

Lingering Legacies and Emerging Progress: Explaining Gender Quota Adoption in
Central and Eastern Europe

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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Gender Quota Adoption in Central and Eastern Europe

By

Anja Vojvodić

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Mona Lena Krook

Immediately after the fall of communism women's representation in Central and Eastern European Parliaments fell precipitously, from roughly 30% to 10%, and below that in certain countries. Currently, the percentage of women in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) is 26% (among 19 countries surveyed). This increase is partly due to the adoption of gender quotas in CEE countries.

Quotas are usually defined as voluntary or legal provisions adopted by countries or political parties in order to increase the percentage of women in Parliaments or other influential bodies, such as corporate boards. Gender quotas broadly fall into three types: reserved seats, legislated quotas and voluntary party quotas. Reserved seats usually refer to parliamentary seats being allocated solely for women; legislated quotas are constitutional or electoral laws that mandate a minimum percentage of women on electoral lists; and voluntary party quotas are provisions that political parties include in statutes that set a specific target for inclusion of women on party electoral lists.

Among the CEE countries I research in this dissertation, 16 of 19 have a gender quota. Three countries have no gender quota. Noting this disparity in terms of gender quota adoption across the region, I ask the question: why do certain countries of CEE adopt gender quotas and why do others not adopt them? To answer this question, I explore regional trends and subsequently focus on four key countries as illustrative case studies (Serbia, Poland, Czech Republic and Latvia). I dedicate two chapters to in-depth explorations of Serbia and Poland. I dedicate the last chapter to an examination of non-adopters, which includes brief case studies on Czech Republic and Latvia.

Methodologically, I approach this dissertation qualitatively. Descriptive statistics are mostly used for contextualization. I rely on fieldwork completed in Serbia and Poland, in addition to 35 interviews completed with relevant elite actors across the region. Generally, I find support for my overall argument. Namely, gender quota adoption is aided by two key factors: the mobilization and activity of women's groups in CEE who advocate for gender quotas and the various, context-dependent political opportunities that become available to them. These political opportunities are often related to post-conflict reforms, symbolic European Union (EU) influence or favorable domestic laws.

This dissertation contributes to the overall literature on gender quotas by including a less-studied region, namely CEE. My argument that active women's groups exist in CEE and can influence policy also counters some of the previous literature on this subject that posited that women's groups were not previously influential in the region.

Acknowledgements

As I review the events of my past life, I realize how subtle are the influences that shape our destinies. – Nikola Tesla

Gratitude is a wonderful word. It connotes a feeling of indebtedness but also admiration. We usually admire people to whom we are grateful, for they have helped us along the way. In this sense, I have so many people to be thankful for. I once heard that Serbian inventor Mihajlo Pupin, who embarked on a long journey as a penniless young man from 19th century impoverished Serbia to New York, thanked the various “angels” who helped him along the way. Although I am a long way from being an illustrious inventor, I feel the same kind of gratitude.

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I have grown and learned so much in this Ph.D. journey. I have become a better researcher, writer and definitely teacher. I would recommend this experience to anyone who is ready to challenge themselves and learn. To paraphrase ancient Chinese philosopher Lao-Tzu, a journey of a million miles begins with a single step. I am grateful that I took that first single step several years ago. My million miles have been very valuable.

Dedication

For Mama, Tata and Serg.

And to all the women of Central and Eastern Europe (and beyond) who raise their voices for change. One day, we will get there.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Recently, women have begun to enter the previously impervious world of politics in greater numbers. Parliaments and other legislative and political bodies (in addition to corporate boards) have opened their doors to previously absent actors—women. Gender quotas, voluntary and legal provisions used to increase the percentage of women in parliaments and sometimes other political and corporate bodies, have been largely responsible for this change (Tripp and Kang 2008). Gender quotas, in the form of party quotas (utilized by political parties in respective statutes to increase the percentage of women on party lists), legislated quotas (constitutional or electoral laws that usually require a minimum percentage of women on a party list) and reserved seats (parliamentary seats or districts reserved exclusively for women candidates or parliamentarians) have challenged masculine dominance in politics.

Currently the global average of women in parliaments is 25% (Inter-Parliamentary Union 2020). Although this is a notable increase from twenty years ago (i.e. in 2000 when the percentage was 13%), this is by no means reflective of parity or what the percentage should be, given the percentage of women in the global population, which most estimate at just over 50%. Gender quotas have increasingly become a tool to implement gender equality. Over 130 countries in the world have adopted gender quotas in some form (Quota Project 2019). These mechanisms are often viewed by many key entities, such as the United Nations (UN) as one powerful way to ensure women's representation in a changing global context (Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998; Krook and True 2012).

The history of gender quotas is varied but as some have noted the spread of these mechanisms was not entirely facilitated by Western or wealthy states (Towns 2010). In fact, many developing countries have taken the lead in adopting gender quotas, causing a change in adoption processes from “incremental” models, or slow-paced gradual change as embodied by the Scandinavian countries to “fast-track” models of quota adoption, spurring rapid change across the developing world, especially Latin America (Dahlerup and Friedenvall 2005). Out of the top 10 countries on the IPU Women in Parliament list, 6 are classified as developing by the UN and 4 are in Latin America. Out of these top 10 countries, 6 use gender quotas, including the world’s leader in terms of women in parliament, Rwanda.

Gender quotas were used in communist states, such as the Soviet Union itself, to promote women in communist political bodies since the 1950s (Nechemias 1994). Voluntary party quotas were first adopted in Norway in the 1970s (Caul 2001; Pande and Ford 2009). The first legislated quota in a democracy was instituted in 1991 in Argentina. Since the adoption of the first legislated quota in 1991, legislated quotas have been rapidly spread throughout the world, along with reserved seats.

Countries have adopted gender quotas to democratize parliaments and make them more open to women. Quotas are also a way for countries to appear more democratic and are often viewed as ways to appease international donors (Bush 2011). The proliferation, or diffusion, of quotas is attributed to several causes in the literature. Many scholars point to the reframing of human rights as women’s rights and the involvement of the United Nations as a catalyst for gender equality change (Bunch 1990; Berkovitch 1999; Krook and True 2012). Others point to women’s organizations with transnational links as

providing a push for gender quota domestically (Krook 2007; Keck and Sikkink 1998). Still some scholars point to the importance of UN women's conferences such as Mexico City (1975) and Beijing (1995) as providing blueprints for concrete action related to gender equality and specifically women's political empowerment (Chen 1995).

Quotas have become a way for women to break down sometimes-intractable, discriminatory, and omnipresent barriers. The importance of quotas has been documented by many scholars and several key international organizations, most notably the UN. The Beijing Conference of 1995 explicitly calls for governments to achieve "gender balance" in their relevant and working bodies. The 1979 Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) also stipulates that promoting women in decision-making realms is crucial. These two documents serve as blueprints for aspirational gender equality around the world (UN 1979 and 1995). Most countries in the world have signed and ratified CEDAW and most sent delegates to the Beijing Conference, the most highly attended conference of the UN series. Evidently, gender quotas have become a global trend and exploring their adoption and potential effects remains crucial, as they continue to transform the composition of historically male dominated legislatures around the world.

Research Question

Having stated some contextual foundations of this research, I will now state its scope. In this dissertation, I analyze gender quota adoption and non-adoption in the context of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). The findings of the quota literature have mostly come from studies in Western Europe and Latin America, and to a lesser extent

Africa and Asia. Thus, this study fills a geographic void in the existing literature. Namely, by studying a region that has not been the focus of quota literature, I can test previously derived hypotheses in a lesser-studied context, contributing to the overall literature concerning gender quotas. *“Why are quotas adopted or not adopted in countries of the region?”* is the overarching research question. This question relates to the international norm literature: namely by assessing the process by which countries adopt or do not adopt gender quotas I can begin to answer how CEE countries respond to an increasingly existing norm in the world, specifically, the adoption of gender quotas and by extension, women’s increased participation in politics.

Since CEE countries adopted gender quotas later than many other countries, I can pinpoint more directly causes of adoption and barriers to no-adoption in relation to crucial domestic and international factors, taking the CEE context into consideration. Additionally, since some CEE countries have gender quotas and others do not, the region provides a conducive environment for theory testing. The diversity of outcomes allows me to effectively compare causal factors, spotting patterns and disparities along the way.

In this dissertation, I also ask several related research questions, including: *Why did some countries adopt quotas at an earlier point than others? What is the level of quality of legislated gender quota in the region? Which cultural and institutional factors are most crucial in adoption and non-adoption processes?* It is not the case that all CEE countries uniformly resist or embrace adopting gender quotas; as we will see, some countries in the region, through sustained and deliberate efforts of women’s groups mostly, have successfully overcome societal and elite resistance to women in politics and by extension gender quotas. However, some have not.

Examining the processes by which international norms are translated and negotiated within domestic CEE contexts represents a potentially unique and important perspective. Under democratic regimes, one would assume CEE countries would have become more open to women in politics. However, the opening of political space did not guarantee the rise of non-traditional politics actors, namely women, especially in the CEE region. In fact, some countries, because of traditionalism, an aversion to perceived communist legacies have actively resisted promoting women and politics, particularly through gender quotas, since the fall of communism.

The CEE countries surveyed here are all post-communist states—but we see divergent outcomes in terms of contemporary levels of political gender equality. Gender equality during communism was directed by the state. Women were guaranteed certain enviable rights during communism. For example, women in these societies took advantage of free or inexpensive educational opportunities given by the state, they became professionals and sometimes leading ones in their fields; reproductive rights, such as abortion, were also extended to women under most communist regimes. However, the current status of women, particularly in political life, varies in the region. I explore this theme more thoroughly in Chapter 3, the regional chapter, but gender equality indicators suggest that some CEE countries are more advanced than others, particularly in terms of women in politics (see also Table 1).

Openness to mechanisms that ensure gender equality, such as gender quotas, also varies. Many countries in the region resist adopting gender quotas in their electoral laws or constitutions because they ostensibly remind the political elites of the communist past, where quotas were utilized in politics but to no discernible end, without empowering

women politically and underscoring the imposing nature of the communist state. But this reasoning often belies a more complex reality. Countries resist quotas for many reasons, many of which can be traced back to traditional views of women and an embedded resistance to opening the political space to women.

Thus, a gender quota is not simply a mechanism that is automatically and seamlessly enforced – sustained, persistent and stubborn campaigns are often needed to introduce gender quotas in a context. After their introduction, gender quotas often need elite allies to be enforced properly and to be sustained long-term. As Krook (2016) notes gender quota adoption is the initial phase of sometimes long battles for political gender equality.

The question of why gender quotas are adopted and not adopted in male-dominated parliaments has been asked in various settings, including Western Europe, Latin America, Asia— but not in a comparative fashion in the CEE region. I believe then that my work is making a theoretical and empirical contribution to the existing scholarship. Exploring gender quota adoption in the CEE region can illuminate gender equality dimensions in the region. Parliaments across CEE have long been dominated by men but especially after the fall of communism. Gender quotas are beginning to introduce more women into legislative bodies across CEE. Exploring their adoption can answer interesting questions of which groups and what factors are responsible for promoting gender equality in the region.

It is thus the aim of this research to contribute to the understanding of women's rights in post-communist states and the status of women and the efficacy of women's movements in that region—by extension. Much has been said about feminism in the CEE

region, but with more than two decades into transitions to capitalism, what is the current status of feminism and women's political presence in the CEE region?

The Status of Gender Quotas in the Region

As one can see from Table 1 (see below) there is variation across the region in terms of quota adoption, type of quota adopted and result in terms of percentage of women in Parliament.

Table 1: Women in Politics in the CEE Region, Ranked by Percentage of Women in Lower House of Parliament

Country	Percentage of Women in Parliament	Quota Adopted?	Type of Quota	Year of Quota Adoption	World Rank
North Macedonia	39.17%	Yes	Legislated	2002	23
Serbia	37.65%	Yes	Legislated	2004	30
Kosovo	32.50%	Yes	Legislated	2000	Not ranked
Latvia	30.00%	No	None	N/A	47
Estonia	29.70%	No	None	N/A	50
Albania	29.51%	Yes	Legislated	2008	51
Poland	28.70%	Yes	Legislated	2011	53
Montenegro	28.40%	Yes	Legislated	2011	55
Slovenia	27.78%	Yes	Legislated	2006	58
Bulgaria	25.83%	No	None	N/A	64
Moldova	25.74%	Yes	Legislated	2016	66
Czech Republic	22.50%	Yes	Party- Social Democrats	N/A	84
Romania	21.88%	Yes	Party- Social Democratic Party, Democratic Party	N/A	88
Bosnia & Herzegovina	21.43%	Yes	Legislated	2000	90
Lithuania	21.28%	Yes	Party- Social Democrats	N/A	91
Croatia	20.53%	Yes	Legislated	2008	98
Ukraine	20.52%	Yes	Legislated	N/A	99
Slovakia	20.00%	Yes	Party--People's Party, Party of the Democratic Left	N/A	103
Hungary	12.56%	Yes	Party- "Politics Can be Different", Hungarian Socialist Party	N/A	151
19	26%				72

Sources: IPU Women in Politics Database, Quota Project 2019

Immediately after communism, notably during the 1990s, women's political representation plummeted to single digits in many post-communist states. Now the situation has improved, the average of women in CEE Parliaments is 26%— a large increase from the early 1990s when the regional average was below 10% (Matland and Montgomery 2003, pg. 1). It is interesting to note that the countries of the former Yugoslavia, including the partially recognized, or de facto, state of Kosovo, not only have some kind of gender quota—but specifically legislated gender quotas, often the most effective kind of gender quota in developing nations.

Timing of adoption is also important to note in CEE. The first adopter in CEE was Bosnia & Herzegovina in 1999. The last adopter was Moldova in 2016. Timing of adoption will be further explored in Chapter 3, but it should be noted now that the ex-Yugoslav states were the first to adopt legislated gender quotas in the region, largely due to post-conflict dimensions, including post-conflict electoral reforms.

Geographic Scope: CEE

I define the CEE region as the post-communist states that are European—thus I exclude Central Asian states. I exclude Armenia and Georgia because of a concern for the manageability of cases (which I tried to keep under 20) and out of a recognition that these countries are quite distinct given their geographic location (in the Caucasus, rather than in Europe) and particular histories. I also exclude countries that are deemed Not Free by the most recent Freedom House Freedom in the World Report (2018). This has excluded the countries of Russia and Belarus.

Thus, the 19 post-communist countries that comprise CEE in this study are: *Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Kosovo, Latvia, Lithuania, the Republic of North Macedonia (formerly Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia or FYROM), Moldova, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Ukraine*. Sixteen of the 19 countries have some kind of gender quota in place. Three have no gender quota. Five of the 19 countries have only voluntary party quotas and the rest (11) have legislated quotas, as captured by Table 1.

Among the eleven countries with legislated quotas the percentage of women in the lower house of parliament is a notable 28%. Among those without legislated quotas, the percentage is 24%. Broken down further, among those countries with no legislated quota and no party quotas the average percentage of women parliamentarians is interestingly 28%. Among those with voluntary quotas only, the average is 19.42%.

Although the percentage of women in parliament is the same in legislated quota adopters and non-adopters, a few points should be made. First, there are only 3 countries in CEE with no quotas, so having a higher percentage is easier to attain among three countries than eleven. Furthermore, the non-adopter countries are still under some pressure, due partly to the spread of gender quotas, to usher more women in politics. Some of them do so through alternative means, such as internal party quotas (Bulgaria) and placing more women in higher positions on electoral lists through informal quotas (Latvia).

It should be mentioned that relying on ad-hoc mechanisms, such as these, may not work as well long-term as gender quotas themselves. In other words, quotas, when designed well and enforced properly, have been associated firmly with higher

percentages of women in parliaments and other legislative bodies. Relying on ad-hoc mechanisms is more precarious (Krook, Lovenduski and Squires 2009).

It is also important to note that the first three country regional leaders all come from the ex-Yugoslavia region. Namely, the top three leaders of the CEE region in terms of women's representation are North Macedonia, Serbia and Kosovo—countries of the former Yugoslavia. Latvia is fourth and Estonia is fifth (See Table 1). The top three leaders can be explained by the robustness of the gender quotas in each country. Serbia and North Macedonia have two of the strongest legislated quotas in the region (see Chapter 3 for a discussion of gender quota quality).

As mentioned, the former Yugoslav states all have a quota, specifically a legislated quota. Thus, they are somewhat unique in the region of CEE. The Yugoslav states have been able to overcome institutional, political and cultural resistance to quotas and women in politics—resistance that has been well-documented in other regions also (Ross 2003; Krook 2017; Krook and Restrepo Sanin 2015).

While some of the countries of CEE have resisted legislated gender quotas, the ex-Yugoslavia region has seemingly embraced them. Poland, Albania, Ukraine and Moldova are the other four countries of the region that also have legislated quotas. However, Albania (2009), Poland (2011) Ukraine (2013) and Moldova (2016) adopted them later than most of the states of the former Yugoslavia.

Theoretical Frameworks:

Importantly, I aim to situate my dissertation in a larger theoretical and comparative context. CEE countries have begun adopting more democratic norms since

the fall of Communism in the early 1990s. They have also re-adopted the norm of gender equality, a gender equality that has been redefined for them within a democratic, less state-centered context.

Many CEE countries redefined their basic systems in the transitional phase from communism to capitalism. This has included a translation of norms from once communist-oriented ones to more democratic centered norms. One example of a norm that had to be translated is that of gender equality—this norm morphed from socialist-oriented to more democratically oriented. This change has yielded interesting and varied results across countries because each country has a different interpretation of the measures it should take in relation to gender equality. Not all of this variation has been documented in existing research, especially in regard to gender quotas.

In general, research in CEE can be more explicit about why countries adopt robust gender quotas, for example delineating the exact mechanisms of country quota adoption may serve to further illuminate the relevant conditions under which gender quotas emerge. Researching this in a previously understudied setting illuminates certain trends in the region in relation to international norms and their diffusion dynamics after post-communism.

To accomplish this, my dissertation tests previous theories of gender quota adoption. Namely, I use descriptive case studies previously completed on other countries in addition to comparative studies to deduce gender quota adoption causes and leading and crucial factors of adoption and non-adoption. Previous literature, as I will go into more thoroughly in the literature review, has posited several causes of quota adoption:

women's movement pressure, elite calculations, a desire for more democratic legitimacy, and international norm diffusion (Krook 2007).

My research tests these previously theorized factors in the CEE setting. Were these factors present in CEE adoptions and in what form? I build a more specific theory as to why gender quotas are adopted in CEE and why they are not. I also ask: which factors lead to each outcome? I am therefore engaged in a theory testing *and* theory building exercise.

Methodology:

To gather data for the case studies I am doing, I rely on the method known as within case process tracing (Bennett and George 2005; Collier 2011), in combination with elite interviewing. Collier (2011) defines process tracing as: “an analytic tool for drawing descriptive and causal inferences from diagnostic pieces of evidence—often understood as part of a temporal sequence of events or phenomena.” (2) Collier maintains that there are three inherent components of process tracing: understanding causal process observations (CPOs), exercising descriptive inferences and sequence-tracing. Collier thus provides an effective blueprint for researchers to test their theories against the causal processes at work within a particular case. Process tracing thus allows me to examine the sequence of events and the crucial timing leading to gender quota adoption. It also allows me to probe causes of adoption in these contexts.

I also rely on interviewing. Elite interviewing facilitated an opportunity for me to ask relevant actors about their participation in gender quota adoption. For this research, I interviewed 35 academics, politicians and NGO leaders across the region because I

hypothesized that each of these actors played a part in or at least had knowledge of gender quota adoption. I completed fieldwork in Serbia during 2011-2012 and during the summer of 2017. There I interviewed 20 elite actors. I completed fieldwork in Poland during the summer of 2018. I interviewed 5 elite actors in Poland. These 5 actors in Poland were carefully chosen and had in-depth knowledge of the Polish adoption process or Polish society in relation to gender equality.

The rest of the interviews (10) happened mainly through Skype or email from 2018-2020 and involved elite actors or experts from across the region. A list of interviews can be found at the end of this dissertation. The in-person or Skype interviews were all between 45-60 minutes. I transcribed most interviews where this was explicitly permitted. I then manually coded these transcriptions, discerned patterns and incorporated them either broadly into the evidence I use to support my overall argument or specifically as quotes to illustrate finer points.

Throughout the dissertation, I rely on Inter-Governmental Organization (IGO) sources, such as UN, EU, OSCE documents, in addition to academic papers written on the respective country in relation to either gender quota adoption or non-adoption, the women's movement in the country and the level of women's political participation.

To aid the organization of this research process, I completed short reports on each country, based on the afore-mentioned sources, being surveyed here, starting from 2017-2018 with updates throughout the late winter of 2020. I asked the same questions of each country in these reports, such as: is there a quota adopted? If so, when was it adopted? How strong is the quota? What are the crucial factors in adoption or non-adoption? I based these reports on the evidence I found in secondary research about these countries.

These reports provided a foundation for drawing inferences about quota adoption and non-adoption in the region.

Case Study Selection

To accomplish the goals of this dissertation, I analyze relevant evidence from mostly a qualitative perspective. I am focused on causality. Specifically, I aim to pinpoint the causes of quota adoption in Eastern Europe. I rely on elite interviewing, case studies and process tracing to gather findings. This study is also a “causes of effects” study; I am evaluating the causes of certain outcomes, namely quota adoption or non-adoption, instead of evaluating the effects of certain independent variables on outcomes, i.e. “effect of causes” (Goertz and Mahoney 2012).

Case study methods can serve to illuminate specific country studies in a greater amount of mechanistic detail than large-N studies alone (Gerring 2007; Tilly 2001). Case studies have been criticized in the field for lacking generalizability, but they are nonetheless important as descriptive, analytical and explanatory tools (Flyvbjerg 2006).

As Gerring (2007) notes:

[If] one wishes to say something about political patterns obtaining in roughly 90 percent of the world’s countries, and if one wishes to go beyond matters that can be captured in standard statistics and the IMF and other agencies...one is more or less obliged to conduct a case study. (60)

For this study, I will focus on four cases that are emblematic of the kind of quota adoption processes present in the region. There are four basic outcomes that are present in the CEE region: legislated quota in a non-post conflict context (2), legislated quota in a post-conflict context (9), voluntary party quota adoption (5) and not adopted (3). I will

choose one case to explore within the four main categories. In this way, I am choosing a “diversity” of representative cases that represent a variance on a variable, in this case the dependent variable (Seawright and Gerring 2008). I use the case of Poland to ascertain why Poland has adopted a legislated quota. I explore the case of Serbia for post-conflict legislated quota adopters. I explore the Czech Republic as a case for weak party quota adopter and I utilize Latvia as representative of the non-adopted category. The Czech Republic and Latvia will be examined together in a less in-depth way in Chapter 6. I present the research on these countries in Chapter 6 in the context of other non-adopters. The two case are more illustrative than in-depth case studies.

In terms of case selection, I chose each case for a specific reason, mostly because they represent a type of outcome. Poland, for example, defies major expectations when it comes to the overall trends in the region. Poland is a post-communist country with a very well-documented and successful history of resisting communism. In many ways, Poland’s adoption of a legislated quota is remarkable in this sense because most countries in the CEE region that are not post-conflict have failed to adopt legislated gender quotas. Poland has many conservative forces in its society, including right-wing political parties and the prominent Catholic Church. Thus, this political constellation has not always presented opportunities for norm entrepreneurs to push for gender equality. Nevertheless, Poland adopted a legislated gender quota in 2011. The Polish women’s movement was able to overcome strong cultural and institutional barriers to gender quotas. There is some information present on Poland and its adoption of a gender quota already. Scholar Sheri Kunovich has examined the case of Poland (Kunovich 2003; Kunovich 2012) but in general on an in-depth level rather than a comparative one. Poland’s path to quotas has

also been examined by other scholars such as Gwiazda (2015) and Sledinzka-Simon and Bodnar (2013).

However, I aim to situate Poland in a larger Eastern European context and apply the case study to a larger theoretical framework within the topic of gender quotas. Poland illuminates some of the tensions identified in the literature between women's movements and conservative attitudes and forces in society. Poland's women's movement has emerged as a strong force recently, especially in the context of pushing for gender quotas and resisting an abortion ban in the fall of 2016.

Serbia, as a case, is a representative case for the region of ex-Yugoslavia, whose legacy has led to all of its resulting countries adopting legislated gender quotas. Here Serbia is the main and foundational case study. A subsequent close reading of the Serbian case, which has resulted in a robust and effective gender quota in addition to a high percentage of women in Parliament (37.65%), will serve as a point of comparison to the other cases, especially Poland.

The local gender quota instituted in Serbia made it to the national level in 2004—Serbia for the first time adopted a legislated quota within the electoral code. The legislated quota of 2004 was further amended in 2011 when norm entrepreneurs, such as MP Aleksandra Jerkov, a young and energetic politician, pushed for placing a “one in three” rank-order stipulation for women on party lists, replacing the previous “one in four” stipulation (Vojvodić 2015). The literature on post-conflict settings and women's representation, has mostly analyzed African countries. Analyzing a CEE country in this context can also shed light on post-conflict dimensions present in the mechanisms to quota adoption.

The Czech Republic will serve as a representative case for the five countries in CEE that have weak voluntary party quotas. The Czech Republic does not have a legislated quota—and only one party, the Czech Social Democrats, has a voluntary party quota (the female representation target of the party is set at 25%). Given that the Czech Republic was an early adopter of women's suffrage (1920), it is surprising that it has strong resistance to promoting women in politics in proactive ways. Here the Czech Republic serves as an illustrative contrast to Poland.

There have been attempts to pass a legislated gender quota in the Czech Republic. In 2015, Ministers from the Social Democratic (SD) Party proposed a legislated measure that would have mandated that all Czech political parties have at least 40% women on their party lists. This measure failed to gain support from the SD coalition partners, namely the Christian Democrats, although a number of female MPs within the Christian Democratic Party supported the measure (Gelnarová and Fousková 2016). In general, there has been significant resistance to women in politics and namely gender quotas in the Czech Republic. Many documents point to the disgruntlement with feminism in the country and the lack of a unified and effective women's movement (Gelnarová and Fousková 2016; Interviews 2019). Negative cultural attitudes towards women also are present. As Gelnarová and Fousková (2016) note: "Opinion surveys show that a half of male respondents think that women are less suited to top-level politics than men (139)."

Latvia, as a case, has, in one sense, an extreme value on the dependent variable—not only is there no legislated gender quota adopted in Latvia, no political party has adopted a gender quota and furthermore the percentage of women in Parliament used to be one of the lowest in the region (16%). As of spring 2020, however, has one of the

highest. During the last Parliamentary elections in Latvia the percentage of women in Parliament almost doubled to 30%. This was accomplished without formal gender quotas. For this reason, this country remains an interesting case study. Latvian politics is still resistant to gender quotas, despite attaining a higher percentage of women in Parliament. Explanations of this surprising result point to Latvian political parties placing women on higher spots on open electoral lists and voters granting women candidates more preferential votes than male candidates (Dean forthcoming; IPU 2019).

Exploring why there is so much resistance to gender quotas in Latvia can help shed light on other contexts with similar histories. Latvian resistance to gender quotas will be in some way surely emblematic of resistance to gender quota in other CEE countries with no adoption or weak voluntary party adoption. The degree of resistance seems to be quite high in Latvia, but it may be present in other non-adopter countries as well, especially its Baltic neighbors, which have limited party quotas mostly initiated by Social Democratic Parties (as is the case in Lithuania).

Latvia is interesting in other ways also. How does a country with such strong indicators and a history of women's leadership (Latvia has had a woman President, Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga, and a woman Prime Minister, Laimdota Straujuma) not promote women's leadership through affirmative mechanisms, already adopted by most of the world?

Expectations of Findings:

There are several expectations I set out to find support for in this dissertation. From an international perspective, first, I hypothesize that international norms, specifically increasing women's political participation through gender quotas, as they are

diffused through international institutions, such as the EU, OSCE and UN have an accelerating effect on gender quota adoption, especially in settings where these institutions have greater influence. I also expect that post-conflict states are more open to these kinds of influences because of the critical openings the cessation of conflict causes. For example, post-conflict states are generally aided by the heightened presence of international institutions that are attempting to rebuild societies. Also, post-conflict societies often reform their electoral configurations after conflict because many of them democratize or learn from previous errors. This also involves elements of inclusive thinking. Actors previously absent from politics may be given opportunities to participate because of the need to maintain newly found peace and stability. This inclusion sometimes includes women and the adoption of gender quotas.

I expect that domestic factors will be crucial too. First, the crux of my argument does involve women's movements, or women's groups, as being necessary agents of change. In fact, I am arguing that in CEE, women's groups are the primary drivers for gender quota adoption. However, their mere presence, although necessary, is not sufficient. I argue that political opportunities must be present for them to assert their agenda. Political opportunities can include electoral reforms, domestic laws and alliances with parties in power. I also argue that women's groups must be unified in their position in relation to gender quota adoption and make this a priority.

In terms of non-adoption processes, I expect that some of the same factors will be relevant. I expect to find a weaker women's movement push in non-adopter countries. I also expect to find more elite-level resistance to gender quotas within non-adopters, thus limiting the kind of political opportunities available to advocacy groups.

Structure of Dissertation

There are 7 chapters of this dissertation. This first chapter is the introduction, methodology and expectations. The second chapter is the literature review. The third chapter is a regional overview chapter, which comparatively analyzes the process of gender quota adoption and non-adoption among all of the CEE cases included in this dissertation. The fourth chapter commences the case study portion of this dissertation. It analyzes in detail the quota adoption process and subsequent gender quota reforms in Serbia. The fifth chapter turns to another CEE adopter, Poland, to assess how and why gender quotas are adopted in non-post conflict states. The sixth chapter analyzes the processes of non-adoption in the region. I ask: why do countries fail to adopt quotas? I use brief case studies of Czech Republic and Latvia in this chapter as illustrative examples of non-adoption. The last chapter, Chapter 7, is the conclusion, where I assess my findings and the limitations of this research, while offering suggestions for future research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

My work speaks back to several key literatures: namely literature related to international norms and pressures and gender equality, institutional factors such as the allure or reality of EU membership, feminist institutionalism, post conflict dimensions and women's political representation, social movements, post-communist states and women and lastly gender quota adoption processes in other parts of the world. What will follow is a survey of the key literature in each domain. With this review, I provide contextual and conceptual background for my research. Each theme is connected to the guiding question of this research.

International Norms and Gender Equality

Gender quotas are operating in not only a crucial domestic context but also a dynamic and interconnected international context. Because they have spread so rapidly across regions, it can be asserted that these mechanisms are an increasingly present global norm. Norms are usually defined as set standards of behavior by which nation-states abide (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998).

Norms have become a leading area of scholarship and an important one in political science. Finnemore and Sikkink (1998) demonstrate the need for expanding research on international norms in political science. Leading scholars have posited different ways norms are spread internationally; namely by a "shared world culture", "tipping points and norm cascades", "boomerang effects" and "spiral models" (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998; Risse and Sikkink 1999 Towns 2010).

Shared world culture refers to the *world polity* model of global politics, indicating that global norms affect how governments accomplish goals. Towns (2010) pinpoints the world polity framework as one of leading explanations of the why global norms have spread. Towns indicates that the world polity model assumes that all states are converging around similar ideals and standards. Isomorphism, as this is called, posits that a shared world culture is spreading and that the universal script is being readily accepted by states.

Towns recognizes this trend towards universalism; however, she is not convinced that the world polity explanation gives an adequate reason *why* states readily adopt norms. Instead she posits her own explanation; namely that states compete with one other to achieve a higher ranking in the global system. This is tied to interpretations of what makes a modern state versus what constitutes a traditional state.

According to Towns, many states are looking to be perceived as progressive or modern and therefore their willing adoption of norms follows this desire to be respected in the international order. Towns also notes that gender quotas, for example, were not spread to Western states nor were they spread by Western states—she notes that the real proliferation of gender quotas started with Latin America and moved on to Asia and Africa. Thus, she convincingly notes that the world polity is not defined by Western liberal democracies—furthermore, she notes that norms are being negotiated constantly and independently by crucial domestic actors.

Tipping points and cascades are explained in the work of Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink. Tipping points are critical points when norms are embraced by a critical mass of actors. At this crucial point, these norms are closer to becoming a global standard

of behavior. Cascades are what follows tipping—a norm cascade refers to a point where norms are embraced by most of the international community. The last phase is called “norm internalization”. This is the point at which state actors psychologically internalize the ideals of the norm, rather than implement it pro-forma or implement it to evade punishment or being ostracized (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998). Often this is the most elusive phase.

Much of this approach is rooted in international relations theories of constructivism, the idea that international relations are rooted in a social and historically contingent arena, and its logic of appropriateness, or the idea that actors behave according to what is expected of them, what is the norm, rather than what they calculate to be of maximum utility (as rational choice theory conversely posits).

Another strand of norm proliferation is captured by the concept of boomerang effects. Boomerang effects refer to the ability of domestic actors to appeal to transnational advocacy networks in response to certain injustices within their countries; this is done in an attempt to influence the global community to shame or push for reform in the violating country (Keck and Sikkink 1998). The transnational advocacy networks then appeal to the international community to shame the government in question into enacting change.

An alternative version of this norm proliferation process is called spiral models. “Spiral models” refer to five steps that countries go through under international pressure to reform human rights abuses: repression, denial, tactical concessions, prescriptive status, and rule-consistent behavior (Risse and Sikkink 1999).

Finnemore and Sikkink in their work also emphasize the importance of agents, or norm entrepreneurs, in the norm diffusion process. Norm entrepreneurs are often motivated by altruism, passion and a sense of what is right. This is a vast contrast to what political scientists often think is the motivation of those in politics: interest. Therefore, examining norm entrepreneurs in different settings can help pinpoint otherwise elusive motivations for action. As the authors note it is crucial to investigate norm processes:

As contemporary researchers make their arguments about norms, culture and ideas they will need to specify ideational causal claims and mechanisms clearly, think seriously about the micro-foundations on which theoretical claims about norms rest, and evaluate those claims in the context of carefully designed historical and empirical research. (890)

Krook and True (2012) expand this conclusion by asserting that norms are not static entities but are constantly being reframed and renegotiated, *often according to domestic pressures and constraints*. Krook and True note that CEDAW is one of the most ratified international documents but also one that has the most reservations. These reservations are usually related to domestic considerations that are perceived to conflict with international norms.

