

FEMALE POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND BARRIERS THAT WOMEN FACE IN
POLITICS:

LESSONS FROM POST-SOVIET KAZAKHSTAN AND BELARUS

ӘЙЕЛДЕРДІҢ САЯСИ УӘКІЛДІГІ МЕН ОҒАН ӘСЕР ЕТЕТІН ФАКТОРЛАР:
КЕҢЕС ОДАҒЫНАН КЕЙІНГІ ҚАЗАҚСТАН МЕН БЕЛОРУССИЯ

ФАКТОРЫ ВЛИЯЮЩИЕ НА ЖЕНСКОЕ ПОЛИТИЧЕСКОЕ
ПРЕДСТАВИТЕЛЬСТВО:

КАЗАХСТАН И БЕЛАРУСЬ В ПОСТСОВЕТСКОМ ПРОСТРАНСТВЕ

by

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Abstract

Women's participation in politics has increased across the globe in the last 50 years, and this trend is not limited to Western democracies. For example, post-Soviet Belarus and Kazakhstan, both presidential autocracies and signatories to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), have seen women's political participation increase in recent years. However, there are more women in politics in Belarus than in Kazakhstan. What can explain this variation? Comparing the number of women in the parliaments of Belarus and Kazakhstan over time, I find that the demand for domestic or international support, the extent to which a country is politically and socially linked with other states in the world, and presidential goals jointly influence female political participation. An increase in women in parliament are not evidence of promoting democratization and democratic representation, but rather deliberate authoritarian strategies to bolster regime resilience and presidential power. Importantly, these findings help advance our understanding of female political participation beyond the western world and beyond the democratization paradigm.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

For centuries, women all over the world have been involved in politics and in the decision-making processes associated with it. There are several outstanding names that we associate with the phrase “women who have changed the world” – individuals who made us believe in female political power and influence by contributing not only to the development of their countries, but also to the international political arena. Among them are Margaret Thatcher, Indira Gandhi, and Golda Meir, to name few. Despite notable progress made toward gender equality across the globe, however, the list of women political leaders remains short. What can explain the limited number of women involvement in politics? Why is there a lack of female participation in politics in almost every independent country? What are the glass ceilings that women face in their political careers? What prevents women politicians from being as successful as their male counterparts? Even when the number of women in politics is similar to the number of men in a given country, why does female participation not always influence political outcomes?

To answer these questions, I analyze female political participation in Kazakhstan in comparison with Belarus. These two countries share a long list of similar features, beginning with their common historical background as members of the former Soviet Union and their nondemocratic regimes headed by strong executives who have been in power at least since the 1990s. In addition, both countries have signed and ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and have bicameral parliaments with an upper and lower house. On the one hand, their shared Soviet legacies and authoritarian form of government suggest that there should be few women in parliament in both countries. On the other hand, one might expect Kazakhstan, as an internationally focused country, to have greater female political participation than Belarus, which is more

Sovietized and less receptive to Western norms or economic engagement with the West. In other words, while both countries are expected to have fewer women in parliament compared to their democratic counterparts, Kazakhstan should perform better than Belarus in terms of female political participation because international influence and diffusion of norms is greater in the former.

Unexpectedly, Belarus exceeds the global average of women in parliament, while Kazakhstan underperforms on this measure. The purpose of my two-case comparison is to understand this puzzle and to uncover the factors associated with this discrepancy. I argue that both countries focus on increasing female political participation due to various mechanisms and goals. In both Belarus and Kazakhstan, presidents (and the ruling coalitions that they head) have common goal of bolstering support for the authoritarian regime. Yet, the way that they go about doing so varies: Belarus attempts to augment its legitimacy and longevity by directly strengthening domestic support, while Kazakhstan is concerned about international support as a means for fostering domestic support. At the same time that they seek legitimacy and increase popular support among citizens, they also seek to minimize and curtail any domestic opposition. Scholars have described many ways that presidential autocracies like Belarus and Kazakhstan accomplish these twin goals, including Koulinka (2006) and Matsuzato (2004). Building on these findings, I argue that the presence of women in parliaments is yet another tool for authoritarian presidents to maintain power. The bulk of this thesis demonstrates how female political participation helps autocrats in these two country settings stay in power, promote popular support, and deter opposition.

Yet, if women are a similar means for fulfilling autocratic goals, why is there variation in the number of women in these two countries' legislatures? This cross-national paradox leads to the second part of my research. To discover the impediments to women's political participation, I focus specifically on the Kazakhstan case, interviewing female

political representatives in parliament. By interviewing women members of parliament (MPs), I try to find the answer to the puzzle of low female political participation from their perspective. I look at their personal biographies and political styles, as well as their understanding of the role of women in Kazakhstan's politics. A result of this two-level investigation (i.e., cross-case analysis, combined with within-case analysis), I find the macro and micro level factors that affect female political participation in non-democracies that are signatories to CEDAW.

Research Questions

My research is motivated by the following key empirical and theoretical questions.

Empirical question: Why does Belarus exceed the global average of women in parliament, while Kazakhstan underperforms in this area?

Theoretical questions: What are the barriers that women in non-democracies face today, despite their countries' ostensible commitment to political equality (as evidenced by their participation in treaties such as CEDAW)? Are these barriers similar to or different from those cited in the literature on women's participation in democratic regimes?

There is an unexpected variation between these two countries on the number of female representatives in each parliament. What are possible country-level reasons for this variation? In addition, what do women see as key factors promoting women's participation and barriers to it? Do their explanations coincide with those in the literature?

My research seeks to answer these interrelated questions by testing hypotheses that emerge from the extant literature. I analyze the participation of women in the parliaments of Belarus and Kazakhstan from 1991 till 2015, and review statistical data on increase/decrease of number of female representatives. Note that my specific focus in this research project is on women's participation as operationalized as the *number of women in parliament*.

