harm women. Analyzing elections to the state houses in the USA, they show that "<...> the number of women who were forced to leave office because of term limits was greater than the number of women elected to seats vacated by term-limited incumbents." (Carroll, 1994a, p. 8) They assume this effect is caused by problems on the "supply side", particularly by the lack of ambitious female candidates. Thus, "term limits, like many other reforms, are neither inherently bad nor inherently

good <...>. Rather, in the long run, the effect of term limits on the number of women officeholders is likely to be strongly influenced by the degree and effectiveness of efforts to recruit women candidates within term-limited states.” (Ibid, p. 16; see also Hawkesworth & Kleeman, 2001)

Political factor receiving a considerable academic attention is gender quotas: national / legislated and voluntary party quotas and reserved seats. All of them are supposed to increase the percentage of women elected to the parliament through a “fast track”, rather than “incremental” as it happened in Scandinavian countries (Dahlerup & Freidenvall, 2005). Many researchers do find that this affirmative action is beneficial for women’s legislative representation (Dahlerup, 1998; Fallon et al., 2012; Inglehart & Norris, 2003; Matland, 1993; McAllister & Studlar, 2002; Paxton et al., 2010; Tripp & Kang, 2008; Yoon, 2004). Some scholars claim that gender quotas also produce a contagion / diffusion effect (Thames & Williams, 2013), particularly under PR (Matland, 2005; Matland & Studlar, 1996). This effect is stronger for voluntary party quotas – when one party adopts it, others follow to preserve their pool of voters.

However, studies showing quotas’ ambiguous or lack of effect (Bird, 2004; Caul, 1999; Krook, 2009; Kunovich & Paxton, 2005; Reynolds, 1999; Rosen, 2013) led to the elaboration of the argument. Intervening factors determine whether gender quotas produce a visible impact on female legislative representation. In particular, a special attention should be paid on quotas’ design: effective sanction for non-compliance with quota’s requirements and rank order of female and male candidates (Dahlerup, 2006; Dahlerup & Freidenvall, 2005; Jones, 2009; Norris, 2004, 2006; Schwindt-Bayer, 2009). Therefore, legislated quotas can be more effective than voluntary party quotas due to the better enforcement mechanisms (Dahlerup, 2006; Davidson-Schmich, 2006; Jones, 2004; Rosen, 2013; Tripp & Kang, 2008).

Not only party level intervening variables, but also a country’s general context can change the way gender quotas work (Krook, 2009). “<...> [T]he use of quotas alone is not sufficient to ensure high levels of women in parliament. Moreover, a high level of representation could also be achieved without quotas.” (Dahlerup & Freidenvall, 2005, p. 35) For instance, Scandinavian countries achieved a relatively high percentage of female representatives before the voluntary party quotas’ introduction. On the contrary, female legislative representation significantly increased in some Latin American countries after the adoption of legislated quotas (Dahlerup 2006). In the post-Communist states, gender quotas are not wide-spread. One of the reasons for their unpopularity, especially among female candidates, is “<...> because it reminds people of what is seen as the ‘forced emancipation’ of Soviet rule.” (Dahlerup & Freidenvall, 2005, p. 34; see also Einhorn, 1993; Fallon et al., 2012) Therefore, analyzing cross-national data on gender quotas’ influence on female legislative representation, Dahlerup and Freidenvall argue that “<...> it is of utmost importance to locate strategies for increasing representation in the context of specific

national circumstances, reflecting the importance of political institutions, electoral systems and cultural dynamics.” (Dahlerup & Freidenvall, 2005, p. 41)

Finally, a broader factor of a country’s political system that can influence female legislative representation is its level of democratic development. Since, on average, the percentage of women in the national parliaments is higher in developed rather than developing countries, we can assume that democracy has a positive impact on the representation of women due to the clear rules of political game helping female candidates to elaborate a political strategy. However, up to date, no large-N quantitative analysis has identified such an effect (Kenworthy & Malami, 1999; Paxton & Kunovich, 2003; Reynolds, 1999; Tripp & Kang, 2008), and even the evidence of its negative impact was found (Kunovich & Paxton, 2005; Paxton, 1997; Yoon, 2004). Qualitative case- and small-N studies also show that the level of female legislative representation decreased in many countries after the democratic transition (Geisler, 1995 on Southern Africa; Jaquette & Wolchik, 1998 on Latin America and Eastern-Central Europe; Stockemer, 2011 on Africa; Watson, 1993 on Eastern Europe).

The lack of democracy’s effect in developed countries can be attributed to the small between-countries variation. In developing countries, in turn, the effect of democracy is positive but curvilinear, as Fallon, Swiss, and Viterna (2012) argue. Analyzing developing states from 1975 till 2009, they claim that what matters for the representation of women is not democracy per se, but rather a democratization process and its particular characteristics. That is, “[w]omen in non-democratic regimes often have high levels of legislative representation but little real political power. When democratization occurs, women’s representation initially drops, but with increasing democratic freedoms and additional elections, it increases again.” (Fallon et al., 2012, p. 380) Paxton, Hughes, and Painter (2010) and later Bjarnegard and Zetterberg (2016) confirm that democracy’s impact comes into power at the later periods of democratic development, after a certain threshold. One of the possible reasons for democracy’s delayed effect is women’s after-transition demobilization (Einhorn, 1993; Paxton et al., 2010). Another one is the difficulties women face in translating their transition activism into political representation in post-transition period (Friedman, 1998; Viterna & Fallon, 2008; Waylen, 1994).

d) Political parties’ context

Factors of female legislative representation at the party level, albeit political as well, constitute a separate group because they interact, mediate, or accelerate the effects of country-level factors. Analysis of party-level variables requires a lot of detailed information, it is thus difficult to perform it on mid-N and large-N samples of counties. However, it is important to give a brief overview of characteristics of parties and party system as a whole that can influence the level of female legislative representation in a country.

Although women can run for an office as independent candidates, it is more common to be selected and nominated by a political party. Therefore, the mode of candidates' selection, "the secret garden of politics" (Gallagher & Marsh, 1988), is of a particular importance. Party selectorate, mainly the levels of its inclusiveness and centralization (Vandeleene, De Winter, Meulewaeter, & Baudewyns, 2013), matters because selectorate nominates women and can place them in safe positions, although male candidates are usually preferred (Norris & Lovenduski, 1995). It is argued whether centralized or decentralized nomination process, mainly under PR, is more advantageous for women. On the one hand, under the former, there is a greater pressure on the party to balance to ticket. "Under PR, because of the greater visibility of the whole slate of candidates, there is greater incentive for parties to present a list that *looks* like the voters. In contrast, in majoritarian systems <...> the selection process is often in the hands of the local constituency party, and there is little incentive for each to pick candidates that will produce a balanced ticket at the national level." (Bird, 2004, p. 12, italics in original; see also Freedman, 2004; Matland, 1999; Matland & Studlar, 1996; Moser, 2001; Norris, 2004). On the other hand, local mobilization in support for gender equality can lead to higher numbers of women nominated (Caul, 1999; Sainsbury, 1993).

Until recently, there was a consensus among scholars that formal rules of candidates' selection and nomination are more beneficial for women's within party mobilization, adoption of gender quotas, and, consequently, female legislative representation (Caul, 1999; Kittilson, 2006; Matland, 1999; 2005; Handbook on Promoting Women's Participation in Political Parties). However, recent research on bureaucratized nomination process in 100 parties in 18 Latin American countries shows that its positive impact is limited and "<...> parties with bureaucratized candidate selection procedures function as rule followers, but not as gender equalizers." (Bjarnegård & Zetterberg, 2016, p. 395) More bureaucratized parties more likely adopt gender quotas but, at the same time, they place women at the end of the party list to minimize internal disputes. "Whereas an implementation of the letter of the quota laws may not instigate serious internal struggles, an implementation where incumbent male candidates in electable slots are replaced with female candidates almost certainly will." (Ibid, 406; see also Reiser, 2014) Therefore, formal rules themselves do not inevitably increase female legislative representation and, consequently, more attention should be paid on the relationship between both formal and informal aspects of party's life (Chappell & Waylen, 2013).

Research on the influence of party's ideology on the representation of women, based mainly on the samples of developed countries, shows that left parties more likely select and nominate female candidates and adopt voluntary gender quotas due to their general adherence to gender equality issues (Bird, 2004; Caul, 1999; Duverger, 1955; Hinojosa, 2012; Kenworthy & Malami, 1999; Kunovich & Paxton, 2005; Matland, 1993; Matland & Studlar, 1996; Murray,

2007; Norris, 1997; Reynolds, 1999; Rosenbluth et al., 2006; Rule, 1987; Salmond, 2006; Siaroff, 2000). However, studies of developing countries indicate that parties' left ideology does not have a significant impact of female legislative representation (Htun, 2005 on Latin America) due to several reasons. For instance, Morgan and Hinojosa (forthcoming) claim that Latin American right parties have closer ties with women's organizations. Fallon, Swiss, and Viterna (2012) argue that the positive impact of left parties is dependent on the level of democracy – it is strongest at its lowest level and decreases when country becomes more democratic. Even in developed countries the difference between left and right parties in regard to gender equality can become less salient over time (Matland, 1998; Matland & Studlar, 1996). For example, the first woman elected to the American House of Representatives was Republican (Dolan, Deckman, & Swers, 2007; Paxton & Hughes, 2007). In Scandinavia, conservative parties have started to nominate more women over time as well (Darcy et al., 1994; Sainsbury, 1993).