Thus, norms are important to examine. Pinpointing causes in political science has often relied on quantitative measurements of interests and rationality rather than norms and ideas. After all ideas and norms remain elusive components of motivations (Parsons 2007). However, it is nonetheless crucial to recognize that actors, even state actors, are often times motivated by norms and ideas. Gender equality itself is an idea that has been promoted by norm entrepreneurs—namely women’s organizations and their leaders and has in turn been adopted by states in some form.

Therefore, exploring gender quota adoption in CEE can uncover how and why countries in that region have translated (or not) an existing global norm into new democratic institutions. How have Eastern European countries adopted a version of a global norm—gender equality—previously present but ensured then by the communist state? Have other crucial actors, such as civil society, played a part in this process? Many of the norm proliferation models I highlighted identify the impetus for change outside of the country itself. Universal scripts originate from outside of the particular country, transnational networks are internationally based too, spiral models involve pressure from human rights networks. The question then becomes: are norms always a product of an international impetus? Can they be a result of a domestic push from below? Gender quota adoption usually has an international dimension (Krook 2006).

Krook (2006) notes much of the work on gender quotas and their diffusion has been analyzed within specific case studies and as a result has privileged domestic factors for quota adoption. The case studies have not been in conversation with one another in general. Krook in this piece aims to evaluate these studies in order to position them in a broader and more international context. Similarly, Krook argues that quota implementation may be driven by domestic conversations but at the same time these conversations are embedded in a pervasive and present international realm. She emphasizes the role of international factors in her 2006 work, pushing future researchers to take these dimensions seriously.

Specifically, Krook notes that the previous literature concerning gender quotas invokes four basic explanations for the implementation of quotas in national contexts. First, scholars have acknowledged the role of women's movements in this process.

Women's movements often mobilize in domestic contexts to clamor for gender equality; often this takes the form of fighting for an increase in women's political representation. Also, *elite political actors* adopt quotas to further strategies related to preserving political power; contagion effects, when a smaller political party adopts a gender quota and then pushes larger ones to do so in turn, sometimes plays a part in this sequence (Matland and Studlar 1996).

Additionally, quotas are sometimes implemented because they are seen to be extensions of gender equality and are thought to increase *democratic legitimacy*. Lastly, quotas are adopted as a result of a fusion or interaction of transnational organizing and the international spreading of norms. Assuming that gender quotas are seen globally as a gender equality norm, Krook explains the four ways gender quotas are adopted or blocked in domestic settings: international imposition, transnational emulation, international tipping and international blocking.

International imposition usually involves an international actor, such as the UN or the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) sometimes in the wake of conflict strongly suggesting to new governments to include gender quota provisions, such as legislated quotas, within new constitutions. This was the case in Kosovo after the civil war there ended. International actors, such as the OSCE and the UN, noticed the dearth of women voters and women in politics. As a result, the UN mission there intervened to implement a 30% gender quota in the de facto state.

Transnational emulation occurs when actors aim to replicate successful and proactive policies they have found in other contexts. Tipping occurs when domestic actors such as women's movements work on an issue, such as gender quotas, for a long

time but are then aided by international events such as women's conferences. Women's conferences, such as the exceptional one in Beijing in 1995, provide additional leverage to women's activists – who rely on the visibility, messaging, publications and conclusions of these conferences to fight for change within their domestic contexts. Finally, international blocking occurs when international actors block the adoption of gender quotas.

Clearly, norm adoption, diffusion and translation depend on the domestic context just as much as the global (Zwingel 2011). Often the linear trajectory described in the previous discussion about norms—namely a global diffusion pattern moving from the international to the local—does not always apply. Countries negotiate norms according to their own priorities and interests. The domestic narrative or discourse often dictates how the norm is translated within a country (Cortell and Davis 2000). Also, norms and their campaigns can sometimes originate locally. One domestic factor that may be present in Eastern Europe is the presence or lack of (in some contexts) strong women's movements. Indeed, many have noted that the passage of the 2011 gender quota in Poland was facilitated and pushed by a strong women's group called the Congress of Women, which organized a citizens' initiative to push forth a gender quota law in Poland in 2011 (Śledzińska-Simon and Bodnar 2013, see also Chapter 5).

Historical Institutionalism and Feminist Institutionalism

Institutions often shape the way politics is done. Institutions, defined as rules or norms, both formal and informal, which political actors play by are crucial components of political behavior (Steinmo 2008). Institutional legacies can affect the direction of a

country and its ultimate success. Institutions also condition the way actors behave— institutions include norms and rules that dictate what a political actor can or cannot do. Historical institutionalism (HI), in particular, is a strand that has gained in popularity since the 1990s. Embodied in the work of Theda Skocpol (1979) and rooted in a historical and contextual basis, HI attempts to take the particular temporal and spatial context into account when analyzing politics.

There are three concepts that are crucial to the study of institutions and that are important within historical institutionalism, namely path dependence, critical junctures, and feedback effects. Path dependence refers to the idea that a country's history and choices it has made in crucial situations have a significant impact on its present and future (Thelen, 1999; Mahoney 2000). Critical junctures refer to moments in time when the ability for political actors to make significant adjustments to institutional realities is present (Capoccia and Kelemen 2007). Feedback effects refer to processes that solidify decisions made at critical junctures a long-term reality – thereby enforcing and solidifying certain institutional choices that become a part of later path dependency (Thelen 1999).

Institutions can help explain why certain actors behave the way they do. Analysis in the HI tradition can also place relevant actors in a particular historical and spatial context—thereby revealing certain specific realities of the given location. Critical junctures in particular can help explain the circumstances behind and effects instituting new rules within CEE societies after communism. Specifically, with the fall of communism, CEE societies were faced with relevant and disparate choices in terms of things like constitutional design, electoral systems, and gender equality provisions. Some

countries, such as Serbia, used political openings such as the cessation of ethnic conflict to envision a future based on a more equitable electoral system. Following the war in Kosovo, Serbia decided to implement electoral reforms first in Southern Serbia to include more Albanians in politics. Serbian officials also decided that women should be included in politics in greater numbers—given their perceived peaceful nature. Thus, a local gender quota was instituted in Serbia for the first time in 2002.

A historical institutionalist approach, one privileging timing and sequence can aid this analysis. Tracing processes back to their sources, at time perhaps of critical junctures, can contribute to an understanding of why certain countries adopted quotas and others did not. The countries of the CEE region all experienced interruptions and changes in fundamental institutions that defined their societies. Critical junctures mark their recent history. The transition to capitalism itself represented a stark difference between the past and present. The question remains: why did some countries choose one path and others another path in terms of quota adoption? Are these institutional processes enveloped in international norm considerations, post-conflict dimensions, and post-communist realities?

Another strand of thinking to note is feminist institutionalism. Feminist institutionalism is a relatively novel but nonetheless powerful strand of institutionalism. Its main proponents argue that there are gendered aspects to institutions; institutions are not gender-neutral, their apparent neutrality often belies a masculine bent. Rules, both formal and informal, can exclude women or define expectations for how women behave in certain institutions and how they are allowed to behave. Some scholars have noted the way feminist institutionalism can explain change (Waylen 2014). Adopting new rules

such as gender quotas within institutions can reveal different gender patterns—the resistance gender quotas face in being passed can expose how masculinized a certain environment is. Also, probing how informal rules can allow actors to subvert formal rules, such as gender quotas, can also be illuminating for gender and institutional research.

How actors react to changes, how norm entrepreneurs navigate institutions to implement change and how change is implemented in institutions can all be further explicated by feminist institutionalism. Furthermore, power relations can be examined more closely through a gendered lens (Kenny 2007).

Analyzing the ways women’s groups or women’s movements navigate openings in institutions is another potential contribution. Sometimes “constitutional arrangements” are more open to change or reform than are certain bureaucratic regimes (Chapell 2000; 2006). Thus, this literature can answer: which institutional openings were present in the CEE context? Which of these did women and other relevant actors take advantage of?

International Institutions: The European Union (EU) and Its Effects on the CEE Region

One institution that has a significant impact on the CEE region and beyond is the EU. The EU, once known as the European Steel and Coal Community, was founded in 1951 to prevent future wars on the world’s bloodiest continent. It is currently a 27-member regional organization that is a supranational authority over many aspects of European law—including human rights. The European Court of Justice (ECJ), for example, is supreme in its authority to interpret EU law. The European Parliament is a

legislative body that is comprised of representatives from member states. Although it cannot initiate legislation, it does have the power to amend and reject legislation. Many EU treaties, such as the 1957 Treaty of Rome (which introduced equal pay for women), the Schengen Agreement of 1985, and the Treaty of Maastricht 1992 are foundational documents that have established and expanded the powers of the EU. Over the years, the EU, as an institution, has greatly expanded its scope and size—continuing to be an alluring membership community. While the EU has no unified foreign policy, for example, many of its states do share a common global vision.

The enlargement processes of the EU of the past twenty years have been expansive. In 2004 alone, the EU welcomed 10 states, 8 of which are from the CEE and Baltic region, including Poland, Slovenia, Estonia, Slovakia, Latvia, Hungary, Lithuania and the Czech Republic (European Union 2009). Coinciding with the fall of the Berlin Wall, the EU began to form policies during the 1990s to welcome the post-communist states of CEE “back to Europe”. However, as some scholars have noted EU influence has been somewhat limited in certain areas. Whereas Central European states have transitioned relatively easily and have embraced the EU-promoted reforms, states further east have not. Two of the seven ex-Yugoslav states have joined the EU (Croatia and Slovenia). Three more are official candidates for membership to the EU (Serbia, Montenegro and North Macedonia). Bosnia and Kosovo are classified as “potential candidates” (European Commission 2019).

Scholars have noted that the EU can influence policies in accession through political conditionality—rewarding countries on the basis of their progress in instituting democratic and economic reforms (Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier 2005). Others have

questioned how effective this truly is—already liberalized states such as Czech Republic can resist the EU in a much more assertive way than countries in the ex-Yu region that are vying for membership. Nonetheless, the power of the EU is present. There are some claims that the policies of ex-Yugoslavia non-member states are driven mostly by the prospect of EU membership. Does this prospect of membership affect the adoption of gender quotas and other gender equality provisions? This work aims to answer this question in a more thorough fashion.

The EU and Gender Equality

The EU has certain provisions that encourage gender equality among member states. The Treaty of Rome in 1957 itself included provisions concerning “equal pay for equal work”—a pioneering and positive step for women in the European Community (European Commission 2007). Other provisions such as anti-discrimination laws have also been instituted in EU law as well as other provisions related to women’s economic empowerment such as “parental and maternity leave” and reforms related to “care and informal work” (Avdeyeva 2015). Some of these worthy reforms came later—within the 1997 Amsterdam Treaty and the 2009 Lisbon Treaty. Member states have been urged to adopt gender equality reforms – although there has been progress overall, some member states have done more than others. One can simply look at the percentage of women in politics within the EU—by no means is it uniformly high. Although the overall percentage, 28%, stands well above the international average, there is still room for improvement. For example, in Croatia, the newest EU member, women only make up 20.5% of parliamentarians (IPU 2019).

Relatedly, the EU has put forth several strategic plans to encourage member and candidate states to promote gender equality. Most of the reforms seem to be targeted towards women's economic empowerment rather than political empowerment. However, there is language concerning women's political empowerment also. In fact, the EU, within its strategy has devised a thorough plan to further encourage women's political participation. Each EU member is expected to improve the status of women in politics through national action plans and strategies (European Commission 2019). Many EU member states have dedicated themselves to promoting gender equality forcefully – others have been more hesitant.

The EU itself acknowledges disparity in progress “due to the variation in socio-economic, cultural and institutional conditions” (EU Strategic Engagement for Gender Equality 2016). In this regard, one must note that the EU is somewhat limited in terms of enforcement post-accession. Pre-accession the EU has a level of conditionality; it can withhold material benefits such as membership itself and crucial funding. The EU considers itself a community of values and the ideas it puts forth are crucial for the advancement of gender equality within its member states. But its member states can also resist certain reforms or choose to bypass others – especially since the EU has limited enforcement measure post-accession. For example, the Czech Republic has a below-average percentage of women in politics (22.5%), has no legislated gender quota and it is an EU member state since 2004—why has the country not made greater strides towards gender equality, especially in politics?

Similarly, candidate countries such as those of ex-Yugoslavia, notably, are required to comply with certain gender equality measures to gain EU membership. Non-

compliance can delay or even eliminate prospects for membership (Avdeyeva 2015). Some scholars have noted that the ex-Yugoslavia is influenced by its desire to join the EU, but some impediments do exist to membership (Anastasakis 2008; Noutcheva 2009). One can simply look at the hesitation Serbia has in recognizing the break-away republic of Kosovo, often viewed as an informal but obvious impediment to Serbia's accession to the EU.

There are 35 chapters of the *acquis communautaire*, the EU body of law, that candidate countries now are required to fulfill. This has been a faster process for some countries than others, Montenegro has 32 of 35 chapters open while Serbia has 17 of 35, leading some to believe that Montenegro will join the EU sooner than any other candidate (EU News 2019). There are certain anti-discrimination laws and other gender equality provisions present in the "acquis". Candidate states must change national laws to be more compliant with EU law. There is no doubt about this. However, some questions remain. How extensive are demands for gender equality for new candidate states such as Serbia, Montenegro and North Macedonia? Can these candidate states resist certain proposed reforms that are not requirements for membership? Gender quotas are not a formal requirement for EU membership—but nonetheless the candidate countries of the Western Balkans all have legislated quotas. Why this is the case remains a crucial question. EU pressures and in turn support may have reformed some of the existing gender quotas but the impetus for instituting gender quotas in the first place within ex-Yu may have a different initial source.

Social Movements and Related Concepts

Social movement literature has concerned itself with explaining the rise of social movements mostly (McAdam 1982; Tarrow 1994, Tilly 2004). The effects of social movements have been studied less (Komnenović 2014). Theories of social movements ranging from resource mobilization theory (McCarthy and Zald 1997) to political opportunity structures (Kitschelt 1986; McAdam 1982) to emotions (Polletta, Jasper and Goodwin et al. 2001) have been put forth by various authors. Scholars have also noted that the study of social movements has been limited to democracies – others have noted the structural bias in these theories and the relative dismissal of emotions (Goodwin 2001; Komnenović 2014).

Social movements in practice have been seminal parts of world history. They have ushered in new eras and have been responsible for serious societal change. Certain key concepts are related to social movements. Political opportunity structures developed by Douglas McAdam in his work on the American Civil Rights movements, are a helpful analytical tool. Rather than explaining the rise of the civil rights movement through previous theories such as the “mob rule” theory or the resource mobilization theory, which ties a rise in social movements to an increase in resources, McAdam explains the rise in the civil rights movement from a political perspective.

Namely, changes in political opportunities, such as the end of WWII and the fight against communism, opened up avenues for Black Americans to clamor for their rights. Mobilizing structures, or previous networks in place where Black converged, also aided this process. Black churches and Black colleges are examples of these mobilizing structures. McAdam’s work signaled a turn in social movement theory—privileging

certain political explanations more than previous relative deprivation theories and theories concerning the availability of resources.

Relatedly, political opportunity structures are further defined by Kitschelt (1986). Kitschelt defines political opportunity structures as “comprised of specific configurations of resources, institutional arrangements and historical precedents for social mobilization, which facilitate the development of protest movements in some instances and constrain them in others” (58). In some instances, the governmental configurations of a state, such as the relative openness of a state to grievance, can dictate how a social movement organizes and its response to government reactions to organizing. For example, Kitschelt argues that a “closed” government configuration in terms of responsiveness to nuclear power protests in four Western European democracies can yield “confrontational” social movement strategies and few tangible policy results.

Thus, political opportunity structures can explain openings or constraints present that either foster or diminish social movement activity. Studying these structures, such as the relative openings present to women’s groups within governments to effect change, can help illuminate how social movements arise and why they sometimes succeed. Much social movement theory has been used to explain mechanisms in democracies and rarely in the ex-Yugoslavia region for example—where a significant civil society did not begin to reemerge until the fall of socialism. Simultaneously, utilizing this basic framework in this study can help reveal how in particular political opportunity structures, or institutional or societal openings, helped organize key groups in the countries of CEE to mobilize for gender quotas. What openings were present in Serbia, for example, for groups to take advantage of in attempts to adopt gender quotas? Was the cessation of

conflict there sufficient to provide enough space for women's groups, for example, to push for reform?

Women's Movements

The literature on women's movements is additionally helpful in this regard. The work of women's movement scholars is crucial to note here (Baldez 2002; Beckwith 2000; Tripp 2001). Beckwith (2000) notes in her work that literature on women's movements has been present but some of it has included the process of "excavation"—or recovering women's roles in movements—and has in turn neglected some crucial comparison and reference to existing theories. Indeed, the literature on women's movements has been case-study based and has occasionally invoked the theories of social movements, related to concepts such as political opportunity structures and cultural framing—or the messaging movements employ to further their missions (Benford and Snow 2000).

Beckwith notes that these connections to theory have not been strong enough. She argues that this particular sub-field of comparative politics should recognize how gendered processes like political opportunity structures can be. For example, women are sometimes allowed to protest as women because the threat of military and physical retaliation is smaller in more repressive environments—this was the case during the Yugoslav anti-war movement in the 1990s. Women were more comfortable protesting because the fear of conscription was not existent (Žarkov 2003). The Mothers of the Plaza Del Mayo in Argentina were permitted to protest the junta there initially because they were older women who invoked their roles as mothers (Bouvard 2002). The ruling

junta was at first unsure of how to react. Las Madres' shaming of the junta eventually led to that regime's just demise. Beckwith and others raise a strong point – concepts such as framing can also be quite gendered. How women and women's groups present themselves is crucial to how their movement will be received.

Baldez (2002) argues a similar thesis in her work. Framing is a crucial component of the success of women's movements—her examples in Chile reveal how women took advantage of “partisan realignment” to reframe themselves in gendered ways. Namely, Chilean women used gendered expectations of women as political outsiders to claim political space and accuse men of ignoring their interests. Thus, the emergence of a movement depends on its framing capabilities. Framing can serve as a source of inspiration for protest—defining how movement actors interpret events—and it can also serve as a rallying call for others to join the protest movement. Thus, it is important to recognize how certain theoretical frameworks, such as framing, can be gendered in nature and can reflect a societal dimension or pattern of gender.

Noting the powerful nature of women's movements, despite various localities and divergent tactics, is important for this work. Women's groups have emerged to lead calls for greater political representation for women at several crucial times in history. Some movement work has explored women's movements in CEE, but most have noted the dearth of women's movements in CEE. Scholars noted that women's movements were somewhat muted in most parts of CEE immediately after the fall of Communism (Matynia 1995). In places like the Czech Republic women felt that they were “over-emancipated”—many believe that the economic burdens placed on societies post-

communism made gender equality a less important issue than others. In their own self-perceptions, they were “free” enough.

Additionally, the region itself is still emerging from a very different socio-political and economic order. “Top-down” state feminism perhaps empowered women in one way but did not empower them for the most part politically nor in a grassroots fashion (Nechemias 1994). The strength of women’s movements varies across countries in the CEE region. Generally, the region has not been associated with a particularly strong or active women’s or feminist movement, particularly since the fall of communism when an increase in feminist organizing was expected under newly democratic regimes but did not actually occur (Einhorn 1993; Gal and Kligman 2000; Jaquette and Wolchik 1998). During communism, women’s organizing, particularly of the Western grassroots kind, was thought to be limited or non-existent because the existence of civil society itself was limited under communist regimes.

However, this “top-down” narrative remains somewhat disputed (Bonfiglioli 2016; Ghodsee 2019) as does the assertion that there is a weak feminist civil society in CEE currently (Spehar 2007, 2012). Scholars such as Kristen Ghodsee argue that women during communism were not simply given rights by the state but demanded them through women’s organizations. Ghodsee’s 2019 work in Bulgaria demonstrates that Bulgarian women worked through international organizations such as the United Nations to fight for the rights of women around the world, but particularly in developing countries. Ghodsee argues that much of this has been forgotten as a result of the end of communism and the paradigmatic shift to neo-liberalism. Nonetheless, she maintains the importance of this misunderstood feminist history.

Scholar Andrea Spehar has challenged the narrative that dominated the early 1990s vis-à-vis women's movements in CEE. Spehar in her 2007 dissertation and a subsequent 2012 article argues that women in the CEE region have formed significant women's organizations that have in turn had an effect on important policy debates and legislation, such as that of domestic violence. Spehar notes that the studies of the CEE documenting the supposed lack of women's mobilization have been marked by inconsistency: "While studies like these often pose theoretically relevant and empirically interesting questions concerning the role of women in post-communist societies, they also suffer from methodological limitations and empirical blind spots that render the validity of several of their claims doubtful" (209). Spehar in her work provides evidence showing that in Croatia and Slovenia the women's movement, namely women's NGOs along with women within formal political institutions, were instrumental in pushing for domestic violence reform and legislation, thus partly, at least, countering the dominant narrative of women's mobilization lacking in CEE (Spehar 2012).

Regulska and Grabowska (2013) note the unique features of CEE women's movements and note their interactions with institutions such as the EU as being crucial to their past development. The authors also recognize the embeddedness of women's NGOs in CEE within a neo-liberal framework—or an emphasis on individual rights within capitalist systems. As they note on page 167: "The post-communist space is not dominated by a single hegemonic narrative. Rather, the hegemonies within which women mobilize vary with respect to spatial location, the political and historic context of regime change, and the particular relationship to free-market post-communism."

A recent (2017) by Krizsán and Roggeband work analyzes the push for domestic violence reform in five CEE countries: Hungary, Poland, Romania, Croatia and Bulgaria. The authors note that the relative strength of the women's movement in each setting varies and that passing successful domestic violence legislation and maintaining it depends on many different factors, including international norms and discursive political opportunity structures. The authors note the relevant disparity that exists in CEE among women's groups and the outcomes they choose to pursue. But they also note some patterns across the region. The authors note that the success of domestic violence legislation in CEE countries depends on various factors, including: "the strength and strategies of domestic women's movement mobilization, the given state's openness, favorable or opposing political and discursive opportunity structures, and the quality of involvement by international, intergovernmental, and transnational actors (2)."

Thus, the question of women's movements, their existence and furthermore their influence in CEE still remains somewhat unexplored. Knowing the intricacies of women's movements and how they emerge and succeed can help explain the quota adoption processes of the four countries I am studying. Namely, following the transitions of the 1990s, it was clear that women and women's groups were receding into the dark (Einhorn 1993). However, twenty-five years later what is the status of women's organizations in CEE? Most importantly, were women's organizations instrumental in promoting the adoption of gender quotas?

Post-Conflict Dimensions and Women's Political Representation

Post-conflict dimensions can be crucial explanatory devices in revealing increases in women's political representation. Women are involved in conflict in various ways. They make up the half of any given refugee population along with girls (UNHCR 2017). They are often victims of war, victims of sexual assault and rape during war and often become widows because of war. Surely, women are also combatants who fight alongside men during war. However, often, women are excluded from peace processes and are often excluded in the planning of transitions from conflict. Women generally do not take part in the rebuilding of societies exiting serious conflict. For example, the peace negotiations known as the Dayton Accords, which ended the Bosnian War, did not include a single woman (Council on Foreign Relations 2019). It is estimated that between 1992 and 2011, women made up "13 per cent of negotiators, 3 per cent of mediators and only 4 per cent of signatories in major peace processes" (UN Women 2019). Although, uniquely affected by conflict, women are often excluded upon its cessation. Security Council Resolution (SCR) 1325 was passed in 2000 to improve the dearth of women in peace processes and conflict prevention initiatives—recognizing the vital contributions women make in these fields. Subsequent to this, 9 resolutions were passed to strengthen the original SCR1325 (Peace Women 2019).

Women are also sometimes great advocates of peace. The Women in Black (WIB) network, operating in diverse places such as Israel, Colombia and Serbia, is emblematic of this. WIB is a feminist-pacifist organization (Cockburn 2010). Women who make up this group directly challenge the dominant, masculine and militarized rhetoric of the national context they live in. For example, WIB Serbia challenges the

Serbian state to accept responsibility for its role in the break-up of Yugoslavia and the bloodshed that came with this. WIB Israel expresses solidarity with the Palestinian people and calls for an end to the Israeli occupation of Palestinian lands. These women's groups are crucial in post-conflict societies because they continue to exert pressure on dominant ethnic narratives within societies that are dealing with a troubling past and even present.

Women's groups also exert pressure during conflict and are often advocates of a cessation of hostilities. In Liberia, the Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace, banded together to put pressure on dictator Charles Taylor to end the civil war there in 2003. Their involvement in peace efforts helped the conflict come to an end and helped eventually oust Taylor from power. Women in Liberia, in contrast to other contexts, were rewarded for their efforts in peace and were involved in post-conflict negotiations. As a result, Liberia became the first African country with a woman head of state, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf (Karam 2010; Pray the Devil Back to Hell 2008).

Thus, it has been claimed that post-conflict dimensions have often led to an increase in women's representation, especially in African countries (Hughes 2009, Hughes and Tripp 2015, Tripp, 2015). Others have extended this to other settings such as Iraq, Afghanistan, Cambodia and Sri Lanka to name a few (Krook, O'Brien, and Swip 2010; Mgrew, Frieson, Chan 2004; Rajasigham-Senanayake 2004; Tajali 2013).

The post-conflict effect on women's representation is explained in various ways. In one crucial way, the cessation of conflict often opens "critical space" for women and other actors to rebuild societies in more constructive, gender-equitable ways—thus changing so-called "gender regimes" or previous configurations of gendered aspects of

society (Tripp 2015). This depends on many factors—how involved and strong the women’s groups are in the society, the political will of new political actors and international influences such as donors and regional powers (Hughes 2009).

Many case studies illustrate the power of post-conflict dimensions in promoting women’s participation in politics. For example, the country of Rwanda, which currently leads the world in terms of women in Parliament, experienced a gruesome genocide in 1994. This genocide claimed over 800,000 lives in 100 days (Power 2002). Following the genocide, international donors and women’s groups became heavily involved in the rebuilding of Rwandan society. One of the key reforms that was instituted was a gender quota in the form of reserved seats. This provision was enshrined in the post-genocide 2003 Rwandan constitution. Reformers noted that women, who were perceived as less combative than men and also made up 70% of the post-genocide population, should take more active roles in Rwandan society (Mineo 2017). Women became active members of society post-genocide and have been able to make some descriptive as well as substantive and symbolic gains in Rwandan society (Burnet 2008).

The post-conflict literature is thus important for this study. The sub-region of the former Yugoslavia is a post-conflict area. The wars in the region have been well-documented both by scholarship and the international media (e.g. Holbrooke 1998; Judah 2009; Kaufman 2001; Woodward 1995). From 1991 to roughly 1999, the ex-Yugoslavia region faced prolonged conflict, first with the break-up of Yugoslavia per se, and subsequently with the breakaway region of Kosovo and the fighting that occurred between Kosovar Serbs and Kosovar Albanians. Croatia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Montenegro, Slovenia, North Macedonia and Serbia all witnessed some kind of armed

conflict on their territories. As a result of the war, 100,000 were killed and two million people displaced, either externally or internally (International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia [ICTY] 2017).

Therefore, post-conflict realities are undoubtedly present in this region. It is then important to examine the specific mechanisms involved there. The ex-Yugoslavia region stands out in terms of women's representation. Numerically, some countries might not have an optimal percentage of women in their Parliaments, but all countries in this region have a legislated quota. In this way, the countries stand in contrast to the rest of the CEE region.

The Gender Quota Literature: Adoption and Beyond

Gender quota literature has proliferated in the last twenty years. Many scholars have analyzed various aspects of gender quotas and their effects. Quotas have been evaluated per se from the angle of adoption and in turn in terms of their effects on three kinds of representation: descriptive (numerical), substantive (representing women's interests in legislative and other political bodies) and symbolic representation (the effects women have on aspiring women politicians and young women, also on public attitudes towards women, this is a more transformative, indirect effect) (Pitkin 1967; Franceschet, Krook, and Piscopo 2012). Prominent works on gender quotas also evaluated them normatively and as sources of current controversy (Bacchi 2006; Dahlerup and Friedenvall 2010; Krook, Lovenduski and Squires 2009; Phillips 1995).

Quota adoption (and non-adoption, but less so see Gaunder 2015 for a notable exception) per se has also received attention by notable scholars (e.g. Baldez 2004; David

and Nanes 2011; Gaunder 2015; Krook 2007; Meier 2012; Murray, Krook, and Opello 2012; Verge 2012). The key question has been why countries adopt quotas, which seemingly go against the interests of ruling male elites. Adoption has been linked to elite calculations, women's movement pressure, democratic legitimacy and the diffusion of international norms (Krook 2007). Most scholars have privileged domestic narratives, but quotas undoubtedly operate in a globalized, interconnected world.

Seminal works reflect how quotas are implemented in countries. Individual case study approaches have dominated the study of gender quota adoption, leaving some uncertainty as to how it actually happens comparatively, leading to an intimation of causal heterogeneity in the process itself, and leaving some room for further exploration, especially from a point of comparison.

Having said this, it must be acknowledged that there have been some comparative studies done of gender quota adoption, usually global in nature. Krook (2009), in her pioneering study, for example, lays out a framework for analysis of gender quota adoption and implementation. She then uses carefully paired case studies to provide empirical evidence for her observations, namely that various actors play a role in gender quota adoption and the success of gender quotas often depends on the political context in which they are adopted. Krook employs innovative qualitative techniques, including case studies and comparative methods to imply a process of equifinality in quota adoption.

Relatedly, Caul (2001) reveals that three factors emerge as most important in cross-national analyses of quota adoption: women activists present in the highest offices within a party, adoption of quotas by another party in the system and party ideology, particularly leftist ideologies. Her methods, however, are quantitative in nature. Namely,

Caul analyzes through a regression model 71 parties in 11 advanced democracies in her work. Adoption processes are thus complex and often context dependent.

Additionally, studies concerning the descriptive effects of quotas have been numerous, as have studies on quota designs (Franceschet, Krook and Piscopo 2012; Jones 2005; 2009; Tripp and Kang 2008; Schwindt-Bayer 2009). Scholars have extended this work on descriptive representation to substantive representation and symbolic representation. Scholars have visited the question of whether or not increases in the number of women in legislatures around the world, accelerated or caused by quotas, have resulted in more positive, gender equal legislative outcomes for women at large.

Some studies point to the positive effects of an increased presence of women in legislatures (Barnes 2012; Barnes and Burchard 2012; Clayton 2014; Clayton, Josefsson and Wang 2017; Xydias 2007), while other studies present mixed findings (Clayton 2012; Cummins 2011; Curtin 2008; Franceschet and Piscopo 2008). Recently, scholars have evaluated aspects of symbolic representation also. Some notable works explore whether or not women's increased presence in legislatures leads to symbolic effects, such as the breaking down of stereotypes of women or even the encouragement of younger women to run for office (e.g. Bauer and Burnet 2013; Beaman, Duflo, Pande and Topolova 2012; Clayton 2014; De Paola, Lombardo and Scoppa 2010).

My dissertation situates itself in the first so-called wave of quota studies, namely the dissertation is dedicated to quota adoption. Given the dearth of comparative adoption studies across CEE, my research can fill the void in the literature and serve as a potential resource for subsequent studies.

The Region

Post-Communist Contexts

The democratic transitions of CEE differed in many ways from the transitions of Latin America that preceded them. Although some scholars have posited some similarities between the two cycles of democratization, others have noted their disparities (Huntington 1991; Linz and Stepan 1996). Latin American regimes and regimes of Southern Europe democratized under very different international and domestic circumstances, specifically under the bipolarity of the Cold War and also from the legacy of right-wing dictatorships.

Furthermore, many of these previous transitions involved elite-actor negotiations rather than civil society actors or the population at large (O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986). In many ways, the democratization processes of CEE were distinct and had different causal mechanisms than transitions that occurred before. Scholars have noted the diverse reasons why CEE states democratized—popular discontent, elite fragmentation, a shifting global economic order, staggering international debt, a mistimed economic opening, Soviet neglect and ailing economic problems (Verdery 1996; Geddes, 1999).

Other scholars have also refuted the tenets of modernization theory in this context (Lipset 1960), which posits that once countries attain a certain level of economic development they will modernize socially and politically. As some have noted modernization theory cannot completely explain Eastern European transitions—countries in the region democratized for diverse reasons, many of which had little to do with modernization (Przeworski and Limongi 1997). It was in fact when the economic order of the socialist regimes began to wane that popular discontent grew (Geddes 1999). Since

the fall of Communism, many countries in the region have made progress but others have developed less rapidly. The ethnic conflicts in Yugoslavia, for example, have made it more difficult for the new states of the former Yugoslavia to implement reforms as rapidly as their neighbors to the West (Rupnik 2013). Central Asian states have retained authoritarian leaders for the most part.

Thus, as many Central European states have made an impressive, if imperfect, transition, others in the region are still catching up. Competitive authoritarian regimes are not uncommon in the region—these are defined as authoritarian regimes that hold some multiparty elections but seriously limit oppositional forces (Levitsky and Way 2010). Discrepancy in terms of democratic consolidation is embodied by the EU membership of states like Poland (until recently arguably), Czech Republic, Slovenia and Slovakia. EU membership still eludes post-conflict countries such as Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro. In fact, the EU has served as a norm-enforcer in the fates of post-communist states (Rupnik 2013). The promise of EU membership has pushed many post-communist states to adopt certain democratic norms.

Post-communist contexts have been analyzed in various ways—including from the point of democratization factors during the beginnings of the transitions to current institutional dynamics facing the countries now (see Fagan and Kopecký for a thorough assessment of scholarship related to CEE politics). The state of the region has also been recently analyzed in a comprehensive manner, most notably through the politics of memory and how states are interpreting the narratives of the past and the rapid and powerful transitions they experienced during the 1990s (Kubik and Bernhard 2014). Many states are even now coming to terms with the communist past and renegotiating

what the present means to them in this context. Although, many of them are content to have shed their communist pasts, there are elements of nostalgia present. There is also some discontent in the region related to disappointment with the economic situation, especially since the 2008 global economic crisis.