In this project, I look at how structural factors that are highlighted in the literature

(regime type, economic growth, international organizations, and cultural orientation) affect women's political participation in Kazakhstan and Belarus. Thereafter, I explore individual factors, such as personal stories of women in political history and their own perception of successful female political participation, which are also cited as key explanatory variables in the extant literature. To get at these individual level factors, I conduct interviews with deputies of parliament of Kazakhstan.

Chapter Outline

This chapter has introduced the main argument of the research and has addressed empirical and theoretical research questions. To answer them, the paper is divided into several chapters that present existing theoretical frameworks used to account for female political participation, testable hypotheses derived from these frameworks, and finally the extent to which these hypotheses explain female political participation in post-Soviet Kazakhstan and Belarus.

Specific chapters are arranged in the following order:

Chapter 2 reviews the literature that provides theoretical basis for this research project. The literature is divided into macro/structural and micro/individual level factors that have been found to influence (promote and hinder) female political participation. After the literature review, the chapter then presents theoretical puzzle that appears as a result of gaps in the literature, as well as introduces the theoretical and empirical contribution of this study.

Chapter 3 sets the empirical stage by describing the cases of Kazakhstan and Belarus in comparative perspective. This chapter further justifies their selection as fruitful venues for investigating women's participation beyond the scope of most studies to date. Thus we move from study of women in politics under *democracy* to women in politics in *authoritarian regimes*.

Chapter 4 focuses on the research design behind this project and establishes several hypotheses that will guide the analysis of the macro- and micro-level factors that are themselves based on the theoretical puzzle described in previous chapters.

Chapter 5 and 6 are the main empirical chapters. Chapter 5 analyzes the results of macro-level hypotheses, explaining whether these are supported or rejected based on the findings from this study. These hypotheses are the continuation of the theoretical framework and are used to test whether theory adheres to reality. While chapter 5 focuses on macro-level hypotheses derived from the literature, chapter 6 turns our attention to micro-level explanations. This chapter examines the personal stories and political styles of female deputies of the Parliament of Republic of Kazakhstan. Results are based upon a detailed analysis of these women's individual experiences and their own understandings of factors that have promoted and hindered their participation in politics in Kazakhstani context.

Finally, Chapter 7 summarizes the research in its entirety and discusses conclusions that stem from findings in Chapter 5 and 6. Also, this chapter indicates future implications that can be addressed in further empirical analyses.

Chapter 2 Literature Review and Theoretical Contributions

Now that we have placed Belarus and Kazakhstan within broader historical, political and international contexts, the next step is to situate and try to make sense of their experiences within theoretical context. The literature on women in politics generally follows two main perspectives: *structural-level factors* that include institutional and national participation of women in politics and *individual-level factors* that demonstrate participation of particular female individuals in political history. Following this basic division, my study examines both structural and individual level factors.

Under structural-level factors I point out four standout categories as regime type, Soviet legacies, economic growth, and the role of international organizations. They provide theoretical explanation for hypotheses on the structural level. Under individual-level factors I specify certain stories and personal barriers traced by female political leaders, and also group two main categories of individual-level factors that generate hypotheses on the individual level.

Macro- or Structural level factors

1) Regime type

Most theories about state regimes argue that regime type directly affects the representation and participation of women in politics. According to theories of democracy, women and men are equally represented in such type of regime, and they have the same participation and representation rights in politics, as well as in other spheres. According to Das, “If democracy is applauded as the best form of government then political empowerment includes the power of decision-making; being a gender-neutral term. If development is structured in any form then it includes social recognition of women’s political and economic credibility and capability” (2007, 124). Thus, theory states that the higher the level of

democracy, the more there are chances of improvement of women's political participation and their access to political institutions.

Countries with democratic regimes in comparison with autocracies support women's participation (Inglehart et al. 2002). Stockemer (2009) argues that the state needs to provide its citizens with political freedom and promote self-development: "Ideally women should have both the right to equal involvement in decision-making processes and the right to take a stand on issues" (p.430). Supporting this statement, Thanikodi and Sugirtha (2007) claim that the high level of female political participation in democracies in comparison with non-democracies can be explained by the length of the regime. Thus, the longer the existence of democracy, the greater the number of women involved in politics. Stockemer explains this phenomenon by the fact that the longer democracy exists, the harder it is for government and opposition to change the regime. Levitsky and Way (2002) agree on this point, noting that if a country survived for 20-30 years as democracy, it probably will remain as democracy. However, it does not limit the countries which just have transitioned to democracy. According to Adams and Tancred (2000), Latin American and East European countries recently becoming democracies show the active participation of women in politics. Therefore, it is disputable whether the duration of political regime, especially democracy, affects or does not affect the high female political participation.

Stockemer (2009) agrees that democracy implies political participation of both sexes and suggests empirical evidence by providing example of Inglehart et al. (2002), which justifies that women participate on the high level in democracies. In 65 democratic countries women's participation in parliament is higher than in other states with different regime types. Also, Patterson (2000) underlines the role of country leaders in promoting female political participation. He says that national leaders in democracies are more likely to react to female pressures – because women have equal rights to support and promote gender related issues as

female political participation. Therefore, countries with a strong presidency might have even stronger impact on promoting women's political participation than democracies.

To show the effect of democracy we may compare it with authoritarianism where women are likely to struggle in efforts to get into politics. Waylen (1996) claims that in authoritarian regimes the role of women is "traditional" and limited to mother's and housewife's duties. These kinds of values do not encourage women to strive for higher positions in politics and, in fact, deter their progress. According to the author, "Such a traditional, strong, patriarchal value system favours sexually segregated roles and so-called 'traditional cultural values' by militating against the advancement, progress and participation of women in any political process" (International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance 2008).

However, some theorists say that not the level of democracy, but rather the process of democratization has more impact on women's political participation (Fallon, Swiss and Viterna 2012). For them, the importance of regime type is dubious because in non-democratic states women's legislative participation level is high, but they do not have much political power. The research shows that features of the democratization process as "nation's pre-democratic legacy, historical electoral experience, and quota implementation" (Fallon, Swiss and Viterna 2012, 400) can increase female political participation equally in democratic and non-democratic countries.