Moreover, Inglehart and Norris (2000) indicate that historically women had more conservative values than men, therefore left parties could be less advantageous for them. These differences in values, not only between women and men, but also between left parties in different world regions, can explain why, e.g., in Russia “<...> voting for the communists in national elections is associated with lower levels of women's representation in regional legislative assemblies.” (Golosov, 2014a, p. 8) In Russia, and in many post-Communist countries, left vote is connected to more conservative views, rather than to gender equality (Golosov, 2014b). “Thus the link between this variable and low women's representation is provided not by party support per se but rather by the so-called “gender ideology”, a set of attitudes and stereotypes pertaining to the role of women in polity and society.” (Golosov, 2014a, p. 8) Consequently, context matters by changing the way a particular factor works in regard to women's representation.

Finally, there is a debate among scholars on whether large or small parties are more beneficial for women. Some argue that minor parties are more advantageous because there is less intraparty competition over the nomination and they provide more opportunities for women trying to swing voters from their major competitors (Sanbonmatsu, 2003). Moreover, due to the above-mentioned contagion effect, “<...> traditional parties will feel pressured to nominate more women if one of their political rivals, usually a smaller party further to the left, starts to promote representation of women.” (Matland & Studlar, 1996, p. 707). On the contrary, others claim that large parties bring more women into politics because they have higher PM and, consequently, more women get elected (Golosov, 2014b; Kroeber, Marent, Fortin-Rittberger, & Eder, 2018; Matland, 2005; Studlar & McAllister, 2002). Due to a higher PM, the effect of gender quotas is accelerated as well (Tripp & Kang, 2008). Therefore, Dahlerup (2006) argues that gender quota's

adoption by the ruling party was more beneficial for women, for example in South Africa and Mozambique, and caused “the snowball effect” to the opposition parties. (pp. 131-132)

e) Country’s socio-economic context

Level of country’s overall socio-economic development is of a particular importance for female legislative representation because “[d]evelopment leads to weakening of traditional values, decreased fertility rates, increased urbanization, greater educational and labor force participation for women, and attitudinal changes in perceptions of the appropriate roles for women.” (Matland, 1998, p. 114) As a result, women’s desire and ability to join political parties and to run for an office as well as voters’ support of female candidates increase (Bjarnegård & Zetterberg, 2016). Having this causal chain in mind, Matland (1998) introduces a famous concept of a “development threshold” below which certain factors, such as PR, gender quotas or participation of women in labour force, do not have a considerable impact. Therefore, different factors facilitate female legislative representation in developed and developing countries (Rosen, 2013; Viterina et al., 2008).

Despite the apparent logic of this argument, empirical data produces mixed results. For instance, some scholars find a statistically significant positive impact of economic development on female legislative representation (Rosen, 2013; Schwindt-Bayer, 2005; Studlar & McAllister, 2002; Thames & Williams, 2013), while others argue that there is no direct linear effect (Moore & Shackman, 1996; Oakes & Almquist, 1993; Tripp & Kang, 2008). Women’s educational attainment, measured through their enrollment in secondary or tertiary education, is found to be positive in some studies (Fallon et al., 2012; Norris, 1987; Rosen, 2013; Rule, 1987) and does not have an effect in others (Kenworthy & Malami, 1999; Matland, 1998; Moore & Shackman, 1996; Paxton, 1997; Paxton & Kunovich, 2003; Tripp & Kang, 2008).

The same disparities can be found between researches analyzing the impact of women’s participation in the paid labour force, as a proxy of their political mobilization and level of financial independence, on their legislative representation. Some scholars show a positive relationship between women’s participation in labour market and in politics (Kenworthy & Malami, 1999; Matland, 1998; Moore & Shackman, 1996; Oakes & Almquist, 1993; Rosen, 2013; Rosenbluth et al., 2006; Rule, 1987; Schwindt-Bayer, 2005; Thames & Williams, 2013) arguing that working women develop solidarity, build networks, and gain financial independence which are important factors in promoting gender equality and for running for an office. On the contrary, other researchers do not find a distinct effect of women’s labour force participation (Norris, 1987; Paxton, 1997; Paxton & Kunovich, 2003; Viterina et al., 2008) or even identify its negative impact on the number of women, but in party elite, not in a parliament (Kunovich & Paxton, 2005).

Besides different choice of countries' samples and ways of operationalization of the main variables, the disparities in the findings indicate that political development does not always coincide with the socio-economic (Hughes, 2009; Krook, 2009). For example, by April 1st, 2018 the level of female representatives in the USA was still quite low, 19.5 percent. On the contrary, Rwanda is the leader in the percentage of women elected to the national parliament with it 61.3 percent (Women in National Parliaments). Therefore, all different factors and their interactions should be taken into account while analyzing female legislative representation.

f) Country's cultural context

The last group of factors is devoted to political culture prevailing in a society. The general framework that I would like to apply here is the distinction between materialist (industrial) and post-materialist (post-industrial) societies proposed by Ronald Inglehart (1977) more than 30 years ago. The general argument behind this distinction is that more developed countries, both socio-economically and politically, have more egalitarian values than less developed nations. Therefore, in the former societies, people has stronger and more positive attitudes towards gender equality in different spheres of life: education, labour market, and politics. Consequently, political parties are more inclined to recruit and nominate women to run for an office and voters more likely vote for female candidates. As a result, percentage of women elected to the national legislatures increases. Many scholars confirm that egalitarian values have a strong positive impact on female legislative representation (Bird, 2004; Inglehart & Norris, 2003; Kenworthy & Malami, 1999; Matland, 1998, 2003; Norris, 1987; Norris & Inglehart, 2001; Paxton & Kunovich, 2003; Tripp & Kang, 2008; Yoon, 2004). Moreover, egalitarianism also facilitates the positive impact of the institutional variables at both country- and party-level (Norris, 2004).

Religion plays a prominent role in shaping people's attitudes towards gender equality, women's place in a society, and their participation in the public life. Previous studies identify that Protestantism has a positive impact on female legislative representation due to its general egalitarian nature and positive view on women working outside the house (Kenworthy & Malami, 1999; Paxton, 1997; Paxton et al., 2006). On the contrary, more traditional and conservative religious beliefs, such as Catholicism, Orthodoxy, and Islam inhibit women's descriptive representation (Bird, 2004; Davidson-Schmich, 2006; Kunovich & Paxton, 2005; Norris, 1997, 2004; Paxton, 1997; Paxton & Kunovich, 2003; Reynolds, 1999; Rule, 1987, 1994). Inglehart and Norris (2003) also provide evidence that "<...> the *type* of religion matters for beliefs about gender equality far more than the *strength* of religiosity." (italics in original, pp. 67-68) Particularly, they argue that Islam plays one of the most important roles in inhibiting "the rising tide of gender equality" (ibid, p. 49), even after controlling for the levels of socio-economic and democratic development and some micro-level factors of female legislative representation. Therefore, "[t]his

suggests that religious beliefs are not simply a by-product of the fact that many Muslims can be found living in poorer societies <...>; instead, the evidence indicates that traditional religious values and religious laws have played an important role in reinforcing social norms of separate and subordinate role for women as homemakers and mothers <...>” (ibid, p. 68)

However, Norris (2004) and Tripp and Kang (2008) show that the negative impact of Islam and Orthodoxy loses its statistical significance after controlling for such institutional variables as electoral system and gender quotas as well as for the overall level of socio-economic development. For instance, “ [a]lthough the Middle East has lower than average rates of female representation, predominantly Islamic countries outside of the Middle East do not have low rates, bringing into question the impact of Islam as a religion on women’s representation. <...> [R]eligiosity is not incompatible with women’s advancement in political representation with the adoption of quotas.” (Tripp & Kang, 2008, pp. 356-357) Therefore, firstly, structural factors can mitigate the negative effect of traditional values prevailing in a society. Secondly, I would like to argue one more time that context matters by changing the way particular factors influence the representation of women.

g) Female legislative representation in the post-Communist countries

Although in previous subsections I provided some examples of the way factors influence female legislative representation in the post-Communist countries, I would like to complement them with a more detailed story based on the existing literature. Understanding determinates of women’s descriptive representation in countries experienced a long Communist regime in the past is of particular importance, because it enables us to formulate more precise hypotheses for the study of the post-Soviet states. Post-Communist – Central and Eastern-European – and post-Soviet countries share a similar political, socio-economic, and cultural background of the Communist rule. However, after the end of the Communist regime, the trajectories of these countries’ developments diverge. Nowadays, Central and Eastern-European states are members of the European Union (EU), while only three Baltic states out of fifteen post-Soviet countries are. Joining EU could have an impact on female legislative representation due to the EU’s promotion of gender equality in different spheres of life (Ortbals, Rincker, & Montoya, 2011, p. 83).

Despite the fact that many scholars identify PR as one of the key factors in promoting gender parity in the legislatures, the strength of its impact varies depending on a particular context. Analyzing women’s representation under PR and SMD tiers of mixed electoral system in four post-Communist states, Moser (2001) finds evidence that the number of women elected under each tier does not differ substantially. Moreover, Russia represents a unique case where female electoral success was higher under SMD. These results were later confirmed by Moser and Scheiner (2012). Identifying the same lack of PR’s effect, Saxonberg (2000) claims that “[o]ne major reason for

this is that the women's movement has not been strong enough in this region to pressure the parties into nominating more women to winnable seats.” (Saxonberg, 2000, p. 156)

At the same time, PR's positive impact can be mitigated by a country's political regime. Following Stockemer (2011) who provides empirical evidence that the level of female legislative representation is higher in African electoral authoritarian countries than in democracies, Golosov (2014b) asks whether this type of regime, wide-spread in the post-Soviet region, can also be beneficial for female candidates in other regions. Scholars show that the current African and world leader in the percentage of women elected, Rwanda, achieved this title through the adoption of gender quotas (Baldez, 2006) and PR electoral system (Stroh, 2010). Therefore, Golosov answers that “[w]ithout these features – for instance, under mixed electoral rules – the causal association between electoral authoritarianism and women's representation cannot be expected to be invariably positive.” (Golosov, 2014b, p. 5) Moreover, electoral authoritarianism changes incentives for political parties and candidates competing under mixed electoral system, widely-used in the post-Soviet states, and mitigates the positive contagion effect of this electoral system on female legislative representation (ibid).