Scholars have observed that the third wave of democratization that occurred CEE prompted many to study the region extensively right after the fall of Communism (Ekiert 2015). This was followed by an integration of post-communist case studies into the democracy and democratization literature. However, this was deemed a somewhat futile effort—given the historical and cultural specificity of the region, fitting the post-communist countries into large-N studies proved to be too difficult as their specificity necessitated more historically oriented approaches. Many scholars have once again turned to more historically specific works on post-communist societies (Ekiert 2015).

Recently, the region has also been deemed less interesting to some as democratization processes have been perceived as complete in many countries (Ekiert 2015). However, democratization processes in the region have been complicated by economic crises, the rise of populism and the return to nationalism. In countries like Hungary, democratization has gone in the opposite direction—the authoritarian nature of Prime Minister Viktor Orbán’s governing style has caused some to question the durability of democracy in the region. Corruption is also seen as a plaguing component of the Central-Eastern Europe reality (Andrews 2018). Thus, the region continues to be an important one; other crucial factors such as the rise of Russian influence, the rise of the populist right in the region, the prospects and effects of EU membership continue to

complicate the region's present and future, making its relevance present and persuasive (Vachudova 2012).

Civil society continues to be a crucial component of these countries. Usually viewed as weak in this part of the world and not involved in democratization processes in most settings (exception if Poland's Solidarity Movement), civil society nonetheless has made an impact on the region. Civil society is defined as being: "populated by organizations which are separate from the state, enjoy autonomy in relation to the state and are formed voluntarily by members of the society" (Ottaway and Carothers 2000). As Ekiert and Kubik (2014) argue, contrary to popular belief, CEE does have a history of loose associations even during communism. Associations such as sports clubs, trade associations and professional associations were present in the region – during communism and even before. Communism did confine these to limited operations and missions, but in some countries this history was enough to create a lasting foundation that has been expanded upon in the wake of the collapse of communism. Ekiert and Kubik thus intimate that civil society has been understudied and undervalued in the region. They claim that in some states, particularly those of Central Europe, civil society has been instrumental in consolidating democracy.

Ekiert and Kubik, among others, crucially note the discrepancy that has come to define post-communist countries—some have democratized almost fully while others such as Central Asian states and Russia and Belarus have morphed into semi-competitive authoritarian regimes (Levitsky and Way 2010). The level of civil society present in their societies often reflects their level of democratization and furthermore civil society can

sometimes undermine democratic movements—often in the form of nationalist or far-right groups (Way 2014).

Thus, the works mentioned reflect the main themes in the post-communist literature: the paths countries took to democratization have varied as have the paths they have taken since then. The region was once the focus of comparative literature attention, especially following 1989. The region is now being examined in a plethora of ways, particularly from the aspect of the EU and accession to this entity. The countries of the CEE are facing disparate and sometimes difficult realities—with the rise of right-wing populism, many of their citizens interestingly to some have turned to this type of regime as a source of progress.

The research I am proposing will consider many of the themes I mentioned. I recognize that civil society is a crucial, perhaps still developing and burgeoning component of CEE realities. In the ex-Yugoslavia region, social movements and civil society itself have been active in transforming certain aspects of society—their importance should not be understated.

Feminism in the Region

Feminism Under Communism

Feminism was not a welcomed or rather popular concept in the CEE region, especially right after communism. Feminism and women's rights were in the purview of communist states during communism—these states in turn viewed women's rights as connected to class struggle and the struggle against imperialism (Waylen 2007).

Feminism thus did not develop in Eastern Europe in the same way it arose in the West.

Women were not involved in social movements in CEE as they were in the West in the 1960s and 1970s during the women's liberation era.

However, so-called state feminism, or "top-down" feminism granted women enviable rights during communism in the region. Women were in general able to vote, serve as politicians and many had the right to an abortion (Waylen 2007). Women were also economically enfranchised: education was mostly free, and women pursued many, diverse careers. For example, in Czechoslovakia, women made up 60% of medical students and 40% of doctors (Pollert 2003).

As a result, many CEE women developed a strong professional identity based on the levels of education and professional status they attained under communism. But this sense of self was not directly related to feminist ideals. As some scholars have noted, because women were given rights rather than fought for them, they tended to take many of them for granted (Einhorn 1991). Some CEE women felt that they did not need feminism because they felt "emancipated" enough (Matynia 1995). Indeed, a sense of fatigue with feminism still resonates in the region among women.

Women were present in politics in CEE. But as scholars have noted women's true influence was limited in central power apparatuses such as the Politburo (Matynia 1995; Vuković 2009). Women were more influential privately and through their professions than they were in formal politics. The rise of communism and leftist movements did not always leave a welcoming space for women, even in the United States (Henry, Cobble, Gordon 2015). Women involved in left-wing movements across Western Europe and the United States, for example, often picked up on the lack of support some leftist activists

had for feminism. So many women turned to feminist activism directly to fight for gender equality.

Currently, women operate in a post-communist setting that is somewhat precarious. After the fall of communism, in the early 1990s, women's representation fell sharply from 30% pre-1989 to less than 10% immediately following the first multi-party elections in the region. The introduction of free elections privileged men who had worked on the transitions. Unlike women in Latin America, Eastern Europe women were not very involved in the transitions to democracy (Waylen 1994). As a result, many of them did not engage politically. This has currently improved. Women now make up over 26% of Parliamentarians in the region. Women currently lead diverse countries, such as Serbia (the Prime Minister is named Ana Brnabić), Slovakia (President is named Zuzana Čaputová), and Estonia (President is named Kersti Kaljulaid). Historical women leaders in CEE include Milka Planinc (Prime Minister of Yugoslavia, 1982-1986), Yuliya Tymoshenko (Prime Minister of Ukraine, 2005), and Hanna Suchocka (Prime Minister of Poland, 1992-1993).

The situation is, in some ways, now more amenable to women. Some countries have introduced gender quotas, despite the post-communist resistance to them in certain states. Women are more engaged politically than they were around the time of the transitions. Women were emancipated “from above” during communism—their freedom lay in their economic emancipation mostly. Women became engaged professionals and their labor was tied to their newly found freedom. Political freedom was not as present.

Women in Yugoslavia and the Post-Yugoslav Space

Yugoslavia itself, as the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY), came into existence in 1945 in the aftermath of WWII. Josip Broz “Tito”, once a communist guerilla fighter, became the leader or President of Yugoslavia from that point until his death in 1980. Importantly, “Tito” split with Stalin’s Soviet Union in 1948, thereafter embarking on a path of political “neutrality”. Along with India’s Jawaharlal Nehru among others, Tito founded the still active Non-Aligned Movement in 1961. The movement included countries that were neither aligned with America or the Soviet Union, the Cold War era hegemons. Indonesia, Ghana and Egypt were notable members of the Non-Aligned Movement. It is partly because of this non-alignment that Yugoslav citizens enjoyed greater freedoms than their Warsaw Pact counterparts, such as Poland. Yugoslav citizens were free to travel almost anywhere, they owned small businesses and labored in worker-led state enterprises.

This particular legacy has left an imprint on today’s ex-Yugoslavia societies, in particular women and women’s groups. The women of Yugoslavia were involved in various ways in their eventual emancipation. Women were active in the partisan resistance to Nazi German occupation in Yugoslavia during WWII (Bilić 2012). Women participated in combat during the war. They were also involved in political life immediately after WWII—forming an official organization dedicated to promoting women’s rights called the Antifascist Women’s Front (Benderly 1997; Bilić 2012; Bonfiglioli 2014). However, the many valiant efforts of this important group were seen as a threat to the Yugoslav Communist Party and they were quickly reigned in post WWII (Benderly 1997). Women were then not allowed adequate space to protest and their many

grievances were seen to have been met by the imposing nature of the socialist state—a state that granted women some progressive rights such as the right to an abortion and the right to vote.

It is thus necessary to explore the particular dynamics of women's participation in politics within the region because the ex-Yugoslavia region is being explored more thoroughly for this research. In some ways, the trajectory of women's participation in politics in Yugoslavia mirrors the participation of women in CEE in general. Unfortunately, after WWII, once the socialist states settled into a post-world war order, Yugoslav women began to recede into domestic and sometimes professional duties, although there was some political activity.

Lokar (2004) mentions interestingly that Yugoslav women were involved actively in the preparations for the UN Conference on Women in Mexico City in 1975. Lokar notes that these same women lobbied Yugoslav leader Josip Broz Tito in the 1970s to include a gender quota in politics and beyond, noting the potential positive effect this would have on other non-aligned countries. Although, a gender quota never became law, soft quotas, or informal quotas that function as an implicit agreement, were implemented in various spheres, including “various socio-political organizations”. Lokar and others lament that like in other CEE countries women were not included in centers of power, such as executive branches of Communist Parties but were given some other substantial opportunities (Vuković 2009).

It was not until the late 1970s that a feminist movement started emerging in Yugoslavia. In the late 1970s women academics began to ponder the feminist question in Yugoslavia. They began to think about their positions as women in Yugoslav society and

began to question the legitimacy of the socialist state in bringing progress to women of the region. This era of Yugoslav feminism was marked by increased publications about women and women's rights and even an emergence of conferences such as one held in 1978 in Belgrade concerning women in Yugoslavia. At this point, feminism in the region was confined to academic and journalist circles (Žarkov 2003).

During the 1980s, feminists in Yugoslavia began to expand their repertoires of contention, or movement tactics. Benderly (1997) notes that during the 1980s Yugoslavia was “home to an outspoken feminist movement, the strongest women's movement in Eastern Europe”. During this time, women began to network with one another and began to protest things such as anti-abortion measures and nuclear power. According to Benderly, this emerging movement had many of the characteristics of new social movements—which became much more concentrated on human rights than on class and economic issues (Buechler 1995). Of course, in a socialist state, the space for protest and grievance was more limited but Yugoslav women managed to use the space provided to create networks, protest policies and even create SOS hotlines for victims of domestic violence by the late 1980s.

These so-called “mobilizing structures”, or foundational networks social movements use to gain ground, were thus in place. These structures became important in the next phase of Yugoslav feminism—namely that of the anti-war era during the 1990s. Yugoslav feminists were a small but significant part of the anti-war initiatives in the region—organizing protests, calling for unity and providing humanitarian aid for victims of the war. It was during this time – it took a collapse of a state—that Yugoslav feminists really emerged as a grassroots feminist force.

It is the legacy of this era of Yugoslav feminism that remains in the region. Many women activists who protested the war, such as Lepa Mladjenović and Women in Black Serbia Founder Staša Zajović, remain active as feminist leaders. Women activists in the region still deal with issues such as war trauma, refugees and women victims of rape during war. An initiative called the Women's Court has emerged. This Court brings together women victims of rape during the war in Yugoslavia to document their experiences and provide psychological relief. It is initiatives like these that make the feminist movement of the region still active and important.

Now that I have surveyed pertinent literature and I have linked them to my overall framework, I will now turn to the first empirical chapter, namely a comparative discussion of gender quota adoption in CEE.

Chapter 3: Women in Politics and Gender Quota Adoption in the CEE Region

Women in Politics in Previous Literature on CEE

Valuable research has focused on women in CEE parliaments. For example, Matland and Montgomery (2003) explore the various dimensions of women's representation in the region. The authors in this volume evaluate whether or not the reasons for limitations of women's descriptive representation in the West apply to contexts in Eastern Europe. They evaluate developed theories in the West concerning women's representation, such as electoral rules (PR systems and large districts) that are thought to aid women's representation and analyze whether or not these dynamics are present in the East. The authors find that there are some variations in CEE contexts—but that many of the Western trends are applicable in CEE.

Relatedly, Saxonberg (2000) observes that there is room to discuss women in politics in CEE, especially given the decrease in percentages of women in Parliament immediately following the fall of Communism. Saxonberg posits that many of the theories explaining why women are more successful in entering politics in the West do not hold up in the context of Eastern Europe. For example, contagion effects are present in CEE but are rare. Leftist parties, associated with the era of communism, did not push for gender equality given their lack of popularity post-communism.

Although leftist parties did have a more robust gender equality agenda, they could not exert this kind of influence necessary to push for more women candidates. Other factors, such as economic issues and cultural bias towards feminism, made it difficult for these parties to quickly position women in a favorable way immediately after

communism. Moreover, Saxonberg notes that the women's movement in CEE faced large hurdle in terms of credibility. As mentioned, feminism, at the time was viewed as a relic of the communist past and therefore women began to choose to dismiss feminist goals. In this context, women's movements were not able to emerge in a proactive and assertive way. Saxonberg's 2000 article concludes by positing what would emerge if women's movements were stronger in CEE.

Saxonberg's article was written in 2000. This date precedes many of the gender quota laws and initiatives of Eastern Europe. Saxonberg does not cover CEE quota initiatives, presumably because there were few at the time, and discusses women's political participation without much mention of the possibility of gender quotas aiding women in this respect. The same is true for Matland and Montgomery (2003). I thus aim to expand their foundational work to include more contemporary developments.

Additionally and more recently, Thames (2018) notes that overall diverse research on women's political representation in CEE has acknowledged the struggles CEE women have faced on the path to political gender equality. He argues that lingering patriarchal attitudes are mostly to blame for this inequality. Thames urges researches to dedicate their future works to comparisons of CEE states to states outside of the region for example in order to deduce how CEE states are distinct or similar to countries in other regions.

Gender Quota Adoption in CEE

Literature concerning gender quotas, has been written on the CEE region but not extensively or comparatively (e.g. Antić and Lokar 2006; Gwiazda 2015, Mrsević 2005).

Antić and Lokar (2006) reveal some dynamics involved in the initial considerations of gender quotas in the ex-Yugoslavia region, but the authors do not consider some of the newer developments in the region as the piece was published in 2006. Lokar and Antić place the causes of the adoption of gender quotas in the context of post-conflict realities in North Macedonia, Serbia, Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia. The authors argue that politicians became more open to gender quotas as a result of increased pressure from women's movements and as a result of the pressure of regional organizations such as the EU. While women's movements are pinpointed as causal actors in the work, Lokar and Antić also do not tie their work to theories of quota adoption but instead put forth detailed case studies of each context they describe.

In terms of more recent volumes on gender quotas, only one recent journal volume, published in February of 2017, in the Slovenian journal called *Teorija in Praksa, Theory and Practice*, explores the "legitimacy and effectiveness" of gender quotas within several countries in the CEE region. The authors in this volume focus on twelve countries to explore their adoption and implementation of gender quotas. Three countries are examined as single cases in this volume; Poland (Fuszara 2017), Ukraine (Dean and dos Santos 2017) and Slovenia (Gaber and Selišnik 2017). Additionally, Ekaterina Rashkova and Emilia Zankina examine the following six countries comparatively: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Montenegro, Kosovo and Romania. Authors Elena Nacevska and Sonja Lokar examine the dynamics of quota adoption in three ex-Yugoslav countries, namely Serbia, Macedonia and Croatia.

Twelve countries are examined in the CEE region across five articles. The conclusions the authors make are varied. Many authors note the resistance, usually rooted

in masculine overrepresentation in politics since democratic transitions and persistent traditional attitudes, present in the region towards gender quotas but they also acknowledge that the situation is improving. The authors astutely note that quota designs matter; that gender quotas with more effective or robust designs will inevitably lead to more women in politics.

Relatedly, Chiva (2018) argues that there is an overrepresentation of men in CEE politics and that this has existed for a very long time, most crucially since the end of communism and the beginning of democratic transitions, when one would have expected a more inclusive environment. In her work, she explains the persistence of male dominance in CEE politics. Chiva identifies several mechanisms that sustain male dominance, most notably built-in incumbency, replicated since the time of democratic transitions when anti-communist and post-communist parties relied on all-male networks to recruit candidates for election, and the ability of party gatekeepers to utilize electoral systems to keep women out of politics.

Chiva's contribution is complex and important. She concludes by noting several ways male dominance in CEE politics is being broken or disrupted. One of the ways she notes is through the introduction of gender quotas in the CEE region. In her work Chiva notes the absence of research in this regard.

Yet, the adoption and impact of gender quotas in Central and Eastern Europe have received surprisingly little attention in the literature. With few exceptions (Antic Gaber 2005), comparative surveys of quotas in the region are rare. Instead, quotas are usually briefly discussed as part of country case studies on women's descriptive or substantive representation (134).

Chiva is correct to note the relative lack of research in this regard. Additionally, Chiva goes on to state that this is mostly because "virtually all regional experts argue,

quotas have been only reluctantly adopted and implemented in post-communist Europe, so that overall, they have not had a significant impact on women's representation" (135). Although she does not cite who these experts are, it is perhaps incomplete to argue that it is not important to study why quotas have been resisted. Resistance to international norms is an important research agenda. Additionally, quotas, particularly legislated gender quotas, have made an impact, especially in the former Yugoslavia. Chiva's six case studies in this regard, namely, Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania, Czech Republic, Poland and Slovakia suggest to her that gender quotas are not having much of an impact.

Her case selection may verify this hypothesis, but 4 of 6 of these countries have weak party quotas, as she herself notes, one country (Bulgaria) has no quotas and Poland has a legislated quota (with open PR lists). However, when one looks more closely at these cases and goes beyond them, it is clear that gender quotas are having an impact. Thus, it is important to look at to what extent and why.

Structure of Chapter 3

Given the literature that has preceded this study, I aim to expand the findings of gender quota dynamics in the CEE region. In this regional overview chapter, I present a comparative analysis of gender quota adoption in CEE. I first discuss possible factors that can explain the discrepancy of women's political representation in the region, asking the question: which non-quota factors can explain variation in women's descriptive representation in CEE? I begin with an analysis of social, political and cultural factors. I utilize relevant categories to make the case that certain domestic factors do not relate neatly to women's political representation. For example, education levels are uniformly

high, according to the World Economic Forum's Gender 2017 Gender Gap Report, in the CEE region. Many countries are given perfect or nearly perfect ratings in education, but this does not always translate to a higher percentage of women in parliament. I then use key variables to explain variations in descriptive women's political representation, including political features of states, such as electoral systems. I conclude that there are few clear patterns that emerge in terms of these variables. I then link this discussion to gender quotas, noting that the presence of gender quotas are one reason why certain countries have a higher percentage of women in Parliament.

Following this portion, I begin to present a mostly descriptive picture of the status of women in Parliaments in the CEE region. I specifically focus on gender quota presence or absence within countries, levels of descriptive representation in the region, sub-regional variation, and quality of gender quotas, as defined by criteria evaluating sanctions for non-compliance and rank-order stipulations in addition to the complementarity of electoral systems. I focus on four main questions in this portion: which countries have gender quotas in CEE, and which do not? Why is there variation in terms of type of quota adopted? What are some regional trends, in terms of EU membership, time adopted etc., that define the CEE region in terms of quota adoption and non-adoption? What is the level of quality of gender quotas in CEE among adopters? Are gender quotas implemented well?

In this section, I illustrate which countries have gender quotas and which do not. I then break this down further by noting some sub-regional trends, such as the predominance of legislated gender quotas in the former Yugoslavia and that region's leadership in terms of women in parliament. I briefly compare the former Yugoslavia

with other sub-regions, such as the Baltic states. I further break this down by examining the percentages of women in parliament within EU member states (in the CEE region) and non-EU member states in the region, noting interestingly that non-EU states have a higher average of women in parliaments than EU member states in CEE.

I then turn to a discussion of the “quality”, or implementation efficacy based on sanction enforcement and rank-order placement, of legislated gender quotas in the region. As scholars have noted, the quality of the legislated gender quota matters for the ultimate result, i.e. increasing women’s descriptive representation in politics (Schwindt-Bayer 2009). How well a quota is designed will factor into how many women ultimately are present in Parliament as a result of the quota. I discuss the variations in quality and hypothesize why this disparity exists. I then discuss the previous attempts to pass gender quotas in non-adopter and adopter states, noting that there have been far more unsuccessful attempts in non-adopter states, where the resistance is clearly greater. This section seeks to answer the question: what have been the previous attempts of quota adoption in the CEE region and what do they tell us about resistance to the international norm?

I then focus on one potential but complex variable that can at least explain the disparity in gender quota adoption, namely the presence and specific activity of women’s groups within a country. I link the presence, activity and focus of women’s networks to several quota adoptions, including Serbia, North Macedonia and Poland. However, the presence of women’s networks and the larger women’s movement within a country do not stand alone as variables. Social movement success depends on many factors including resources, mobilization networks and political opportunity structures. As I will discuss,

particularly in the subsequent case studies, along with the influence of international norms, women's networks take advantage of previously present networks, the language of international norms, and political opportunities to effect political change, such as gender quota adoption. I end the chapter with this section and by focusing on the following questions: What are the comparative factors involved in CEE quota adoption and non-adoption across all cases? What patterns of adoption and non-adoption can we deduce across cases?

Non-Quota Dimensions; Domestic Factors Influencing Women's Political Participation

It is first important to delve into what can explain variation in women's political representation within the whole region. Factors that are at first glance unrelated to gender quota adoption will be considered. I will explore select domestic factors that are relevant for women's political representation in the CEE region as established by previous literature. I will use statistics from the 2017 Gender Gap Report from the World Economic Forum to complement the forthcoming analysis.

Generally, women's political representation is associated with a variety of domestic factors: usually designated as social, political and cultural (Kentworthy and Malami 1999; Paxton and Kunovich 2003). In terms of socioeconomic factors, countries with high levels of female education and labor force participation should provide a solid foundation or at least a good candidate pool that can potentially promote the inclusion of women in politics. However, the results of empirical studies testing these factors remain mixed (Kentworthy and Malami 1999; Patxon 1997; Paxton, Hughes and Green 2006).

As Paxton, Hughes and Green (2006) note, factors historically associated with women's political participation have not always been supported empirically. As they argue, factors such as education and labor force participation vary culturally as does their importance. An adequate level of education may be primary school in one context and tertiary in another. Additionally, women can learn skills outside of the labor force that are relevant for political careers. Interviews I conducted in Serbia in 2012 with women politicians included many of them referring to their familial roles as mothers as being instructive for the multi-tasking nature of politics (Interviews 2012).

Presumably, the countries of the CEE region, given the more positive legacies of communism, have historically offered women the opportunity to work and the opportunity to attain higher education levels. This legacy, especially in terms of labor certainly, has been complicated by a transition to capitalism that has redefined the notion of worker and career, especially for women who were, after the fall of communism, forced to participate in a more precarious labor market (Einhorn 1993; Fodor and Balogh 2010; UNICEF 1999). As a result, fewer women participated in the CEE labor market after the fall of communism (Einhorn 1993). However, certain legacies, especially education, should provide enough of a foundation for CEE countries to build on.

To evaluate the strength of these social, political and cultural factors in the CEE region, I have done an analysis of relevant social factors based on the World Economic Forum 2017 Global Gender Gap Report (excluding Kosovo, which has not been ranked in the report). I utilize the averages of important indicators, such as educational attainment and labor force participation. I analyze political factors, such as presence of PR system to ascertain any kind of political and institutional pattern in the CEE region.

Although, the countries of the CEE region I am studying are generally well-ranked across the Gender Gap report variables, such as economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival, they lag in terms of political empowerment. While it is true that political empowerment scores are relatively lower across the board for all regions, in the CEE region the political score is relatively the lowest compared to the other variables.

The average rank for educational attainment in the CEE countries, where 8 of the CEE countries have attained a perfect score of 1, is 43 (there are 144 total countries being ranked). The average ranking for economic participation is 58. This economic variable is made up of the following indicators: labor force participation, wage equality for similar work, estimated earned income, legislators, senior officials and managers Professional and technical workers (World Economic Forum 2017). The average rank for political empowerment is 61. Compared especially to the educational attainment, this is substantially lower. As mentioned, many countries in the region have very good international indicators for gender equality, especially for educational attainment, like Lithuania and Slovakia, but they trail in relative terms of women's political representation. Thus, educational attainment cannot be closely linked to a substantial percentage in terms of women's political representation in all countries.

Additionally, political and institutional factors are important in terms of fostering higher levels of women's political participation (Paxton, Hughes and Painter 2009; Paxton and Kunovich 2003). Proportional representation (PR) systems, as opposed to majoritarian systems, are more likely to result in higher percentages of women in parliament. However, this electoral system feature has not produced particularly high

results across the CEE region. Most of the countries of the CEE region have a PR system with the exception of four countries (surveyed here): Lithuania, Hungary, Moldova and Ukraine, which have mixed systems. Although this may be a constraining feature in Hungary, which has the lowest percentage of women in Parliaments in CEE, it has conversely not completely helped per se other countries with exclusively PR systems, such as Croatia or the Czech Republic. This electoral system feature per se has not always resulted in an automatic increase in women in parliament. By itself, it is not a sufficient factor for women's political participation in the CEE region.

Other domestic features have also been deemed relevant to explain women's political participation. Factors such as ideology and religion are important to note (Norris 1997; Paxton 1997; Paxton and Kunovich 2003; Rule 1987). According to previous literature, a current Marxist-Leninist ideology can help the cause of women in politics by ensuring gender quotas in legislatures that can be easily passed by a more compliant legislature.

However, this is complicated when the country in question has a communist *history*. All of the countries of the CEE region do trace their political histories back to some kind of communist ideology during much of the second half of the twentieth century. However, this, in certain circumstances, has hurt the prospects of women entering politics, not helped. The history of Soviet imposition of gender quotas is cited as a reason to not adopt this new version of gender quotas currently. This is particularly true in the post-Soviet Baltic states.

Conservative forces in society, such as religion, particularly Catholicism and Islam, have been associated with lower levels of women in politics (Paxton and Kunovich

2003). This factor also has limited explanatory power in CEE. The Catholic Church, in particular in Poland, does exert significant influence in the country and was one of the main opposition forces to communism. However, Poland has one of the highest percentages of women in Parliament in CEE, whereas the Czech Republic, a generally secular state, does not have such a high percentage of women in Parliament and additionally, unlike Poland, has no legislated gender quota. This level of religiosity was systematically measured by the Pew Research Center survey in 2018. Poland is ranked the 8th most religious European country (out of 34 surveyed), while The Czech Republic is ranked 32nd.

Religion does play a part in societies across CEE, but this is rarely a reason given, at least publicly, for the exclusion of women from the political sphere. Croatia is also a Catholic country and religion (it is the 7th most religious country according to the Pew study cited above), along with other conservative values, does affect women's roles in the country but Croatia also has historically had a progressive women's movement (Irvine 2007). Slovenia is a nominally Catholic country also but until late 2018 was one of the leaders in the CEE region in terms of women's political representation.

A substantial percentage of people are of the Islamic faith in Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Albania but all three have a legislated quota and in the case of Albania and Kosovo an above-world-average representation of women in Parliament (29.51% and 32.5% respectively). Orthodox Christianity has also been associated with more traditional attitudes towards women. However, Serbia and North Macedonia are both predominantly Orthodox Christian countries (Serbia is ranked the 10th most religious country in Europe by the above-mentioned Pew study). However, Serbia and North Macedonia lead the

region in terms of women's representation. Both are also in terms of the world average (25%) substantially ahead with 37.65% and 39.17% women in Parliament, respectively. It can be inferred that the legacy of communism, which in many countries forbade formal religious practice, secularized some of the countries of the CEE region so that in this respect they are unique. This may be changing now with populist movements, such as in Romania, Bulgaria, and especially Hungary and Poland, which use religion to substantiate their claims against "gender ideology" (Corredor 2019). But this secular legacy of communism remains present in many contexts.

Thus, given the inconsistent explanatory power of many of these domestic factors, it is prudent to explore beyond these factors and explore specific gender quota campaigns and the strength of the women's movement within the particular country. The presence of legislated gender quotas particularly correlates with a higher percentage of women in parliaments in the CEE region. It can be deduced then that these mechanisms are making a difference and may be necessary for women in countries with a history of masculine dominance in politics to enter Parliaments in greater numbers. The story of gender quotas is not exclusively linked with domestic environments that are necessarily open to gender equality in politics. It is clear that gender equality in politics must be demanded by women's groups. Much of this involves organized gender quota campaigns. Upon discussing the descriptive picture of gender quotas and descriptive representation in CEE, I will then return to a discussion of women's networks and their impact on gender quota adoption.

Now and Then: Women in Politics in CEE

Gender quotas have aided the CEE region in improving the percentage of women in parliament, at least to an extent. It is clear that countries with gender quotas, particularly legislated quotas enshrined in constitutions or electoral law, have generally a more equitable representation of women in parliament. Immediately following the fall of communism, states in the region saw the percentage of women in Parliament fall precipitously. Immediately after the fall of communism, however, women made up on average below 10% of members in parliament and in some countries below 5% (Matland and Montgomery 2003, pg. 1). This notable fall speaks back to the reluctance of newly elected male elites in CEE to include women in transition politics (Waylen 1994; Waylen 2007; Chiva 2018). Transitions to democracy in the region did not immediately result in gender equality for women in the CEE region. In fact, many women lost some of the securities communism offered, such as maternity leave and steady employment, and in turn began to live in a precariously novel environment (Einhorn 1993; Matynia 1995).

Countries in the CEE region did not include gender quotas within new, democratic constitutions after the fall of communism. In contrast, democratization in Latin America during the 1980s and 1990s ushered in gender quotas. Gender equality became a component of new regime types there (Dahlerup 2006). This resulted in many Latin American countries (11 of 19) adopting legislated quotas from 1991 to 2000. Currently, most Latin American countries have a gender quota, with the exception of Venezuela and Guatemala (Piscopo 2018). Such a movement for gender quotas was not present in the CEE region immediately after the fall of communism in the 1990s; in fact, quotas were largely jettisoned because countries quickly moved away from the

communist system and began to resist such state-led interventions. Women were less involved in democratic transitions than they were in Latin America and as a result their demands were not as vocalized (Matland and Montgomery 2003; Saxonberg 2000). Only well after immediate democratic transitions have women's organizations been actively vying for these mechanisms and sometimes are succeeding (Chiva 2018).

Overview: Women in CEE Parliaments Presently

Among countries with legislated gender quotas in the CEE region, the percentage of women in Parliament is 28%. Among countries with only party quotas, the percentage of women is 19.42%. Among countries with no gender quotas the percentage of women is interestingly also 28%. The countries with no gender quota adoption have a higher percentage of women in parliament than the countries with weak party quotas. The party quotas that exist in CEE countries usually belong to small parties or more rarely parties that are center-left in ideological proclivity and that are thus less influential. This makes these party quotas less effective than in other parts of the world, such as in Scandinavia.

A higher percentage of women in parliament among non-adopters is also due to the relative strength of non-quota mechanisms for ushering women into politics that exist in countries such as Bulgaria (Krook and Norris 2014). Bulgaria's Social Party (SP), for example, has internal party quotas for leadership positions (Rashkova and Zankina 2017). One can infer that this may help women eventually reach party lists (Krook, Lovenduski and Squires 2009). Latvia succeeded in promoting more women in politics only after the October 2018 election, when women were placed higher on party electoral lists (IPU 2019).

Thus, although women in CEE parliaments have increased their presence over the last two and a half decades, there is variation among countries that are more committed to gender equality mechanisms, such as quotas, than those that are not. This is captured in Table 2, 3 and 4 below:

Table 2: Percentage of Women in Lower House of Parliament, Countries in CEE Region with Legislated Quotas

Country	Percentage of Women In Parliament	Quota Adopted?	Type of Quota	Date of Quota Adoption
North Macedonia	39.17%	Yes	Legislated	2002
Serbia	37.65%	Yes	Legislated	2004
Kosovo	32.50%	Yes	Legislated	2000
Albania	29.51%	Yes	Legislated	2008
Poland	28.70%	Yes	Legislated	2011
Montenegro	28.40%	Yes	Legislated	2011
Slovenia	27.78%	Yes	Legislated	2006
Moldova	25.74%	Yes	Legislated	2016
Bosnia & Herzegovina	21.43%	Yes	Legislated	2000
Croatia	20.53%	Yes	Legislated	2008
Ukraine	20.52%	Yes	Legislated	2013
11	28.36%			

as of January 2020, Sources: IPU Women in Politics Database, Quota Project 2019

Table 3: Percentage of Women in Lower House of Parliament, Countries in CEE Region with Voluntary Party Quotas

Country	Percentage of Women in Parliament	Quota Adopted?	Type of Quota
Czech Republic	22.50%	Yes	Party- Social Democrats
Romania	21.88%	Yes	Party- Social Democratic Party, Democratic Party
Lithuania	21.28%	Yes	Party- Social Democrats
Slovakia	20.00%	Yes	Party- Party of the Democratic Left, People's Party
Hungary	12.56%	Yes	Party- "Politics Can be Different", Hungarian Socialist Party
5	19.64%		

as of January 2020, Sources: IPU Women in Politics Database, Quota Project 2019

Table 4: Percentage of Women in Lower House of Parliament, Countries in CEE Region with No Quotas

Country	Percentage of Women in Parliament	Quota Adopted?	Type of Quota	Date of Quota Adoption
Latvia	30.00%	No	None	N/A
Estonia	29.70%	No	None	N/A
Bulgaria	25.80%	No	None	N/A
Count: 3	28.50%			

as of January 2020, Sources: IPU Women in Politics Database, Quota Project 2019

Regional Trends

There are several regional trends to be explored further. Most notably, outside of the ex-Yugoslavia region, there are very few CEE countries with legislated quotas. Only Poland, Albania, Ukraine and Moldova have a legislated quota among CEE countries outside of the ex-Yugoslavia region. This suggests a general reluctance among countries outside of ex-Yugoslavia to pass legislated gender quotas. This has had an effect on the level of descriptive representation in the CEE region outside of ex-Yugoslavia. The 12 non ex-Yugoslavia countries have a lower percentage of women in Parliament than the ex-YU countries, 24.02% versus 29.63% respectively. Given that it generally takes sometimes decades for the percentage of women in any parliament to increase by 5%, this is a significant difference (IPU 2018).

Five non-ex YU countries in the CEE region have party quotas. However, as mentioned, these party quotas are generally ineffectual because they are only followed, and sometimes not enthusiastically at all, by one or at most two political parties (Chiva 2018). Thus, their true impact is limited.

There are variations in terms of specific geography also. For example, the Baltic States (Estonia, Lithuania, and Latvia) have a slightly lower percentage of women in politics compared to the ex-Yugoslavia region. Among Estonia, Lithuania, and Latvia the percentage of women in Parliament is 28%, which is above the regional and international average and has been accomplished largely without legislated or party gender quotas. Hungary and Slovakia have the lowest percentage of women in Parliament, with 12% women in Parliament and 20% respectively. Among the Visegrád states, the alliance of Central European states including Poland, Slovakia, Czech Republic, and Hungary the

percentage of women in parliament is also lower than the world average, CEE average and ex-Yugoslavia average: it is 21%. Only one of the Visegrád states, namely Poland, has a legislated quota.