In addition, even among democracies we witness a diverse range of participation rates. Stockemer (2009) finds that there are democratic countries which in fact have a low number of women in politics. He demonstrates this by conducting research on 98 countries which in Asia, Pacific region, Africa, and America (Central, South) to test on the regime's effect on female political participation. As a result of his analysis he identifies that "Averaging 17.7% female national deputies, democracies have only slightly more female

members of parliament than non-democracies, which average 16%” (Stockemer 2009, 437). This means that the support for women’s promotion into politics is on the same level as in non-democracies; in other words, the effect of democracy is not significantly different than the effect of non-democracy. This statement can be supported by Fallon, Swiss and Viterna (2012), who find that democratization does not affect women’s participation in politics. Moreover, Fallon, Swiss and Viterna find that countries which have recently transitioned to democracy pay more attention to party policies, and women are usually suppressed.

In addition to regime type, there are internal causal factors that may affect women’s participation in politics. Under democratization scholars highlight the influence of electoral systems. One of the aspects of democracy is the right to free elections. When scholars identify how democracy affects women’s participation they look at the number of elected women; the reason for this is the short period of democratic regime (Tremblay 2007). It might be connected to women’s struggles with political invisibility during the period of consolidation of democracy. Stockemer (2009) also suggests that the electoral system is the best indicator of women’s participation. Moreover, he claims that the proportional electoral system with party list of any political system positively affects women and their participation in politics. This idea is also supported by Fallon et.al (2012), who assert that legislative representation of female politicians increases with the implementation of the proportional election system. Therefore, we can see that the findings on women’s participation in democracy and non-democracy are contradictory, and the regime cannot tell us whether women’s political participation depends on the political system of a certain country.

2) *The Soviet System*

The literature on comparing specifically Kazakhstan and Belarus on gender-based representation is scarce. Usually these countries are compared under the framework of former Soviet legacies. Mostly political scientists are interested in their further development as

independent countries, but they cannot omit the fact that Kazakhstan and Belarus were the part of a large communistic system. Therefore, in this part of literature review I analyze the effect of the Soviet system on the present orientation of the two countries and provide an overall historical review of female participation.

The main theories about female politicians and their participation in Soviet times focus generally on the social equality that the Communist regime imposed on its citizens. According to Stockemer (2009), Communism fought for social equality of the sexes, demanding that women be on the same high working positions as men. To justify this argument, he uses other communist states as examples (China, Cuba, Nepal, Venezuela, Vietnam, and Laos). These countries are expected to have a high level of women participation in politics.

However, as a result of quantitative analysis, Stockemer (2009) concludes that communism in fact does not promote women's participation in politics. Millard (2004) similarly confronts the idea about Communism's support for women politicians: "Communist efforts to incorporate women were perceived as misguided and unnatural and women had to carve out their space in the political arena during and after these transitions" (Stockemer 2009, 439).

Similarly, Moses (1976) explains that in Soviet times women were provided political positions, but these were of secondary importance. Through such positions women were partially involved in the political process, but they could not succeed as political leaders: "Influential female professional politicians, however, have been relatively few in the Soviet system, for the political ambitions of such women are typically thwarted at an early period of their political careers by their diversion into secondary 'female' positions" (Moses 1976, 526). One of the impressive theorists on Soviet female participation, Lapidus, criticized Soviet authors that "repeatedly point with pride to an impressive array of statistics

demonstrating that Soviet women take an active part in political life to a degree unique among contemporary societies” (1975, 91). Therefore, there was an apparent division between female and male politicians in Soviet times that somehow affected on its former members as Kazakhstan and Belarus. Obviously, being its member for more than half a century these countries have engaged in its unifying political system even unintentionally. Detailed analysis of female political participation in Belarus and Kazakhstan enables us to see the effect of Soviet system on its former members and their political views.

Danilovich (2010) conducted research comparing Kazakhstan with Belarus. Even though the research was about the health-care system, its structure lets me view my research from another angle. The author explains her reasons of choosing these particular cases by saying that social inequalities that occurred in Kazakhstan and Belarus after the collapse of Soviet system let us compare the cases with each other. Danilovich (2010) says that these two countries went into two different directions: [Kazakhstan] “...quickly moved to a market economy, which produced a staggering rise in social inequalities; while [Belarus] ...under the stewardship of its autocratic president, froze the Soviet egalitarian society in a kind of glacier” (p.33). Matsuzato (2004) explained the “freezing” of Belarus by its former close ties to Soviet Union norms even at times it was its member, which eventually led to the Lukashenka regime. My goal is to discover how the Soviet past and transition since have affected the participation of women in politics.

3) Economic growth

Economic growth is one of the factors that can facilitate women’s entering into politics (Matland, 1996). High levels of urbanization, large opportunities to access labor and educational categories of prosperous life all facilitate female political participation. Concomitant changes in traditional values about paternalistic framework of politics may support female participation in political power, as well (Stockemer 2009). Modernization and

development theories suggest that "... highly developed nations are likely to embrace a more liberal and egalitarian culture than are less developed nations" (Stockemer 2009, 436), and this extends to women's role in politics. The fewer women are in financial need, the more opportunities they have for their professional development. In that case women have access to employment opportunities, which finally leads to their active participation in politics.

Fallon et.al (2012, 400) also argue that economic factors of the state can affect women's participation, but they view them together with social factors, calling them "socioeconomic" factors: "...women's socioeconomic status will be central to future efforts at parsing out how factors affecting women's political representation in developing countries differ from those in developed countries". However, when it comes to comparison with political and cultural factors, they underline the higher impact of the last two. As a result of their investigations, they connect female access to secondary high education with political participation, and show the correlation. Thus, they categorize two socioeconomic controls: one of them – GDP per capita is not statistically significant, but another one – secondary education has positive statistically significant results. It means that economic growth alone does not change anything regarding the status of women in politics, but in combination with social factors it influences female political participation.