Unlike African states, gender quotas are not popular tool of affirmative action in the post-Communist countries. One of the reasons mentioned above is that they are negatively perceived, especially by female candidates, as a reminder of “mandatory” gender equality during the Communist rule (Dahlerup & Freidenvall, 2005; Einhorn, 1993; Fallon et al., 2012). Alternatively, it is also possible “<...> that in some Eastern parties women are in such a weak position that even with advantageous institutions, women are unable to use the institutions to improve their position or that the assistance provided is very limited.” (Matland, 2003, p. 20) However, Matland (2003) argues that some post-Communist countries adopted gender quotas to legitimize themselves in the eyes of the “West”. Particularly, several parties in the Baltic countries adopted voluntary gender quotas inspired by the example of their Scandinavian neighbors.

Going down to party level, the most important feature of many post-Communist countries is weak party system's institutionalization (Golosov, 2004; Hale, 2006; Moser, 1999, 2001; Moser & Scheiner, 2012; Protsyk & Wilson, 2003; Saxonberg, 2000; Thames, 2007). This, in turn, interacts with party-level factors described above and determines the way they affect female legislative representation. For instance, Matland (2003) argues that in the post-Communist countries, such as Russia and Ukraine, party's internal life is mainly characterized by informal relations and patronage. Loyalty is perceived as a more important candidate's feature than competence. On the one hand, we saw that formal rules of candidates' selection and nomination are more beneficial for women (Caul, 1999; Kittilson, 2006; Matland, 1999, 2005). On the other hand, such internal life as in the post-Communist parties implies that personal control by party

leaders is quite strong. Consequently, nomination procedures are more centralized which is found to be advantageous for women by many scholars (Bird, 2004; Freedman, 2004; Matland, 1999; Matland & Studlar, 1996; Moser, 2001; Norris, 2004).

Whether formal rules and centralized nomination are beneficial for women in the post-Communist countries can also be determined by the strength of women's movements. "We initially suggested that open processes, with explicit rules for selecting candidates, would help women. <...> A review of the results across countries, however, shows the effect of institutions is very much dependent upon the degree to which women are organized to take advantage of the institutions. The same 'it depends' conclusion must be drawn in terms of whether centralization helps or hurts women." (Matland, 2003, p. 24; see also Matland, 2005) Therefore, regardless of the party's level of formality and centralization, women should organize themselves to demand improvement of their status within parties. Otherwise, in the context of the post-Communist countries where gender equality is still not considered as a salient issue, it seems unlikely that political parties will start promoting gender parity in representation. Unfortunately, the level of female activism is still quite low in the region due to women's overall demobilization after democratic transition (Einhorn, 1993; Paxton et al., 2010) and existing structural constraints (Friedman, 1998; Viterna & Fallon, 2008; Waylen, 1994).

The level of party system's development also has an impact on the distinction between left and right parties. Due to the weakness and instability of party systems in many post-Communist countries, the ideological difference between parties is not as apparent as in the Western democracies. Therefore, it is more beneficial for women, especially in less democratic regimes, to be members of the ruling party, regardless of its ideology (Golosov, 2014a). Pro-government party has a higher PM, and, consequently, women can be included in the party list without exclusion of male incumbents.

Nevertheless, Matland argues that "<...> in most countries the successor Communist parties were generally more open to women than the nationalist and conservative parties, although just 'how open' they were varied from country to country." (Matland, 2003, p. 25) On the one hand, this is explained by the fact that Communist and Social Democratic parties usually have stronger women's organizations pushing for more equal representation (Saxonberg, 2000). On the other hand, it can be attributed to the "Western" influence because "<...> leftist parties <...> consciously tried to model themselves upon Western European social democratic parties, for example, the Lithuanian Social Democratic Party." (Matland, 2003, p. 25) Despite this, it should be taken into account that in many post-Communist countries voting for the left parties is associated with more conservative views of the voters. Therefore, their gender stereotypes can inhibit the positive impact of the left parties on female legislative representation (Golosov, 2014b).

Finally, the difference between left and right parties in regard to gender equality can decrease over time. For instance, as in the example of Scandinavian countries provided in the subsection on party's political context, the level of women's representation in the Lithuanian conservative party (Homeland Union) approximated the level in other parties over time (Matland, 2003).

A brief note should be made on the role of women's parties in the post-Communist countries. In general, their electoral performance was quite bad, for example in Lithuania and Ukraine (Matland, 2003). One exception is a relative success of the "Women of Russia" party in the national parliamentary election in 1993. It received 10 percent of the votes which was translated into 25 seats in the State Duma (lower house of the Russian parliament). However, its narrow electoral appeal led to the failure to surpass a five percent electoral threshold in the next legislative elections in 1995. Only three female members of the "Women of Russia" were elected under the majoritarian tier of the mixed electoral system (Handbook on Promoting Women's Participation in Political Parties, 127).

Moving forward, we proceed to the role of socio-economic development for female legislative representation in the post-Communist states. On average, their level of economic development is lower than in developed countries. However, women's socio-economic status expressed in terms of such indicators as literacy, education, and labour force participation is in line with the position of women in developed countries and is usually significantly higher than in other developing countries. Therefore, it creates a controversial and ambiguous for women context when they achieved a relative gender parity in some spheres of life – education and labour market – but not in the political arena. This situation is well summarized and to some extent explained by Moser:

Under communist rule women achieved levels of literacy, education, and participation in the work force that rivaled or exceeded levels in the West. But women reached this status under political regimes that allowed virtually no independent political organization. Therefore, women did not develop the level of political organization that accompanied increased gender equality in the West nor did they experience the level of political activity of women's groups during transitions from authoritarianism in developing countries of Latin America. This social context characterized by weak political organization but high levels of literacy, education, and economic activity may interact in different and unexpected ways with institutional arrangements rendering the relationship between women's representation and electoral systems in post-communist states different from both consolidated democracies and democratizing states from other regions. (Moser, 2001, pp. 354-355)

This brings us back to the importance of women's organizations for gender equality's promotion. Even when institutional and socio-economic arrangements are favourable for women, the lack of their activism, both within and outside political parties, can suppress women's opportunities to be elected. Some organizations do try to increase the number of women running for an office by organizing special seminars and trainings, for instance, the Association of Business Women and the Foundation of Parliamentary Development in Kazakhstan, Women's Club 50/50 in Moldova, and Central and Eastern European Network for Gender Issues in Slovenia (Handbook on Promoting Women's Participation in Political Parties, 144). However, women's organizations in the post-Communist countries are still in their infancy and have a limited impact on political parties and governments in regard to adoption of policies promoting gender equality. One example of a successful joint work of women's organizations in the post-Soviet space is Kyrgyzstan. In the national parliamentary elections in 2005 no women were elected. Consequently, a united women's movement launched a media campaign, undertook a number of activities, and elaborated a Joint Action Platform to attract attention to the issues of gender inequality in the country. As a result, the amendments to the Constitution indicating a usage of a PR electoral system in the national legislative elections and to the Electoral Code obliging parties to alternate male and female candidates in their electoral lists were adopted. In 2007, only three parties out of 12 met these requirements and could participate in the national parliamentary elections (Handbook on Promoting Women's Participation in Political Parties, 147-148). 26 percent of women were elected.

Finally, an important cultural factor that should be mentioned here is the absence of big gender bias identified among voters in the post-Communist countries (Matland, 2003; Saxonberg, 2000). The same lack of voters' predisposition towards male candidates was also identified in the studies of Latin American countries (Shair-Rosenfield & Hinojosa, 2014) and the USA (Darcy et al., 1994). According to them, once women are nominated by political parties, they have the same chances of being elected as men do (Fox & Lawless, 2004). For instance, results of a survey undertaken in Ukraine show that there is a greater support for equal political representation of women among voters rather than political parties. Only ten percent of respondents think that "women's inability to engage in politics" is an important reason preventing women from participating in politics. 53 percent of participants are in favor of the legislated measures that promote gender parity, although women are still more supportive of this idea than men (61 percent of female respondents and 40 percent of male) (Ukrainian Women's Fund, 2011, p. 13).

Summing up the literature review section, we can make several conclusions. First of all, there are many macro-level factors of female legislative representation and none of them alone can be considered as a panacea for achieving gender parity. Secondly, they can work in different, and

sometimes unexpected, ways depending on their interactions in each particular country- and region-specific context. Therefore, factors that are found to have a positive impact on women's legislative representation in developed and developing countries in other regions, such as PR or left parties, do not work or work in the opposite direction in the post-Communist states. Talking about the latter group of countries, we can conclude that in general there is no big gender bias among voters, but political parties can pose certain problems for women due to informal rules of recruitment and nomination and weak and non-institutionalized party systems. A relatively high socio-economic status of women in these countries is not accompanied by the same gender parity in political arena. Even in a presence of favorable institutional opportunities, women's lack of activism both within and outside political parties impair their descriptive representation. Now we proceed to the research design of my study of macro-level factors of female legislative representation in the post-Soviet space.

Research design

a) Hypotheses

The literature review on the factors of female legislative representation and their applicability to the post-Communist countries enable us to formulate four main hypotheses for the analysis.

H1: the level of female legislative representation is not higher in the countries with proportional electoral system and / or gender quotas than in the countries with majoritarian electoral system and / or absence of gender quotas.