The ex-Yugoslavia region has almost attained a “critical mass”, i.e 30%, percentage of women in parliament, specifically 29% (Dahlerup 1988). The reasons the ex-Yugoslav states have attained a near critical mass level for women in politics are complex. First, the socialist state-system in Yugoslavia allowed for more civil society organizing than in other parts of CEE. Women as a result began to organize along feminist lines earlier than their CEE counterparts, as early as the 1970s, at least within academic circles (Benderly 1997).

Second, Yugoslavia experienced a violent and tragic break-up. Democratic transitions had post-conflict dimensions there as opposed to the rest of the CEE and democratization in this area of CEE happened later, as late as 2000 in Serbia. As a result, many international and regional actors, such as the UN, OSCE, and the EU were involved in the formation of new Constitutions and electoral laws in these countries. These institutions still are involved with the countries of the former Yugoslavia. These institutions exert more influence arguably there than in any other part of the CEE.

Additionally, these international and regional institutions actively promoted a gender equality agenda, sometimes through direct imposition of gender quotas in certain places such as Kosovo and Bosnia and Herzegovina (Boric 2004; Krook, O’Brien, and Swip 2010). Relatedly, women’s groups in these countries utilized the influence, language and aspirations of these norm-diffusing institutions to convince elites of the need to promote women’s participation in politics by ushering in legislated gender

quotas. The non ex-Yugoslavia countries of the CEE region have different historical legacies. They are generally not post-conflict and embody divergent paths to gender quota adoption and non-adoption.

Timing of Gender Quota Adoption in the CEE region

The region of CEE has lagged behind regions like Latin America in terms of gender quota adoption during the post-communist era. It should be noted that most countries in CEE had gender quotas under communism (Dahlerup 2006; Paxton and Hughes 2016). However, these quotas were eliminated during the transition to democracy by countries of the CEE region. In fact, this aversion towards Soviet-style quotas has led to many countries using this specious narrative to resist increasing women's political participation.

Argentina was the first democratic country in the world to adopt a legislated gender quota in 1991 (Franceschet and Piscopo 2008). The first legislated gender quota that was adopted in the CEE region was in Bosnia & Herzegovina in 1999 directly as a result of post-conflict considerations and the plight of women activists working within the OSCE (Boric 2004; Domi 2002). The ex-Yugoslavia region in this regard was again pioneering. Serbia, North Macedonia, and Kosovo adopted legislated gender quotas early for the region, in the early 2000s. Slovenia adopted a legislated quota in 2006 and it was followed by Croatia (2008) and Montenegro (2011).

One of the last legislated quotas to be adopted in the region was Poland in 2011 (Ukraine in 2013, Moldova followed in 2016). The timing of the Polish case is somewhat unusual and indicates that there were serious impediments to the quota adoption, such as

conservative parties in power and prevalent conservative and religious values. Women activists in Poland attempted to introduce quotas as early as the beginning of the 2000s (Gwiazda 2015, Interviews 2018). But they were only successful, after several attempts, in 2011 when the Civic Platform, a center-right party, allied with women activists to finally pass gender quota legislation. The timing of the Polish case can also speak back to the serious impediments that quota campaign faced. It also highlights the strength of the Polish Congress of Women movement and its ability to overcome many societal hurdles on the path to gender equality in politics.

The Beijing Effect

Relatedly, the Beijing UN Women's Conference Platform of 1995 explicitly called upon UN members to increase the percentage of women in relevant political bodies. Since this was the most highly attended conference of the UN women's conferences, many women activists utilized this moment to call upon their governments to follow the directives of the conference and its platform. Thus, gender quotas have been adopted at a more accelerated pace since 1995. As Tripp and Kang (2008) note, between 1975 and 1985, 4 countries introduced gender quotas. Between 1985 and 1994, 21 countries adopted gender quotas. It should be noted that during this decade the countries of Eastern Europe eliminated gender quotas. Most relevantly, between 1995 and 2005, so post-Beijing, more than 55 countries adopted gender quotas (Tripp and Kang 2008). As of 2018, more than 130 countries worldwide have adopted some kind of gender quota (Quota Project 2019). This electoral reform or feature has become the norm for countries to follow. Of course, there are notable "holdouts" such as the United States itself, which

has no formal gender quotas. But many countries, especially in the developing world, have gender quotas (Towns 2010).

The important point to realize in the context of the CEE region is that in terms of those countries with legislated quotas, most of them adopted these quotas in the early to mid 2000s (post-Beijing). Those countries that adopted quotas in the early to mid 2000s are all from the ex-Yugoslavia region, thus, to varying degrees are post-conflict countries but are also some of the region's leaders in terms of women's political representation (e.g. Serbia and North Macedonia).

This timing is also related to quality. Interestingly, many of these countries introduced initial gender quotas that were somewhat weak or unenforced properly, such as Serbia and Montenegro. But however, over time and through deliberate women's movement persistence, these gender quotas were reformed to be stronger and more effective, thus resulting in a greater presence of women in Parliament.

Post-Conflict Timing Dimensions in the former Yugoslavia

Notably, the collapse of Yugoslavia in the early 1990s did not automatically result in the adoption of gender quotas. Even in Slovenia, some time was needed to introduce gender quotas. Namely, Slovenia introduced its national gender quota in 2006, many years after attaining independence (1991) and after several attempts to introduce gender quotas in the 1990s. A concerted campaign in Slovenia by women activists and scholars was needed to usher in this reform (Antić Gaber and Selišnik 2017). Governmental and societal restructuring after conflict can sometimes lead to positive reforms for women in politics (Tajali 2013; Tripp 2015). This was the case in the more affected conflict regions

of the former Yugoslavia, such as Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Kosovo. Their gender quota adoption is directly linked with post-conflict and democratization considerations and timing. Other countries from the former Yugoslavia, such as Croatia and Montenegro, adopted their gender quotas at a later time (2008 and 2011 respectively). This mostly indicates a weaker emphasis placed by women's groups in those countries on the issue of gender quotas and also a greater resistance to gender quotas by elites.

The timing of legislated gender quota adoption is relevant to note. Some of the most effective quotas in the region were passed during the post-Beijing phase, although some adoptions came later. Although Beijing may have affected the language used by norm entrepreneurs in these contexts, post-conflict considerations were also important, as were continuous EU dimensions and foreign funding and assistance (Irvine 2007).

Scholar Jill Irvine notes that Croatian women's groups were assisted and inspired by the messages of the 1995 Beijing Women's Conference, particularly its emphasis on women's rights as human rights. In her 2007 work, Irvine notes, that Croatian women were encouraged to promote gender equality back in Croatia, especially in terms of adopting quotas. Additionally, Irvine acknowledges the international norm environment that Croatian women were operating in at the time. In the context of Croatia, we see an example of "tipping" where women's conferences aid the work of a domestic women's movement (Krook 2006).

Although it was not until 2008 that Croatia passed a legislated gender quota, the 1995 Beijing Conference nonetheless inspired many activists to push for women's rights in the wake of conflict, where mobilization structures were in place in the form of anti-

war feminist networks. Thus, the timing of Beijing had some effect in some CEE contexts. Irvine acknowledges that Croatian women found this language and the focus of Beijing uplifting (Baldez 2003; Jaquette and Wolchik 1998). Although it is not clear that women's groups from all of ex-Yugoslavia went to Beijing, particularly because what remained of Yugoslavia was under international embargos in 1995 (Serbia and Montenegro), some women from the region were directly affected by the powerful Beijing conference, thus revealing how influential international interaction can be (Beijing Conference List 1995).

EU Members Vs. Non-Members

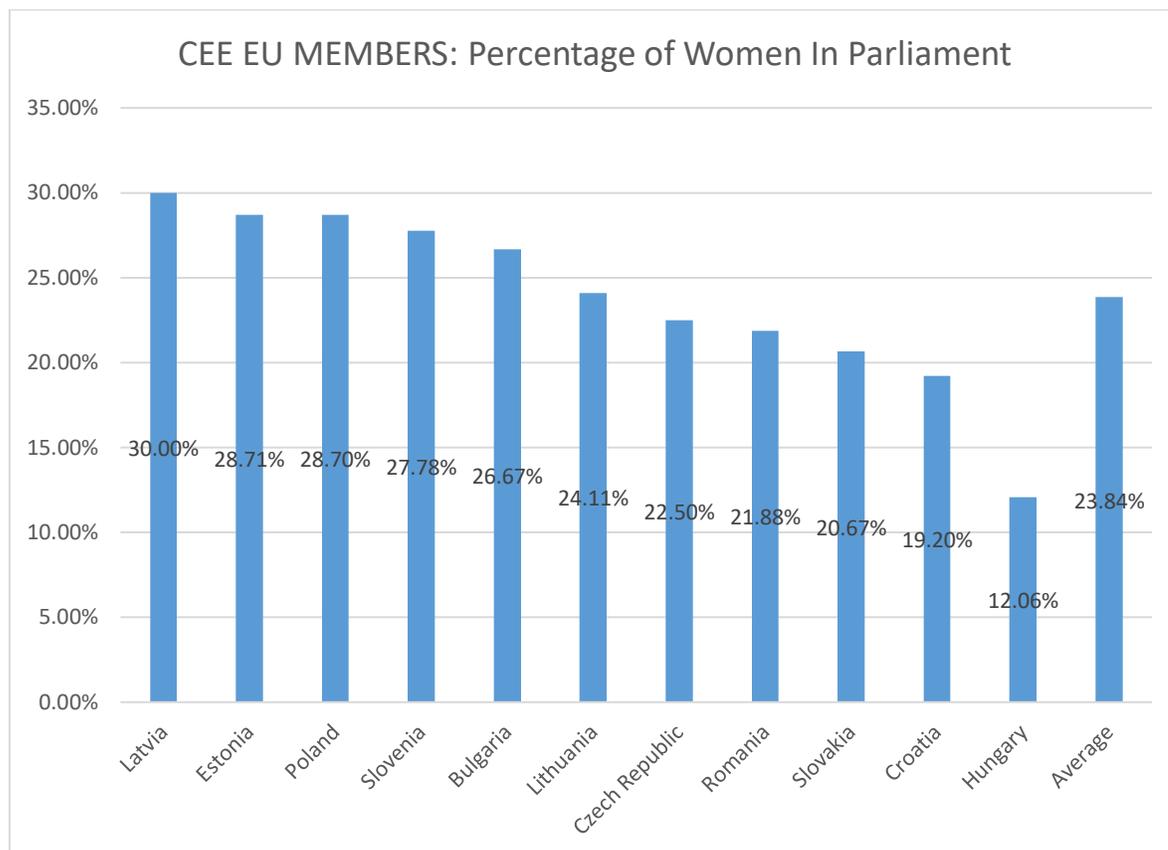
The EU is the world's leading regional organization. It is also highly influential as a norm-diffusing body. As noted, all EU candidates must adjust their domestic legal frameworks to conform to EU law to gain admission. Thus, EU dimensions are important to explore in this region, where 11 of the countries being analyzed are in the EU and 8 are candidates, potential candidates, or EU aspirants.

First, the descriptive levels of representation within each group are significant to note. There are differences in terms of percentage of women in Parliament among EU candidates and EU member states. In the CEE region, EU candidates and potential candidates have a higher percentage of women in Parliaments than EU member states. The EU candidates or potential candidates in the CEE region have a percentage of 29.37% women in parliament. In contrast, the EU member states of the CEE region have a percentage of 23.71%. It should be noted that the EU itself has 28% women in the Lower Houses of member Parliaments. The European Parliament per se has 35.2% women within its ranks (IPU 2019).

Given that it takes serious effort to increase the percentage of women in any political body, these are significant differences among non-EU members and EU members. It could be potentially inferred that the EU candidate states have more of an incentive to follow EU gender equality recommendations to pass gender quota legislation. This will be further examined in the specific case studies, especially that of Serbia, a candidate country whose elites are generally eager to join the EU.

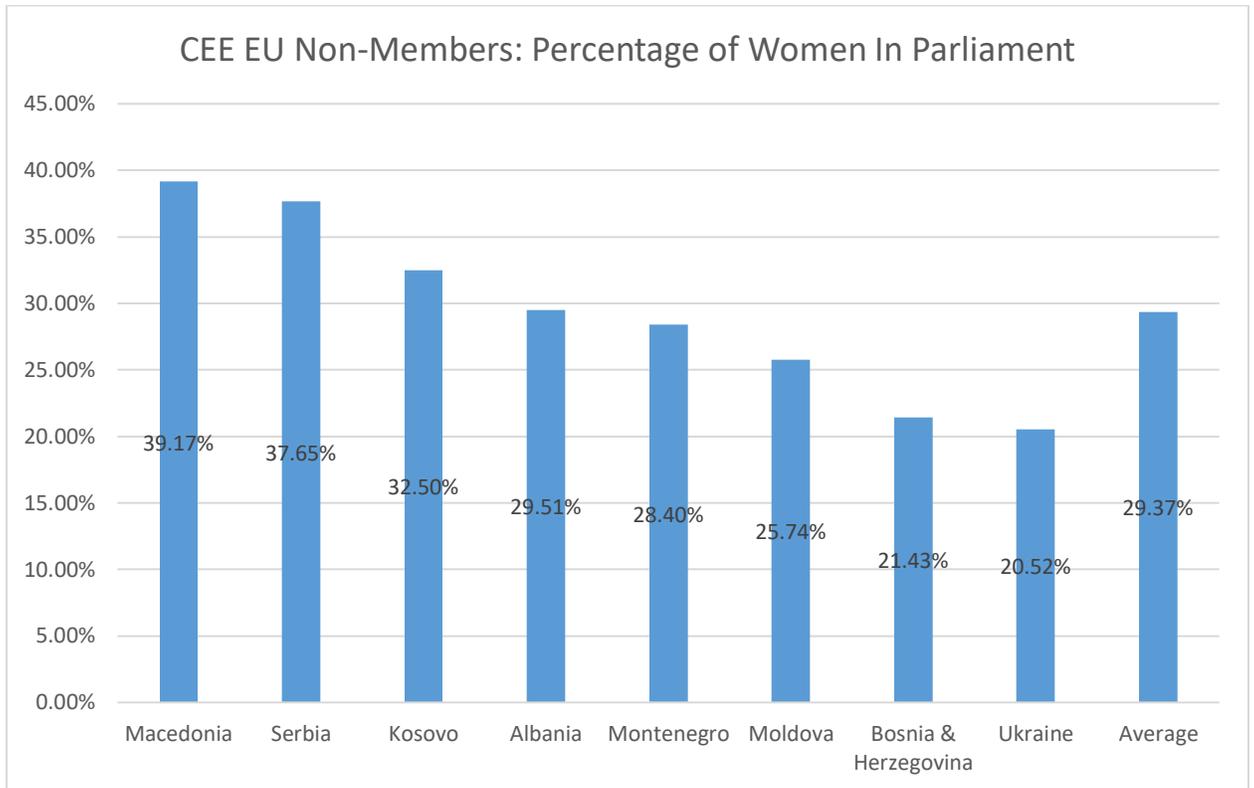
Additionally, all non-EU member states have legislated gender quotas. Only 3 out of 11 CEE EU member states have a legislated gender quota. This includes Slovenia, Croatia and Poland. Five member-states (Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Romania, Lithuania) have voluntary party quotas and three (Bulgaria, Estonia and Latvia) have no quotas. Graphs 1 and 2 demonstrate this difference between EU member states and non-EU member states.

Figure 1: Percentage of Women in Lower House of Parliament among EU Members in CEE



Sources: IPU Women in Politics Database, Quota Project 2019

Figure 2: Percentage of Women in Lower House of Parliament among EU Candidate/Potential Candidates in CEE



Regardless of the party in power, maintaining and reforming gender quotas seems to be a goal of many EU candidates. Presenting themselves as “women-friendly” or sensitive to women’s issues seems to be a priority they deem important. Although the EU does not have a gender quota requirement in its body of law, the *acquis communautaire*, it nonetheless emphasizes women’s rights in many initiatives and projects. This makes certain candidate states more open to introducing mechanisms that can promote women in politics.

For example, the legislated gender quota in Serbia was introduced when a center-left coalition was in power, namely the Democratic Opposition of Serbia in 2003. However, Serbia has attained its highest percentage of women in Parliament in 2016 (37.7%) under a center-right government, namely the Progressive Party of President Aleksandar Vucic. This party itself has become much more EU-friendly and gender equality-friendly since taking and consolidating power in the country. No party has attempted to remove the legislated gender quota. Similarly, North Macedonia has the highest percentage of women in Parliament in the region. It also had a strong gender quota in place. Its gender quota was adopted fairly early also (2002). North Macedonia has consistently increased the percentage of women in Parliament since 2002, reflecting a desire to accept EU soft directives regarding gender equality (Spehar 2012).

Quality of Gender Quotas in the CEE region

The quality of gender quotas, linked to ultimate efficacy, in the region is also important to explore. As mentioned, 11 countries in the CEE region have a legislated quota. 5 countries have weaker party quotas and 3 have no quota at all. Among the 11

countries with legislated quotas, there is diversity in “quality” of gender quotas. Quality in terms of gender quotas has been linked to quota effectiveness in many settings (Dahlerup and Freidenvall 2006; Krook 2009; Schwindt-Bayer 2009). Generally, in order for a quota to be effective certain criteria have to be met. First, the legislated quota should be enforced by some kind of punishment for non-compliance, ideally a rejection of the party’s electoral list by the relevant body, usually an Electoral Commission. Fines alone are sometimes inadequate for countries to comply with the legislated quota stipulations. Wealthy parties in those systems simply pay the fine without including more women on their electoral lists as has been the case in France in Western Europe and Croatia in CEE, for example (Quota Project 2019).

Additionally, legislated quotas should be accompanied by rank-order placements or a placement mandate to be effective (Schwindt-Bayer 2009). There should be specific language about where women or “the under-represented” gender should go on these lists. In many cases it is in the third spot (as in the case of Serbia), thus ensuring at least 33% women in the subsequent body of Parliament. Other non-quota features also aid the promotion of women in Parliament. Closed lists in proportional representation (PR) systems also aid the effectiveness of a legislated gender quota. When a list is closed, the position of candidates is fixed, and as a result, voters must vote for the entire party list in the way it is specified. If there is a quota requiring that every third or fourth position should be filled by a woman, then in a closed system this will actually result in more women in parliament. Conversely, open lists in PR systems allow the voters the possibility of choosing specific candidates on an electoral list. This may sometimes

facilitate a voter gender bias. As in the case of Poland, voters may prefer incumbents and male candidate on higher positions on the electoral list (Millard 2014).

Given these dynamics, I have created an evaluation of gender quotas in the CEE region based on the 2009 work of Leslie Schwindt-Bayer. In her 2009 article, Schwindt-Bayer does a cross-national study of quota effectiveness based on legislated quota designs. She includes three quota components for evaluation: quota size, placement mandates and enforcement mechanisms. Schwindt-Bayer finds that quota size matters most for quota effectiveness but that the combination of placement mandates and enforcement mechanisms matters too. In other words, if there is a rank-order stipulation in the quota (a placement mandate) and if there is a sanction for non-compliance, the quota is usually more effective at increasing the percentage of women in parliament.

Thus, for the purposes of this modified analysis, I have designated criteria for an evaluation of legislated gender quota quality and potential effectiveness. This set of criteria directly evaluates the quota itself. I have devised another set of criteria that evaluates the electoral system, namely whether or not the electoral system complements the legislated quota. As mentioned, PR systems and closed electoral lists tend to most closely have been linked to a greater increase in women's political representation (Matland and Studlar 1996; Norris 1985; Rule 1987).

The explicit criteria are:

Quota specific:

- 1) sanctions for non-compliance (the ideal sanction being the rejection of an electoral list),

- 2) rank-order placement (not only mandating a percentage of women to be included on an electoral list, but also requiring a certain order, as in ‘one of three’)

Larger electoral context:

- 1) electoral system, the ideal being a completely PR system
- 2) closed electoral lists

I have not concerned myself with quota size because there is not much diversity in terms of quota size in the CEE region. Most quotas are 30% and the range is only from 25% to 40%. Thus, the ideal, or most effective, combination for a gender quota is **sanctions present**, specifically in the form of rejection of electoral list until compliant with gender quota, **rank order placement explicitly specified and electoral system is PR and there are closed electoral lists**. Based on this I have grouped the countries into three categories of quota quality: **strong, mixed and weak**. Countries that meet all quota criteria are given a “strong” quota quality grade. Countries that meet 1 criterium are designated as “mixed”. Quotas that meet no criteria are designated as weak. Additionally, if the country has a complementary electoral system, for these purposes closed lists and PR, then I assign its electoral system a designation of “complementary”. If the electoral system only has one criterium met, then I designate it as “fairly complementary”. If no criteria are met in this category, I utilize the term “not complementary”. **Table 5** shows the variation in terms of gender quota quality in the region.

Table 5: Strength of Legislated Gender Quotas CEE Region

Country	Percentage of Women in Parliament	Type of Quota	Percentage/Rank Order	Quota Strength	Electoral System
North Macedonia	39.17%	Legislated	40%	Strong	Complementary
Serbia	37.65%	Legislated	one in three, 33%	Strong	Complementary
Kosovo	32.50%	Legislated	30%	Strong	Fairly Complementary
Albania	29.51%	Legislated	30%	Mixed	Complementary
Poland	28.70%	Legislated	35%	Mixed	Fairly Complementary
Montenegro	28.40%	Legislated	one in four, 25%	Strong	Complementary
Slovenia	27.87%	Legislated	35%, at least one in three	Mixed	Fairly Complementary
Moldova	25.74%	Legislated	40%	Weak	Not Complementary
Bosnia & Herzegovina	21.43%	Legislated	40%	Strong	Fairly Complementary
Croatia	20.53%	Legislated	40%	Mixed	Fairly Complementary
Ukraine	20.52%	Legislated	40%	Weak	Fairly Complementary
Average:	28.37%				

Source: IPU and Quota Project

In the region of CEE, most countries, 9 of 11 with legislated quotas, have at least a “mixed” quota strength. 5 out of 11 countries with legislated quotas in the region meet all criteria for high quality quotas. 5 of these countries are from the ex-Yu region. 3 of them (Serbia, Kosovo and North Macedonia) are additionally regional leaders in terms of numerical women’s political representation in national parliaments. This adds potential evidence to the idea that strong and well-designed gender quotas produce more women in parliaments. Additionally, 4 of 11 countries in the region with legislated quotas have a quota quality designation of “**mixed**”. Poland, Albania, Slovenia and Croatia meet at least 1 of 2 criteria.

Kosovo, Poland, Slovenia and Bosnia and Herzegovina do not have closed lists but rather open ones, so their electoral system is “fairly complementary”. Croatia has partially closed lists and the new EU member state only fines political parties for non-compliance; it does not reject the electoral list. There are only two countries in this small dataset that have a “weak” quota regime/design. Namely, Moldova and Ukraine meet very few criteria listed. The Moldovan quota does not sanction non-compliant parties. Also, the legislated quota does not have a rank-order stipulation. The same situation applies to Ukraine. Ukraine’s quota will not be mandatory until the 2023 elections. At this point, very few parties follow it strictly (Interview 2019).

Additionally, Moldova recently reformed its electoral system and thereby converted half of its districts into majoritarian ones, thus changing its system from exclusively PR to half majoritarian (Interview 2019). This complicates the situation for women and the legislated quota aimed at promoting their political participation.

One can potentially infer from this analysis that, in terms of legislated gender quota quality in the region, that generally when a legislated quota is present, it is fairly well designed. There are certainly flaws in some designs and electoral systems, namely the choice of fining a party for non-compliance rather than rejection of said list and option of utilizing open lists instead of closed ones.

This analysis suggests that there is some will on behalf of political elites, who have often been nudged by women's groups, to design strong gender quotas. In the case of Poland, Polish women activists who worked on the adoption of the legislated gender quota, lament over the presence of open lists because they deem them a hindrance to attaining a 35% representation of women in the Sejm. But they also acknowledge how difficult it would be to change this part of Polish law (Interview 2018).

Additionally, not all legislated quotas in the region begin in an ideal form. In the case of Serbia, the closing of the electoral lists came as a result of a 2011 reform. Serbia reformed its legislated quota to state that "one of three" places on an electoral list should include a person of the "under-represented" gender. Previously, it was "one of four". Additionally, before 2011, Serbian political parties reserved the right to send whomever they wanted to parliament (after an election), regardless of the order of the electoral list the parties initially submitted. In the words of Serbian Professor of Political Science, Dr. Slaviša Orlović, electoral lists were "closed for voters but open for political parties" (Orlović 2014).

As a result of recommendations from the Council of Europe and an acceptance of Serbia to implement these recommendations, the electoral system was reformed and improved in 2011 to close the electoral lists for voters, fixing the order of the lists, and

close the lists for parties, requiring them to respect the order of the lists, and in essence the will of the voters, when giving out mandates to parliament (see Chapter 4 for more details). The quality of gender quotas has steadily increased in certain contexts but not without concerted, deliberate efforts.

Montenegro also reformed its gender quota in 2013 to include a rank-order stipulation. This resulted in more women entering parliament. The percentage went from 17.3% before the 2016 election to the current 28.4%. Given the inertia that exists in Montenegrin politics and the general resistance to new actors entering politics, this is a significant step towards progress. The success was a result of a campaign led by activists, the UNDP and women politicians (Brnović 2016).

Previous Attempts of Legislated Gender Quota Adoption in CEE:

Legislated gender quotas are a positive and effective mechanism in the CEE region used to promote the number of women in politics. Exploring resistance to this mechanism remains an important part of this work. It is crucial to explore the previous attempts of both non-adopters and adopters of legislated gender quotas in the CEE region so that reasons for non-adoption and adoption can begin to be explored. As Table 6 below notes, there have been several attempts by most non-adopters in the CEE region to pass gender quotas.

Table 6: Non-Adopters: Attempts to Pass Legislated Gender Quotas in CEE

Country	Quota Adopted?	Type of Quota Currently	Legislative Quota Attempted?	By Whom?	Party in Power Then/Ideology
Latvia	No	None	Yes, Three Times, 1995, 1998 and 2003	Unclear	N/A
Bulgaria	No	None—Internal Party Only	Unclear	N/A	N/A
Estonia	No	None	Yes-2004, 2017 most recently	By Social Democratic Party member of Parliament Marianne Mikko	Center-Left Coalition
Czech Republic	Yes-- Party	Party- Social Democrats	Yes, twice, in 2015 most recently	Social Democrats-- failed to convince Coalition Partners	Social Democratic Coalition
Lithuania	Yes--Party	Party- Social Democrats	Yes 4 times-- deemed unconstitutional, most notably 2004 and 2008	Social Democratic MP- Birute Vesaite (2004)	Social Democrats, Labour Party-- 2004
Romania	Yes--Party	Party- Social Democrats, Democratic Party	Yes- several times, 1999 most notably	Leftist Parties, Democratic Party	Democratic, Minority Parties
Slovakia	Yes--Party	Party--Party of the Democratic Left (Social Democrats)	Yes, notably during the early 2000s	Individual MPs, Eva Rusnakova, Christian Democratic Party 2001, Ivan Simko (2002) CDP also	People's Party, Conservative
Hungary	Yes--Party	Party-Socialist and "Politics Can be Different"	Yes, 2007, 2010 and 2011 most recently	Individual MPs, Liberal Party (center and center-right)	Various, 2011- Fidesz-Christian Democratic party

From early 1990s- 2020 (multiple sources)

Notably, Latvia and Bulgaria do not have any kind of quotas in their electoral systems, neither party quotas nor legislated quotas exist in these countries. The Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP) does have a 40% voluntary party quota but this party quota only applies to leadership bodies within the party itself, not electoral parliamentary lists (Rashkova and Zankina 2017; Dahlerup and Gaber 2017). For Latvia, especially, it was difficult to find any kind of data verifying legislated gender quota attempts, especially who initiated the previous three. Estonia is similar in this regard. Estonia's Gender Equality Act included a provision in 2004 that could have led to the adoption of gender quotas. One MP of the Social Democratic Party attempted to introduce quotas in 2017, albeit to no effect (Estonian News 2017).

Latvia and Estonia are both Baltic states. Many documents that were analyzed for this research include quotes from politicians from this sub-region who are opposed to gender quotas. Many of these politicians point to the imperative of avoiding the Soviet past in rejecting gender quotas. Others interpret gender quotas as diminishing "liberal" values and compromising merit. This kind of anti-quota narrative appears in many settings but seems to be quite durable in the Baltic states, which were under direct Soviet rule for several decades and faced formidable resistance to their early 1990s independence campaigns (Eglitis 2015).

The picture of resistance changes somewhat when the countries with voluntary party quotas are analyzed. Interestingly, the 5 countries with political party quotas, although they have a lower percentage of women in politics, have had more attempts to pass legislated gender quotas. Many of these recorded attempts have been initiated by

Social-Democratic (SD) parties, supporting the established idea that the ideological orientation of political parties matters for women's political representation (Caul 1999). For example, in 2015 in the Czech Republic, there was an attempt to pass a legislated quota by the Social Democrats, which have a party quota incidentally. This attempt failed because the Czech SD party could not convince its various coalition partners to come on board and pass the legislation (Gelnarová and Fousková 2016).

Similarly, in Romania, center-left and left parties have attempted to pass legislated gender quotas. These attempts have always failed to pass. Relatedly, sometimes the push for gender quotas has been spearheaded by individual members of parliament (MPs) who have not been able to secure enough support to pass the quota legislation. This was the case in Lithuania, Slovakia and Hungary. In Lithuania, a prominent and vocal member of the Social Democratic Party, MP Birutė Vėsaitė, attempted to introduce gender quota legislation in 2004, notably. Her efforts were futile as the legislation was deemed unconstitutional by the Lithuanian courts (Mejere 2012).

In Slovakia, other norm entrepreneurs, namely Eva Rusnáková of the Christian Democratic Party (CDP) and Ivan Šimko also of the Slovak CDP, introduced gender quota legislation in the early 2000s within the Slovak Parliament that ultimately did not pass (Bitušíková 2005). Similarly, in Hungary individual MPs have attempted to introduce gender quota legislation in 2007, 2010 and 2011 (Várnagy 2013). These initiatives were never successful because the MPs who introduced them did not garner enough support for the proposals. Also, there was insufficient civil society backing for these proposals.

Thus, the resistance in CEE towards legislated gender quotas is pronounced in many different contexts. It seems as though reaching the elite level (meaning the national parliament level) with a proposed gender quota is insufficient, especially when there is no political support for it or apparent public pressure. This is where women's groups, or other NGOs, can get involved and push for reforms in these countries, especially those that are close passing important quota legislation. It is thus not solely a matter of elite level pressure ensuring gender quota adoption in CEE: there must be bottom-up pressure, in the form of women's rights advocates, involved for quotas to pass several present hurdles.

Attempts to Pass Legislated Gender Quotas Within Adopter States:

For the most part, the effort to pass legislated gender quotas within adopter states has been less arduous, albeit with some exceptions (namely in Poland, Ukraine, Moldova and Croatia). Clearly, the stark difference between the two groups of countries is that in Table 6 legislated gender quotas have not passed and have faced serious resistance along the way. In the eleven countries of Table 7 below, legislated gender quotas have been passed and have faced less resistance on the path to adoption generally.

Table 7: Legislated Quota Adopters and Attempts Before Adoption

Country	Type of Quota	Post Conflict?	Times Attempted Before Adoption	Year Adopted	Party in Power During Adoption	Political Orientation of Party in Power
Bosnia	Legislated	Yes	imposition from OSCE/women in OSCE	1998	Temporary Government	N/A
Kosovo	Legislated	Yes	imposition from UN	1999	UN recommendation	imposition/ UN led
Macedonia	Legislated	Yes	None	2002	VMRO-DPMNE	Center-Right
Serbia	Legislated	Yes	None	2004	Democratic Party of Serbia	Center-Right
Slovenia	Legislated	Yes	Several times in the 1990s	2006	Slovenian Democratic Party	Center-Right
Croatia	Legislated	Yes	several times 2000 notably	2008	Croatian Democratic Union HDZ	Center-Right
Albania	Legislated	No	Once	2009	Democratic Party	Center-Right
Montenegro	Legislated	Yes	Once	2011	DPS - Democratic Party of Socialists	Center-Left
Poland	Legislated	No	5 times	2011	Civic Platform	Center-Right
Ukraine	Legislated	Yes	10 times	2013	Party of Regions	Center
Moldova	Legislated	Yes	several times, 1997	2016	Alliance for European Integration	Center-Left
11						

multiple sources

Within this group, there are also clear post-conflict dimensions at work. For example, in the de facto country of Kosovo, there was an imposition of gender quotas by the UNMIK, the temporary UN mission to Kosovo in 2000, following the tragic civil war in that part of the former Yugoslavia (NDI 2016). This gender quota then was not a product of a bottom-up effort, led by a women's movement per se, but this adoption was encouraged by a UN mission. Thus, Kosovo's example is very different than that of Poland, where women's groups had to create opportunities for themselves and wait for the right political moment in 2011 to pass gender quotas. In terms of passing a gender quota, there was an opening in the form of the cessation of conflict, and subsequent restructuring of society in Kosovo.

These post-conflict dimensions were present elsewhere. Similarly, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, gender quota language was adopted by the Provision Election Commission in 1998 within that post-conflict country. This was, conversely, the result of a women's campaign led by Bosnian women during 1998 aimed to increase women's voter turnout and raise awareness concerning the importance of gender quotas (Borić 2004). However, passing the initial gender quota provision in Bosnia and Herzegovina was met with less resistance than maintaining the legislated quota. Bosnian women again fought to keep the gender quota in place when its elimination was proposed in 1999 (Borić 2004). Generally, the Bosnian quota is well-designed (see Table 5). However, the electoral lists in Bosnia and Herzegovina were opened in the early 2000s, thus inhibiting the ability of the quota to work completely as intended.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is then somewhat different than Kosovo in regard to the adoption of their gender quota. Bosnian women had to take advantage of windows of

opportunity created for them by the cessation of conflict to themselves push for gender quotas. It is well-documented that the Dayton Accords, the peace agreement of 1995 that ended the Bosnian War, had no women negotiators (Lithander 2000; Irvine 2013). It is also well known that almost no part of the Dayton Accords is related to women, even though the gendered narratives concerning women victims of the Bosnian War were well-documented (Irvine 2013). Bosnian women thus had to create space for themselves and demand rights in the post-conflict environment to reach their gender equality goals.