4) International Organizations

NGOs and political institutions have also an impact in promoting active female participation in politics. Lombardo (2008) argues that international organizations have improved political conditions of female politicians, and taking the main problem of gender inequality he emphasizes the current issue. There is one particular organization that I refer to in this paper – CEDAW. Regarding the theory (Kenworthy and Malami 1999), countries ratifying this convention are more likely to accept female politicians. Except for this convention Fallon et.al (2012) accentuate the influence of women's international

nongovernmental organizations (WINGOs). They tested the significance level of these organizations and found that they were not always significant in models. Therefore, they doubt the influence of organizations, basically saying that these organizations have impact only in specific cases, because the countries that did not ratify this convention had the same level of significance.

However, according to Thanikodi and Sugirtha (2007) strategies offered by the United Nations Organization take actions in promoting and supporting female political equality. They monitor the process of political campaigning, analyze decision-making process by women in politics, and improve certain mechanisms to encourage women to participate in politics. They say that there are results that were made by these organizations, and that countries that are members of this strategy usually tend to have a higher degree of female political participation on the global scale. Perhaps, previous critique of NGO's by Fallon et.al (2012) was connected only to developing nations, whereas Thanikodi and Sugirtha (2007) viewed the effects of NGO's on the global level.

Micro- or Individual-level factors

In addition to structural or macro-level influences, women's participation can also be analyzed at the micro or individual-level. Sheckels, Gutgold and Carlin (2012) describe a list of barriers that were collected as a result of nine stories of nine women which were prospective presidential candidates for the time of their running office. Possible barriers that occurred as a result of their political participation were: financial support, personal attitudes, sexual orientation, attractiveness, style and rhetoric of speaking, and charismatic feature. Welch (1977) explains the reasons for low female political involvement comparing to men through three explanations as political socialization process, situational and structural explanation. Even though these explanations are broad, they cover almost all potential barriers that are proposed by Sheckels, Gutgold and Carlin (2012).

1) Background

There are number of scholars who claim that the background of women influences their political participation. Kaufmann (2012) argues that family values and the conditions in which a girl was raised affect her future career. As an example she talks about “daddy’s girls” that are usually affected by their father’s upbringing and follow the same career path as their fathers. Usually, these types of women have an ability to communicate with opposite sex more aggressively in their future. Skard (2015) analyzes all female presidents and prime ministers of last century worldwide, and argues that women usually get involved in politics because at least one of the family members was actively involved in politics, and in most cases women succeed their positions. For example, Philippines’ first vice president and ex-president (2001-2010) Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo’s father Diosdado Macapagal was the president of Philippines as well (1961-1965), the Prime Minister of Pakistan Benazir Bhutto’s (1988-1990 and 1993-1996) father Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was minister, India’s first prime minister Indira Gandhi’s (1966-1977 and 1980-1984) father Jawaharlal Nehru was the first Prime Minister of India, and the same stories happened in families of Sheikh Hasina, Megawati Sukarnoputri, Gro Harlem Brundtland, Mary Eugenia Charles, Margaret Thatcher etc., where daughters followed their father’s steps. Even though most of them were influenced by their fathers, there are also female politicians who were inspired by their mother’s political participation. Michelle Bachelet, Vigdís Finnbogadóttir, Indira Gandhi and Sheikh Hasina’s mothers were also politically standing out individuals. Thus, political engagement of families connected those women to politics: “When the parents were politically engaged, political issues were often discussed at home” (Skard 2015, 467). Underlining the importance of relations between daughter and father, Steinberg (2001) finds that first-born women are overrepresented in politics, as well as first-born male politicians. Sheckels et.al (2012) also agree with the statement that strong daughter-father relationships

encourage women to be politically active and affect their political career.

Most female politicians are married and have children, which might be one of the barriers for active political participation. According to Skard (2015), majority of female politicians have their own political career that is hardly connected to their husbands' jobs. There are also women politicians that married more than one time and divorced. However, even divorced women have succeeded in political careers and turned to national powers of their countries. On the other hand, there are women that work together with their spouses in political arena, and do it rather effectively. Skard explains that in industrial countries working together with husband is more likely to be the barrier for female political participation, but in developing countries political involvement considers the engagement of family members: "In industrial countries, such a career would easily create problems for the wife's political activities. But in developing countries, it was more accepted that politics was a family affair, and the husbands of Bhutto, Gandhi and Megawati became MPs" (471). Accordingly, Sheckels et.al discuss the issue of divorce among majority of women in Congress, and they analyze it as the barrier of women in the attempt to get into politics. However, they say that women that primarily get married and create families before starting political careers are more likely to save their families and succeed politically at the same time. Also it leads to the similar position of Skard and Sheckels et.al about female politician's children. Skard claims that politically active women in Western countries are supported by their husbands in upbringing children, but in more industrial countries women have to combine their careers with their family duties. Observing this issue as the barrier, Sheckels et.al argue that frequently women raise their children till a certain age of independence, and only after that they work on their political careers. For example, Margaret Thatcher did not lead the parliament until her children grew older.

2) Political Style

The categorization of political styles of women is given by several scholars. Firstly, scholars identify whether male and female politicians have diverse political styles, and what makes them different. Costantini (1990) claims that women and men differ in their political styles because they look for different outcomes and have different expectations. Identifying differences Kaufmann (2012) states that women are more creative as leaders and focus on the process, but male politicians tend to make more decisions and focus on results. Cheryl de la Rey (2005) argues that female politicians can offer other alternative political style that male politicians cannot.

Sheckels et.al (2012) describe different political styles of women in U.S. Congress, and they indicate certain patterns for successful political style. For example, they claim that women in politics should on the one hand express aggressiveness towards their colleagues or in decision-making, but on the other hand they should know the limit of such harsh approaches. However, at the same time, being too nice is also not good. These factors were taken from the personal styles of female politicians as aggressive Barbara Mikulski or too nice Nancy Pelosi. Also, Sheckels et.al claim that after coming to the leading political position, women start to promote women issues, and sometimes it might be excessive. Skard (2015) explains this phenomenon by the characterization of women in politics in establishing peace, cooperation, and reconciliation. Some women use positive discrimination to emphasize the role of women and to solve gender based issues, obviously because they know more about it than male politicians.