According to the literature, the main political institutional factors that have impact on the number of women in parliaments are the type of electoral system and gender quotas. PR induces political parties to balance the ticket and include more women in their party lists. Gender quotas, either legislated or voluntary, should also increase the number of women elected due to the higher level of women nominated by parties to fulfill quota's requirements. Of course, additional factors such as electoral threshold, PM, position of women in the party list, and efficiency of quota's enforcement mediate the effect of electoral system and gender quotas on female legislative representation. Nevertheless, as discussed, both factors do not always have an expected direction and strength of influence in the post-Communist countries. Not many of these countries adopted gender quotas and women sometimes perform better under majoritarian electoral rules which can be explained by the low level of party systems' institutionalization in these states. Therefore, I expect that proportional electoral system and presence of gender quotas do not have a distinct effect on female legislative representation in the post-Soviet countries.

H2: in a democratic political regime higher level of a party system's institutionalization leads to a higher level of female legislative representation.

High level of party system's volatility can hinder female legislative representation for several reasons. Firstly, parties need time to recruit and train women for running for an office. Secondly, established parties operating in a political system for a long time can be advantageous for women because they have financial resources to assist female candidates, supporters who can vote for women representing their favorite party, and higher PM which enable them to nominate more candidates. Finally, party system's institutionalization can facilitate the positive impact of PR. However, in an authoritarian political regime low degree of a party system's volatility is usually explained by the existence of one ruling party receiving the majority of the parliament's seats. Even under PR, this party can be less inclined to ticket-balancing because it receives the majority of parliament seats anyway. What is more, informal rules of nomination and recruitment processes are more likely to be in place in authoritarian countries negatively influencing female legislative representation. Thus, I expect that a higher level of democracy combined with a higher level of party system's institutionalization leads to more women being elected.

H3: higher level of a country's socio-economic development leads to a higher level of female legislative representation.

The higher level of a country's overall socio-economic development can increase female legislative representation through different channels. First of all, socio-economically developed countries, on average, have better access to secondary and tertiary education for women. This helps them to develop skills and obtain knowledge necessary for running for an office and to make them more attractive candidates for political parties. Secondly, higher level of socio-economic development leads to a better infrastructure such as kindergartens and day-care facilities which are of a great importance for women thinking about participating in the national elections. Also, more women participate in the paid labour force in more socio-economically developed country. It helps them to organize, build networks, and to demand more equal representation. At the same time, it enables women to gain financial independence which is beneficial in the world of politics due to the high costs of running a campaign. Therefore, I assume that the higher overall level of a country's socio-economic development enhances female legislative representation.

H4: the level of female legislative representation is not higher in the countries with more egalitarian attitudes towards gender equality than in the countries with more traditional attitudes towards gender equality.

Many prior studies of female legislative representation argue that more egalitarian political culture and, consequently, more egalitarian attitudes towards gender equality increases the number of female representatives. Positive attitudes towards women in education, labour market, and

politics mitigate gender bias existing among voters and party gatekeepers. As a result, parties recruit and nominate women at higher rates and people more likely vote for female candidates. Contrary to these findings, the literature on the post-Communist countries show that their voters, having more traditional attitudes towards gender equality as opposed to the “Western” voters, support female candidates as likely as male. This finding distinguishes countries experienced long Communist rule from other states. Thus, I expect that societies with more egalitarian attitudes towards gender equality do not have a higher level of female legislative representation than societies with more traditional views on women’s place in the society, or this effect will be minimal.

b) Sample

The main sample for the analysis consists of fifteen post-Soviet states established after the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kirgizia, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan (for more information on the years of national parliamentary elections held in each country and percentages of women elected see Table 1A in the Appendix). Besides the fact that these countries have not been systematically studied before in regard to factors of female legislative representation, there is another reason making them worth investigating. Some sample’s features enable us to consider it as an example of the “natural experiment” (see, e.g., Dunning, 2007; Meyer, 1995; Morton & Williams, 2006), albeit not in a strict sense of the concept.

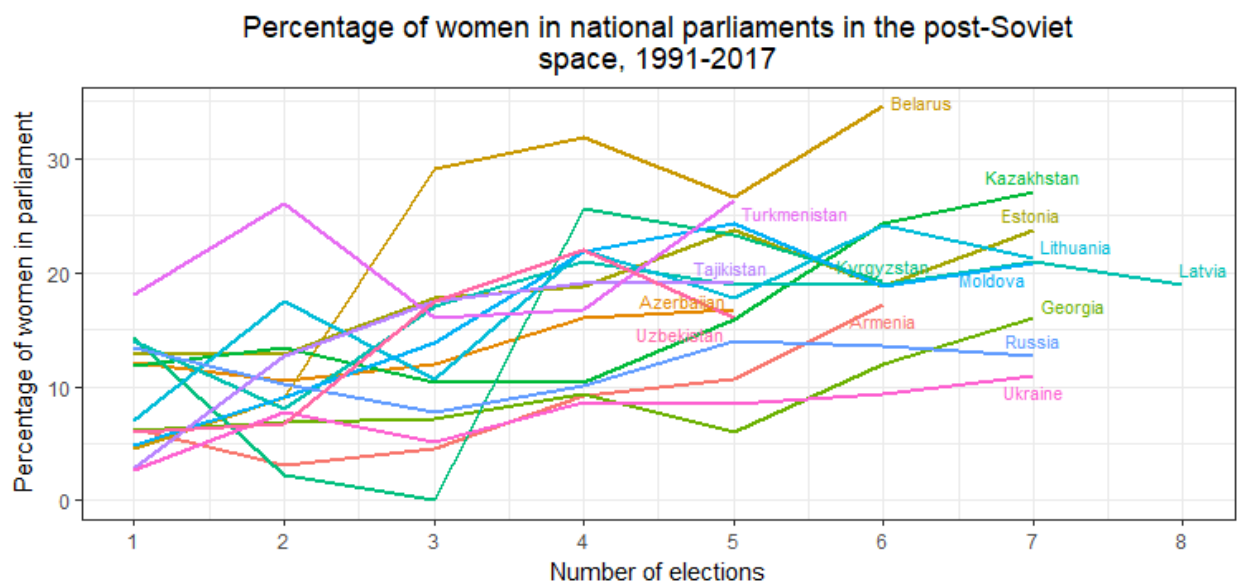
During Soviet times, the percentage of women in the Supreme Soviets of fifteen USSR’s republics was approximately the same, around 30 percent, due to the special gender quotas (Ballington & Binda, 2005; Kochkina, 2003; Lapidus, 1978; Shahnazaryan et al., 2016). This level of female representation was even higher than in many Western democracies, but it did not coincide with the level of actual political power women possessed (Moser, 2001). In the Soviet Union, the real decision-making power was not in the symbolic parliaments (Supreme Soviets), but in the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party. Women’s representation there, in turn, was quite low, e.g., 8 percent in 1981, achieving its highest level of 13 percent in 1986 (Browning, 1987, p. 34; see also Einhorn, 1993).

The collapse of the Soviet Union and, consequently, abolishment of gender quotas, led to a steep decrease in the number of female representatives in the newly-formed fifteen states. In a political “vacuum”, representation of women in the national parliaments would remain the same. However, governments started to implement political and socio-economic reforms, and the level of female legislative representation started to vary considerably (Figure 1⁴). Thus, we can argue

⁴ All computations and graphs are made using R 3.4.1 software for statistical computing and graphics.

that “[w]here the various countries are today has relatively little to do with where they were as a group <...> [during Soviet times]. Internal conditions, that vary across the countries, are determinative of women's representation.” (Matland, 2003, p. 2)

Figure 1. Percentage of women in national parliaments in the post-Soviet states, 1991-2017



Although we can see a general longitudinal trend that the percentage of female representatives in the national parliaments increase in all countries, there are large variations not only between, but also within them over time. Therefore, the facts that the level of women’s legislative representation was approximately the same in all Soviet republics and that its dissolution “caused” the variation in the percentages of women in the new states’ parliaments give us a good starting point for the analysis. It enables to isolate possible path-dependent factors and to focus on the countries’ current political and socio-economic indicators.

As it was argued above, political, socio-economic, and cultural contexts change the way particular factors work (Moser & Scheiner, 2012). The sample of the post-Soviet states is appropriate to (dis)confirm this thesis. They differ not only from the consolidated democracies and developing countries in other regions, but also from each other in their political regimes, levels of socio-economic development, and prevailing political culture. For instance, three Baltic countries – Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia - are democracies nowadays. On the contrary, Turkmenistan and Belarus are autocracies. There are also several states in the middle of these two categories – Russia represents a case of the so-called electoral authoritarianism (Golosov, 2011). The combination of all these reasons makes the post-Soviet space of a particular interest for the analysis. Thus, the research question which I aim to answer in this paper is: What are the macro-level factors of female legislative representation in the post-Soviet states in 1991-2017?

c) Operationalization of the variables

Dependent variable used in the analysis is straightforward – percentage of women elected to the national parliament in every election since 1991 till 2017 in fifteen post-Soviet countries. The data is provided by the PARLINE database on national parliaments.

Main independent variables:

Political variables:

The type of electoral system is operationalized through the percentage of seats allocated via proportional representation. The data is compiled from PARLINE and Electoral System Design databases. Unfortunately, the influence of district and party magnitudes is not analyzed due to the lack of reliable comparative time-series data.

National gender quotas are operationalized through a dummy-variable with a value of “1” assigned to the countries if they had some type of a legislated gender quota operating during each particular election and a value of “0” otherwise. Data is provided by Gender Quotas Database. For some states the information was further confirmed by their Central Electoral Commissions.

The influence of voluntary party quotas is not tested due to the unreliability of obtained data. Although Gender Quotas Database provides some information, there is a high degree of missing data, especially on the dates of gender quotas’ adoption by parties in developing countries. Therefore, it is not clear whether a voluntary party quota was in place during each particular election, what party adopted it, and whether this party surpassed an electoral threshold. At the same time, legislated gender quotas can be more advantageous for women because they are applied to all parties and sanctions for non-compliance are usually more effective (Davidson-Schmich, 2006).