There were also post-conflict dimensions at work in other countries of the adopter group. Serbia and North Macedonia passed their quotas in the early 2000s. Most documentation related to the adoption of gender quotas in both countries speak back to the mobilization efforts of women's groups in each country that were complemented by post-conflict openings or opportunities.

Additionally, there is no evidence of multiple attempts in either country. It can be inferred that within each country the legislated gender quota legislation passed the first time it was introduced. This stands in stark contrast to the various attempts of the non-adopters. Montenegro and Albania are somewhat different than Serbia and North Macedonia in this respect. Legislated quotas were adopted the second time legislation was introduced, thus implying some resistance, but overall less resistance within these contexts than in those within Table 6.

Even within the countries where there was some resistance, in the form of more than two attempts, such as in Poland, Croatia and Slovenia, legislated gender quotas were ultimately passed. Out of these three countries, Polish women's advocates had the most difficult time getting the legislated gender quota passed. The legislation was attempted

four times before it finally passed, mostly due to a remarkable campaign led by the Polish Congress of Women in 2011, and the presence of a center-left party, the Civic Platform, in power at the time. Gender quota resistance in Poland was at least initially rooted in resistance to the memory of gender quotas from the Soviet era. Also, interpretations of quotas as diminishing merit also were at work (Interview 2018).

In Slovenia during the 1990s, there were two attempts to pass legislated gender quotas. The reasons for the failure of adoption mirror the reasons mentioned in Poland and the Baltic states, but also involve different dimensions. According to Antic Gaber and Selišnik (2017), Slovenian elites thought that state building was their first priority in the post-conflict environment of the 1990s. Slovene elites did not take gender equality, especially in the form of gender quotas, very seriously because they had more “important” matters to attend to, given that Slovenia at the time was a newly independent state (since 1991). Also, Antić Gaber and Selišnik mention that there was also a belief at the time that gender quotas were a relic of the past and that quotas compromised merit. Slovenia finally adopted a legislated gender quota in 2006 for the national and local level.

What preceded this was the adoption of a legislated gender quota for elections to the European Parliament (EP). As Antic Gaber and Selisnik note, EU pressure was exerted from the top-down on Slovenia because it had previously sent an all-male contingent to the European Parliament. Recognizing it had to diversify this group, Slovenian elites became more open to the pressure of women’s groups and experts, who were by that point, working for a decade to ensure women’s equal representation in politics.

The situation in neighboring Croatia was somewhat different. Croatia experienced a breakthrough in elections in terms of women in 2000 when the percentage of women climbed to 21% from the previous 7% (Siročić 2014). The Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) relinquished power in 2000 to the Croatian Social Democratic (SD) Party after ruling the new country for most of the 1990s. The Croatian SD party was much more amenable to promoting women's rights and working with women's advocacy groups. The SD Party also had a voluntary party quota, which ultimately helped more women enter the Croatian Parliament (called the Sabor). It took eight more years (2008) to pass a Gender Equality Law in Croatia that provided for a legislated gender quota. This was mostly again facilitated by women's group mobilization and the alliance with elite actors (Šinko 2019).

Despite its adoption, there are several problems with the Croatian legislated gender quota, which might reflect consistent resistance to women in politics in the country. First, the initial language of the legislated gender quota framed the quota as a recommendation that should facilitate the "gradual increase in the percentage of the underrepresented sex", which "shall be achieved not later than in the course of the implementation of the third regular elections to follow" (Siročić 2014).

The language within the 2008 Act on Gender Equality is vague and unclear. The law encourages parties to include women on lists but provides no mechanisms other than fines, which are sometimes not enforced, to ensure that they do so. There is also no presence of a rank-order stipulation. The law is additionally unclear in terms of the time frame and has been subjected to various interpretations of when it should actually go into

effect. It is no surprise then that Croatia's percentage of women in Parliament has been steadily going down, reaching a below than world average of 20.5% currently.

Additionally, the Croatian Constitutional Court deemed any kind of sanctioning or rank/order stipulation unconstitutional in 2015 (Nacevska and Lokar 2017). This was done after women's rights advocates and party leaders amended the electoral law to ensure punitive sanctions in the form of electoral list rejection. Thus, Croatia presents an interesting case of actual quota resistance in a sub-region where quotas have been mostly embraced.

Moldova is somewhat similar to Croatia in this respect. The 40% legislated quota that was passed in 2016 has no rank order stipulation and no sanctions for non-compliance (Quota Project 2018, OSCE Elections Report 2019). Additionally, Moldova reformed its electoral system from strictly PR to a mixed system. Currently 51 out of 101 MPs are elected through a single-member district system, the other 50 are elected via a PR system (OSCE 2018). MPs in Moldova have attempted to pass legislated gender quotas several times before they were successful in 2016 (Quota Project Moldova 2018). Resistance to legislated gender quotas is similar in essence to resistance in other settings, although through partnerships with agencies such as UN Women and women's NGOs, this resistance was overcome in 2016 (UN Women 2016; Interview 2019). When Moldovans went to the polls in February of 2019, despite a faulty quota and a mixed electoral system, more women were elected to Parliament, from 22.8% to a current 25.74%.

Thus, the adopter group reflects a less arduous road to legislated gender quota adoption in CEE. Resistance was present in many contexts, such as Poland and Moldova,

but it seems that this group has come a further way in terms of women's representation. Not only does this group have a higher percentage of women in parliament but it also has legislated quotas that were not as frequently attempted as those of non-adopters.

A geographical inference can be made once again. The states of the former Yugoslavia (7), experienced the least resistance to gender quota adoption. Particularly, states with a history of direct conflict, such as Kosovo, had quotas virtually imposed on them without much resistance. Additionally, the post-conflict countries of Serbia and North Macedonia experienced less resistance in this respect. Their first attempt at gender quota adoption passed. Slovenia resisted legislated gender quotas during the 1990s but not as forcefully as other CEE states. EU pressure became crucial within Slovenia as it first became open to legislated quotas as a result of European Parliament elections. Croatia seems to be the exception as its quota is not particularly well-designed.

Women's advocates in the former Yugoslav countries were able to utilize various post-conflict/democratic transition openings that were simply not available to women in other CEE countries. Women in other CEE countries, such as Poland, had to create openings for themselves through tireless and persistent social movements that provided counter-resistance to traditional ideologies. However, these movements are not uniform nor are they present at all across the region. As was described in Hungary, Lithuania and Slovakia, individual MPs who propose bills lack the support from civil society and elite-level politics to effect any kind of real change. These dynamics will be explored in the next section and further in the relevant case studies.

Strength and Activity of Women's Movements

Women's movements have been contrasted with feminist movements, where women's movements are defined as composed of women who "act collectively to present public claims based on their gendered identities as women" (Mazur, McBride and Hoard 2015). This kind of movement is different than a "feminist" movement, which generally centers its claims around correcting or abolishing aspects of patriarchy and women's inferior position in relation to men across different societies (Beckwith 2000).

Features of social movements are important to capture, especially in order to assess effects on policy, for example. Furthermore, the strength of women's movements, in particular, is a hard measure to capture because it depends on many factors, varies by context and can be a matter of judgement. The project developed by the Research Network on Gender Politics and the State (RNGS) on women's movements in 13 Western democracies from the 1970s to 2000s is one large effort being done in an attempt to assess the "strength" of women's movements. This research has been utilized by Amy Mazur, Dorothy McBride and Season Hoard (2015) to assess movement strength in more countries.

In their assessment of strength, these three scholars have privileged the concepts of mobilization or the ability of women's movement actors to accumulate "assets through participation of women as activists outside the state to further movement discourse and policy goals in a variety of formal and informal structures" (Mazur, McBride and Hoard 2015). They also measure institutionalization to assess women's movement strength. Institutionalization is defined as "the presence of women's movement actors in government and quasi-government institutions" (658). This operationalization of

women's movement strength has been challenged by others. Clearly, movement strength is a subjective concept and some observations of strength are interpretations at best and can vary by national context (Basu 2016; Tripp 2016). What Western social movement scholarship privileges as strength may not be translate-able to other more politically closed or authoritarian environments.

Furthermore, *autonomous* women's movements, or women's movements that are independent of the state, have been linked to effective policy domestic violence policy change in 70 countries, as opposed to leftist parties or national wealth (Htun and Weldon 2012). However, the nature of autonomous movements may also vary by context and the term autonomous is also contentious and can be potentially disputed.

Measuring Women's Movement Strength in CEE

For the purposes of this research, I am making the assertion that there is generally evidence of women's mobilization *and* institutionalization in CEE and therefore there are active women's networks in most CEE countries. Some countries such as Poland, for example, have an active feminist movement that has successfully campaigned against anti-abortion laws through mass mobilization, for example (Majewska 2018). In Poland, the influential group called the Congress of Women, was formed in 2009 as a result of being excluded from Solidarity commemorations (Snitow 2009). Congress of Women also had many allies within the Polish Civic Platform, the political party in power in 2011, thus embodying levels of institutionalization. Women in the post-Yugoslav space mobilized in the 1990s as a result of the war there in a grassroots fashion. This anti-war spirit continues there in the form of organizations such as Serbia's Women in Black.

Women's groups in Serbia and the ex-Yugoslav region also effectively work with and lobby government to effect policy changes (Interviews 2017). However, generally speaking despite these case examples, the strength of women's movements has not been measured exhaustively and certainly not in the CEE region. Other than the studies mentioned, very few comparative studies exist.

In this respect, my overall argument is that organized women's movements in certain CEE countries take advantage of opportune political moments to push for women's rights, particularly the adoption of gender quotas. In all of the countries I am surveying some kind of women's movement exists, but the strength, priorities and the organizational capacity of these movements vary. For the most part, the women's groups from the ex-Yugoslavia region have the longest history of organizing (Benderly 1997). They have also been aided by a post-conflict environment where elites were particularly open to adopting international norms because of *inter alia* their desire to join the EU. One of their key priorities was also increasing women's political participation, which aligned with democratization priorities in those countries.

The women's movement status varies outside of the former Yugoslavia. For example, Bulgarian women did organize from 2000-2015 to influence domestic violence policy (Krizsán and Roggeband 2017). However, they have not been successful in passing legislated or party quotas. Women's groups and the women's movement itself in a country may have different priorities such as domestic violence and may not prioritize women's participation in politics.

I thus primarily rely on secondary sources to complete this part of my research. I take the position that if women's movements are not mentioned or are explicitly

mentioned as ineffective in the process of quota adoption, they have limited abilities to effect change in the realm of women's political participation. I define "strength" as the ability of women's movements to influence policy making, whether it be through mobilization or institutionalization or a combination, particularly in terms of the passing of gender quotas.

What follows is a survey of the nature of the women's movement involvement in each adopter CEE case. I focus particularly on movement strength in terms of promoting women's political participation, based on a triangulation process that includes primary document analysis, secondary source research and expert opinion. I ask three questions of each domestic context: 1) Did women's groups, defined as NGOs, grassroots networks in addition to women activists in and outside of formal politics, influence gender quota adoption? 2) Was there a concerted gender quota campaign (defined as concerted lobbying of the public or political elites or both)? 3) What political opportunities were available to aid the gender quota campaign? Table 8 is a summary of these results.

Table 8: Women's Movement Involvement in Gender Quota Adoption in CEE

Country	Nature of Quota Adoption	% of Women in Parliament	Women's Movement Involvement?	Gender Quota Lobbying Campaign?	Political Opportunities
North Macedonia	Legislated and Strong	39.17%	Yes	Yes	Democratization/Post-Conflict
Serbia	Legislated and Strong	37.65%	Yes	Yes	Democratization/Post-Conflict
Kosovo	Legislated and Mixed	32.50%	No	No	UN imposition
Albania	Legislated and Mixed	29.51%	Yes	Yes	NGOs and International NGOs/EU accession dimensions
Poland	Legislated and Mixed	28.70%	Yes	Yes	Strong Women's Grassroots Movement/Elite Ally
Montenegro	Legislated and Strong	28.40%	Yes	Yes	Mostly Elite led/UN Women facilitated
Slovenia	Legislated and Mixed	27.78%	Yes	Yes	EU pressure/democratization
Moldova	Legislated and Mixed	25.74%	Yes	Yes	UN Women facilitated/Domestic women's NGOS
Bosnia & Herzegovina	Legislated and Mixed	21.43%	Yes	Yes	Women's NGOS/post-conflict considerations
Ukraine	Legislated and Weak	20.52%	Yes	Yes	Women's NGOs/women politicians/post-conflict dynamics
Croatia	Legislated and Mixed	20.50%	Yes	Yes	Women's NGOs/ women politicians/post-conflict considerations
	AVG:	28.35%			

Sources: Various

Discussion

As one can see from Table 8, women's groups and women actors, including NGOs and women MPS, have been generally involved in gender quota adoption across CEE cases. In most of the adopter countries, women's group have waged campaigns to advocate for gender quotas. Some of these advocacy measures have been from the bottom-up, such as in Poland, and others have been driven by more elite actors, such as women's politicians or academics, such as in Slovenia and Montenegro. There is one example of an imposition of quotas and that is the partly recognized state of Kosovo, where upon the cessation of conflict there in 1999, the UN mission, UNMIK, strongly suggested that the Kosovo Parliament include more women and to accomplish this adopt a quota. But despite this one example, it is clear that women's groups and advocates have pushed for gender quotas.

Additionally, the kinds of political opportunities available to women's groups and other quota advocates vary by domestic context. However, some patterns do emerge. In general, the adopter countries have been aided by post-conflict openings, EU accession pressure dynamics and democratization reforms.

The Overall Story

In terms of gender quota adoption itself, generally, it is known that women's movements are instrumental in pushing for gender quotas (Krook 2007). Many of the countries that have passed legislated quotas in the CEE region do credit, in official documents, women's groups for initiating and persistently pushing for legislation to be passed. It is the case that an organized women's movement is a necessary condition for gender quotas to be passed but it is certainly not sufficient. Often, there have to be

openings in society, windows of opportunity, for women to assert their agenda. It seems that this window of opportunity was particularly present in the former Yugoslavia in the wake of conflict there. Women took opportunities for greater democratic participation and asserted the need to include women in post-conflict governments. This is particularly the case for Bosnia, Serbia, North Macedonia and to an extent Croatia.

The Polish case also reveals another window of opportunity available to Polish civil society groups. As Korolczuk and Saxonberg (2015) note, in Poland there is an embedded (in form of a domestic law) political opportunity structure in place that can be used advantageously. If a civil society group secures 100,000 signatures from the public, it can force parliament to debate the proposed law the group seeks to pass. This is precisely what happened when the Congress of Women, a dynamic, newly formed women's group in Poland, initiated the gender quota law in Poland in 2010. It secured over 150,000 signatures from the public and thereby ensured a Parliamentary debate and eventual passing of the law (Gwiazda 2015).

Thus, political opportunity structures have to be present in some form for women's groups to take advantage of them to effect change. What will follow in subsequent chapters is an analysis of four important cases: Serbia, Poland, Czech Republic and Latvia. I trace the quota adoption or non-adoption processes in each setting and derive causal inferences on what factors were most relevant in adoption and non-adoption outcomes.

Chapter 4: Starts, Stops and Eventual Breakthroughs: The Process of Gender Quota Adoption in Serbia

Introduction

Serbia's path to increased participation of women in politics has been arduous but nevertheless effective, at least in terms of descriptive representation. As of winter 2020, women's descriptive representation in the Serbian National Parliament stands at 37.65%, placing it 30th on the IPU Women in Parliament global list. It is in second place on the CEE country list being examined in this research. The Republic of North Macedonia (formerly FYROM) leads the region with 39.17% women in Parliament.

Serbian initiatives, mostly led by women activists and allied politicians, to adopt gender quotas started as early as February 2000 when women organized under the auspices of the Stability Pact (SP) Gender Task Force (GTF) (a global initiative aimed at stabilizing the once warring countries of the former Yugoslavia) to host the first "Palić" Conference in Vojvodina, a region in Serbia with a long history of women's activism.

The Palić conference brought together women activists, politicians, businesswomen, academics and other experts to discuss the future of women in the post-Slobodan Milošević era, a leader who would be in power until October 2000. It should also be noted that there were initiatives spearheaded prior to 2000. Glaz Razlike, an NGO founded in Serbia in 1994, for example, encouraged women to be politically active during the 1990s and beyond (Irvine 2013). However, the emphasis on passing gender quotas was most explicitly defined by the women of the Palić conference.

Thus, one of the main goals articulated at this conference was the promotion of women in decision-making realms, particularly politics. Women at this conference,

including current Deputy Speaker of Parliament Gordana Čomić, Balkan gender quota expert Sonja Lokar, and Serbian legal scholar Marijana Pajvančić, among others, came together to take the first concrete steps towards ensuring political gender equality in Serbia. These activists immediately recognized that gender quota adoption would be the most direct way to ensure an increase in women's political representation, which had fallen to single digits during the 1990s, notably 5.6% in 1996 (as Yugoslavia, together with Montenegro).

The national legislated gender quota the Palić women clamored for was eventually passed in 2004. Before this national reform, a local quota was adopted in 2002. The national legislated quota was subsequently reformed in 2011 to include a more ambitious rank-order stipulation, resulting in Serbia's notably higher current percentage of women in parliament. As a result of these reforms, Serbia has been able to more than triple the percentage of women in Parliament, from 7.2% in 2000 to 37.65% in 2020 (IPU Archive 2000). The question remains how?

In this chapter, I will examine the reasons why Serbia adopted a strong legislated quota, one that has promoted women in national politics. I am focusing on the case of Serbia because it is one of the leaders in the CEE region and has dealt with and continues to deal with many post-conflict dimensions, such as the need for electoral reform and the recognition of women as powerful post-conflict actors. Post-conflict settings open up space for activists to push for electoral reforms and ensure more equitable environments. What were some of the opportunities present for women activists at the time? Certainly, the fall of Milošević and the transition to democracy helped women, who networked with

new political parties to assert their agenda, not always successfully but definitely persistently.

To support this claim, I trace the gender quota adoption process in this case study within Serbia from 2000-2011. I utilize several guiding questions to provide organization for the forthcoming analysis. I also focus on key actors and relevant factors that enabled Serbia to adopt a legislated gender quota. To provide support for the hypotheses of this study, I highlight women's networks and activism in the country as being crucial to adoption. I also assert that even though Serbia's women's movement is crucial in this discussion, it was aided by two other factors: namely political opportunities as they arose from the cessation of conflict in Southern Serbia and later political opportunities as they arose from the desire to democratize and eventually become an EU member. I thus examine the diffusion of international norms in relation to Serbia and assess its willingness to adopt these norms in particular in light of distant yet desired EU membership.

To this end, I will examine three stages of the Serbian quota adoption process, namely the local quota adoption phase of 2002, the national quota adoption phase of 2004, and the national quota reform of 2011. I rely on fieldwork completed in Serbia in 2011, 2012 and 2017. I rely on 20 elite interviews with academics, politicians, and NGO leaders. I examine and utilize primary documents, such as parliamentary records of quota adoption debates in the Serbian Parliament from 2002, 2004 and 2011, in addition to relevant secondary literature.

History of Women in Politics in Yugoslavia

During Communism

Women were a part of the communist legislature, the Yugoslav Federal Assembly, although women in this legislature, as in other communist states, exerted limited influence. Vuković (2009) argues that, as in other communist countries, the emphasis of the Yugoslav state was mostly economic empowerment rather than political, especially for women. Patriarchal attitudes thus persisted in socialist Yugoslavia and were never really reformed or addressed in the socialist system. Women, despite their relatively high level of educational and professional attainment, still were privately confined to more traditional roles, although the same can be fairly said of Western contexts during this time. The difference according to scholar Sabrina Ramet is that the state per se in Yugoslavia promised emancipation for women; whereas in the West this initiative was mostly promoted by feminist organizations that operated outside of the state in civil society (Ramet 1998). Independent civil society was mostly constrained in socialist countries.

Relatedly, women's presence in the Yugoslav Federal Assembly stood below the averages in other communist countries. For example, in 1976 women made up 17% of deputies in the Federal Assembly (Wolchik 1981, pg. 460). In 1986, women made up 15% of deputies (Ramet 1998, pg. 102). Yugoslavia lagged behind other socialist states such as Czech Republic and even the Soviet Union itself, which had 28.6% and 31% women respectively in their national legislatures in 1976 (Wolchik 1981, pg. 460).

Additionally, Yugoslavia did not have a formal legal quota for women in the Federal Assembly. Lokar (2005) asserts in her work that communist party women in the

1970s tried to persuade Yugoslavia's leader Josip Broz "Tito" to include gender quotas in political realms. However, she maintains that these quotas were never legally implemented but became soft targets that were generally more faithfully adhered to at the beginning of their introduction (1970s) than at the end of Yugoslavia's existence (the end of 1980s). Given the lower percentage of women in the Yugoslav Federal Assembly, it is likely that these soft quotas were not faithfully implemented, thus resulting in a lower-than-expected percentage of women in the Yugoslav Assembly.

The Break-up of Yugoslavia and the Milošević Era

Yugoslavia was ruled by the same leader for much of its existence. Communist partisan fighter turned political leader, Josip Broz "Tito", ruled the country from 1945-1980, the year of his death. His leadership was marked by a break from the Soviet Union in 1948, a subsequent pursuit of non-aligned politics, worker self-management of various Yugoslav enterprises and generally a more flexible, less repressive socialist system, compared to other countries in CEE. For the better part of the second half of the twentieth century (1950-1990), Yugoslavs lived relatively well. Yugoslavs were free to travel, earned good salaries and generally enjoyed a more open environment.

Instrumentalist ethnic nationalism, economic instability as aggravated by international loans that no longer were available, resulting republic in-fighting but also a wary and divided international response would become driving forces in the break-up of the once harmonious multi-ethnic state (Kaufman 2001; Woodward 1995). Unlike Czechoslovakia's "velvet divorce", Yugoslavia's break-up was anything but peaceful. With the secession of Slovenia and Croatia in 1991, a brutal civil war began. The war in

Croatia spread to an even more disturbing conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Yugoslavia, as it was during much of the post-WWII era, namely a six-republic entity, ceased to exist in the early 1990s. Ultimately, hundreds of thousands of Yugoslavs were displaced by the conflict and thousands lost their lives in a civil war that pitted neighbor against neighbor (Bieber 2014). The disturbing ramifications of this war linger to this day.

By the early 1990s, Slobodan Milošević became the leader of what remained of Yugoslavia, a precarious union between Serbia and Montenegro, which itself would only officially last until the secession of Montenegro from this fragile union in 2006. Milošević's strong-arm policies towards seceding republics and then the break-away region of Kosovo would mark the 1990s era in Yugoslavia and turn this country into an international pariah. Yugoslavia was under crippling UN, EU and American economic sanctions for much of the 1990s (UN Security Council Resolution 757 1992). Yugoslavia ceased to be a member of the United Nations from 1992-2000 (UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/47/1 1992). Yugoslavia was also the target a NATO 78-day bombing campaign in 1999 that was partly responsible for weakening the stronghold of Yugoslav leader Slobodan Milošević (Marshall 2019).

This harsh reality provided the impetus for democracy activists and anti-war activists to protest Milošević's policies during the 1990s, which they deemed to be the cause of hardships in the country and beyond. Many of these protesters were women, such as the group Women in Black Serbia, founded in Belgrade in 1991 (Women in Black 1991). The youth group called OTPOR (*Resistance* in English) also began to organize in the mid-1990s to demand the ousting of Milošević. Ultimately, these

opposition forces, which were heavily funded by Western donors, were successful (Carothers 2001; Judah 2010).

These pro-democracy groups defeated Milošević in the 2000 Presidential election, encouraging citizens to vote against him in the process. After some contestation, Milošević eventually conceded defeat and was subsequently sent to the ICTY or the Hague in April of 2001 to await trial for his role in the Yugoslav civil war. He died of a heart attack in prison in March 2006, avoiding a complete trial. No verdict was rendered (The Guardian 2006).

In 2000, the Serbian democratic opposition called DOS (Demokratska Opozicija Srbije, Democratic Opposition of Serbia) in Serbia took over the Presidency and the Parliament. However, this did not lead to an immediate, substantial increase of women in the national parliament, despite a pre-election pledge by 14 of 18 political parties that made up DOS to include 30% women on their electoral lists. In actuality, the DOS lists only included 14% women in the crucial 2000 elections (Irvine 2013, pg. 251). As a result, the 2000 post-Milošević Parliament was composed of only 7.2% women MPs. Evidently, more time was needed to push for women's political representation. In 2000 the focus was on removing then Yugoslav leader Slobodan Milošević from power. Political gender equality, despite various attempts to seize the opportunity of political change, was deemed less important (Irvine 2013).

However, women were involved even at that precarious time. Women's groups, such as Glas Razlike and the Women's Network, encouraged other women to vote in the 2000 elections that ousted Milošević. Irvine (2013) notes that the increase in women

voting for DOS influenced the elections positively for DOS. Despite this, women had to wait until actual legal quotas were adopted to enter politics in greater numbers.

Women's Presence in National Parliament in the 1990s in Yugoslavia

By all accounts the presence of women in what remained of Yugoslavia's Federal Assembly in the early 1990s dropped precipitously. Women's presence in the Federal Assembly plummeted to 1% in 1991 from 15% in 1986 (Vuković 2009, pg. 5). This reflected, in some ways, the general societal instability and the domination of ethno-nationalist politics of the time. Also, during the 1990s in what remained of Yugoslavia was marked by international isolation and sanctions, along with, as mentioned, prolonged territorial wars and massive loss of human life.

Women during this time were not present in significant numbers in the Federal Assembly, but many women began to organize in a grassroots fashion in the early 1990s against the war. Pacifist groups such as Belgrade Women Lobby, the Centre for Anti-War Action and Women in Black were formed in the early 1990s in an effort to oppose the grave conflict engulfing Yugoslavia (Bilić 2012). This history of feminist organizing was partly a reflection of the more open space available to civil society in Yugoslavia itself, in relation to other CEE countries.

Non-party affiliated, urban and educated women in Yugoslavia began to discuss and act on feminist ideas as early as the 1970s (Cockburn 2007; Žarkov 2003). They were disgruntled by certain restrictions the Yugoslav state placed on women, such as those on abortion. This initial organizing resulted in the convening of a 1978 conference in Belgrade called *Comrade Women, The Woman Question: A New Approach*. This was one

of the first conferences in Yugoslavia to openly tackle feminist issues. Some women thus had an already formed feminist consciousness that aided them in organizing anti-war groups and protesting the 1990s civil war. During the war, women also provided humanitarian aid to victims across the former Yugoslavia (Korac 2006; Miškovska-Kajevska 2017). Although split at the time across nationalist and anti-nationalist camps, they formed feminist networks that endure today (The Women's Court 2019).

These anti-war feminist groups were also linked to pro-democracy groups that were actively vying for the ousting of Slobodan Milošević, Yugoslavia's leader at the time. The ousting of Milošević in 2000 and the preparations for democratization that were underway opened up significant space for activist women to promote their stated goals, although certain impediments remained initially, as noted. The first step in the gender quota adoption process was the adoption of a local-level gender quota in 2002. As will be discussed, significant post-conflict considerations were crucial in this adoption.

A “Sandwich” Strategy: Stability Pact for Southeastern Europe and the Stability Pact Gender Task Force

There were many crucial actors aiding the Serbian path to gender quotas. Many of these actors are related to the conflict that consumed the region in the 1990s. During the Kosovo crisis in the former Yugoslavia, in June of 1999, the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe came into being. This “loose network of donor and beneficiary states and international organizations” had as its goal the stabilization of the region (Antić and Lokar 2006). Additionally, through this body, the Stability Pact Gender Task Force (SP-GTF) was also initiated at the behest of women's groups in the region. Its goal was to

train and organize women and women's allies to promote gender equality in the Balkan region. The GTF trained thousands of women in political organizing and gender equality. The GTF also encouraged activists to use a "sandwich strategy" to promote gender equality mechanisms, such as gender quotas. As Antić and Lokar (2006) note:

A sandwich strategy consists of the planned combination of the top-down pressure coming from international agents (such as UN, OSCE/ODHIR, SP, Council of Europe, European Commission and Parliament) and their support in the form of funding and know-how. Pressure from below is created by the SP GTF, which helps build up regionally connected and extensive coalitional movements of cross-cutting gender equality issues. (148)

Thus, as this work has noted, there was both mobilization and organization on the ground, from the bottom-up, and significant pressures and political opportunity structures opened from the top-down by norm-diffusing organizations, such as the United Nations and the OSCE. The GTF also utilized the activists who were already there in the region and trained them in meaningful ways. This GTF was significant particularly in North Macedonia where the GTF Women's Lobby used their skills and networks to push for an effective legislated national quota in 2002. This quota has enabled the country to lead the region in terms of women in politics in 2020.

Three Stages of Gender Quota Adoption: Local, National Quota Adoption and the Subsequent Reform of 2011

Serbia's Local Gender Quota Adoption (2002)

It is important in the course of this discussion to recognize that Serbia's path to quotas started at the local level. It is also worth mentioning that before the local gender quota was passed, there was one party in Serbia with a voluntary party quota, namely the

Social Democratic Party of Serbia (Antić and Lokar 2006). Key members of social democratic parties within Serbia would be instrumental in pushing for the adoption of a local quota in 2002 within Serbia's Parliament.

The impetus for local quota adoption, which later translated to the national level, began in a post-conflict environment in which elites and women activists looked to usher in more democratic and inclusive reforms. At the time, Serbia was ruled by the Democratic Opposition of Serbia (DOS) a coalition of center-left parties that managed to oust long-time Yugoslav leader Slobodan Milošević in the fall of 2000. Serbia's Prime Minister was the reformer Zoran Djindjić and its President was Vojislav Koštunica.

However, this coalition would not last long; it broke apart in July 2001 when Koštunica's Party, the Democratic Party of Serbia (DSS), left the coalition government. The coalition also had further trouble in the next few election cycles when voter turnout for the Presidential election failed to meet the legal minimum required (50%). Prime Minister Zoran Djindjić, who some saw as the future of Serbia, furthermore, was assassinated in March of 2003 (Judah 2009).

Thus, Serbia's initial local quota was adopted during a tumultuous time, specifically, only a few years after the conclusion of the Kosovo conflict of 1998-1999 and the 1999 NATO 78-day bombing of Yugoslavia. As could be expected, post-conflict considerations were paramount in this initial quota discussion. The impetus for the local quota interestingly came from the recognition that there should be a way to include ethnic minorities in formal politics. One interviewee in Serbia called the first local quota adoption phase as a question of national "security" (Interview 2017).

The area of concern at the time was Southern Serbia, which has a substantial Albanian and Roma population. Three Southern Serbian municipalities with significant Albanian and Roma populations, named Bujanovac, Medvedja and Preševo, held delayed elections in the early 2000s because of ethnic fighting between ethnic Albanians and Serbs in the area (OSCE 2000). The Preševo Valley insurgency as it would be called, was a result of ethnic Albanians attempting to annex parts of Southern Serbia to join the new international protectorate of Kosovo. Some fighting occurred during this conflict and there were casualties but comparatively this conflict ended swiftly. The Preševo conflict ceased in 2001 when Nebojsa Čović, a Serbian official, drafted the Čović plan, which promised to integrate ethnic Albanians in Serbia into Serbian society more proactively through government institutions, such as local government. The Čović plan or the Končulj Agreement, as it was later known, was signed by Serbs and Albanians in 2001 (Crisis Group 2007). It was called the Končulj Agreement because it was signed in the village of Končulj (Peace Agreements Database 2019).

These ethnic tensions still simmered in 2002. As a result, mechanisms were proposed to ensure greater political representation and inclusion of minority groups in Southern Serbia, including introducing PR representation, as opposed to the existing majoritarian, at the local level and instituting a lower census threshold for political parties, from 5% to 3%, so as to accommodate minority parties (Mršević 2005).

Concurrently, given this opening in the electoral system, Serbian elites and the OSCE, along with its gender adviser, Zorica Mršević, recognized that including more women in local politics could potentially promote a less belligerent environment in Southern Serbia and beyond (Interview 2017).

As Mršević (2005) writes:

The main reason for introducing the quota, was not to provide women with better mechanisms to secure political representation and access to decision-making positions, but rather to establish a more peaceful and cooperative atmosphere in future local representative bodies. (49)

Women were seen, in an essentialist manner certainly, as potentially “peaceful” actors and the reasons for including them were related to a post-conflict environment, which elites were eager to stabilize. The local quota was first adopted in the three mentioned Southern Serb municipalities but was then adopted throughout municipalities in Serbia in 2002, once the local quota was passed in Serbian National Parliament in June 2002.

Serbia’s Parliamentary Debate on the Local Election Reforms (2002)

The Parliamentary debate that discussed the proposed reform of the Law on Local Elections included many reasons for the adoption, including the need to promote women in politics from the point of view of international and European standards. It demonstrated that certain members of the Serbian government, including members of the reformist Zoran Djindjić government itself which proposed the law, were behind the quota and others, including some prominent women MPs, also members of the ruling Democratic Opposition of Serbia (DOS), were not in favor of the quota. The law was eventually passed in June 2002 with a local gender quota provision that required that every fourth candidate on an electoral list must be of the “less represented gender” (Serbian Law on Local Elections 2002).