There are number of suggestions offered by researchers that are given for women in politics. Paying attention to the difference between male and female political styles, Hunt (2007) suggests that women need to use this difference to their advantage, not as a detriment. On the basis of personal biographies of female politicians, Jalalzai and Krook (2010) state that leadership styles of female politicians affect their political participation. As an example

they tell of different policies of two groups of female politicians: Thatcher, Meir and Gandhi that mostly followed masculine policy not attempting to use women-friendly policies, and in contrast, Bachelet, Johnson-Sirleaf, and Gro Harlem Brundtland of Norway that promoted women-friendly policies. Thus, women have different political styles from men, also they have political styles different from other female representatives.

Welch (1983) presents factors that hinder female political involvement. Testing the hypothesis, he finds that women in countries where female solidarity and control of female sexuality exist do not face barriers in the ways of political leadership. Kruschke (1966) also suggests looking at one interesting feature that might promote women's impact in the politics. He hypothesizes that the more women look at their political participation optimistically, the more they are likely to be associated to politics. Trimble (2007) lists features that might advance female political participants. He says that women as political representatives need to be charismatic, ambitious and competitive.

This Study's Contribution

As described above, the literature on women's political participation can be broadly divided into two categories: state-level or macro/structural factors and individual or micro-level factors that promote or impede women's participation in politics. My study is designed to reflect this division and thus draws expectations/hypotheses directly from the extant literature. Note that these expectations do not neatly correspond to the Kazakhstan and Belarus cases; in fact, in crucial ways the empirical evidence contradicts scholarly predictions. This mis-match between theory and reality is what makes these two countries fertile grounds for in-depth research.

The literature suggests that women pursuing liberal values in democracies tend to actively participate in politics, while, in autocracies where conservative values prevail women are less politically active. The dichotomy between democracy and non-democracy

highlighted in the literature, however, cannot adequately explain variation within regime types. Kazakhstan and Belarus are illustrative of the variation found in non-democratic regimes. The literature also suggests that countries with higher GDP should have a higher number of women in parliament since the higher the country's economic welfare, the more potential there is for women to professionally develop themselves, including entering politics. Again, Kazakhstan and Belarus do not conform to these expectations.

My alternative explanation delves deeper into intra-regime differences, which corresponds to previous studies' focus on macro-level analysis. Given Belarus and Kazakhstan's presidential forms of autocratic rule, what differences between them can account for the variation in women's parliamentary participation? To answer this question, I argue that the political orientation of Kazakhstan and Belarus affects female political participation. Since the collapse of Soviet Union, Kazakhstan has started integrating into the global community and has tried to be internationally recognized. As Kazakhstan attempts to follow Western models of liberal values, according to scholarly predictions women are expected to be actively participating in politics. Belarus, on the contrary, in the post-Soviet period still sticks to many aspects of the previous regime and tries to prevent or limit international influence. As theory suggests, following conservative values stemming from the Soviet Union, Belarus is expected to experience passive participation of women in parliament as it was in Soviet times. However, in reality, female political participation in these countries does not correspond to predictions given by scholars.

In addition to political orientation, we could have also explained the difference between Belarus and Kazakhstan as a result of CEDAW. According to the literature, countries which ratify CEDAW should have more women in participating in politics. Belarus ratified CEDAW later than Kazakhstan which suggests that the importance of women in politics in Kazakhstan has been accepted by national leaders for a long time than in Belarus.

Accordingly, Kazakhstan is expected to have more female deputies in parliament than Belarus. However, this theoretical expectation does not resemble with the reality.

Following my comparative study of the Kazakhstan and Belarus cases, I then move to an in-depth study of women MPs in Kazakhstan. The selection of Kazakhstan for this portion of my study sheds light on current barriers to women's political participation. As we will see in chapter 3, Kazakhstan – despite CEDAW ratification and the government's international and more Western orientation – underperforms in terms of the number of women in politics. By speaking directly with women in parliament, I uncover the factors that both promote and hinder participation. I argue that certain stories of their personal lives and their personal political styles that they use in parliament support them or on the contrary prevent them from being politically active.

I detail my two-level research strategy in chapter 4, following chapter 3 in which I situate Belarus and Kazakhstan in their regional and political contexts.

Chapter 3 Kazakhstan and Belarus in Comparative Perspective

Much of our understanding of women in politics comes from studies conducted in the US and Western Europe. By focusing on Kazakhstan and Belarus, my study extends our knowledge of women's political participation to a new area of the world, which has been understudied to date. I am also building on the literature to investigate a different regime type. Since most of what we know about political participation is derived from research on democracies, do theoretical expectations hold under non-democracies? Or do we find fundamentally different patterns, opportunities, and pressures under autocracy? In this chapter, I argue that Kazakhstan and Belarus are excellent venues for investigating women's participation beyond Western democracies. First, their political systems are representative of a prevalent form of authoritarianism, in which strong executives have great formal powers. Second, their shared Soviet background belies post-Soviet variation in women's presence in parliament as a form of political participation.

Kazakhstan and Belarus as Representative of Presidential Autocracy

There are several factors that influence my choice of Belarus and Kazakhstan as cases for comparison. First, both have the same regime type: both are presidential autocracies, a form of non-democracy that is found throughout the world. Indeed, according to Svoboda (2012), presidential autocracies are the most common type of non-democracy today. At the same time, the constitutions of both countries claim that they are democracies: "The Republic of Kazakhstan proclaims itself a democratic, secular, legal and social whose highest values are an individual, his life, rights and freedoms" (Article 1, Section 1, General Provisions, Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan) and the Republic of Belarus also proclaims itself to be "a unitary, democratic, social law-governed State" (Article 1, Section 1,

Principles of the Constitutional System, Constitution of the Republic of Belarus). Belarus and Kazakhstan are nonetheless considered autocracies, according to global democratization levels (Democracy Index 2014). Following international practice, I will refer to these countries as presidential autocracies, rather than democracies.