It is disputed in the literature what is a better measure of a party system’s institutionalization. Some authors operationalize it through party system’s fragmentation (Dix, 1992; Kreuzer & Pettai, 2003; Moser, 1999) or Rae’s Index of fractionalization (Rae, 1971). Birch (2001) suggests to use the party replacement indicator measuring the percentage of votes won by parties that did not participate in previous elections. Mainwaring (1999) argues that the percentage of votes for independent candidates is a better proxy (see also Moser, 1999; Protsyk & Wilson, 2003). One of the most famous indicators is Pederson’s index of volatility (1979) measuring “<...> the net change within the electoral party system resulting from individual vote transfers.” (Pedersen, 1979, p. 3). However, a scholar should be familiar with a party system of each individual country to calculate it, because it requires knowledge of whether a party changed its name between elections or formed a coalition. It makes it difficult to measure volatility over time in fifteen countries. Therefore, I use a party institutionalization index provided by V-DEM as a proxy. It measures “<...> various attributes of the political parties in a country, e.g., level and

depth of organization, links to civil society, cadres of party activists, party supporters within the electorate, coherence of party platforms and ideologies, party-line voting among representatives within the legislature.” (V-DEM Codebook V7.1, p. 67) It focuses more on individual, especially larger, parties rather than party system as a whole which, in turn, can be a good proxy not only of a party system’s institutionalization but also of a level of informal rules operating within parties.

Finally, a level of democracy is measured by the V-DEM indicator of “clean elections” – the extent to which elections were free and fair (V-DEM Codebook V7.1, p. 58). I decided to take this index out of a variety of democracy’s measures provided by V-DEM or other projects as a proxy of democratic development. Coming back to Pitkin’s concept of formal representation, this measure seems appropriate, because “[w]hile the existence of free and fair elections [is] not a necessary condition for formal representation, in practice elections are considered critical and underlie most attempts to operationalize this dimension.” (Schwindt-Bayer & Mishler, 2005, p. 408). Moreover, free and fair elections can be beneficial for female candidates by lowering the number of barriers they have to overcome (Kunovich & Paxton, 2005, p. 515).

Socio-economic variables:

The level of economic development is conventionally measured through GDP per capita at purchasing power parity (in constant 2011 USD). A natural logarithm of this variable is taken due to the non-normality of the initial distribution. The data is provided by the World Bank Open Data.

The level of social development is operationalized by two variables. The first one is female participation rate in the labour force as a percentage of female population ages 15+. This estimate is modeled by the International Labour Organization and provided by the World Bank Open Data. The second variable is the mean years of schooling for women. Data is provided by the United Nations Human Development Data. Unfortunately, a better indicator of women’s access to education, such as the gross enrolment ratio in secondary or tertiary education, was not taken due to a higher level of missing data.

Cultural variables:

The level of egalitarian attitudes towards gender equality in a society is measured by the World Values Survey indicators. Particularly, three questions about people’s attitudes towards gender equality in labour market, education, and politics are taken: “when jobs are scarce, men should have more right to a job than women”, “a university education is more important for a boy than for a girl”, and “on the whole, men make better political leaders than women do” respectively. They were chosen because they appear in each wave of the survey. To obtain a more precise measure at the national level, I take a ratio of percentage of citizens’ responses “agree” (and “strongly agree” when applicable) to “disagree” (and “strongly disagree” when applicable) on each of three questions. As a result, a higher value of the resulting variable indicates more traditional

attitudes towards gender equality. Variables on attitudes towards gender equality in labour market and politics are transformed via logit function and towards gender equality in education – via natural logarithm to ensure their normal distribution.

Religious beliefs are approximated by the percentages of Muslims, Orthodox, Catholic, and Protestant believers in the population. The variables indicating percentages of Protestant and Catholic believers are transformed through a natural logarithm to make them normally distributed. The data is provided by the World Religion Database.

Control variables and alternative measures:

I also control for several measures used in the previous studies. Number of years passed since the introduction of the universal suffrage in a country till a particular national election is taken as a proxy of state's adherence to gender equality, history of women's political participation, and level of egalitarian values in a society (Fallon et al., 2012; Kenworthy & Malami, 1999; McAllister & Studlar, 2002; Moore & Shackman, 1996; Norris, 2004; Paxton et al., 2006; Reynolds, 1999). Prior to analysis, I cube it to make it normally distributed.

Ratification of CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women) is taken by some scholars as a proxy of international influence on national governments in regard to gender equality and of women's overall status in a country (Fallon et al., 2012; Kenworthy & Malami, 1999; Norris, 2006; Paxton et al., 2006; Viterna et al., 2008). Since all states from my sample ratified this convention, I include the number of years passed since its ratification till a respective national election.

As alternative measures of the country's socio-economic development, I use Human Development Index and adolescent fertility rate. The former indicator "<...> is a summary measure of average achievement in key dimensions of human development: a long and healthy life, being knowledgeable and have a decent standard of living." (Human Development Index) Some authors prefer this index over GDP because it measures overall country's development rather than wealth (Inglehart & Norris, 2003; Krook, 2010). The latter index reflects the number of births per 1000 women ages 15-19 and is provided by the World Bank Open Data. It is a good proxy of the country's socio-economic development because it shows whether girls have initial knowledge about birth control, whether contraceptives are accessible, and how much women are excluded from public sphere (Oakes & Almquist, 1993; Rosen, 2013). Prior to analysis, I take a cube root of this variable to make it normally distributed.

It is difficult to analyze female legislative representation without taking into account party context. As it was shown in the literature review section, there are three dimensions of party's internal structure which can matter for female candidates: recruitment, nomination, and ideology. Unfortunately, I cannot control for parties' recruitment and nomination processes of female

candidates due to the lack of comparative longitudinal data. However, I analyze the influence of party institutionalization index. To some extent, its higher value can be an indicator of more formal rules operating within parties. In regard to ideology, I argue that the differences between “left” and “right” parties in many post-Soviet states are minimal due to the low level of party systems’ development in the region, may be with the exception of Baltic states. Parties’ programmes are quite controversial combining items attributed to both left and right ideologies. Therefore, it is more important for female candidates whether they are members of the ruling party, rather than left or right.

Nevertheless, I use Manifesto Project Dataset to control for the presence of left parties in the elections. This data is criticized by many scholars for its methodology (see, e.g., Benoit, Laver, & Mikhaylov, 2007; Benoit, Laver, & Mikhaylov, 2009; Dinas & Gemenis, 2010; Franzmann & Kaiser, 2006; Mikhaylov, Laver, & Benoit, 2008; Zulianello, 2014), but this is not in the framework of the paper. I operationalize the presence of left parties through the percentage of votes received by all left parties in a particular election. Parties are considered as left according to: a) their belonging to the left party family (Communist, Socialist, Social-Democratic, Green); b) the negative value received by a party on the left-right scale. Alternatively, I control for the total share of parties’ adherence to: c) equality measured as a share of equality’s mentions in a party’s programme; d) traditional morality measured in the same way. To account for possible problems with the Manifesto Project data at least to some extent, I also use more elaborated data on parties’ positions in latent political spaces provided by Elff (2013). Particularly, I control for the percentage of votes received by all parties in the election chosen according to their negative values on: e) the authoritarian-libertarian and f) traditionalist-modern dimensions. Higher values of the resulting two variables indicate parties with more traditional views and are transformed via square root to make them normally distributed.

All of the variables’ values are taken for each election year if other is not specified. In case of missing data for any particular year, I tried to take the value of previous or consequent year as a proxy. I also ran a multiple imputation of missing data using Amelia II package to preserve as many observations for the analysis as possible due to their low overall level. However, some variables of interest have a high degree of missing data which creates certain problems for the imputation process and, consequently, produces uncertain estimates with larger error terms. Therefore, I do not report the results of the analysis conducted on the imputed databases.

d) Method

A longitudinal analysis is particularly beneficial for analyzing female legislative representation because it allows for a better testing of existing theories, to check whether they are applicable over time, and possibly to generate new arguments explaining growth or decline of the

percentage of women elected (Hughes & Paxton, 2007, 2008; Kunovich & Paxton, 2005; Paxton et al., 2010; Thames & Williams, 2013). Therefore, I run an OLS regression with fixed effects which is a widely-used method for the longitudinal cross-national analysis in the field of political science. I use a demeaning procedure to obtain “fixed effects”, to account for the unobserved unit heterogeneity, and to preserve degrees of freedom due to the small number of observations. Lagged dependent variable is included to model dynamic and, consequently, to account for serial autocorrelation when a percentage of women elected in the previous election affects their percentage in the next. Finally, panel corrected standard errors (pcse), as proposed by Beck and Katz (1995, 1996), are used to account for panel heteroskedasticity.

The method has some disadvantages. First of all, fixed effects absorb all between-countries variation and, consequently, the effects of independent variables are solely within-countries. As a result, identified effects explain the change in the percentage of female representatives over time within country, which is of a particular importance too (Norris & Lovenduski, 1995), rather than between countries. Secondly, fixed effects models do not allow to test the effects of constant or slowly-changing over time variables (Bartels, 2015). Having this in mind, we should cautiously draw conclusions based on the obtained results. They are applied to a particular sample of countries and, strictly speaking, cannot be used to make generalizations to a bigger population of states from other world regions. However, I argue that it is important to investigate female legislative representation in each particular region due to the differences in their political, socio-economic, and cultural contexts. Therefore, the fixed effect model seems to be an appropriate tool for the purpose of this analysis.

Random effects models help to overcome the above-mentioned problems. They enable researchers to include time-constant variables and to test the effects of between-countries independent variables. I ran OLS regression with random effects for each of my main models⁵ and the results are similar to those of the fixed effects models in terms of direction and, in most cases, strength of the relationship between dependent and independent variables. However, the results of the Hausman test are statistically significant for all models indicating that fixed effects models are more preferable.