Many of those who were in favor of the law gave impassioned reasons for the adoption of the local gender quota. Some of them also recognized that this mechanism

was even then an international norm that signaled the level of development or democratization of a country. Members of the Social Democratic Party (SDP) were particularly persuasive. For example, Nataša Milojević, an MP in the Serbian Parliament at the time and a member of the Social Democratic Party, voiced her support of the gender quota invoking international norms, agreements and obligations. As she stated in June of 2002:

I remind everyone of UN Resolution 1325, which holds states responsible for finding positive discrimination mechanisms and implementing these mechanisms. This falls into the state-political reasons. There is also the fact that we want to become a European Union member; there is no way to do that but to respect these positive and progressive provisions that come from the largest European family and to take a progressive approach to the theme of equality and equal opportunity, if you understand. (Serbian Parliamentary Debate, Local Quotas, June 2002)

Interestingly, some of MP Milojević's male colleagues supported her, in particular Liberal-Democratic Party leader Čedomir Jovanović and Democratic Alternative Party member Nebojša Čović. They also invoked international standards and norms in particular EU standards, to convince their colleagues of the value of gender quotas. As MP Čović stated during the Parliamentary debate:

You mentioned Lady Margaret Thatcher. Well, in England there is a standard for [gender equality]. In France there is even more of a sense of that. The European Parliament also promotes women in politics. We said that our goal is modern Europe, the union of European states and peoples. Are we going to enter the EU with these facts [*meaning a very low percentage of women in politics*]? We can definitely enter, but only if we are aware that we must change this fact. (Serbian Parliamentary Debate, Local Quotas, June 2002)

During the debate it was mentioned by several skeptical MPs that the "Women's Political Network" was lobbying for this change. This idea was used to discredit the potential local quota adoption. It was mentioned disparagingly. MP Nebojša Čović, who

was in charge of stabilizing the situation in Southern Serbia, in particular, denied that there was any kind of lobbying going on by the Women's Political Network, which referred to a network of women politicians and activists, including those from the Palić Conference mentioned.

Čović stated that the Government of Serbia introduced this law and the amendment on gender quotas, not the Women's Political Network. However, several other sources including Mršević (2005) and Antić Lokar (2006) point to women's organization influence in this regard. Antić and Lokar note that the political and military crisis in Southern Serbia at the time "made it easier to persuade the late Prime Minister Zoran Djindjić, his government and the majority in the Parliament to vote for the strong quota rule" (157). Mršević notes the influence of women's groups in promoting the quota law in her 2005 piece. However, she also notes that women's groups were not allowed to participate directly in the drafting or debate procedures. The women's groups thus relied on allied women Parliamentarians, such as the quoted Nataša Milojević, to advocate for gender quotas.

Women's groups and their allies were involved in seizing the opportunities before them. Along with appeals to international standards and eventual EU membership, post-conflict dimensions became crucial for the adoption of the first legislated quota, on the local level, in Serbia, simply because they opened up the possibility for women to assert their claim on political decision-making.

Although, there were some opponents to the local quota, even by women members of the parliament, enough support was secured for the amendment to pass. The local quota, stipulating at the time that one in four candidates on a party list must be of

the “less-represented gender” was passed in June of 2002. The first nationwide local elections after that point were held in September of 2004. The local quota mostly achieved its goal; the 16 municipalities in Serbia went from having on average between 0-10% women in local councils to between 15-25% after the 2004 local elections (Mršević 2005, pg. 49). Importantly, the situation in Southern Serbia also stabilized. Ethnic groups began to work together more peacefully as a result of the greater inclusion of other ethnicities in local government. Currently, women make up 32.7% of representatives on local councils (Serbian National Level Review Beijing +20 2019).

National Quota Adoption (2004)

Background

It would take roughly two more years for the national legislated quota to be adopted in Serbia (February 2004). However, by 2004 Serbian politics had changed from the more hopeful mood of 2000-2002, when the ousting of Slobodan Milošević brought peace and healing to an ailing pariah nation, to the more pessimistic mood of 2003-2004, when voters became disgruntled once again with the direction the country was going in.

Additionally, the country was still dealing with the disturbing assassination by criminal clans and security personnel of reformist DOS Prime Minister Zoran Djindjić in March of 2003. By 2004, the Democratic Opposition Coalition, known as DOS, had split into three parts, the party called Demokratska Stranka (DS) led then by Boris Tadić and once by the late Zoran Djindjić, Demokratska Stranka Srbije (DSS) led by Vojislav Koštunica and G-17 led by Miroljub Labus. The parties ran separately in the Parliamentary elections of December 2003. The Serbian Radical Party, a right-wing

nationalist party, secured the most votes in this election. However, the Radicals did not take power, as a precarious coalition was formed between DSS, G-17, the monarchist party of Vuk Drašković SPO-NS, and the Socialist Party (SP). Once President Vojislav Koštunica became Prime Minister of Serbia as a result of this 2003 election (Judah 2010).

Despite this despondent and unstable mood, women activists kept looking for opportunities to encourage gender equality reforms. The opportunity came again to push gender equality reforms to the national level. Once again, post-conflict considerations opened up this possibility. When the quota debate came up in February of 2004, the Koštunica DSS-led government was not technically in power but did have a working and proposed coalition, as mentioned. DSS would not officially form a government until March of that year.

Parliamentary Debate 2004

Upon entering Parliament, 53 members of Kostunica's DSS party, acknowledging that no parties representing ethnic minorities entered Parliament in 2004, realized that they would have to amend the Serbian Law on the Election of Deputies to make it possible for ethnic minorities to enter the Serbian Parliament. In some ways, this mirrors the intention of DOS and the local election law. Recognizing that ethnic minorities, especially in Southern Serbia but also in Vojvodina (where there are a substantial number of Hungarians) must be included to avoid future ethnic conflicts, the DSS members astutely proposed an overhaul of Serbian election law.

Thus, DSS introduced this new law in February of 2004. It was discussed in Parliament using an accelerated method called "urgent procedure", reflecting the need to

pass it quickly. This law, in essence proposed many reforms to the Serbian elections. Primarily, it was concerned with implementing reforms so as to include more diverse actors in the democratic process. The law specifically proposed the elimination of electoral thresholds for ethnic minority parties. In other words, the threshold for ethnic majority (or Serb) political parties in Serbia was 5%. At that point, this was true for ethnic minority parties, such as Bosniaks in Sandzak or Hungarians in Vojvodina. The law proposed that the threshold be eliminated so as to encourage the active participation of ethnic minorities in the formal political process.

This suggestion did not go over well with all parties. Specifically, the nationalist-oriented party of Serb Radicals, led then by Tomislav Nikolić in the absence of Dr. Vojislav Šešelj (who was being tried for inciting war crimes in the Hague at the time), opposed this measure, accusing those who introduced this measure of somehow discriminating or isolating ethnic minorities this way, who, according to them, could easily join the Radical Party for example and be fully represented. The Radicals also claimed that eliminating the threshold for ethnic minorities would not be fair for other Serbian parties that in essence received more votes than ethnic minority parties but did not meet the threshold. Despite this, this measure did pass parliament without Radical Party support (Serbian Parliamentary Debate 2004).

The proposed law also dealt with the question of the Serbian Diaspora and its right to vote in foreign territories. Previously, there were no mechanisms for this. The law also made it easier for those who are disabled to vote at home. Given the nature and the momentum of the reform and the particular moment in time, there was an opening within this law to attempt a national gender quota.

Electoral provisions were being amended so women activists and influential women Parliamentarians seized the opportunity to push for a legislated quota that called for “one in four” candidates to be of the less-represented gender (Antić and Lokar 2006; Interview 2017). The amendment calling for a national legislated quota was proposed by Lejla Ruždić, an MP from the center-left Democratic Party (Demokratska Stranka) and a member of the Palić network. Eventually, the amendment, clause 7a of the electoral law, was voted on and passed with majority support (159 of 250 voting in favor, 20 against and 56 abstaining) (Parliamentary Debate 2004).

Interestingly, the debate itself reflected a general agreement that Serbia needed to include more women in Parliament. Some of the women MPs, including MP Lejla Ruždić and MP Ljiljana Nestorović (SDP, Social Democratic Party) gave persuasive reasons for this, citing domestic and international factors. MP Ljiljana Nestorović explicitly reminded her colleagues of the UN resolution 1325. As she stated:

I would like to remind you that the UN Security Council passed the 1325 resolution in 2000, which is binding just like UN Resolution 1244 regarding the Kosovo conflict. This resolution, 1325, asserts that every country, every post-conflict country, as Serbia is, has the responsibility to build mechanisms in its laws that will ensure a greater presence of women in Parliament. (Parliamentary Debate 2004)

These women MPs and others noted that Serbia, at that point, only had 7% women in Parliament but Serbian women made up 52% of the electorate. They recognized the gendered disparity in Parliament and advocated for a change. The background of the Parliamentary debate is also important to note. In a 2017 interview with a prominent Serbian lawyer and gender quota advocate, the advocate asserted that it was the network of women who organized the 2000 Palić Conference and several follow-up conferences that helped push for the national legislated gender quota.

She recognizes that both domestic and international factors were relevant in this process. As she stated:

Domestic factors [were important], particularly organized, continuous acts by women who were involved in the Palić platform. International factors were a source of support (we relied on international documents and the standards found in them and that was our argument). Also, our allies, in particular Sonja Lokar from Slovenia, helped us in the process of lobbying in the international association of Social-Democratic parties. (Interview 2017).

By Social-Democratic parties the advocate meant The Party of European Socialists. The gender quota advocate also stated that the EU was not “directly” involved in the gender quota adoption process in Serbia. However, she noted that EU documents were a positive and instructive source for making an argument for gender quotas. As she said: “No, the EU did not influence the process directly. EU documents had an impact because we based our argumentation on them” (Interview 2017). Thus, international norms aided Serbian women in their push for gender quota adoption, at least in a figurative way. When asked what factors she deemed most crucial in the gender quota adoption process in Serbia, the advocate responded: “Perhaps the Serbian women’s movement was most crucial, especially because they are well-organized, and they gather experts who help to formulate and explain things” (Interview 2017).

Additionally, there was notably very little substantive resistance to this proposal. Even the Serbian Radicals, a right-wing party known for nationalism, led by Tomislav Nikolić, were in favor of this proposal. Nikolić went as far to note that the electoral lists should be further amended to ensure that 30% of not only candidates are women but those who enter parliament. At that point, Serbian electoral law allowed parties to choose

whomever they wanted on their electoral lists to enter Parliament; they did not have to respect the order of the voted-on party list. This ultimately did hinder the full implementation of the legislated quota as only 20% of women entered Parliament in the first elections after the national legislated quota became law (2007), short of the 25% it was supposed to ensure. In May of 2008 when another round of Parliamentary elections occurred, a similar result occurred. As a result of those elections, women made up 21.6% of the Serbian Parliament. It would take a national reform of the electoral lists in 2011 and a reform of the gender quota to create the ideal situation for the Serbian quota to work properly. This eventually happened in May of 2011.

2011 National Quota Reform: Serbia on an EU Path

By 2011, Serbia was on a different trajectory than it was in 2004. Kosovo had declared independence in 2008 and Montenegro had seceded from the Serb-Montenegrin Union in 2006. Despite continued instability stemming from the previous few decades marked by conflict and various economic setbacks related to the transition to capitalism and the global economic crisis, there was some progress in Serbian society. War was now mostly a memory. Even the secession of Kosovo, viewed as Serbia's historical center, its own Jerusalem, prompted no renewed military battles, just primarily a diplomatic fight over international recognition.

Crucially, EU membership had become the paramount goal of many Serbian elites, exceptions notwithstanding. Reforming Serbian law to become more "European" and "democratic" was a motivating factor for many in Serbian politics. Around that time (2009) 65% of Serbian citizens were in favor of EU accession, as opposed to 51% in

2012 (B92 2012). Although Serbia did not become an official candidate country of the EU until 2011, it signed a Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) with the EU in late 2007. This agreement was generally looked at as validation from the EU and acknowledgement that Serbia was on a stable path to eventual membership. Additionally, Serbia at the time began to actively cooperate with the ICTY, arresting wanted war criminals Ratko Mladić (2008) and Radovan Karadžić (2011). Serbia had apparently pivoted West.

Relatedly, as a result of the May 2008 Parliamentary elections, a pro-EU coalition called “For a European Serbia” won 38.42% of the vote, translating to 102 seats in parliament. The center-left coalition was led by the party of Serbia’s then President Boris Tadić, Demokratska Stranka or DS. The coalition was also made up of the Social Democratic Party of Serbia (SDPS), Serbian Renewal Movement (SPO), League of Social Democrats of Vojvodina (LSV), G17 Plus and Democratic League of Croats in Vojvodina. The coalition entered into a ruling coalition with the Socialist Party of Serbia and other smaller parties in June 2008 in order to secure a majority in Parliament. The main opposition to this coalition was the Radical Party led by Tomislav Nikolić. Interestingly, the Radical Party split into two factions after the 2008 Parliamentary elections. The resulting split faction became the Serbian Progressive Party (abbreviated SNS in Serbian) led then by Tomislav Nikolić and now by Serbian President Aleksandar Vučić. The Serbian Progressive Party retained a nationalist perspective but adopted a pro-European stance and many pro-European reforms. This kind of approach marks the politics of this party until today. The SNS party has been in power in Serbia since 2012.

Importantly, the debate in parliament concerning the DS proposed 2011 reforms of the Serbian electoral law, which included a reformed gender quota, reveals that the proposed reform was largely opposed by the Serbian Progressives and Radicals. However, the reformed law passed in May of 2011, given the 128-MP majority attained by the center-left coalition.

2011 Parliamentary Debate

By 2011 the Serbian quota was adopted nationally and locally but the results were not ideal. Women made up only 21.6% of women in Parliament in 2011, far lower than the 37.65% they make up as of January 2020. Certain features of the Serbian electoral system were not conducive to making the national gender quota work as intended. As mentioned, the party lists to which the quota applied were in a sense closed for voters but open for political parties (Orlović 2014). Voters voted for closed political lists with fixed rankings at the voting booth, but once a political party secured a certain number of parliamentary seats it was up to party officials to send essentially whomever they wanted to parliament, regardless of the order of the list, which diminished the stipulations of the gender quota.

At the time and preceding this period, Serbia received several so-called warnings about this “problem” within its electoral system. The OSCE, for example, recommended strongly to Serbia in its election observation reports that Serbia reform its electoral law to explicitly make lists completely closed (OSCE 2007). In a 2007 report on Serbian elections, the OSCE noted that the reason why Serbia’s gender quotas was not working as intended is because of this flaw in its electoral system. The Venice Commission of the

Council of Europe also expressed concern. The Venice Commission, an advisory body of the Council of Europe with expertise on constitutional law, is tasked with providing advice to member countries on various legal matters. The Venice Commission opined on Serbian's electoral law in 2011. At the time, Serbia was utilizing neither fully closed nor open electoral lists. Parties presented closed lists to voters, who had to choose a party's list in total and not by individual candidate, but then treated these lists as open when distributing actual Parliamentary seats. This, according to the Venice Commission, was not good electoral practice.

It was these recommendations from outside European-oriented institutions that ultimately convinced the ruling coalition at the time, "For a European Serbia", composed primarily by the Democratic Party (Demokratska Stranka or DS) led by then President Boris Tadić, to propose reforms to the electoral law of Serbia, specifically reforms to the Law on the Elections of Deputies. The coalition in power had as one of its main goals the eventual accession of Serbia to the EU and linked this reform to its potential EU candidacy status. This factor was crucial in terms of the initial decision to amend the law and the persistence with which the ruling coalition pursued the law. Serbia wished to be seen as a truly democratic state. After years of being ostracized and rebuked, Serbian elites recognized that in order to gain admission to the EU at some point in time, it would have to reform many aspects of its legal and electoral system.

The proposed electoral reform law was introduced in May of 2011 by the ruling coalition mentioned. The parliamentary representative of the ruling coalition was MP Nada Kolundžija, a prominent member of the DS Party. This proposed reform of the law, officially called Reforms to the Law on the Elections of National Ministers of Parliament

(2011), essentially and most importantly introduced truly closed lists. It mandated that parties would have to accept the rank-order stipulated in the original electoral lists. Parties would lose the right to send whomever they wished to parliament. This list would substantially enhance the gender quota because it would guarantee the percentage of women as stipulated in the quota to be actually given parliamentary mandates.

A two-day debate would follow as a result of this feature of the proposed law. Many MPs in Parliament felt that the law was an imposition from above; that it did not reflect the true will of Serbia. One MP in the Serbian Parliament called Serbia in this respect a “protectorate” because the country’s elites were introducing “anti-constitutional” measures directed by external and dubious European institutions. One parliamentarian questioned why the Venice Commission even opined on this matter because the EU’s *acquis communautaire* does not directly stipulate that a country should have any kind of specific electoral law. The MP noted that countries in the EU have various kinds of electoral systems, from PR to majoritarian to open and closed electoral lists. Those in favor recognized that it was ethical to respect the wish of the voters, who voted for a closed list that should not be open for parties. The main opposition to this feature of the law came from the opposition in government, namely the Radical and Progressive Parties of Serbia.

In terms of the amendment introduced to reform the gender quota itself, this amendment was initially introduced by two young women MPs of the League of Social Democrats of Vojvodina, Aleksandra Jerkov and Oleana Papuga. They introduced an amendment to article 8 of the Electoral Law Reform to increase the percentage of women in Parliament. Jerkov and Papuga proposed to change the language of the gender quota

from 2004 from “every fourth candidate” to “every third candidate” must be of the less-represented gender. MP Jerkov made an assertive plea to her fellow parliamentarians on May 25, 2011, noting that women are a vital part of Serbian society and can make a lasting contribution to the country. She also astutely pointed out that Serbian law itself was conducive to gender equality and promised this ideal to citizens. Jerkov stated:

I will remind you that, even though I think this is familiar to all MPs here, that article 15 of the Serbian Constitution explicitly guarantees equal opportunity and gender equality, and it assumes, allows and dictates for explicit measures that will ensure gender equality. (Parliamentary Debate May 2011)

Jerkov was alluding to the fact that Serbia’s 2006 Constitution does indeed allow for special measures to increase gender equality. Some other national constitutions conversely provide obstacles for gender quota adoption, prohibiting any positive discrimination measures. Furthermore, Jerkov and Papuga received significant support for their amendment. There was very little opposition to this idea of a more robust quota, even from the opposition who later boycotted the vote because of their objections to the lists being closed. Additionally, several women parliamentarians, including Vice-President of Parliament, Gordana Čomić, voiced support for this measure. As in previous debates, fellow women parliamentarians noted the need to include and ensure a greater female presence in parliament.

The women parliamentarians I interviewed between 2011-2012 in Serbia, just after the law passed, were extremely supportive of this quota initiative. I also found that Serbian women parliamentarians banded together behind the scenes to pass the 2011 amended quota law. Nada Kolundžija, a prominent member of the ruling Democratic Party of Serbia (DS) and the MP who initiated the 2011 electoral reforms, stated this in an interview:

My experience again with the gender quota passing was that we women were unified. I think that the opposition was in favor as well but boycotted the passing of the law. Every time when we have a law that affects women, there is absolutely a unified stance towards women. They are ready to pass laws, maybe not so ready to mentor or push other women but that is dependent on the personality of the woman. Yes of course. Women often introduced amendments to laws, which bolster these laws from a gender equality perspective. (Interview 2012)

MP Kolundžija's experience was verified by several other women parliamentarians, including one-time President of Serbia Nataša Mičić and Vice-President of Parliament Gordana Čomić (Interviews 2011-2012).¹ The Serbian reformed law on The Elections of Deputies and the reformed quota was passed on May 25, 2011, with the opposition parties boycotting the vote.²

Social Movement Effect

The gender quota reform in Serbia was formally aided by norm entrepreneur women politicians who recognized the need to ensure more women in Serbian politics. Appeals were made to international, European, and constitutional norms by various political and critical actors, thus reflecting the importance of international norms in this context. Women politicians utilized strategic openings available to them to usher in positive gender equality reforms.

¹ Gordana Čomić introduced an amendment to a Serbian electoral law reform in 2020 that increased the Serbian quota to 40%. The measure passed Parliament. Since this study does not encompass this time period for the case study of Serbia, future research should look into the circumstances of this.

² It should be noted that Serbia does have an official Women's Parliamentary Network as of 2013. This network has worked on many positive reforms, including reforming domestic violence legislation and pushing for gender-responsive budgeting (GRB), which Serbia adopted in 2015.

The electoral law reform was also a victory for civil society organizations. According to Milo Djajić, Executive Director of the Center for Modern Skills (abbreviated CMV in Serbian), his NGO and others lobbied the Serbian government and worked with parliamentarians in 2011 to increase the number from every fourth candidate to every third (Djajić 2011). As Djajić noted again in an email interview in March 2015:

In 2011, the NGO sector in Serbia (and me as one of the leaders of this movement), directly appealed to the government to change the quota goals from every fourth woman on a party list to every third woman on a party list. This is how we got this accomplished (Djajić 2015).

In a follow up email interview in 2019, Djajić reaffirmed this notion that civil society organizations were crucial in promoting this initiative. Djajić mentioned his own group, CMV, as being one of the initiators behind the push for the gender quota reform. Djajić highlighted the heightened “responsiveness” of the Serbian government to NGOs and civil society at the time. He also indicated that at this time the Serbian government, namely the pro-European Coalition that was mentioned, usually responded to media and NGO pressure positively, at least “promoting dialogue in the process”. Djajić indicated that more than 40 Serbian NGOs signed a proposal to reform the gender quota in the country.

This push by NGOs is in some ways an extension of the organizing that was present in Serbia since the 1990s. The Palić Initiative and the women who organize it are still active in Serbia today. In 2011, the Palić women also lobbied for an expansion of the gender quota (Interview 2020). In 2014, the Palić group convened a third meeting and formulated several goals to promote their agenda into 2020. Their goals include various elements of gender equality, including anti-discrimination, dignified work for women and

the continued promotion of women in politics. The network that began in 2000 thus expanded and became more institutionalized in Serbian politics by 2011.

As one Serbian quota advocate said in relation to a question about the Serbian social movements, particularly its women's movement:

I would not say Serbia is more open, but it is different than other countries in the sense that it has a well-organized women's movement, a well-conceptualized network (and good components of this network, which brings together crucial actors in decision-making, namely Ministers of Parliament, CSOs, unions, experts, journalists etc.), This network is functional for over twenty years. It has defined goals and related strategic activity so that these goals are met. The network also follows these aspirations and ensures they are realized. We also work on setbacks and challenges. (Interview 2017)

The Three Stages of Quota Adoption: Assessment and Impact

The quota adoption process in Serbia thus took several years to transpire into real results for women in politics. It took three serious electoral reforms (2002, 2004 and 2011) to introduce and amend the local and national gender quota so that these legal provisions could begin to function properly. Serbia has one of the highest percentages of women in its national parliament in the CEE region (37.65%). This position was not achieved immediately, nor was it achieved easily. Women's concerns and goals, specifically the adoption of gender quotas, at the beginning of the democratization period in Serbia (2000) were not immediately adopted by the democratic opposition, but women's organizations nevertheless continued to organize, advocate, and wait for the right moment to seize opportunities before them.

Women's organizations were aided by a multitude of auspicious factors (ironically and initially arising from tragic conflicts), some of which were domestic in nature and others international. Specifically, women's organizations were aided by political opportunities, created by post-conflict dimensions, initial and continuing

democratization efforts and later a pro-EU political approach emphasized most prominently by the 2011 government of President Boris Tadić. Serbia's relatively strong women's movement, which arose from a more open civil society space in Yugoslavia, anti-war initiatives by women's groups in the 1990s and women's involvement in pro-democracy forces during the late 1990s, navigated the opportunities before them successfully enough to institute meaningful electoral reform.

Additionally, early on, Serbia's gender quota adoption coincided with greater pushes for inclusion of ethnic minority groups. The reforms of 2002 and 2004 included changes to Serbian electoral law that would promote minority party participation in Serbian national politics. As is often the case in post-conflict societies, dimensions that are present post-war lead to a reconfiguration of certain features of domestic law. The Preševo Valley conflict in Southern Serbia prompted Serbian authorities to figure out a way to include ethnic minorities, namely ethnic Albanians, into formal politics, so as to integrate them more substantively in Serbian society. This led to a push for electoral reform which aimed to lower the electoral threshold for minority groups in the area, during which women's organizations simultaneously advocated for electoral reform for women, namely the adoption of a local gender quota. The local quota was adopted in 2002 and continues to exist today. The local quota led to a greater inclusion of women in local Serbian politics.

A similar breakthrough happened in 2004 when the Koštunica-led DSS government noted the importance of including ethnic minority parties in National Parliament, which at the time had no ethnic minority party representatives. This led to the elimination of an electoral threshold for minority parties. This reform also led to an

introduction of a national gender quota, which at the time stipulated that “every fourth candidate must be of the less-represented gender.” By 2008, there was some progress in terms of women’s percentage of Parliamentarians as a result of the national quota.

Women at that point made up 20% of the National Parliament.

Later, Serbian officials became much more preoccupied with the possibility of eventual EU membership. Thus, domestic and post-conflict dimensions took a more international tone. Serbia became very responsive to the international realm; noting that its eventual membership to the EU would depend on crucial internal reforms it had to make. These internal reforms would have to conform to perceived European and international standards.

This recognition made Serbia, at the time, very responsive to recommendations of the EU and other European institutions. As a result of recommendations made by the OSCE and the Venice Commission, Serbia introduced a proposed reformed electoral law. The law in essence closed Serbian electoral lists and also amended the gender quota to stipulate that “every third candidate must be of the less-represented gender” on electoral lists. The law passed in May 2011, even though it was boycotted by the opposition. This led to a substantial increase of women in politics. After the 2012 Parliamentary elections, women made up 32% of Parliamentarians in Serbia. Thus, the reforms had worked.

Overall, the “sandwich effect”, or the combination of top-down and bottom-up factors in Serbia, contributed to the adoption of robust local and national quotas. Serbian women’s groups certainly advocated for these provisions very early on. Through persistence they eventually succeeded in convincing elites to introduce these measures.

Additionally, conflict is a significant part of the Serbian story. Post-conflict considerations provided the initial impetus for the local quota and then the national quota. Women in the former Yugoslavia generally utilized post-conflict political opportunities to effect electoral and societal change. This is particularly true in the cases of the Republic of North Macedonia, Croatia, Slovenia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. In all of these cases, women's groups organized to push for gender quota adoption, to varying degrees of success. Serbia and Macedonia, in particular, have been most successful in this regard. They are currently the regional leaders in terms of women in national politics.

The women of the former Yugoslavia were thus ironically aided by the conflict that arose in the 1990s. Their activism became much more grassroots in nature as a result of the conflict. Crucially, this reality stands in contrast with most of the countries of the CEE region, which did not experience a prolonged civil war. Also, international assistance and international institutions were quite present in this part of CEE throughout the 2000s.

This legacy of conflict and international involvement lives on until today. I thus argue that post-conflict dimensions accelerated gender quota adoption in this part of CEE, namely the former Yugoslavia. Countries that have legislated quotas outside of this part of CEE are rare. In fact, there are only two *non-post conflict* countries with legislated gender quotas in CEE: Poland and Albania. Thus, the next chapter of this research will focus on the case of Poland and how the political opportunities available to Polish women activists were different than those available to Serbian women.

Chapter 5: A Legacy of Resistance Leads to Eventual Adoption: The Case of Polish Quotas

Introduction

In the absence of the legacy of conflict, it appears to be more difficult to adopt legislated gender quotas in the CEE region, even given democratic transitions. As argued in Chapter 3, legislated gender quotas are rare outside of the post-conflict ex-Yugoslavia region because political opportunities are scarcer and the resistance to communist legacies is stronger. Post-conflict environments are fertile grounds for positive reforms because societal change is encouraged and expected (Tajali 2013). External norm-diffusing organizations also apply pressure on post-conflict countries to reform new constitutions and electoral laws, as we have seen in the case of Serbia and its interactions with the EU, OSCE, and Council of Europe, among other institutions.

Only Poland and Albania have legislated quotas outside of a post-conflict area. Poland's gender quota adoption process (in the form of attempted legislation) began in the 1990s and was only ultimately successful, mostly due to a women's movement campaign in 2011, which, relative to global adoption patterns, makes it a late adopter (Gwiazda 2015). Poland currently has close to 29% (28.70%) women in its Lower Chamber of Parliament (called the Sejm) (IPU 2019). It is ranked 53rd on the IPU list. This is an improvement from ten years ago when it only had 20% women in its Lower Chamber. Despite a rise in populism and the current conservative majority rule of the Law and Justice Party (PiS), women have made some inroads in Polish politics (Fuszara 2017).

Some challenges obviously do remain for Polish women politicians and women at large, such as the attempts in 2016 and 2018 to further ban abortion rights in a country where women's reproductive rights are already significantly limited. Yet these attempts were also countered by serious social movement resistance; women's groups from all over the country organized protests and even organized a one-day Women's Strike. This led the Law and Justice Party to rescind the anti-abortion bill both times (Majewska 2018). Despite valiant movement efforts, the road remains arduous for Polish women activists. However, it is certain that without them the country would look very different.

The focus of this chapter will thus be on how and why the Polish legislated quota was passed in 2011, despite a conservative and deeply religious context. Several key factors will be explored, including the gender quota campaign led by the then newly formed Congress of Women and the alliances the Congress formed with key actors, including that of the party in power then, the center-right Civic Platform. I will thus pay special attention to the Congress of Women, because they were a critical actor in the adoption process. I will explore their founding, composition, and efforts to secure gender equality legislation in Poland.

To explore the case of Poland, I aim to trace the gender quota adoption process as I did in the Serbia case. I have already mentioned the several attempts from 1990s to the 2000s to pass a legislated gender quota (4 in total). I will briefly explore these attempts and hypothesize why they failed. I will then contrast the failed attempts with the eventual successful campaign of 2010-2011. I will highlight the differences between attempts, thus providing discussion for my research question and providing support for my overarching theory.

The Polish case will be traced in a similar chronological fashion as the case study of Serbia, but I will also place emphasis on certain structural and institutional factors that were critical in the Polish case. These include the role of conservative politics and the response of women's groups to these positions, as well as the role of political opportunities, such as the Polish law that allows civil society groups or citizens to force Parliamentary consideration of a bill if 100,000 signatures are secured within a time frame of three months.

Conflict transformed the Serbian context, i.e. it opened up critical democratic space for women activists to assert their agenda. In a related but more internalized fashion, domestic political opportunities, such as the Polish law that was mentioned and a persistent gender quota campaign by the Polish Congress of Women, opened space for activists to push for reform and positive change. As mentioned, the challenges Polish women faced to get a legislated gender quota passed were much more pronounced. In the absence of political opportunities based on the cessation of conflict, Polish women created their own space, dutifully and persistently so.

History of Women in Politics in Poland

During Communism

As in many other CEE contexts, there was a form of "top-down" feminism in Poland. The state granted Polish women legal equality, at least on paper, and promoted their education, workforce participation and even gave them the right to an abortion in the 1950s (Hauser, Heynes and Mansbridge 1993). Women were involved in public life to an extent. They were factory and shipyard workers, doctors and other professionals.

They also had the dual or triple responsibility of being workers, housewives and mothers. They were included in governmental functions; they made up a respectable percentage of the Sejm, at least in 1980s (they attained a percentage of 20% by 1989) (Fuszara and Zielińska 2006, pg. 41). But they did not exert real authority as members of the communist legislature.

Poles lived under a generally authoritarian communist government. There were significant rebellions during the 1960s and 1970s, as unrest began to increase in the country. But by the early 1980s, serious rebellion was beginning to brew in Poland. In the shipyards of Gdańsk, a city in northern Poland, rebellion was fomenting. A new, then-illegal, trade union was formed in 1981 called Solidarity, or *Solidarność* in Polish. Led by worker Lech Wałęsa, who would become Poland's first democratically elected President, the trade union would be the instrumental force that brought the eventual end of communism in 1990 (along with the Catholic Church).

Women's roles in Solidarity were similar to their roles in other resistance movements in Polish history, namely active. Women made up 50% of members of Solidarity (Simienska 1991). They were active members during the resistance period, working dutifully as messengers, publishers of relevant newspapers and protesters. The women members of Solidarity helped the movement become eventually successful, although their contribution remains formally underappreciated (Grabowska 2012; Graff 1999; Penn 1994; Penn 2005).

Once formal transition negotiations started, concerning eventual democratization in Poland, the women of Solidarity were largely forgotten. Rarely were they present in top-level negotiations at this crucial time. Chiva (2018) points to this dearth of women in

the transition period in CEE as a crucial critical juncture that has led to women's current underrepresentation in politics in the region. According to Simienska (1991) at the time men leaders in Poland were looking for political candidates who had resources, political or financial, to lead the country. These men believed that women did not meet those criteria. As a result, women's representation in the Sejm plummeted to a low of 9.6% in 1991 post-communism (Gwiazda 2015, pg. 683).

Post-Communism and Women in Poland

Immediately after the fall of communism, as mentioned, the situation for women across the CEE region was not ideal. Poland was no exception. Women in this country and others had to navigate an entirely new, capitalistic and democratic system. Although this system, opened up opportunities for some, it made life more difficult for others. Abortion in Poland and Hungary, as a right, began to be seriously curtailed. Politics became to be dominated by conservative parties. Women across CEE Parliaments were virtually non-existent. Quotas were largely abandoned, and this resulted in precipitous drops of women in Parliaments across CEE.

Furthermore, many women lost their jobs in previously state-owned companies and had trouble adapting to the new circumstances before them. Even though the Catholic Church was instrumental as an anti-communist force in a deeply religious Poland, it was also adamant in furthering certain religious practices and positions, which were not always favorable towards women.

According to some scholars (Grabowska 2009; Spehar 2007; 2012), despite the unfavorable conditions for women, women still protested and were active in seeking

gender equality. Their work counters the predominant narrative of “where are the (feminist) women in CEE?” that largely defined Western scholarship on CEE at the time (Einhorn 1991, 1993). Grabowska (2009) mentions the abortion protests in Poland during the early 1990s, where women banded together to fight for choice in terms of reproduction. Although they failed to stop the anti-abortion law from being passed, they created the beginnings of a strong resistance, whose natural antagonist remains the Catholic Church.

Grabowska (2009) argues that abortion became a defining issue for Polish women’s mobilization: “I would argue that in Poland, women’s deprivation of reproductive rights became an impulse for the emergence of one of the most vibrant and diverse feminist movements in the region.” (44). Indeed, Polish women have reacted several times to being constrained or excluded by Polish male leaders. The 2009 formation of the Congress of Women, the powerful Polish women’s group that spearheaded gender quota adoption in Poland, was in part a reaction to women being excluded from official Solidarity commemorations in 2009 (Snitow 2009).