The second reason for selecting these two cases is that both Belarus and Kazakhstan are former members of the Soviet Union. This argument is connected with the previous one because the Soviet regime also affected women's political participation. By establishing socialism, the Soviet system provided women with greater opportunities for participation in political life. At the same time, some scholars argue that women's participation in politics was strong only at the local level, whereas they did not have impact on national power (Lapidus 1975). Indeed, the Soviet system encouraged women to participate in politics, but did so only at the margins. In other words, while the government claimed to be emancipating female political participation, it nonetheless promoted the male-dominated concept of political participation. Thus, these two countries share a common history of being part of the USSR with its political practices, norms and values. It is important to see if the practices, norms and orders of female political participation have changed in Belarus and Kazakhstan since Soviet times, and if yes, to what extent.

The third reason for choosing Belarus and Kazakhstan is their ratification of CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women), which is one of significant documents meant to positively impact female political participation. Theory suggests that countries ratifying CEDAW tend to agree on the value of women's political participation. Paxton et al. (2006), for example, claim that the higher the involvement of international women organizations in certain country, the higher the rate of female political participation. Therefore, I analyze the impact of this convention on women's political participation in Belarus and Kazakhstan, which will show us if signing official

documents can somehow improve number of women in politics. In addition to the above similarities, both states have bicameral legislatures (upper and lower houses). Building on the extant literature, my main focus area of politics is parliament, and I am interested in analyzing how two non-democratic regimes with similar parliamentary systems approach female political participation.

As has been well documented, in democracies women come to power through elections, but because of autocratic presidential system in Belarus and Kazakhstan, elections are not the only method by which women come to power. In fact, some women are elected, while others are appointed by the president. That will lead us to the possibility that in fact the decision of whether or not women get into power does not depend on the same factors as in democracies. If women are mostly appointed to parliament, then it means that there is another type of mechanism that we need to investigate. Therefore, we need to know how many female members are elected versus appointed in Belarus and Kazakhstan. If there are more women appointed than elected, it will show that the common historical background that I mentioned in the second reason strongly affects current norms and orders in these countries. The appointment of women may also demonstrate or reveal something about presidential authoritarianism, which may be another reason for this paradox.

Kazakhstan and Belarus in Comparative Perspective

In the previous section, we saw how the similarities between Belarus and Kazakhstan make two cases useful sites for expanding our knowledge of female political participation beyond the democratic world. In this section, I place Belarus and Kazakhstan within comparative perspective to provide a better sense of how women's participation there compares to international patterns. While every country has its own specific parliamentary characteristics and in some countries women's political participation is high, the global average of women in parliament is nevertheless low. According to UN Women, as of

September 2015 only 22% of members of parliament in democracies in the world are female, up from 11.3% in 1995 (UN Women 2015.) The numbers, highlighted in Table 1, are as follows:

Table 1. Women MPs in Democracies

Both Houses Combined	
Total MPs	45 113
Men	34 951
Women	10 162
Percentage of women	22.5%

Note: As of September 1, 2015.

Source: "Women in Parliaments: World and Regional Averages" (2015).

As seen in Table 2 and Table 3 below, the number of women in parliament in Kazakhstan is lower than in Belarus. This suggests that, despite the two countries' many similarities, they vary in terms of female political participation. As previously noted, this finding counters expectations. Belarus has largely followed Soviet policy in its political, economic and social aspects, while Kazakhstan has instead supported international integration and participation in international organizations. Moreover, Kazakhstan has started to apply Western policies and practices to develop a knowledge society and make the economy more internationally competitive. Based on this depiction, we would expect the number of female participants in politics to be higher in Kazakhstan than in Belarus. However, statistics show the opposite.

This, again, raises the question: What can explain why Belarus outperforms, but Kazakhstan underperforms relative to the global average of women in parliament? By focusing on the differences between the two cases, I will be able to see what are other possible diverse factors of each country might affect female political participation. Why there is variation between the numbers of women in parliaments, and what similarities and

differences affect this variation?

Table 2. Women in Both Houses of Parliaments of Kazakhstan and Belarus

Parliament of Kazakhstan	Parliament of Belarus
Mazhilis (lower house) 107 members 27 women 25.2%	House of Representatives (lower house) 110 members 29 women 26.3%
Senate (upper house) 47 members 2 women 4.2%	Council of Republic (upper house) 64 members 19 women 29.6%
Overall: 154 members 29 women 18.8%	Overall: 174 members 48 women 27.5%

Note: As of September 1, 2015.

Source: “Women in Parliaments: World and Regional Averages” (2015).

Table 3. Women in Both Houses of Parliaments of Kazakhstan and Belarus, in Comparison with World Average for Democracies

World Average for Democracies	Kazakhstan	Belarus
Percentage of women of Both Houses Combined 22.5%	Percentage of women of Both Houses Combined 18.8%	Percentage of women of Both Houses Combined 27.5%
Single House or Lower House 22.9%	Single House or Lower House (Mazhilis) 4.2%	Single House or Lower House (House of Representatives) 26.3%
Upper House or Senate 20.6%	Upper House or Senate 4.2%	Upper House or Senate (Council of Republic) 29.6%

Note: As of September 1, 2015.

Source: “Women in Parliaments: World and Regional Averages” (2015).

Chapter Summary

This chapter has introduced Kazakhstan and Belarus as excellent venues for exploring female participation in parliaments beyond the usual focus on Western democracies. In many ways, these two former Soviet republics have similar factors, such as regime type, a common history, and CEDAW ratification. And yet, the numbers provided in the analysis reveal unexpected divergence that calls for further analysis. Most importantly, the data urge us to look at other factors – the ways in which these two cases of authoritarianism differ – to understand their different outcomes. As we will see in the next chapter, not only do these two cases reveal variation within the general category of personalist autocracy; they also

encourage us to think beyond the “usual suspects”. It turns out that most of the explanatory factors cited in the extant literature fail to account for female parliamentary participation in either country. Nor do they fully account for the variation between them.