All of the diagnostics specific to the fixed effects models were performed as well. Stationarity assumption was met indicating that there is no unit root, that is no systematic patterns that are unpredictable, in the variables. Poolability tests, checking whether there are systematic differences between cases requiring usage of fixed effects instead of pooling, confirmed the choice of the fixed effects models. Durbin-Watson autocorrelation test showed no autocorrelation in the

⁵ Not shown in the paper.

models. Finally, Lagrange-Multiplier test for presence of time- and unit-specific omitted variables was not statistically significant for all models confirming the unnecessary of applying random effects models.

Results

The results of the models testing the first three hypotheses about the influence of political factors and socio-economic development on female legislative representation are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Political and socio-economic factors of female legislative representation (pcse in parentheses)

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
% women's seats _(t-1)	0.19* (0.09)	0.18* (0.09)	0.12 (0.10)	0.21* (0.09)	0.34* (0.13)	0.34*** (0.08)
% PR seats	0.09*** (0.02)	0.1*** (0.02)	0.09*** (0.02)	0.10*** (0.02)	0.08** (0.03)	
National gender quotas	2.21 (2.39)	2.27 (2.32)	2.34 (2.8)	2.74 (2.8)	2.52 (2.50)	14.05*** (2.67)
N years suffrage – election (^3)	0.00*** (0.00)					
GDP per capita PPP (nat.log)		5.79*** (1.48)				
HDI			51.78*** (12.88)			
Labour force participation (female)				-0.1 (0.13)	0.13 (0.2)	
Secondary school (female, mean years)					1.43 (0.73)	
Adolescent fertility rate (^1/3)				-7.52** (2.27)		
Party system institutionalization						16.08* (7.83)
Elections free/fair						-5.55* (2.39)
Party system institutionalization * elections free/fair						1.69 (3.61)
n	15	15	15	15	14	15
N	80	80	70	74	48	79
Adj. R²	0.4	0.43	0.38	0.32	0.32	0.38

Significance: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1

Hypothesis 1 is partially confirmed. As predicted, national gender quotas, while having a positive direction of influence, do not have a statistically significant effect in all, except one, models. Several explanations can be applied here. On the one hand, the absence of impact can be attributed to the fact that only five out of fifteen states adopted legislated gender quotas. Moreover,

almost all of them did it in the recent years, therefore, the effect can still appear in the upcoming elections. On the other hand, this can be explained by quotas' ineffective enforcement mechanisms and lack of strong sanctions for parties' non-compliance with them. Proportional representation, in turn, has a consistent positive impact on the number of female representatives increasing it on average 9 percentage points.

Hypothesis 2 is partially confirmed as well. Higher level of party system's institutionalization leads to a higher level of female legislative representation and increases it on 16 percentage points which is a quite significant improvement. However, contrary to the expectation, higher level of democracy is not associated with the stronger presence of women in the parliament. Having more free and fair elections decreases female legislative representation on 5.5 percentage points. The interaction term of party system's institutionalization and level of democracy is not statistically significant, albeit positive. This is an interesting finding showing that democracy itself is not a keystone for female descriptive representation. A less volatile party system seems to be a more important factor. To some extent, it confirms my assumption made earlier that it is more important for a female candidate to be a member of the stable ruling party rather than of smaller parties but with a greater adherence to gender equality.

Hypothesis 3 is confirmed. The impact of almost all variables reflecting the level of a country's socio-economic development is in the hypothesized direction of influence. Economic development, operationalized through GDP per capita, is positively connected to the female legislative representation, increasing it on 5.8 percentage points. Alternatively, a higher adolescent fertility rate decreases women's legislative representation on 7.5 percentage points. Increasing the mean number of years spent by girls in secondary school on one year rises female legislative representation on 1.4 percentage points. The effect of this variable is smaller and statistically significant at a lower level. This can be explained by the fact that the post-Communist countries generally have quite high levels of literacy and education. An alternative measure of socio-economic development, a country's HDI, have an expected positive impact on female legislative representation increasing it substantially on more than 50 percentage points. At the same time, the impact of women's participation in the paid labour force is ambiguous. It has both negative and positive impact in different models requiring further consideration.

Controlling for a number of years passed since introduction of universal suffrage in a country till the respective national parliamentary election shows that it has an expected positive impact on female legislative representation. However, its effect is negligible. This can be explained by the fact that almost all countries gave women the right to vote in the early years of the Soviet rule. One noticeable exception is the Republic of Moldova where the universal suffrage came into force only in 1978 (confirmed by the new post-Soviet government in 1993) (Women's Suffrage).

Thus, one can assume that the effect of this variable, if existed, diminished during the countries' history as members of the USSR.

The results of the fourth hypothesis testing the influence of cultural attitudes on the percentage of women elected are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Cultural factors of female legislative representation (pcse in parentheses)

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7
% women's seats _(t-1)	0.66*** (0.07)	0.36** (0.08)	0.45** (0.10)	0.18 (0.11)	0.30 . (0.17)	0.29 . (0.16)	0.36* (0.16)
% PR seats	0.04 . (0.02)				0.1* (0.04)	0.09* (0.04)	
National gender quotas		6.41*** (0.8)		6.72* (2.66)		4.12 (2.91)	5.68 . (3.17)
N years suffrage – election (^3)				0.00 (0.00)			
N years CEDAW – election					0.25 . (0.13)	0.21 (0.14)	
Adolescent fertility rate (^1/3)	-10.63* (3.77)			-2.77 (3.44)	-2.66 (3.42)	-1.79 (3.31)	
GDP perc capita PPP (nat. log)		6.80** (1.64)					6.82** (2.27)
HDI			68.70* (19.74)				
Labour force participation (female)		-0.62** (0.16)	-0.53* (0.16)				0.17 (0.23)
When jobs are scarce, men should have more right to a job than women (ratio "agree" to "disagree", logit)	8.32* (2.42)						
Men make better political leaders than women do (ratio "agree" to "disagree", logit)		5.01* (1.55)					
University education is more important for a boy than for a girl (ratio "agree" to "disagree", log)			5.34* (1.56)				
% Muslim				0.77* (0.35)			
% Orthodox					-0.24 (0.41)		
% Protestant (log)						0.2 (5.66)	
% Catholic (log)							-9.21 . (4.49)
n	13	13	13	15	15	15	15
N	24	25	24	54	39	39	45
Adj. R²	0.70	0.8	0.73	0.32	0.39	0.39	0.44

Significance: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1

The first and the third hypotheses are partially confirmed again. PR has a positive impact on female legislative representation, while the effect of legislated gender quotas is controversial. It is positive and increases female representation on average 5.7 percentage points, but it is not highly statistically significant in all models.

GDP per capita, HDI, and adolescent fertility rate have the hypothesized direction of influence in all models confirming that higher level of socio-economic development leads to a higher level of female legislative representation. However, female labour force participation produces ambiguous results again. It has a positive, albeit not statistically significant, relationship with the dependent variable in the last model. At the same time, it negatively influences the percentage of female representatives in the second and third models reducing it significantly on average 57 percentage points. This result is puzzling and contradicts previous findings.

On the one hand, an aggregated measure of female labour force participation shows that women work but does not indicate where. As Matland argues, “[w]hile women's labor force participation rates are quite high in many LDCs [less developed countries], this is largely due to women's presence in subsistence-level primary sector work. This work is quite unlikely to have the same empowering and consciousness raising effect.” (Matland, 1998, p. 118) Therefore, we need a more precise measure of women’s presence in professional occupations. On the other hand, it might be the case, as Moser claims, that “<...> post-Communist states have not achieved a level of political and socioeconomic development that has allowed women to organize so as to take advantage of institutional opportunities.” (Moser, 2001, p. 365)

Therefore, I decided to test the influence of women’s participation in civil society organizations (CSO) on their legislative representation. This variable is operationalized as a degree to which women are prevented from joining CSO and to which specific women’s organizations are prevented from operating in a country. Higher value of this variable shows less restrictive environment (V-DEM Codebook 7.1, p. 248). The data is provided by V-DEM. As we can see in Model 1, Table 3A in the Appendix, the results are surprising. More open societies where women can freely participate in civil society organizations and where women’s groups can freely operate in women’s interests have for about 12 percentage points lower level of female legislative representation. However, this finding shows again that female descriptive representation is higher in less democratic and less open societies.

Hypothesis four is confirmed. Orthodoxy and Catholicism reduce women’s presence in the national parliaments, while Protestantism increases it. However, these results are not statistically significant or, in case of Catholicism, are significant at a low level. On the contrary, higher percentage of Muslims in the population leads to a higher level of female legislative representation increasing it substantially on 77 percentage points. Therefore, we can assume that Islam does not

play such a restrictive role for participation of women in politics in the post-Soviet space as it does, for example, in Arab states such as Saudi Arabia. Partly, this can be attributed to the USSR's heritage where religion was officially banned. Another possible explanation for this effect confirms the argument that women's descriptive representation is higher in more authoritarian countries which, in the Post-Soviet region, are also represented by predominately Muslim Central Asian states and Azerbaijan.

The effect of the World Values Survey's items further confirms my argument that more authoritarian and traditional, in terms of attitudes towards gender equality, societies have more female representatives. As we can see, all three variables have a positive and statistically significant impact on female legislative representation. More traditional attitudes toward gender equality in the labour market, politics, and education increases percentage of women's representatives on 8.3, 5, and 5.3 percentage points respectively. The share of variance explained by the models with the World Values Survey variables also raises drastically. However, testing the influence of cultural variables significantly reduces the number of observations due to a high degree of missing data or, in the case of World Values Surveys, due to the fact that surveys were not conducted in two countries from the sample and the number of surveys undertaken in other states ranges from one to four.