In general, there is a fairly strong and developed women’s movement in Poland. This movement tends to organize itself around the issue of reproductive rights, but some groups work on other matters. The Congress of Women is just one example of women’s organizing beyond reproductive rights. Manifa, for instance, is a Polish protest movement that organizes feminist marches across several themes every International Women’s Day, March 8th (Beaty 2017). Through organizations and initiatives such as these Polish women are able to fight for gender equality. But in a precarious and conservative environment lead by the staunchly traditional Law and Justice Party (PiS), the question

remains how successful can they ultimately be? One area where they have been successful is gender quota adoption. I will now turn to the adoption process in Poland.

Gender Quota Adoption Process in Poland: Four Attempts before Eventual Adoption

Now that I have briefly surveyed the history of Polish women's activism in the latter half of the twentieth century and beginning of the twenty-first, noting that Polish women's activism has a long, complex and involved history, I will turn my attention to discussing the specifics of the gender quota adoption process of 2010-2011. My argument here is that without the efforts of the Congress of Women, the Polish legislated gender quota would not have passed in 2011. Certainly, other factors were important as well, but the bottom-up efforts of this group were necessary to overcome embedded challenges to gender equality in the Polish context. I will thus first turn to the previous attempts of gender quota adoption in Poland to demonstrate the importance of the work of the Congress of Women.

Previous Attempts at Quota Adoption:

There were four previous attempts in Poland to introduce legislated gender quotas before the eventual adoption of 2011. According to Gwiazda (2015), all four previous attempts originated in parliament itself. Table 9 below demonstrates the factors that were crucial in the failure to adopt gender quotas at the time.

Table 9: Previous Attempts at Gender Quota Adoption in Poland

Attempt Number	Attempt Date	Initial Bill Sponsors (MP AND PARTY, if applicable)	Party in Power	Reason for Policy Adoption Failure
1	1996	Women from the Parliamentary Women's Group	Center-Left Coalition	Not a Priority at the time, other initiatives more important, the official reason given
2	1998	Women from the Parliamentary Women's Group	AWS-Center-Right	Traditional, right-wing part in power, opposition did not have enough votes
3	2001	Olga Krzyżanowska, a UW MP (UW center party)	AWS-Center-Right	Traditional, right-wing party in power, opposition did not have enough votes
4	2002	Women from the Parliamentary Women's Group	Center-Left Coalition	not enough votes, not enough support from coalition parties

Source: Gwiazda (2015)

Generally, legislated gender quotas were resisted in Poland because they were introduced during a time where conservative politics and parties dominated. The AWS was a coalition made up of center-right parties that ruled Polish politics in the early 2000s. Its platform included elements of national conservatism. The reasons why Polish quotas were resisted included arguments based on traditional values and conservative ideals. One MP, Urszula Krupa, expressed this sentiment in relation to gender quotas: “...The parity system limits our freedom and leads to slavery, which can cause disorders, mental distress and the degradation of the human being. The League of Polish Families supports only one parity – 50% parity of men and women in a sacred marriage.” (quoted in Gwiazda 2015)

There were very few direct mentions of the seemingly negative communist legacy of quotas in Poland during these debates. This was not a reason used to resist quotas, although one can infer that many even “liberal” or center-left parties opposed quotas because of this reason, at least partly. These new parties wanted to distance themselves from communism as quickly and forcefully as possible. One academic and activist I interviewed in 2018 said that the unwanted communist legacy of gender quotas was only mentioned during the early 1990s. She also said that the allure of EU membership helped transform this perception. Polish elites began to understand the need to include more women in politics from an EU perspective, rather than a communist legacy one (Interview 2018).

What is also interesting about the gender quota attempts in Poland is that 3 out of the 4 attempts were introduced by the Women’s Parliamentary Network and as early as 1996. This is indicative of the reality that there are crucial actors in Polish politics that

have attempted to further gender equality in politics. The fact that Poland had and continues to have an active Women's Parliamentary Network (which was formed in 1991) is also a positive sign.

Unfortunately, their efforts to pass legislated gender quotas were not taken seriously by their fellow parliamentarians. They lacked the support from other MPs and crucial political parties to get quotas passed at earlier times in Polish history. As in other settings, even a group of enthusiastic and persistent MPs is not sufficient to get legislated gender quotas passed. Sometimes, pressure outside of formal politics is more effective.

The Congress of Women: Founding

Persistent leadership from outside of politics was needed to pass legislated quotas in Poland. In Poland, during the transition in the early 1990s, there were few opportunities for women to assert their claims for gender equality. They simply were not included in formal proceedings, although there was some feminist organizing and attempts to adopt gender quotas then. Thus, Polish feminists had to wait for the right opportunity and perhaps the right strategy. As one academic and activist noted during an interview, given the record of unsuccessful quota attempts: "I thought it would be the issue of the next generation to take care of the quota proposal, but in 2009 Congress of Women happened" (Interview 2018).

In 2009, partly as a result of the exclusion of women and women's perspectives in Solidarity commemorations, leading Polish women formed the Congress of Women (Interview 2018; Snitow 2009). The Polish Congress of Women is the largest and most influential women's group in the country (Korolczuk and Saxonberg 2015). It advocates

a mostly liberal feminist (i.e. legal and equality centered feminism) goals such as parity in politics, higher wages and freedom from discrimination and harassment in the workplace. It also lists combating violence against women and promoting women's health as other issues it promotes (Congress of Women Website 2019).

The Congress, at least its leadership, is made up of prominent, well-connected and professionally accomplished Polish women, such as philosopher Magdalena Środa, professor and politician Malgorzata Fuszara and its current charismatic leader, television host and journalist Dorota Warakomska. The Congress holds gatherings in different Polish cities almost every year. In June 2018 this meeting was held in the Polish city of Łódź and was attended by thousands of enthusiastic Polish and foreign women, some of whom identify as feminists.

The Congress of Women also has local branches in cities and towns all around Poland. Thus, its overall membership is in the thousands. Notably, the campaign the Congress of Women launched in 2010 to push for legislated gender quotas was initially arduous, but ultimately well-planned and effective. This was the Congress's first and to date most effective campaign. As one Polish academic stated the Congress of Women is an exceptional entity, especially in CEE: "Congress of Women is something remarkable. It is set up like an association, but functions more like a social movement." (Interview 2018). The academic also noted the effectiveness of the Congress: "It has been successful in many ways, voicing women's concerns, becoming the mainstream voice of the women's movement. It has been heavily criticized because of its entrepreneurial, neo-liberal stance. But we need a mainstream voice."

Aspects of the Quota Campaign

Now that I have briefly introduced the impressive women's organization, I will focus on the 2010-2011 campaign to introduce legislated gender quotas. I will highlight some key campaign factors through the lens of social movement theory that I believe led to the eventual quota adoption in an unlikely context. These are the Polish law on civic initiatives on new legislation (political opportunity), the media and public awareness campaign led by the Congress of Women (elements of framing), important events that occurred during the bill's introduction (political opportunities) and the alliances that were formed with the Civic Platform, the center-right party in power at the time of the introduction of gender quotas in Poland, and other key actors.

Key Quota Campaign factors:

Polish Law on Petitions

The focus on political parity became the Congress of Women's primary goal. It was at their first meeting in 2009 that this goal crystalized. As one founder of the Congress stated in a 2018 interview:

I was running a panel on political participation and we proposed that every panel think up a to-do list as a result of the panel. Our panel proposed parity. Congress took this as a first step. For many reasons—it is a precondition for change in parliament and in local government. This is a clear goal. Usually in these women's issues, participation of men in family life is difficult to frame as a clear goal, for example. It was our main proposal. We decided to do this in a specific way, it was the civic proposal. In the Polish case, we used it early in our system. It is usually used by those who have a large presence in the country. (Interview 2018)

The Congress realized one medium to achieve this would be by utilizing an aspect of Polish law. Article 118 of the Polish Constitution allows citizens to propose laws so

that if they are able to gather at least 100,000 signatures in three months the proposed bill will be debated in Parliament (Fuszara 2017; Korolczuk and Saxonberg 2015). This law does not guarantee that the proposed bill will be passed although it opens the possibility for citizen involvement in national laws. The Congress of Women in 2010 astutely utilized this political opening to wage an effective public and media campaign to gather over 150,000 signatures to bring the proposed legislated quota bill to Parliament. The Congress of Women campaign included media personalities, including television hosts, actors and actresses, in addition to local public mobilization across cities and towns in Poland, in an attempt to gather enough citizen signatures in a short amount of time.

As one Polish academic noted, the media was crucial in helping the Congress of Women reach their goal of 100,000 signatures, despite initial skepticism from the public:

The discussions we had with people were very challenging. We also took care of the media. The media sympathized with us. They promoted this initiative. Main figures in the private media appeared in the shopping malls to support us...Some people wanted information about quotas, so we gave them pamphlets. (Interview 2018)

As Fuszara (2017) notes, the campaign added public and democratic legitimacy to the quota adoption process.

After the first official reading, all parliamentary groups voted for the bill to proceed to committee discussion, and although some pointed out that they were against parity, they chose not to vote to reject the bill precisely because it had entered parliament with the express support of such a large group of citizens. (330)

Crucial Events

In addition to the founding of the Congress of Women itself, there were certain key events that aided the gender quota campaign in Poland during the debate concerning the bill in parliament. Most notably, in 2010, the then President of Poland Lech

Kaczyński, a leading member of the conservative Law and Justice Party currently ruling Poland, died in a tragic airplane crash in Smolensk, Russia. The Polish delegation traveling with President Kaczyński, which included 18 members of parliament and many other Polish dignitaries, perished. The delegation was flying to Smolensk to commemorate the Katyn massacre of 1940, when Soviet officials murdered notable Polish citizens, namely members of the Polish intelligentsia.

The effect of this undeniable tragedy was that a new presidential election was called to replace the late Kaczyński. Bronislaw Komorowski, an official presidential candidate at the time, temporarily took over the role of president. Importantly, Komorowski officially endorsed the Congress of Women's proposal for a gender quota at one of their annual meetings. This endorsement led to an acceleration of the approval of the quota bill within parliament. It is not certain that the quota bill would have had similar success under the leadership of the former president (Śledzińska-Simon and Bodnar 2013).

In addition to this larger event, smaller events such as public meetings also aided the quota campaign. For example, before the Smolensk tragedy, Manifa staged protests on International Women's Day in March 2010, calling for the acceptance of parity in politics. In addition, the Congress of Women actively publicized the quota proposal through social media. The Congress also wrote letters and petitioned Parliamentary committee members who were in charge of approving the bill in 2010 (Śledzińska-Simon and Bodnar 2013).

Elite Allies

As mentioned, Komorowski endorsed the gender quota proposal at a crucial time. He later won the presidency of Poland. This helped bring elite-level legitimacy to the bill. At the time, the ruling party was the Civic Platform, a center-right party. The quota bill was also supported by the Prime Minister and leader and co-founder of the Civic Platform, Donald Tusk, thus bringing more elite legitimacy to the bill (Gwiazda 2015). The prominence of the Congress of Women members made networking easier for them and thus aided the overall campaign. As one Congress member stated:

They recognized at the moment that the Congress of Women was the power and that we sympathize with some ideas of the government. The Prime Minister of our shadow cabinet was a member of the Civic Platform. Another woman was a minister in the Tusk Cabinet. (Interview 2018).

As another academic said, the alliance with the Civic Platform became a crucial opening.

Then you have the Civic Platform, classic Christian Democrats. Although at the time, they tried to position themselves as a liberal party. In the Polish context, it is pretty [politically] “left” which is an abomination. That opened up a classic political opportunity structure. Congress of Women lobbied within the Civic Platform. (Interview 2018)

Framing and Re-Framing of Quota Debate

Throughout their campaign, the Congress of Women strategically framed their cause as one of equality. Through their various efforts, they positioned gender quotas as necessary and effective tools for achieving greater equality in the Polish parliament, where women were seriously and continue to be underrepresented.

It should be noted that the bill the Congress of Women introduced initially was a parity bill. Parity means that the resulting quotas should ensure a 50/50 gender composition in Parliament. However, the Parliament, and the Civic Platform, the party in

power, was not ready for a parity bill. When Komorowski endorsed the quota bill in 2010, he made it clear that he would only support a quota that stipulated that 35% of party lists should be composed of women. The Congress accepted this compromise, or reframing, to ultimately achieve their larger goal of promoting more women in politics. As one member of the Congress stated, it was a combination of skill, determination, and luck that got the quota passed in Poland: “By coincidence, we worked with a party who thought it is politically advantageous to support this. And yes, it always has to be the right moment” (Interview 2018).

Legislative Process and Resulting Compromises

By the end of 2010, the Polish Sejm and the upper house of parliament, the Senate, voted on and adopted the quota bill. The bill was officially approved in its entirety by Parliament in January of 2011. Throughout this process, persistent efforts were needed and timing, mostly due to unforeseen events, was crucial.

In addition, the Congress of Women’s efforts were fortunate in one key regard. The constitutionality of quota laws has been challenged in various settings, most notably France and Italy (Murray, Krook, and Opello 2012; Palici di Suni 2012). Sometimes, constitutional amendments are needed to change existing law to allow gender quotas to be passed because the language in constitutions usually determines that men and women should be equal. Quotas, according to critics, positions women favorably and thus unfairly. The Law and Justice Party in Poland, which was in opposition at the time, did threaten to challenge the constitutionality of the law several times. However, the party did not go through with this threat, making the process much smoother and quicker.

However, compromises were made. The gender quota law in Poland is limited in its effects because a crucial requirement is missing; it does not stipulate rank-order placement but rather stipulates a 35% minimum for women's presence on party lists. This lack of rank-order placement diminishes the effect of the quota law. As Millard (2014) notes, Polish parties tend to place women on the bottom of lists and in an open-list system this diminishes their likelihood of being elected. Gwiazda (2017) also extends this argument to implicate some political parties in Poland for their reluctance to place women in higher positions on electoral lists. In Poland, the more conservative parties, such as Law and Justice, placed women closer to the bottom of electoral lists in 2015. This stands in contrast to the electoral choices of the Civic Platform, which is a more centrist political party in Poland and is more committed to gender equality. The Civic Platform placed women more readily at the top of their electoral lists. In fact, the Civic Platform placed a woman in the number one spot on 31% of electoral lists (Gwiazda 2017).

International norms

International norms were once again important in the Polish context but perhaps not as important as domestic aspects. Śledzińska-Simon and Bodnar (2013) argue that the Polish quota adoption process "was a model imported from abroad" (160). They further note that:

The individuals involved in the Congress of Women envisaged the law in cooperation with international experts in this field, and the final push most likely came from the comprehensive report commissioned by the European Parliament, "Electoral Gender Quota Systems and their Implementation in Europe' in 2008. (160)

Although the Polish case is probably an instance of transnational emulation and tipping, there are key domestic factors that should be taken seriously in this discussion. Women in Poland reacted to their own sometimes-difficult domestic realities by pushing for gender equality legislation that would position women in politics a more favorable way. It is not clear that comparing Poland to other national contexts by activists worked to help the cause of the Congress of Women. Thus, the Polish campaign certainly received help from outside the country, but it was primarily a domestically driven effort.

As one Polish academic noted:

During the campaign for quotas, we had some – in our strategy—to organize a conference in Parliament. We had some sympathetic males in the Parliament, the Vice Chairman of European Parliament. We invited Drude Dahlerup. We wanted to gain some media interest. It was the only international event [we held]. Gender studies are organized with the Western feminists. From the beginning we were doing it ourselves. We had Western money, Ford Foundation and Open Society, but we had only Polish teachers. I use quotas all over the world, as examples, in our teaching. (Interview 2018).

The academic also stated that they wanted the campaign to be authentic: “We wanted it to be very much Polish.”

In this way Poland is again different than Serbia. Serbia is more sensitive, given its past, to international norm adoption because it is looking to improve its international image. Poland is simply not under the kind of pressure Serbia is to do so. This is clearly related to the post-conflict nature of the Serbian state and additionally the EU accession dynamics Serbia faces as an EU candidate. Poland has been in the EU since 2004 and generally had a smoother accession process.

Current Impact and Potential Future Impact

Poland currently has 28.7% women in its Lower House of Parliament (the Sejm). This is a descriptive improvement, but some challenges do remain in this respect. First, the lack of a rank-order placement in the Polish quota allows political parties to place women at the very bottom of electoral lists. While this practice is not unique to Poland, it is nonetheless problematic and complicates the goals of the quota law. Incumbency also favors men and men are usually placed on top of Polish electoral lists.

According to Millard (2014) the open list nature of the Polish PR system may also diminish the prospect of women entering the Sejm in greater numbers. Voters tend to vote for familiar names that are on top of open lists and these are usually male names. When Polish voters choose candidates from outside the order of the party list, they usually choose male names. This may not be a reflection upon the bias of the average Polish voter, but rather again a reflection of the intentions of the political party to maintain power and hierarchy through preferring and promoting incumbent male names.

Despite these electoral challenges, the Polish quota has opened up some space for women to enter the Sejm in greater numbers. Beyond this it has introduced political parties and arguably the public to this notion of including women in politics. Because it was a bottom-up effort led by a social movement organization, the quota also has an element of democratic legitimacy. It was a citizens' initiative that got the law passed and so the bill retains this kind of public importance. Thus, the possibility of the quota being repealed, even under the leadership of Law and Justice, is low.

In terms of potential impact, the gender quota has the potential to change Polish politics even further. Its passing was the first step to the inclusion of more women in the

Sejm. The irony is that this quota has ushered in more women from the ruling Law and Justice Party, which has not been advantageous for women's rights. As one Polish academic noted:

[The thinking was...] If you manage to change the political system from within, then it would be much easier to have other changes. The vision did not completely work. Right now, Law and Justice has the most female MPs. We also have to think about the fact that women have different interests. (Interview 2018)

As is noted in the academic literature, descriptive representation often leads to substantive representation in the form of positive gender equality legislation, although this can be complex, depending on the legislators and their priorities. As Gwiazda (2018) notes, substantive representation of women can occur outside of formal political channels. Since the recent electoral domination in Parliament of the Law and Justice Party in Poland, Polish women have had to turn to mass mobilization in the form of Black Protests, rather than parliamentary representation, to combat efforts to further curtail the right to abortion. For now, women's representation in Parliament, although higher in absolute number, has not produced enough women politicians who fight for feminist interests. Thus, the fight for gender equality in Poland continues.

Chapter 6: Resistant Legacies: Dynamics of Quota Non-Adoption in CEE

Introduction

In the last two chapters, I provided process-tracing driven case studies of two paths to gender quota adoption, namely that of Poland and Serbia. In both cases, I highlighted the importance of women's movements and the opportunities that these movements, or networks, used to effect policy change in different settings. In the case of Serbia, I emphasized post-conflict dimensions in this process, in addition to the role of the EU and other European institutions in promoting gender equality in the country, sometimes more symbolically. In the case of Poland, I emphasized the role of the Congress of Women, constitutional provisions that provide openings for change and alliances with ruling parties and elites. Poland's path to gender quotas was much more arduous than Serbia's, and Serbia's gender quota is more effective because it includes a rank-order placement stipulation the Polish quota does not have. Additionally, Serbia has closed electoral lists whereas Polish lists remain open.

In this final substantive chapter, I look to explain why countries *do not* adopt gender quotas in the region. To accomplish this goal, I will look at the non-adopter countries first comparatively. For the purposes of this chapter, I will comparatively utilize 3 non-adopter countries. I will also analyze the 5 remaining countries where there are only voluntary party quotas because I argue that voluntary party quotas in CEE are largely ineffective and amount to limited progress for women in Parliaments as demonstrated by Table 3.

Thus, the structure of this chapter is as follows. First, I will look at the broader themes that emerge from mostly academic research, IGO reports and news outlets, related

to quota non-adoption. I will discuss what reasons politicians and others give for not supporting adoption and I will delve into the significance of these reasons and their implications. I will then analyze the institutional and political (top-down) and social movement (bottom-up) impediments that are present in CEE non-adopter countries that make it difficult for women's groups, even if they exist in some form, to push for gender equality in politics. Because my overall theory takes into account top-down and bottom-up factors, it is necessary to use this approach to explain non-adoption. Following this, I will delve into two shorter case studies, the Czech Republic and Latvia, to illustrate the specific dynamics involved in quota non-adoption in the CEE region.

The causes of non-adoption can be complex, as the causes for adoption can be also. I will first delve into the broader themes of non-adoption and then break down various aspects related to this non-adoption trend in certain countries of CEE. Table 10 shows which countries do not have legislated quotas in CEE.

Table 10: CEE Countries with No Legislated Quotas

Country	Percentage of Women in Parliament	Quota Adopted?	Type of Quota	Year of Quota Adoption
Latvia	30.00%	No	None	N/A
Estonia	29.70%	No	None	N/A
Bulgaria	25.83%	No	None	N/A
Czech Republic	22.50%	Yes	Party- Social Democrats	N/A
Lithuania	21.28%	Yes	Party- Social Democrats	N/A
Romania	21.88%	Yes	Party- Social Democratic Party, Democratic Party	N/A
Slovakia	20.00%	Yes	Party--People's Party, Party of the Democratic Left	N/A
Hungary	12.60%	Yes	Party-Socialist and "Politics Can be Different", Hungarian Socialist Party	N/A
8	22.97%			

as of January 2020, sources: IPU and Quota project

Eight countries in CEE have no legislated quota. The percentage of women in the Lower House of Parliament among them is almost 23%, lower than the percentage among those countries with legislated quotas, namely 28.36%. Three countries have no gender quota, and 5 countries have party quotas. In this chapter, I will examine why this is the case. Party quotas are less effective in terms of increasing women's descriptive representation than a country having no quota at all. This unusual trend will also be explored by noting some recent developments in the country of Latvia, where the 2018 elections ushered in almost twice as many women as there were in Parliament, from 16% to 30%, without a quota.

Cultural Factors: A Communist Past as a Present Excuse

The reasons why CEE countries do not adopt gender quotas are varied but some broad themes do emerge. First, many politicians within non-adopter countries where there was an attempt to adopt gender quotas cite the connection gender quotas have to a much-critiqued communist past. Gender quotas are viewed by some in this region (and, in reality, beyond) as impositions "from above" that diminish merit and a particular version of "freedom" some CEE elites have. Analysis of relevant documents of parliamentary discussions in secondary literature reveals that members of parliament across CEE emphasize, at best, that liberal democracies should encourage women to run for political office, but not make this mandatory or enforced, as was the case during the communist era.

As mentioned, the communist past of these countries complicates their views of quotas; in a sense it reminds relevant actors of this unwelcome past and in turn gives

them at the very least a rather effective toolkit of reasons to resist gender quotas, even in new democratic contexts. There are many examples of quota legislation failing in CEE countries because of a persistent reference to an unwanted communist past (see Table 6).

This method of association to a communist past long gone is particularly effective as a framing tactic in Parliament during quota debates and other debates concerning gender equality legislation. This framing has resonance among politicians, in reality, and at times the broader public. It is interesting to note that this resistance to communist-era policies extend to other forms of gender equality legislation. I will mention a parallel with the domestic-violence legislation called the Istanbul Convention later.

In terms of anti-quota rhetoric, there are several instances of MPs and other politicians advocating against quotas on the basis of a link to communism and similar arguments derived from this notion. Usually, these arguments involve mentions of merit and who truly “deserves” to enter Parliament and who does not. As Slovak scholar Dr. Alexandra Bitušíková (2005) notes in her work discussing quotas in Slovakia during an attempt to introduce them:

The deputy chair of the Christian Democratic Party and the present Minister of Justice (2005) Daniel Lipšic criticised the proposal as anti-constitutional and discriminatory because ‘it strengthened the stereotype that some groups of population could not achieve success without a special protection’ [Rebrova 2002; Jurinová 2004]. His argument was supported by a number of politicians, mostly from conservative right-wing parties.

In a 2018 interview with a Slovak academic, she noted that gender quotas have become a moot point in Slovakia, a kind of outdated and taboo topic. They are no longer a seriously discussed policy issue, due to many factors, including the rise of right-wing populism. As the academic noted:

In the meanwhile, the gender agenda has become very much „stigmatised“ and marginalised in Slovakia – mainly by “pro-family“ movement, several influential Catholic priests (who started anti-Istanbul protocol debate and who openly talk about gender agenda as an evil) and even by some politicians (mainly from extremist far right party) – this has a big impact on the overall societal opinion about gender equality. (Interview 2018)

Additionally, Mejere (2012) discusses the various sources of opposition to gender quotas in Lithuania as stemming from an unwanted “Soviet” legacy. She notes:

When presenting amendments to the Law on Equal Opportunities for Men and Women (XIP-3380(2), Labour Party MP member Zasciurinskas referred to the Soviet times when the number of women in some organisations was fixed. In a similar manner central liberal MP Mazuronis commented the idea of gender quotas to a journalist: ‘Gender quotas came from the Soviet times, when representatives of certain professions had to participate in election. Adoption of gender quotas is an evident disrespect and distrust of women.’

Often male politicians in the region note how women “do not need” gender quotas, that they are capable of achieving political admission and success on their own. However, this approach inevitably leads to preserving the status quo in CEE, one that consistently, at least recently, had led to women’s underrepresentation in politics. In short, quotas have been effective worldwide and in the region in terms of increasing representation of women. Resisting them on this basis masks the structural and cultural discrimination women face on the road to political careers. This is particularly true in a region where since the fall of communism, political institutions have been dominated by males.

In the same 2012 article, Mejere interestingly notes the problem with framing some pro-quota politicians have:

Thus it can be assumed that such comments and attributing gender quotas to the Soviet heritage is determined by the fact that politicians, lobbying for quotas, do not point out that they are not discussing re-establishment of Soviet style quotas but social democratic quotas that are in practice in Northern [Scandinavian] countries. (58).

Mejere points out that linking quotas to the Soviet era makes them unpopular and furthermore this tactic might be an issue of proper framing. Proponents of gender quotas have had trouble, at least successfully, framing this new era of quota adoption as stemming from a democratic-socialist agenda according to the Scandinavian model, rather than a Soviet one. But when there is so much resistance, this might not even matter, because in reality the problem is deeper than framing.

Sometimes the problem is deeply cultural and relates to a country's path dependence post-communism. In an email interview with a former MP of the Lithuanian Social Democratic (SD) Party, who was involved in introducing a quota amendment to the Lithuanian Parliament albeit unsuccessfully, she gave insight as to why there has been so much resistance to legislated quotas in Lithuania. In fact, the Lithuanian SD Party is one of the only prominent social-democratic party in the Baltics and the only party as of now that has a voluntary party quota in the Baltics. However, Lithuania continues to resist any kind of legislated form of gender quotas.

The MP's task to introduce quotas was not particularly easy in such a resistant context. In the 2019 email interview, the MP mentioned various cultural and institutional impediments to quota adoption in Lithuania:

Lithuania is still a patriarchal country. [the] General public do[es] not miss women candidates, even women voters prefer male candidates. In our electoral system we have preference votes. General tendency after elections is that women drop down in the list. (Interview 2018)

As the former MP notes, the cultural and political resistance that is present in some countries of CEE is rooted in a pronounced patriarchy and often a sense of anti-feminism, which has been amplified in recent years, as the Slovak and Lithuanian cases imply. The Baltic states seem to have a more pronounced resistance to gender quotas on the basis of eschewing communism or anything that resembles it. In fact, two of the no-quota countries are in the Baltics (Estonia and Latvia). This is presumably related to the fact that the Baltic States were once a part of the Soviet Union itself. This also relates to the prevalence of conservative, or at least, center-right parties in the region since independence.

One can also infer that gender quotas are associated with feminism by the general public, which is not exactly a popular or embraced philosophy in parts of CEE. Although, state feminism was a part of CEE life during communism, most people did not really understand these policies as particularly “feminist”. The state imposed them and there was very little grassroots effort at least to raise awareness about these policies. Sometimes, as a result, the current form of feminism is viewed even by some proponents or supporters of these policies as a “Western” imposition. Many people in this region (and of course beyond) associate feminism with negative or perceived negative consequences, such as the end of the family or anti-male attitudes. The CEE region in this regard is no exception.

Institutional and Political Constraints

There is also a political background to this context; resisting quotas on the basis of legacies of communism is not the entire story, although this overlaps on the political

dimension because politicians use this argument to frame opposition to quotas. In many of the non-adopter countries, including those that have party quotas, legislated quotas have been attempted and sometimes with some help from women's groups. The rejection of quotas on the political or elite level has happened many times among the non-adopters (see Table 6, Chapter 3). The reasons for rejection of quotas politically and institutionally are varied but I would argue they follow broadly into three categories: *limited outside political pressure, limited inside political pressure, and lack of political consensus on the matter once it does get to the elite level*, which is albeit rare among non-adopters.

In terms of limited outside political pressure, I am referring to the relative lack of pressure put on politicians to pass these gender quotas by relevant social movement actors, particularly women's groups. If one uses Poland as an example or even a measure in terms of social movement pressure, it is clear that most other CEE countries do not have this kind of social movement activity. Poland's Congress of Women, I would argue, is a unique organization in this regard with very few true counterparts in CEE. In Slovakia and the Czech Republic women's groups were involved in the few quota adoption attempts, but their ability to lobby successfully was limited because political parties were not interested in hearing their pleas and their unity is not as cohesive as the Polish Congress of Women itself. It is also not clear if these women's movements sustained a vigorous gender quota campaign to amass public support for the initiative. No evidence could be found to suggest any kind of vigorous quota campaign in any non-adopter context. As one Slovak quota actor notes women's organizations in Slovakia are facing a difficult reality and do not always focus on quotas in their missions.

The main activities of these groups relate to gender education (at informal level) and gender "sensitisation", violence on women, women in labour market. In 2001,

33 women's groups addressed political parties and asked them to introduce quotas in the elections at all levels (every 3rd candidate should be a woman), there was one more attempt a bit later (initiated by a political party), but since then nothing - no debate in the society about this at all. Gender agenda is very marginalised in the society, no political party sees gender equality as a problem - while in the first decade after 2000 there was a debate from time to time about it, in last decade there is almost nothing (except for topics such as violence on women and women in labour market - from time to time). Even women's groups do not open the topic of women in politics - I think it is because the rhetoric against gender has strengthened in recent years. (Interview 2019)

This is also an issue in the Czech Republic. An NGO representative in the Czech Republic had another insight in terms of adoption. As she noted:

It's quite tricky to "measure" or assess the strength of women's movement... there are organizations promoting women's rights (Fórum 50 % focuses specifically on politics and among other also on gender quotas), Czech Women's Lobby has more than 30 member organizations. But the fact probably is that feminist agenda doesn't have some major support from "ordinary" women, general public... At the same time women's/gender NGOs are consistently underfinanced which significantly limits their capacities to advocate for particular issues and policies. (Interview 2019)

The NGO representative also mentioned the lack of cohesion among women's groups:

Fórum 50 % is the only Czech NGO focusing on balanced representation of women and men politics and actively promoting gender quotas. Within Czech Women's Lobby (at least in the time when the proposals were discussed) there was (is?) not a consensus on whether to support gender quotas in politics or not and for that reason we were not actually able to use the network for lobbying and did it solely in the name of Fórum 50 %. *Nevertheless, as mentioned above, the impetus was not primarily from NGOs but directly from within the government.* (Interview 2019)

The NGO representative makes clear that NGOs are limited in Czech Republic in terms of how much they can influence this policy adoption, which then links back to one of the main arguments of this research, namely that NGOs in other parts of CEE sometimes either lack cohesion or a strong enough influence to effect policy changes. Nonetheless, the NGO representative asks an interesting question at the end. What kind of impetus would be enough to secure quota adoption in non-adopter states? This is a

complex question. One can potentially look at the case of Poland, where resistance did exist surely for some of the same reasons it exists in other parts of CEE, and the arduous campaign the Congress of Women waged in 2011 to get quotas passed. When there is significant elite resistance, much social movement pressure is almost necessary to overcome it, as Poland demonstrates.

This social movement actor theme is present in other cases in CEE. As Várnagy (2013) notes the Hungarian women's movement is also limited and lacked influence in terms of gender quota adoption, when it was attempted in that state in 2011. Citing a 2010 failed attempt at a referendum to usher in a legislated gender quota, Várnagy (2013) notes the lack of influence of women's groups to actually bolster public support. As she notes: "The political elite, including both male and female politicians, does not seem open towards gender quotas, while the bottom-up pressure of the public or civil society is not strong enough" (10). Thus, one can infer that in the Hungarian case, especially with the rise of right-wing leader President Viktor Orbán, the context for promoting women in politics may not be optimal. Also, given the lack of movement mobilization, the push to promote more women in politics may continue to be a difficult task.

Lithuania has also been described as lacking a cohesive women's movement, as has Estonia. The Lithuanian feminist movement is according to one source "hardly developed" (Jankauskaitė 2016). Lithuanian women's groups mostly focus on domestic violence issues and "promoting women's voices in economic/political decision-making" but face challenges combating a political culture that remains traditional and masculine (Jankauskaitė 2016). Stankevičius (2012) also cites the lack of strength of women NGOs

as a reason for the relative lack of women in the Lithuanian Parliament. As Stankevičius notes:

...Institutions of civil society are weak in respect to their impact on changing policies and their influence on political decisions. The funding difficulties, tensions between the work of NGOs, the negative perception of feminism, and public attitudes towards feminism decrease the importance of NGOs in society. (25)

Thus, in many non-adopter countries, there is limited outside pressure in terms of gender quota adoption and other gender equality legislation.

In terms of inside political pressure, the situation is even more challenging. In all of the attempts in non-adopter states, the proposed quota law met serious resistance at the elite level, where it mostly originated. This is related, as mentioned, to a certain perception of quotas by politicians, but it is also related to the kinds of political parties that are in power in CEE and have been in power since the fall of communism. Most non-adopter CEE countries I survey do have variation in terms of the ideological proclivity of ruling political parties. In many of them, there is a presence of both left-wing and right-wing parties. However, generally speaking, there is a predominance of center or center-right parties, particularly in the non-adopter Baltic states (Eglitis 2015). Because communism and, as a result, leftist ideologies, are still discredited in CEE, it is difficult to push for policies that are reminiscent of that kind of political approach. I have documented the resistance to the communist past in this chapter among non-adopters and this is related to the lack of strength left-wing parties have in CEE. Also, right-wing or center-right parties may enjoy more legitimacy because of their anti-communist, anti-leftist stances. They can always label their opposition to gender equality proposals in pejorative, anti-communist ways.