Chapter 4 takes up this task. It first describes the research design that is used to compare the two cases and to carry out interviews in Kazakhstan. It also describes the hypotheses that are derived from the theoretical puzzle.

Chapter 4 Research Design

To narrow my research, I have chosen to focus specifically on female representatives in parliament. This strategy is common in the social sciences, as most studies of women in politics focus on legislative bodies responsible for national decision-making (Thanikodi and Sugirtha 2007). In particular, I study women MPs in two post-Soviet countries, Kazakhstan and Belarus. Parliament in Kazakhstan according to the Constitution, is the highest representative organ that realizes legislative functions (Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan 2015). The same is in the case for Belarus, where parliament has representative and legislative responsibilities, and approves/opposes activities of government (The Parliament of the Republic of Belarus 2015).

According to the scholarship on women in politics, women have different political perspectives, policy goals, and visions for the common good as compared to men, and these influence their likelihood of supporting policies that benefit or address women's concerns (Soetjipto 2014; Swers 2001). For example, in the United States' 103rd Congress women in both the Democratic and Republican Parties highlighted the problems of violence against women and women's health (Swers 2001), and they ensured the passage of these kinds of bills in to law. Because my goal is to contribute to this particular strand of scholarship, I follow their example of looking at women in parliament as a way of observing female political participation.

Macro-level Factors: Qualitative Two-Country Comparison

I follow the two-case study method to get at the macro-level factors that affect women's participation in politics. According to Yin (2003), this method permits the researcher to systematically compare two cases in depth and, from this comparison, build strong arguments. He explains, "Analytic conclusions independently arising from two cases,

as with two experiments, will be more powerful than those coming from a single case (or single experiment) alone” (p.53). I could have analyzed only the case of Kazakhstan, but without comparison I would not be able to predict or hypothesize on the strong basis. Thus, I analyze the case of Kazakhstan by comparing it with Belarus.

Qualitative research method is the most appropriate method for this research. This method differs from other research methods, because it covers the whole range of possible techniques that allow us to understand human behavior in different social contexts and to analyze his/her experience, history and perceptions. This type of method does not study the impact or causal factors, instead it analyzes how people accept a certain factor, what kind of experience they have regarding that factor. Moreover, the questions that are posed in qualitative research method are aimed to study a certain issue(s) deeply. For example, if quantitative research method were used in this research, the main question would sound as: “How barriers that women face in Kazakhstan and Belarus affect their participation in politics?” Here we see the cause and the expected effect of independent variable on dependent one. We would expect to find a certain measure of this impact and correspondingly we would use numbers to answer this question. However, the numbers cannot always describe the whole situation and explicate women’s experiences or biographies.

Therefore, I prefer to use qualitative research method that is concentrated on the process and meaning, and not on the outcome, which is important in analyzing promoting factors and barriers that women face in politics. By using this method I interviewed women, to understand how they perceive barriers and promoting factors, and to analyze their experiences. My choice reflects Merriam’s approach, namely that “[t]he overall purposes of qualitative research are to achieve an understanding of how people make sense out of their lives, delineate the process (rather than the outcome or product) of meaning-making, and

describe how people interpret what they experience” (2009, 14).

Macro-level hypotheses are based on the findings in the literature:

Hypothesis 1. The income level/economic growth affects the female political participation in Kazakhstan and Belarus. [Matland (1996), Stockemer (2009), Fallon et.al (2012)]

Hypothesis 2. Participation in/ratification of CEDAW has a positive/has no impact on female political participation in parliament in both states (Kazakhstan and Belarus). If positive, to what extent does the number of women in parliament increase [Lombardo (2008), Kenworthy and Malami (1999), Thanikodi and Sugirtha (2007), Fallon et.al (2012)]?

Hypothesis 3. A country’s regime type affects female political participation. [Thanikodi and Sugirtha (2007), Stokemer (2009), Levitzky and Way (2002), Inglehart et al. (2002)]

Hypothesis 4. The specific post-Soviet political orientations of Belarus and Kazakhstan influences female political participation in each state. [Stockemer (2009), Moses (1976), Lapidus (1975), Danilovich (2010)]

Macro-level: Operationalization of Concepts and Data Sources

Below is an explanation of the dependent and independent variables to be used in my two country comparison. The dependent variable is *female political participation*. To operationalize this concept, I look at the number of women in both houses of parliament and take the percentage of women in office per session of parliament.

My independent variables, like my hypotheses, are derived from the theoretical literature. The first is *income level or GDP value*. Belarus has a GDP per capita of US\$8,040 and Kazakhstan’s is US\$12,276 (GDP per capita 2015.) Basing on theories of democracies, democratic countries tend to have high economic development, which lets their governments focus more on issues as social welfare and reduces gender gaps. Therefore, I hypothesize that states with higher income level have more women as political participants.

Building on theories linking women’s political participation and international organizations, my second independent variable is *the impact of the CEDAW* (yes or no impact). I hypothesize that CEDAW influences the number of female deputies, and I also justify that after ratification of this convention the number of women notably increased. Both Kazakhstan and Belarus ratified the CEDAW in different periods of time: Kazakhstan has

ratified the convention in 1998, while Belarus has signed it earlier in 1980 and ratified in 1981 (UN, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women 1979). The difference in ratification periods directly affected implementation of norms of the CEDAW, which eventually led to the increase in number of women in parliaments in both countries. However, this increase is different in each country. I hypothesize that due to the fact that ratification of the CEDAW by Belarus happened a decade before ratification by Kazakhstan, the number of women in parliament is higher in Belarus than in Kazakhstan. To see the effect of the CEDAW on the number of women in parliament of both countries I monitor the number of women since the ratification of convention.