Finally, an earlier ratification of CEDAW does not seem to have a noticeable effect on female legislative representation. However, this is not surprising considering that ratification of the international conventions does not automatically mean that gender equality is respected and promoted in the country.

One additional remark should be made about the influence of women's presence in the state's authority bodies in the previous elections on the number of women elected in the next elections. As you can see in the tables, the percentage of women elected in the previous elections has a positive and almost always statistically significant impact. The percentage of women in the national executives during the previous convocation of the parliament also has a positive, albeit statistically significant at the lower level, effect on the percentage of female representatives elected in the next electoral cycle increasing it on 16 percentage points (Model 1, Table 3A in the Appendix). Therefore, previous findings indicating that higher level of female descriptive representation "reproduces" itself in the next elections (see, e.g., Kittilson, 2006; Kunovich & Paxton, 2005; Matland, 1993; Salmond, 2006; Wängnerud, 2009) are supported. Elected women inspire more women to run for an office, push party's gatekeepers and / or national authorities to adopt measures promoting gender equality, and voters "get used" to female candidates and more likely vote for them in the future. However, a recent study by Kroeber et. al. (2018) shows that there is a "saturation point", at around 25 percent, in women's legislative representation.

Therefore, we should not be too optimistic because “[t]hese findings contradict established theories that lead us to expect women’s representation to follow a self-reinforcing process, with parity as an end point. Rather, we find that women hit a ‘glass ceiling’ far sooner.” (Kroeber et al., 2018, p. 1)

Results show that female legislative representation is higher in more authoritarian countries with more traditional attitudes towards gender equality among voters raising a question of why is it the case? There are several possible explanations. The legacy of the Soviet rule can manifest itself. The presence of women among Soviet higher officials was quite prominent due to the USSR’s general adherence, at least *de jure*, to gender equality and to the special gender quotas adopted. Women were appointed to positions of power but it did not necessarily translate into the actual decision-making power they possessed and into perceptions of women as equal to men by male colleagues and citizens. This type of political “behaviour” could persist over time in the political environment of the newly-formed states. Another plausible explanation is institutional. Women can be better represented in more authoritarian states due to the lower actual power their parliaments hold. Therefore, it is easier for women to get elected there. Consequently, female representation can be in an inverse relationship with a parliament’s “prestige” and *de facto* political “weight”.

Therefore, I decided to check this operationalizing parliament’s prestige through the effective number of parliamentary parties calculated by Laakso and Taagepera’s formula (1979). Golosov’s formula (2010) is more preferable when one dominant party operates in the party system, which is the case in many countries in the post-Soviet region. However, this is not valid for all states and I decided not to apply it. Leaving aside the question of democracy, we can assume that more competitive elections indicate that being elected to the parliament is a valuable political achievement. Although the literature shows that more competitive elections provide more opportunities for women (Kroeber et al., 2018; Norris & Inglehart, 2001), I assume that higher effective number of parliamentary parties is associated with more prestigious parliament and, consequently, negatively influences female legislative representation.

Prior to analysis, I made a logit transformation of the effective number of parliamentary parties to make this variable normally distributed. The results (Model 1, Table 3A in the Appendix) confirm my expectation. Effective number of parliamentary parties, albeit statistically significant at a lower level, has a negative impact on the percentage of women elected to the parliament. Therefore, the results of the conducted analyses enable us to conclude that female legislative representation is higher in more authoritarian countries with more traditional attitudes towards gender equality among voters and less prestigious and competitive national parliaments. Unfortunately, this resembles a situation with women in politics in the Soviet Union. At the same

time, the level of the country's social-economic development should be high to ensure that more female candidates are elected. Institutional factors, such as proportional representation and legislated gender quotas, seem to play a less important role in promoting female legislative representation in the post-Soviet region.

Finally, an alternative explanation of more women being elected to the national parliaments in more authoritarian countries with more traditional attitudes towards gender equality can be found applying the “supply-demand” framework. In more democratic countries, the “market” of eligible candidates is free or partly-free. In more authoritarian states, in turn, the composition of the candidates’ pool is mostly determined by the ruler / ruling party to ensure stability of the political regime and to prevent possible overthrow of their power. In this case, the question of who is allowed to stand for an office becomes more important than the nature of electoral or party systems. Reviewing the literature on women’s legislative representation in the post-Communist states, I mentioned that candidate’s loyalty is usually perceived as a more valuable asset than competence by political parties’ leaders in weak party systems. Similarly, rulers of more authoritarian countries generally tend to appoint or to allow entrance to political arena for loyal rather than competent political actors (Boix & Svolik, 2013; Egorov & Sonin, 2011; Magaloni, 2006). In some African countries, for example in Rwanda, ruling party was promoting gender equality to “<...> count on a loyal cadre of supporters who will not challenge RPF [Rwandan Patriotic Front, ruling party] authority <...>.” (Dahlerup, 2006) Consequently, this possible “filter” of candidates by the ruler / ruling party can lead to a situation when a different set of explanations is required to interpret women’s legislative representation in authoritarian countries. Therefore, obtained macro-level results raise important questions for the future research telling us, for example, to look at who women elected and who women allowed to be elected are. This question is analysed in my other paper.

The results of analysis testing the influence of parties’ left ideology on female legislative representation are presented in Table 4A and discussed in the Appendix.

Conclusion / discussion

Unequal representation of women in states’ authority bodies is a particularly salient issue nowadays. The parity between female and male representatives in the national parliaments is almost achieved only in the Nordic countries but it is a distant goal for the states in all other world regions. From the mid-XX century social scientists have started to investigate factors that can explain the vast differences in the levels of female legislative representation between regions, individual countries, and within states over time. Analyses of developed countries with consolidated democracy mostly show that proportional representation and gender quotas play the

most important role in promoting gender equality in politics. In developing countries, in turn, the level of socio-economic development explains a bigger share of variance in the number of female representatives. However, consensus among scholars on the factors of female legislative representation is not achieved and the studies sometimes show contradictory results.

In this article, I argue that the analysis of a particular world region in regard to women's descriptive representation is of a particular importance. Scholars receive different results not only due to the different choices of the main variables and methods of analysis, but because context matters. Countries from one region, either geographical or political, have their own unique political, socio-economic, and / or cultural "profile". Therefore, regional context affects the mode in which particular factors influence female legislative representation interacting with them in, sometimes, unexpected ways. One of the regions remained understudied so far is the post-Soviet space.

Dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 gives us a "natural" starting point for the analysis. Due to the gender quotas adopted in the USSR, the level of female legislative representation was approximately the same in the Supreme Soviets of all fifteen republics. Formation of new fifteen independent states caused a great variation in the share of women elected to the national parliaments both between and within states over time. The post-Soviet countries also differ from each other in the levels of political, socio-economic, and cultural development. All of these reasons make these states worth investigating because it is unclear what factors identified in the literature work in the region. Therefore, I aimed at answering a question, what are the macro-level factors of female legislative representation in the post-Soviet space in 1991-2017.

Based on the results of the first longitudinal cross-national analysis of the post-Soviet countries, I provide evidence that women have higher chances of being elected to the national parliaments in more authoritarian countries where traditional attitudes towards gender equality prevail in the society. Although religious beliefs do not seem to play an important role, overall traditional attitudes of voters towards women in education, labour market, and politics explain a big share of variance in female legislative representation. Contrary to the findings in the other world regions, less egalitarian values do not prevent post-Soviet citizens from voting for female candidates. Democracy appears not to be a keystone for female legislative representation as well. "Cleaner" and more competitive elections worsen women's electoral success. It enables us to conclude that more authoritarian countries where national parliaments are not considered as prestigious have an easier access for women into the sphere of politics.

Although the analysis shows that less volatile party systems are more advantageous for women, in the context of the post-Soviet space it mostly implies an existence of one dominant ruling party. Therefore, it is more important for a woman considering running for an office to be

a member of this stable ruling party than of a left party with a greater adherence to gender equality. Despite the fact that the identified effects of parties' left ideology are ambiguous, our explanation seems plausible. In the post-Soviet countries, the distinction between left and right parties is not clear due to the low overall level of both party system' and democratic development.

Conventional institutional factors that increase female legislative representation in majority of other regions and countries – proportional representation and national gender quotas – seem to play a less important role in the post-Soviets states. Although the relationships between these political variables and the percentage of female representatives are positive, they are not always statistically significant and noticeable. The impact of socio-economic development, in turn, is considerable. Countries' overall social and economic development increases the number of women elected to their national parliaments. However, contrary to the previous findings, women's greater participation in the paid labour force has a negative impact on their descriptive representation. Partially, this can be explained by the fact that "<...> post-Communist states have not achieved a level of political and socioeconomic development that has allowed women to organize so as to take advantage of institutional opportunities." (Moser, 2001, p. 365) Having this and the fact that institutional factors do not play a great role in mind, we can confirm Matland's (1998) thesis about the existence of a "development threshold" on the sample of the post-Soviet states.

The results also raise substantial questions for the future consideration by both practitioners and social scientists, especially in regard to the connection between descriptive and substantial representation. Female legislative representation is higher in more authoritarian countries where traditional attitudes towards gender equality prevail in the society, but is it translated into women's real decision-making power? Dahlerup (2006) claims that "[a]s long as civil and political liberties are curtailed, women's potential to make a genuine difference remains restricted." (p. 136) Therefore, are women elected just tokens, as it was in the Soviet Union, or do they have an impact on policies adopted? Should a powerless descriptive representative be increased anyway? Does it contribute to the empowerment of women in less egalitarian societies? Finally, can a higher number of women elected promote democratization in more authoritarian countries? A further and deeper analysis of women's political representation in the region is required to give answers to these questions.