This also has to do with ideas of path dependence and critical junctures in CEE. At the time of the fall of communism, those who were in opposition to communist ideology won the struggle over the political future of their respective countries, ushering in a democratic and capitalistic future. Since these political parties and their members were influential at a crucial time, they created a political pattern that continues to today in one form or another (Chiva 2018). Right-wing populism has become appealing currently for states such as Hungary and Poland. I believe, given their trajectories post-communism, that this is no accident. Thus, this political bent results in anti-feminism or a sense that gender equality is anti-family or anti-male, for example.

Additionally, once a legislated gender quota proposal comes to the elite, parliamentary level in certain countries in CEE, its fate is usually sealed by stark opposition, who base their opposition on a myriad of reasons, usually anti-gender equality and anti-leftist in nature. Even sometimes political parties that have introduced a legislated quota proposal fail to gain the support of their coalitions. This was the case in the Czech Republic in 2015, as previously mentioned.

Similar initiatives have met similar fates. Initiatives introduced by single MPs or even a pair of MPs in certain contexts fail to garner the kind of elite support required to push such an initiative through. Examples where this has happened include Hungary and Slovakia.

The Istanbul Convention Parallel

It is helpful to examine a parallel between another kind of emerging international norm or set of norms and the subject under study, gender quota adoption. The parallel

norm is combating and preventing domestic violence. One of the leading conventions dedicated to preventing and combating domestic violence is called the Istanbul Convention (formally the *Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence*). The Istanbul Convention was drafted in 2011. It has since been signed by 46 countries in Europe. It has been ratified by 34 countries (Council of Europe 2019).

There is a possible parallel involved between the two norms because both involve the promotion of gender equality and deal with similar dimensions across public and private space. Although domestic violence legislation targets the private sphere more directly than gender quota adoption, the two norms are linked because they are efforts in essence to promote women and to protect and enhance the spaces within which women live and work. Additionally, both norms have been resisted for similar reasons. Both policies reflect an increasing sensitivity to gender equality norms as promoted by international and regional institutions, in this case, the Council of Europe. Narratives opposing gender quotas and domestic violence have much in common. There are examples across CEE of opposition to the Istanbul Convention on familiar grounds, usually involving misconceptions of the concept gender, harkening to a better or worse past and outright traditionalism.

For example, in 2016, the Latvian Ministry of Justice urged the Latvian government to not sign the Istanbul Convention on the grounds that this kind of approach is “neo-Marxist”. The Ministry of Justice in its legal justification advocating against ratification noted:

However, as we know, the communist regime was a direct product of Marxist ideology. Why then should the Latvian people now support and celebrate neo-Marxist

ideologies - "gender" feminism - in the Latvian legal system and all walks of life?
(Latvian News 2016)

Relatedly, Latvia has signed but not ratified the Istanbul Convention. The countries that have signed but not ratified the Istanbul Convention mirror almost exactly the countries that have not adopted gender quotas. Signing a treaty is a signal of agreement in international law and an intent to follow the treaty, but it is not a true commitment by any means. Ratification of a treaty usually means an acceptance of all of its terms and a formal national procedure to implement the treaty's provisions within national law. The Istanbul Convention is therefore binding for signatories and therefore its stipulations must be adopted into domestic law. 34 out of 46 signatories have also ratified the Istanbul Convention. Tables 11 and 12 illustrate which CEE countries included in this work have signed the Istanbul Convention and which countries have ratified it. A clear pattern emerges between gender quota adopters and non-adopters:

Table 11: Gender Quota Adopters and Ratification of Istanbul Convention

Quota Adopters CEE	Istanbul Convention Ratification?
Albania	Yes
Bosnia & Herzegovina	Yes
Croatia	Yes
North Macedonia	Yes
Serbia	Yes
Slovenia	Yes
Montenegro	Yes
Poland	Yes
Moldova	No
Ukraine	No
Kosovo*	N/A

Sources: Council of Europe

Table 12: Gender Quota Non-Adopter Countries and the Istanbul Convention

Legislated Quota Non- Adopter CEE	Ratified Istanbul Convention?
Latvia	No
Bulgaria	No
Czech Republic	No
Lithuania	No
Slovakia	No
Hungary	No
Estonia	Yes
Romania	Yes

Source: Council of Europe

It is evident that the countries that have adopted legislated quotas in CEE are more likely to ratify the Istanbul Convention. Out of the adopter countries, only two Moldova and Ukraine, have not ratified the Istanbul Convention. Kosovo is not in the Council of Europe because it is a partly recognized state, so it has not ratified the Convention as an independent state. Out of the non-adopter countries, 6 of 8 have signed but not ratified the Convention. This is important to note because this pattern mirrors gender quota adoption and reflects some of the same sources of resistance. This tendency to resist gender equality norms in certain CEE countries also extends to domestic violence legislation. Along with the case of Latvia, the case of Bulgaria in this context is particularly instructive.

Significant controversy arose in Bulgaria, a quota non-adopter, because of the potential ratification of the Istanbul Convention in 2018. In 2018, the Bulgarian Council of Ministers recommended that the Istanbul Convention be ratified by the Bulgarian Parliament. At this point there was already controversy and complaints among members of parliament, the media and civic organizations who perceived the Convention to be leading to recognition of “same sex marriage” and recognition of a “third sex”. Again, this illustrates how gender equality legislation can often be misunderstood and misrepresented. Due to this outside and inside political pressure, Bulgarian Prime Minister, Boyko Borisov, of the populist GERB party, referred the matter to the 12-person Bulgarian Constitutional Court for an evaluation of its constitutionality, noting that he had very little support among his coalition partners and others for ratification (Bulgaria National Radio 2019).

The Constitutional Court found in an 8-4 ruling that the Istanbul Convention does not conform to the Bulgaria Constitution because its definition of gender as a social construct does not conform to the common (mis)conception of men and women as biologically determined categories. As the Court noted the concept of gender as being a social construct: “relativizes the borderline between the two sexes – male and female as biologically determined” (Court Ruling 2018). Without this biological distinction, the concept of man and woman ceases to exist and there is no point then to even discuss domestic violence—the Court asserted. The Court also cited the concept of “gender ideology” and how it has been “spread” to many countries and has caused controversy. As of early 2020, Bulgaria has still not ratified the Istanbul Convention.

Furthermore, Defense Minister, Krasimir Karakachanov, a member of nationalist party IMRO (in a ruling coalition with GERB currently), claimed that, through the convention, “international lobbies are pushing Bulgaria to legalize a ‘third gender’ and introduce school programs for studying homosexuality and transvestism (sic) and creating opportunities for enforcing same-sex marriages” (Balkan Insight 2018). Surprisingly, the Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP), the leading left-wing party in Bulgaria did not support the Convention at all, leading to a rift with the Party of European Socialists.

Examples such as these show that gender equality legislation, especially when it has substantial levels of enforcement and when it deals with the private sphere, is resisted by certain, more traditional, or socially conservative elements, in many national contexts. Interestingly, the rhetoric used against the Istanbul Convention mirrors some of the rhetoric against gender quotas: gender quotas are resisted on the basis of an unwanted

historical legacy and present realities, and domestic violence legislation is resisted on the basis of different historical legacies, but also present realities and misperceptions.

The Istanbul Convention is another example of an international norm or a set of norms, in the form of a Convention, that has been resisted by some of the same countries in the CEE that resist gender quotas. What these non-adopter countries have in common are pronounced right-wing movements and parties that succeed in convincing relevant political actors to resist gender equality mechanisms. What they lack generally is enough social movement strength, both outside and inside elite political circles, that can promote gender equality and stop these regressive measures.

Czech Republic

Now that I have completed an overview of various factors that contribute to quota non-adoption in a comparative perspective, I will now turn to brief case examples of quota non-adoption. The first case I examine is that of the Czech Republic.

Context: A Previous Attempt at Gender Quota Adoption in the Czech Republic

The Czech Republic currently has 22.5% women in the lower chamber of parliament. This places the Central European country 84th on the IPU Women in Parliament global ranking list. It is 12th out of 19 CEE countries being examined in this research. Scholars and activist have noted the dearth of women in politics in the Czech Republic since the fall of communism. Many observers have called for the adoption of legislated gender quotas as a potential remedy. As of this point only one political party, the Czech Social Democratic Party (ČSSD), utilizes a party quota in the Czech political

system. It was this party that attempted to make politics more equitable for women by proposing passing legislated gender quotas in 2015.

Specifically, the Social Democratic Party, the party in a coalition majority, introduced a proposal in Parliament that called for a legislated quota, which would have guaranteed that 40% of candidates on party lists are women and a zipper-system or rank-order system within the legislated quota. However, the legislated quota attempt failed to garner enough coalition support.

The Christian Democratic Union–Czech People’s Party (KDU-ČSL) and ANO (Movement of Dissatisfied Citizens) opposed the measure and thus doomed it to failure. Gelnarouvá and Fousková (2016) note that even though male politicians from the Christian Democratic Party of the Czech Republic opposed the quota, the women of KDU did not. As they note: “Their organization joined its signature to an open letter supporting the legislative introduction of quotas, signed alongside the women’s organizations of the Green, Social Democratic and Communist parties” (138). Unfortunately, this women’s initiative, although a promising sign for future attempts at quota adoption, did not work to change the minds of opponents leading to the proposed bill’s defeat.

Why the Resistance?

The attempts to pass legislated gender quotas in the Czech Republic have not been numerous and when they have gotten to the elite level, they have faced serious internal and external impediments. There is once again a lack of internal and external political pressure and a significant lack of consensus when the quota proposal does

actually get to the elite level. In some sense, the Czech Republic embodies this kind of pattern we see elsewhere in CEE among non-adopters. The 2015 quota proposal was not associated with significant women's movement pressure, as the 2010-2011 gender quota campaign by the Congress of Women was in Poland. The one organization in the Czech Republic that does focus on parity in political, Forum 50%, was not involved in a grassroots campaign to introduce gender quotas at this time. Their efforts are mostly based on lobbying, instead of grassroots pressure. The impetus for the legislated gender quota originated at the elite level with Ministers of the Social Democratic Party—and not at the grassroots level. This made it more difficult to convince coalition partners of the popular legitimacy and importance of the gender quota.

This is related to the kind of women's movement in the Czech Republic. In fact, as Korolczuk and Saxonberg (2015) explain that the Czech women's movement is different than the Polish women's movement in several crucial ways. The Czech women's movement is mostly focused on “transactional” strategies, defined as lobbying activities behind the scenes, whereas the Polish women's movement focuses on “participatory” and “transactional” strategies. Participatory activities refer to grassroots tactics, such as protests, boycotts and strikes. Polish women activists employ both strategies more readily than Czech women activists and are often more successful in meeting their goals as a result. Grassroots pressure in addition to more political opportunities in Poland, such as the law that allows citizens to propose a Parliamentary bill by securing at least 100,000 signatures in three months, has made the Polish women's movement more effective in creating change, especially when it comes to women's political leadership.

The numbers of organizations working to further gender equality also vary across contexts. There are more listed Polish women's organizations than Czech organizations. According to Korolczuk and Saxonberg, in 2015 there were 49 listed women's organizations in the Czech Republic and 133 in Poland. Additionally, Poland is home to one significant women's organization, i.e. The Congress of Women, a women's organization that boasts thousands of members across localities in Poland. The Czech Republic has no equivalent organization with that much grassroots reach. The Czech Republic is home to an organization called the Czech Women's Union, but this organization was originally created during communist times. It still is dominant as an organization, but it lacks the legitimacy and trust of other Czech women's organizations as it is often in competition with them for scarce resources, which the Women's Union, because of its size, ends up securing. Thus, there is a difference in the kind of women's movement that exists in each setting.

This distinction might be also due to historical legacies. Women in Poland made up a sizeable percentage of Solidarity participants, whereas women in Charter 77 in Czechoslovakia were less active. Also, Polish women face the harsh reality of severe restrictions to abortion in their country, whereas Czech women do not. This might serve as a catalyst for participatory social movement action. As one interviewee from the Czech Republic explained:

Opponents usually say quotas are not in compliance with the constitution. At the same time it seems that if it comes to policies reacting to gender issues in post-communist countries (or at least in the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland and Hungary) it's a kind of trade-off - e.g. in Poland they have gender quotas in politics but access to abortions is restricted, in the Czech Republic it's quite the opposite - general attitude to abortions (and contraception, sexual education...) is quite liberal but quotas are out of question (Interview 2019).

Restrictions on abortion may be one catalyst for Polish women, but this is not the only issue women protest there. As was noted in Chapter 5, Polish women organize around other issues including domestic violence and of course gender quota adoption. It also seems unconvincing that Czech women do not have any reason to protest, certainly issues such as domestic violence and women's political leadership could spark a movement. There is perhaps a lack of cohesion among women's organizations, a lack of consensus and also a lack of political opportunities in the Czech context to push forth gender quota legislation. These factors, when combined together, can serve as explanatory reasons why the Czech Republic does not have a legislated quota. This does not mean that this will always be the case in the country, but for now prospects are low.

Latvia Overview

The last case I will examine is that of Latvia. Latvia is a Baltic state. It is a member of the EU (since 2004) and NATO (since 2004). Despite having generally positive gender equality indicators according to various reports including the mentioned World Economic Forum Global Gender Gap Report, Latvia has not historically had a high percentage of women in its Seima, the unicameral national Parliament, since independence.

From 1944-1991, Latvia was a constituent republic of the Soviet Union. It became independent in 1991. A high number, 240,000 (26.9% of a population of 1.92 million) of Latvians are of Russian ethnicity and many remain without formal citizenship (Freedom House 2018). The Russian citizenship question in Latvia has remained controversial, as has the question of the Russian language and the general Soviet legacy. Furthermore,

gender quota opposition remains intact and pronounced as it is reminiscent of a bygone, turbulent Soviet era.

In terms of women in Parliament, Latvia currently has 30% women in its Parliament, the highest percentage it has achieved since independence (IPU 2018). Before this election cycle, Latvia had 16% women in Parliament. The recent (October 2018) election clearly ushered in more women parliamentarians. To remind the reader, Latvia has no legislated gender quota, nor does it have a party with a voluntary quota—thus it remains an odd case in CEE, a country with absolutely no quotas. It is one of three countries with that designation—the other two being Bulgaria and Estonia.

The reasons why Latvia has improved its percentage of women in parliament remains uncertain, although most experts can initially deduce that political parties placed women higher on electoral lists, even without a formal legislated gender quota (and without voluntary party quotas) (IPU 2019; Dean forthcoming 2020). Furthermore, Dean (2020) asserts that women were present in absolutely greater numbers on electoral lists in 2018; there were more women running. Also, for unknown reasons, voters gave women more preferential votes, which is allowed in the Latvian electoral system, thus increasing their places on electoral lists and ultimately ushering more of them in Parliament.

Thus, before I begin to discuss Latvia's apparent recent success in promoting more women in Parliament without a quota, I will discuss the reasons why Latvia has no gender quota, contributing to the overall research question of this work. In this brief case study, I will discuss Latvia's cultural and political environment in addition to its diffused women's movement as elements of an explanation why Latvia continues to resist a prevalent international norm. I thus highlight three possible factors as explanatory

measures for non-adoption, namely a conservative political environment, a diffused women's movement, and a lack of political opportunities. There are few opportunities to push for legislated quotas and the anti-quota sentiment and pressure from the top-down perspective is significant. There is additionally little bottom-up pressure coming from women's movements or the public to introduce this important and potentially transformative measure.

Latvia's Conservative Political Environment

From a top-down or elite level perspective, there are some impediments for quota advocates to push for quota legislation in Latvia. First, the political parties that lead in the country are generally and have been historically center-right and nationalist in nature (Mawhood 2017). There are few left-of-center parties (but not many) and historically, at least since 1991, they have been not in power. For example, the Latvian equivalent to a social democratic political party, called Harmony, represents the interests of the Russian minority in the country, and since its founding in 2010, it has never been invited to form a government with other parties, despite attaining high levels of mandates in Parliament, especially in the last two Parliamentary elections. In fact, the party won the highest number of seats (23) among political parties in the recent October 2018 elections (IPU 2018).

The fact that Harmony has never been included in the ruling government emphasizes the idea that they have very few potential coalition partners, mainly because very few center-left or left parties reach the electoral threshold in Latvia so as to be represented in parliament. Therefore, the political environment in Latvia is not exactly

welcoming of all gender equality ideals, despite the many prominent women in Latvian politics, such as the former President of Latvia Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga, who was President from 1999 to 2007. Latvia has also had several women speakers of parliament. Despite these accomplishments, Latvia remains closed to the idea of gender quotas, partly because there exists a high level of political elite resistance.

No Bottom-up Impetus: A Diffused Women's Movement

Latvia's women's movement has also been described as diffused and lacking a grassroots orientation. Novikova (2006) describes how Latvian civil society, including women's groups, were largely marginalized during the transition to a market economy and thereby did not have a prominent role at this critical time. She also describes how the ethnic tensions between Russian in Latvia and other Latvians make coordination among women's groups very difficult. She notes that generally Latvian women's NGOs do not have a coordinated or unified stance on many issues. One can then deduce that this extends to gender equality provisions, such as gender quotas.

There is one NGO in Latvia that is credited as being the most prominent one in the country (Interview 2019). The NGO is called MARTA (<http://marta.lv/projects>). MARTA was founded in 2000 as a collaboration project between Latvia, Finland, and Sweden. At certain points in the history of this NGO, it has fought for gender quotas, or at least women's political participation. However, its focus currently is on the labor market and human trafficking. Women's political participation is not even listed as a main project on the MARTA website, underscoring the difficult setting in which the NGO operates.

Lack of Political Opportunities, Public Opposition and General Anti-Quota

Sentiment

Latvia is also an unhospitable setting for gender quota introduction because women's groups, which are diffused and disunified, lack political opportunities because the setting is so anti-quota, conservative and politically turbulent. There is also a lot of public opposition to gender quotas. Funding for NGOs is also a problem. Novikova (2006) explicitly points out the lack of funding NGOs face in Latvia:

No less important is the obvious fact that there is no direct or even partial government funding for projects that implement gender equality principles or address the procedures for gender mainstreaming. The absence of state-funded actions/projects, designed to improve gender equality on a regular and integrated basis, reflects the indifferent, if not reluctant and even hostile, attitude of the political powers towards taking the additional steps that are necessary to move gender equality beyond the "accession exam". (109)

Thereby, she also highlights somewhat ironically the minimal effect of EU accession had on Latvia in terms of promoting gender equality. She claims that gender equality became subordinate to ensuring free market and other neo-liberal reforms during accession. This stands in contrast to the seemingly positive effect solely *possible* EU accession has had on states of the former Yugoslavia.

Relatedly, there was a MARTA-led initiative in 2017 that attempted to gather 10,000 signatures to force the Latvian Parliament to debate the measure (as it happened in Poland). However, this campaign has only gathered 200 signatures to date. While this is promising that Latvia has this kind of civic initiative law, it is clear that the campaign waged to utilize this law for gender quotas is gaining very little traction. This implies a constrained campaign but also a disinterested public.

Another impediment to gender quotas or gender equality may be the high levels of turnover in Latvian politics. This creates an instability in the country that does not in this case provide an auspicious opportunity for the introduce of gender quotas. Champions of gender quotas, if they exist, may not have the kind of electoral safety or confidence to introduce this measure. Instability of the parliament itself may also be uncondusive to these kinds of changes as they often require a long process and significant bottom-up and top-down advocacy to be passed.

Latvian Electoral Breakthrough of 2018: Initial Clues

There is an interesting recent trend occurring in the Baltic States. Countries are succeeding in promoting more women in politics without legislated gender quotas or voluntary party quotas. In fact, Latvia and Estonia have relatively high percentages of women in Parliament; 30% and 29.2% respectively.

However, neither country is home to any kind of gender quota. In Latvia specifically, the percentage of women in Parliament almost doubled in the last 2018 Parliamentary elections: going from 16% to 30%. Although the question of how this happened has not been answered affirmatively by scholars yet, it seems as though women, for whatever reason, were put higher on Latvia's open electoral lists and managed to secure more votes. One can make a preliminary deduction however; perhaps Latvia is becoming more open to the norm of gender equality in politics. Although it still resists formal gender quotas, this might be slowly changing.

This is a positive development, surely, but there is question of sustainability. Given the unstable nature of Latvian politics, it is not enough to rely solely on the

apparent whim of political parties to ensure a higher level of women's representation. Something has to be codified to be consistent and followed. It seems as though, despite the positive result, that this was not the case in Latvia. Therefore, there is no institutional guarantee that a similar result will happen for women in the future.

Conclusions

In this final chapter, I set out to explain why certain countries in the CEE region do not have legislated gender quotas and in some cases have no quotas at all. I emphasized top-down and bottom-up factors as explanatory factors in this complex story. First, I placed emphasis on the political environment in the country. I noted that inhospitable political environments can be inhibitors of gender quota adoption. I also noted that this can be overcome by strong social movement actors, such as women's groups, but that this impetus has to be quite effective and powerful, such as the one in Poland. There also have to be political opportunities or openings through which social movement actors operate. The more inhospitable the political environment is, the fewer of these that exist. I used the cases of the Czech Republic and Latvia to specifically demonstrate how these mechanisms work in so-called political "real-time".

The case of the Czech Republic, where there exist voluntary party quotas and where there have been attempts to pass legislated quotas, demonstrates a combination of inhibiting factors, including a disunified women's movement, an unsupportive public, a generally inhospitable elite political level and a lack of support for quotas among political elites.

The case of Latvia demonstrates an even more “closed” environment where not only there are no quotas but there have also been no attempts to pass legislated gender quotas. This can be traced back to a lack of a unified women’s movement, a very conservative political environment and a lack of public support for the idea of quotas. Suffice it to say in both cases, there is a strong “lingering legacy”; a kind of resistance to anything reminiscent of communist times. This does not help this cause; in fact, it is quite the hindrance.

Overall, gender quota non-adoption occurs in countries where there are less active women’s movements and where there are fewer political opportunities for these actors to enact change. Focusing in further, this is embodied in Parliaments that are dominated by conservative parties and where currently populism is becoming an ever more attractive ideology. Non-adoption is complex process and some deduction is necessary to solve this riddle. However, some general patterns, as documented in this chapter, have emerged.

Chapter 7: Conclusions, Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

My dissertation set out to explain why some countries of CEE adopt gender quotas in their electoral or political party frameworks and why some do not. Virtually no previous study is dedicated to a comparison of gender quota adoption in CEE. In this sense, this dissertation is a new contribution.

My dissertation followed a systematic format. To attain working explanations for the overall puzzle or question, I delved into the secondary literature for the overall topic and additionally I looked at secondary literature analyzing quota dimensions of the countries being analyzed. I then complemented this initial analysis with fieldwork interviews in Serbia (summer 2017) and Poland (summer 2018) in addition to Skype and email interviews (2018-2019). I focused on interviewing NGO activists, academics and politicians who had knowledge of the gender quota adoption process in most countries. The interviews provided greater insight into my research question and provided a venue for more contextual knowledge and cultural sensitivity. I then utilized specific process-tracing driven case studies in the dissertation to illustrate the mechanisms involved in quota adoption and non-adoption. The case studies served as detailed examples of real-time adoption and non-adoption processes.

Argument and Findings

Overall, I made the argument that gender quota adoption in CEE is crucially aided by the activity of important women's social movement groups in each national setting but also at times through other networks. These women's groups then utilize political

opportunities, or windows of opportunity, to advocate for gender quota adoption. These political opportunities can be primarily domestic in nature (Poland's law on civic initiatives) or represent a complex combination of domestic and international level political opportunities, such as those in Serbia that reflected a desire on behalf of Serbian political actors to change domestic electoral law to be more equitable, but also later to be more reflective of European ideals and values.

In turn, I speak back to the theoretical framework I started with. To remind the reader, Krook (2007) posits four crucial factors involved in quota adoption: women's movement pressure, elite calculations, democratic legitimacy and the spread of international norms. In the case of CEE, I test these factors and then contextualize and extend the theoretical framework. Gender quota adoption in CEE is initiated mostly by women's movement actors who then use elements of democratic legitimacy and international norms to frame their arguments. In the case of the former Yugoslavia, this involves an appeal to European Union norms and standards. Women's groups also rely on arguments of fairness and gender equality to secure adoption, in addition to utilizing relevant political opportunities, such as post-conflict electoral reforms and conducive domestic laws.

In the absence of strong women's movement pressure, gender quota adoption is more difficult to secure. In the absence of elite-level opportunities, such as sympathetic elites or political parties, gender quota adoption is difficult to accomplish. Often, as in the sandwich strategy in Serbia, there has to be a combination of top-down opportunities and bottom-up efforts to ensure gender quota adoption in a setting.

Thus, complex factors can interact to open opportunities for the primary drivers of gender quota adoption, women's groups. Women's groups are also aided by elite allies. In the case of Poland, The Congress of Women used its allies in the ruling Civic Platform party to help ensure quota adoption in 2011. In the case of Serbia, women's groups and other social movement actors used their allies in the Democratic Party (DS) to push for gender quota reform in 2011. Usually, gender quota adoption is a complex and long process that requires many committed supporters along the way to succeed.

There are conversely many factors that explain quota non-adoption in CEE. On one larger level, quotas are not viewed favorably by CEE elites, causing a serious impediment at the elite level for adoption. This is usually because quotas are thought to be reminiscent of an unwanted Soviet era and are perceived as impositions that diminish "fair play" and merit.

Additionally, in some settings that do not have legislated quotas or that have weak voluntary party quotas, women's groups in those settings tend to be disunified generally and also not unified in terms of pushing for gender quota adoption. In the Czech Republic, there is a record of gender quota adoption attempts so the resistance is overall less pronounced. However, the Czech Republic illustrates how top-down resistance and a lack of bottom-up pressure can combine to provide inhospitable environments for gender quota adoption.

Thus, I used specific case studies to illustrate some of the dynamics involved in gender quota adoption and non-adoption. The last substantive chapter was dedicated to an overall comparison of non-adopter countries and shorter case studies of the Czech

Republic and Latvia. The case studies demonstrate that hindrances such as diffused women's movements and unsympathetic elites can translate to a pattern of non-adoption.

Overall, women's movements are crucial actors in this story. They generally provide the impetus for gender quota adoption in domestic settings. I also contend that women's groups are aided by important political opportunities or openings available to them in the adoption process. These openings vary by domestic context but nonetheless help women's groups usher in more women in politics across CEE.

I focused on discerning patterns in this dissertation across cases, but I do acknowledge that there is a level of equifinality, or diversity in paths to the same outcome. As the Serbian and Polish case demonstrate, women's groups utilize different kinds of openings, tools, tactics and strategies to secure quota adoption. Also, paths to non-adoption are also quite diverse and context-dependent, despite the similarities I introduced throughout.

Potential Significance

This work is significant primarily because it is a new contribution to the existing literature on CEE women and politics. There is no comparable study that focuses on a comparison of gender quota adoption in the region. Most studies are single-case studies of adoption. Mine is the first to include 19 cases. The comparative method has allowed me to analyze similarities and differences across cases in order to make generalizations and deduce patterns. I believe it is an effective method to gather support for research questions.

My dissertation is significant also because temporally it is looking at the current situation of women in CEE politics, which many other studies do not do comparatively. Namely, it is noting that there is a substantially higher percentage of women in CEE Parliaments now than immediately after the fall of communism. I am also making the argument that quotas have aided this increase. Crucially, these quotas have generally been advocated for by women's groups, which have not been described as very strong or active in CEE previously.

By asserting that women's groups are crucial in advocating for gender equality reforms I am countering some of the previous perceptions many scholars had of women's movements in the CEE region. By describing Poland's Congress of Women and Serbia's women's networks, I am suggesting that there are developed and active women's movements in certain settings in CEE. I am also suggesting that women's movement strength varies across national context and is often linked to the country's particular history, as in the relative openness of Yugoslavia and the effect this has had on the strength of women's movements in the ex-Yugoslavia region, which tend to be more active than in others parts of CEE.

Not all countries across CEE have strong women's movements or movements that are focused on increasing women's political presence, but many of them do. The barriers women's movements face in CEE settings include conservative environments, the rise of populism and a legacy of anti-leftism or anti-communism. Their future remains uncertain, but it is probable that many of them will continue to advocate for positive gender equality measures.

Limitations

As with all studies, this dissertation has limitations. First, the case selection was mostly appropriate to get a sense of gender quota adoption and constraints to adoption in the CEE region. However, in the interest of manageability, I did not focus on Central Asian states nor did I focus on Georgia, Armenia, Russia or Belarus. Future studies should at least include Belarus and Russia in some way. Even though neither country is deemed “free” or even “partly free” by Freedom House and thus their electoral process is not democratic, nor very open, future studies should nevertheless analyze both countries because they are crucial actors in the region. Belarus does have a quota that was instituted by long-time leader Aleksander Lukashenko. These cases can serve as contrast cases to some of the ones I highlighted because of the very different dynamics at play in each setting. They can be interesting case example of non-adoption (Russia) and imposed adoption (Belarus).

Another limitation is the lack of information about certain settings, especially in the language of English. Information about the Baltic states was sometimes difficult to use or decipher because it was mostly in the native language of the country. The other problem was the reliability of the information. I had to triangulate or double-check much of the information I gathered in order to ensure that the information was accurate. Mostly, I relied on credible documents such as those of the EU, UN or documents written by well-known experts. This helped me overcome some of the mentioned hurdles of reliability.

This study does make some generalizations based on comparisons of several CEE states, but future studies should go into greater depth discussing some of these countries. Some of this could be accomplished with a larger research team and more fieldwork. I had limited funding and time, for example, to go to Latvia so as a result I had to rely on secondary literature and email and Skype interviews. I have a working knowledge of Latvia and Latvian politics, but more information could be gathered from additional fieldwork. Also, the results of the October 2018 elections in Latvia were significant for women but as of now no scholar has published anything on this election. There is some work in progress that will ultimately shed true light on how Latvia managed to almost double the percentage of women in Parliament with any kind gender quota. Until then, we only have only a preliminary sense of how this has happened.

Future research

Studies that focus on CEE women in politics should go further than studying quota adoption and non-adoption. This was the first step even for my research agenda for the region. One relatively straight-forward question that could be asked is now that women in CEE have attained 26% representation on average in Parliament, are they having any substantive effects on legislation for example?

Another area of fruitful research could be the idea of symbolic representation. Now that women have a larger voice in some societies in CEE, are they inspiring other women to run for office? Are women in CEE inspiring young women, for example, to be more politically active? How have changed laws led by women affected women in

society? These are the kinds of questions that could be applied to meaningful research in the future.

Finally, and more broadly, it would be potentially fruitful to compare the CEE region with another group of states, such as a few African nations. In particular, it might be interesting to compare post-conflict nations with one another, such as Serbia and Rwanda. Both nations have experienced an increase of women in Parliaments post-conflict, so comparing their respective particular experiences may be worthwhile going forward.

The CEE region has experienced turbulence historically, but it remains an important, relevant and interesting region for academic scholarship. I anticipate that CEE studies, on gender in particular, will continue to expand, so that this area of the world receives the kind of meaningful attention it deserves. Furthermore, women in CEE might end up being the crucial actors the region needs to embark on a more successful and promising path. I hope that these women will be assertive and transformative actors going forward.

Appendix 1: List of Interviews in Serbia 2012

- 1) Interview with Serbian Politician. Belgrade, Serbia. In-Person. April 2012
- 2) Interview with Serbian Politician. Belgrade, Serbia. In-Person. April 2012.
- 3) Interview with Serbian Politician. Belgrade, Serbia. In-Person. April 2012.
- 4) Interview with Serbian Politician. Belgrade, Serbia. In-Person. April 2012.
- 5) Interview with Serbian Politician. Belgrade, Serbia. In-Person. April 2012.
- 6) Interview with Serbian NGO Activist. In-Person. May 2012.
- 7) Interview with Serbian NGO Activist. In-Person. October 2011.
- 8) Interview with Serbian NGO Employee. In-Person. October 2011.
- 9) Interview with Serbian Ministry Employee. In-Person. October 2011.
- 10) Interview with Serbian Ministry Employee. In-Person. October 2011

Appendix 2: List of Interviews in Serbia 2017

- 1) Interview with Serbian Academic. Belgrade, Serbia. In Person. July 2017.
- 2) Interview with Serbian NGO Activist/Academic. Email. July 2017.
- 3) Interview with Serbian Former Government Official. Belgrade, Serbia. In Person.
Employee of the Ministry of Human Rights. July 2017.
- 4) Interview with Serbian OSCE Employee. Belgrade, Serbia. In Person. July 2017.
- 5) Interview with Serbian Politician. Belgrade, Serbia. In Person. July 2017.
- 6) Interview with Serbian Politician. Belgrade, Serbia. In Person. July 2017.
- 7) Interview with UN Women Employee in Serbia. Belgrade, Serbia. In Person. July
2017.
- 8) Interview with UN Women Employee in Serbia. Belgrade, Serbia. In person. July
2017.
- 9) Interview with Former Serbian Government Employee. Belgrade, Serbia. In
person. July 2017.
- 10) Interview with Serbian NGO Activist. Email. July 2017.

Appendix 3. List of interviews with NGO activists, academics and politicians in Poland

- 1) Interview with Polish academic. Warsaw, Poland. In Person. June 2018.
- 2) Interview with Polish academic and former government official. Warsaw, Poland. June 2018.
- 3) Interview with Polish academic. Warsaw, Poland. In-person. June 2018.
- 4) Interview with Polish NGO activist. Warsaw, Poland. In-person. June 2018.
- 5) Interview with Polish academic. Warsaw, Poland. In-Person. June 2018.

Appendix 4. List of interviews with NGO activists, academics and politicians in Slovakia, Moldova, Ukraine, Czech Republic, Albania, Montenegro, Lithuania, Latvia

- 1) Interview with American academic, expert on Baltic States. Skype. January 2019.
- 2) Interview with Swedish academic and expert on CEE women's movements.
Skype. January 2019.
- 3) Interview with Slovak academic, expert on quotas. March 2019. Email.
- 4) Interview with Czech NGO activist. March 2019. Email.
- 5) Interview with UN Women Official from Moldova. July 2019. Email.
- 6) Interview with Ukraine NGO Official. September 2019. Email.
- 7) Interview with Montenegrin politician. December 2019. Email.
- 8) Interview with American academic, expert on Latvia. Skype. December 2019.
- 9) Interview with Lithuanian former politician. Email. March 2019.
- 10) Interview with Ukraine NGO Activist. Email. February 2020.

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