Appendix

Table 1A. National parliamentary elections in the post-Soviet countries, 1991-2017

States	Name of the lower / single house of parliament	Year of elections	Percentage of women elected
Armenia	Azgayin Zhoghov / National Assembly	1995	6.32
		1999	3.05
		2003	4.58
		2007	9.16
		2012	10.69
		2017	17.14
Azerbaijan	Milli Mejlis / National Assembly	1995	12.1
		2000	10.48
		2005	12
		2010	16
		2015	16.8
Belarus	Palata Predstaviteley / House of Representatives	1995 (May)	4.57
		2000	9.09
		2004	29.09
		2008	31.82
		2012	26.61
		2016	34.55
Estonia	Riigikogu / Parliament	1992	12.87
		1995	12.87
		1999	17.82
		2003	18.81
		2007	23.76
		2011	18.81
		2015	23.76
Georgia	Sakartvelos Parlamenti / Parliament	1992	6.2
		1995	6.93
		1999	7.23
		2004	9.36
		2008	6
		2012	12
		2016	16
Kazakhstan	Mazhilis / House of Representatives	1994	11.86
		1995	13.43
		1999	10.39
		2004	10.39
		2007	15.89
		2012	24.3
		2016	27.1
Kyrgyzstan	Jogorku Kenesh / Supreme Council	1995	14.29
		2000	2.22
		2005	0
		2007	25.56
		2010	23.33
		2015	19.17
Latvia	Saeima / Parliament	1993	14
		1995	8
		1998	17
		2002	21
		2006	19
		2010	19
		2011	21

		2014	19
Lithuania	Seimas / Parliament	1992	7.09
		1996	17.52
		2000	10.64
		2004	21.99
		2008	17.73
		2012	24.11
		2016	21.28
Moldova (republic of)	Parlament / Parliament	1994	4.81
		1998	9
		2001	13.86
		2005	21.78
		2009 (Percentage of female representatives is taken as an average of elections in April and July)	24.26
		2010	24.26
		2014	18.81
Russia	Gossoudarstvennaya Duma / State Duma	2014	20.79
		1993	13.39
		1995	10.22
		1999	7.71
		2003	10.07
		2007	14
		2011	13.56
Tajikistan	Majlisi namoyandogon / House of Representatives	2016	12.67
		1995	2.84
		2000	12.7
		2005	17.46
		2010	19.05
Turkmenistan	Mejlis / Assembly	2015	19.05
		1994	18
		1999	26
		2004	16
		2008	16.8
Ukraine	Verkhovna Rada / Parliament	2013	26.4
		1994	2.7
		1998	7.8
		2002	5.1
		2006	8.7
		2007	8.44
		2012	9.3
Uzbekistan	Qonunchilik palatasi / Legislative Chamber	2014	10.9
		1994 (2 nd round – in 1995)	6
		1999	6.8
		2004	17.5
		2009	22
		2014 (2 nd round – in 2015)	16

Table 2A. Descriptive statistics of the variables

Variables	Mean	Median	Min	Max	St. deviation
% women's seats	14.67	14.00	0	34.55	7.24
% women's seats _(t-1)	13.56	12.78	0	31.82	7.07
% PR seats	51.11	50.00	0	100	40.34
National gender quotas	0.12	0.00	0	1	0.32
N years suffrage – election (^3)	553937.84	551368	4096	941192	232080.86
N years CEDAW – election	12.79	13.00	-4.00	35.00	9.45
GDP per capita PPP (nat.log)	8.89	9.00	7.08	10.24	0.85
HDI	0.70	0.70	0.54	0.87	0.08
Labour force participation (female)	54.39	54.60	37.60	67.50	5.43
Secondary school (female, mean years)	10.48	10.45	7.30	13.00	1.34
Adolescent fertility rate (^1/3)	3.19	3.13	2.32	4.10	0.43
Party system institutionalization	0.58	0.6	0.07	0.91	0.19
Elections free/fair	-0.35	-0.47	-2.91	2.49	1.56
When jobs are scarce, men should have more right to a job than women (ratio "agree" to "disagree", logit)	-4.46	-4.45	-5.81	-2.33	0.69
Men make better political leaders than women do (ratio "agree" to "disagree", logit)	-3.96	-4.00	-4.58	-2.95	0.39
University education is more important for a boy than for a girl (ratio "agree" to "disagree", log)	-0.88	-0.89	-1.61	-0.04	0.42
% Muslim	36.51	10.58	0.11	97.12	42.43
% Orthodox	35.57	21.55	0.55	94.48	35.47
% Protestant (log)	-0.23	0.09	-3.00	3.52	1.75
% Catholic (log)	-0.64	-0.60	-4.61	4.37	2.97

Effective number of parliamentary parties (logit)	-3.50	-3.40	-4.60	-2.19	0.58
Women's participation in CSO	0.8	0.89	0.25	0.97	0.18
% female ministers _(t-1)	9.07	8.5	0	30	6.95
% rural	42.98	37.40	23.00	73.60	13.92
% left (left party family)	25.84	20.65	0.00	74.51	18.68
% left (left-right scale)	35.48	31.66	0.00	98.39	26.35
Traditional morality parties' content	14.43	11.61	0.00	54.34	12.00
Equality parties' content	21.07	16.07	2.01	107.11	18.70
% parties' votes (authoritarian- libertarian dimension, sqrt)	3.89	4.01	0.03	9.07	2.60
% parties' votes (traditionalist- modern dimension, sqrt)	3.38	3.42	0.03	6.94	2.40

Table 3A. Additional model

Variables	Model 1
% women's seats _(t-1)	0.25** (0.08)
% PR seats	0.08** (0.03)
National gender quotas	8.87** (2.62)
Effective number of parliamentary parties (logit)	-3.40 . (1.71)
Labour force participation (female)	-0.22 (0.17)
Women's participation in CSO	-12.42** (4.34)
% female ministers _(t-1)	0.16 . (0.09)
n	15
N	79
Adj. R²	0.38

Table 4A. Party' left ideology and female legislative representation (pcse in parentheses)

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
% women's seats _(t-1)	-0.49*** (0.11)	-0.32* (0.14)	-0.44* (0.20)	-0.35* (0.14)	-0.44* (0.14)	-0.24 (0.16)
% PR seats	0.06 . (0.03)	0.01 (0.03)	0.02 (0.04)		0.01 (0.03)	
National gender quotas				1.35 (3.36)		
GDP per capita PPP (nat. log)			6.67** (2.04)			7.64* (2.58)
HDI	72.10*** (12.38)	74.98*** (11.84)		66.20*** (12.12)	69.41** (17.79)	
Labour force participation (female)	-0.46*** (0.08)	-0.42*** (0.1)		-0.38*** (0.1)	-1.11*** (0.22)	-0.73* (0.30)
Secondary education (female)			0.32* (0.15)			
% rural	2.06* (0.94)			1.73* (0.82)		
% left (left party family)	0.08** (0.03)					
% left (left-right scale)		0.01 (0.01)				
Traditional morality parties' content			0.07 (0.06)			
Equality parties' content				-0.00 (0.04)		
% parties' votes (authoritarian-libertarian dimension, sqrt)					-0.97** (0.24)	
% parties' votes (traditionalist-modern dimension, sqrt)						-0.5* (0.22)
n	9	9	9	9	9	9
N	42	42	28	42	24	25
Adj. R²	0.63	0.51	0.57	0.52	0.64	0.27

Significance: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1

The effect of parties' left ideology on female legislative representation is ambiguous. The total percentage of votes won by left parties identified based on their belonging to the left party families has a positive and statistically significant impact. It increases the number of female representatives on 8 percentage points. However, when parties are considered as left according to the Manifesto Project's left-right scale, it does not produce a statistically significant effect. The same is true for the variables reflecting the total share of traditional morality and equality's mentions in parties' programmes. But, it is interesting that the direction of influence of two latter variables on female legislative representation is positive and negative respectively which is in line

with my argument that women perform better in more authoritarian and less egalitarian political context.

Due to the methodological problems with the Manifesto Project data, I also use more elaborated measures described in the second section of the paper. These results are in accordance with the literature. Higher percentage of votes received by the parties placed on the left side of the authoritarian-libertarian dimension, that is which are more authoritarian in their political views, has a negative and statistically significant impact on female legislative representation. The effect is considerable and reduces the percentage of female representatives on 97 percentage points. The same holds true for the effect of parties which are traditionalist rather than modern in their political standpoint. It decreases the level of female legislative representation in half. However, we should cautiously interpret these results due to the high level of missing data. The data on parties' ideological positions was available only for nine countries from my sample which significantly reduced the number of observations.

It was also decided to check whether my findings that female legislative representation is higher in less egalitarian societies are valid under a different operationalization of traditional attitudes towards gender equality. I control for the share of rural population which is usually associated with less egalitarian values (see, e.g., Davidson-Schmich, 2006; Kroeber et al., 2018). As we can see in Table 4A, my assumption is confirmed again. Percentage of rural population has a small positive and statistically significant effect on female legislative representation increasing it on average two percentage points. However, more rural settlements are usually a base of electoral support for the Communist and Socialist parties (Golosov, 2014b). Consequently, more women can get elected there as members of these parties. Another possible explanation is the lower costs of electoral campaigns in the rural areas which can be beneficial for female candidates (Nowacki, 2003). But, since we cannot be certain about the identified effect of parties' left ideology on female legislative representation, this finding requires further analysis.

It is interesting that controlling for parties' left ideology makes the influence of institutional factors – proportional representation and national gender quotas – not significant, possibly indicating that parties play a more important role for female legislative representation. Percentage of women elected in the previous elections, in turn, changes the direction of influence on negative. On the contrary, the influence of socio-economic variables remains as hypothesized. The only exception, again, is women's participation in the paid labour force which reduces the share of female representatives on average 62 percentage points. Therefore, we can conclude that the post-Soviet countries have not achieved a level of socio-economic development that allows political factors to start working and women to take advantage of institutional opportunities, confirming Matland's (1998) argument about the existence of a "development threshold".

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