The third independent variable is *regime type*. I hypothesize that the regime type of the country affects its female political participation. According to theoretical justifications from literature review I test if Kazakhstan and Belarus being two democracies have a high female political participation. To operationalize *regime type*, I refer to Democracy Index of Economist Intelligence Unit (2015) that shows possible variations of democracy units in these countries. Democracy Index includes indicators as electoral process and pluralism, functioning government, political participation, political culture and civil liberties. I analyze all these indicators and compare them between two countries. Also, to make comparison, I include one country (Norway) that is not member of former the Soviet Union and that has been democracy for more than 30 years, because as Levitsky and Way (2002) have mentioned, countries need to be democracies for more than 30 years to develop all characteristics of real democratic country.

The fourth independent variable is *political orientation*. There are shared features between Kazakhstan and Belarus: both states have presidential system of power and national leaders that have been ruling the country for many years, both of them have leading parties that in fact can be called single parties, and moreover both Kazakhstan and Belarus are

former members of the Soviet Union. However, after the collapse of the USSR, the leaders of Kazakhstan and Belarus took different orientations to further each state's development. Belarus sticks more to former Soviet Union system and keeps its agricultural system remaining on collective farms or *kolkhoz* (*kollektivnoe khoziaistvo*). Kazakhstan conversely moves to western politics and development system. Belarus comparing to Kazakhstan has more univector foreign policy because Russia is its main partner. Kazakhstan has multivector foreign policy that means not depending on one actor, but cooperating on multivariate level. In countries with western political system women are more politically active. Thus, I hypothesize that the western orientation of Kazakhstan promotes female political participation, when Belarus keeps to former political systems and does not have such female participation in the politics. To operationalize *political orientation*, I use the Globalization Index. This index measures three factors of globalization: economic, social and political. Through comparing globalization indexes of Belarus and Kazakhstan, we see how they are linked with other states in the world, and how it affects female political participation.

Micro-level Factors: In-depth Case Study of Kazakhstan

Case study as one of the types of qualitative research methods is applied as the most applicable among the list of other qualitative traditions as grounded theory, phenomenology, narrative and ethnography. Case study answers the set of questions that lead us to thorough understanding of the phenomena under investigation. Indeed, the detailed analysis of a specific case is perfectly done by comparing cases which is the part of case study. In general, case study provides this research with a great opportunity to ask questions and investigate promoting factors and barriers that we cannot control or change; it is specific to each case and does not have a certain strategy; and it is applicable to each case, because Kazakhstan is a unique case by itself and furthermore, women from parliament essentially have their own

personal stories and political styles. These factors are considered by case study, as it does not have a limit or boundaries in doing investigations.

Micro-level hypotheses, as was the case with those at the macro-level, are derived from the findings in the literature:

Hypothesis 1. Personal background and experience influence female political participation. [Kaufmann (2012), Skard (2015), Sheckels et.al (2012)]

Hypothesis 2. Individual political style affects political participation. [Costantini (1990), Kaufmann (2012), de la Rey (2005), Sheckels et.al (2012), Skard (2015), Welch (1983), Kruschke (1966), Trimble (2007)]

Micro-level: Operationalization of Concepts and Data Sources

According to Merriam (2009) interviewing is the best way of collecting data in doing qualitative research. Following this logic, I conducted semi structured in-depth interviews with five former female deputies of Mazhilis of the Parliament of Republic of Kazakhstan. I analyze women in the parliament because it is a supreme body of parliament in legislative issues, and results from this interview are as close as possible to the reflection of the barriers and opportunities that women face in politics.

Due to the limit of time, distance and resources, I could not conduct interviews with female deputies of Belarus, and focused my micro-level analysis only on the case of Kazakhstan. Therefore, my research is unbalanced in these terms, and I base my findings only on the analysis of interviews of female deputies of Kazakhstan.

Questions were designed based on theoretical expectations in and hypotheses derived from the literature, as listed above. By having women in politics themselves describe and share their experiences, the goal was to see whether the factors they cite conform to extant scholarship or deviate from it. Some questions were open-ended, designed to solicit responses without prompts; other questions included suggestions or possibilities (again, based on findings from prior research). Below is the basic list of questions asked of each

informant:

1. What do you see as key factors promoting women's political participation and barriers to it in Kazakhstan?
2. What are possible promoting factors based on your own personal experience? For example:
 - a) family background
 - b) education
 - c) marriage
 - d) children
 - e) socio-economic status
3. What are possible barriers in their personal experience (according to the previous list)?
4. What are promoting factors in their political style? What kinds of features in personality promote women to participate in politics?
5. What are possible barriers in their political style? What kinds of features in personality impede women from participating in politics?
6. How are these promoting factors and barriers similar/different from those cited in the literature on women's participation in politics?

To find participants for my interview, I solicited the help of family and friends who have acquaintances in the parliament or personally know female deputies. Some of them previously worked with these women, and one of my friends has close family bonds with a female deputy. Acting as intermediaries on my behalf, they inquired if those women would be willing to take part in my research. Later, I followed up by calling these women to make appointments to interview them. By using networks that connected potential interviewees to me in some way, I came across as far more trustworthy than an unknown researcher. These women thus immediately agreed to participate in the interview, and they trusted me to a great extent. This way of securing contacts to conduct research is quite common in post-Soviet countries, where networks used to be essential part of doing research in any scholarly field. As Merriam (2009) explains, networking is the most common type of technique used in qualitative research like interview sampling.

Assuming that it would be more comfortable for them to have meeting without

disturbing from working process, I set up personal meetings in their offices. Interviews lasted approximately 30-40 minutes and were recorded. In addition to the recording, I took notes to ensure that everything was covered.

Bumps in the Road: Issues Related to Kazakhstan Data Collection

Here, I would like to share my experience of facing unexpected difficulties. I started data gathering process in 2015 when the parliament in Kazakhstan was in its fifth session. In January 2016, the deputies from Mazhilis announced that they intended to dismiss themselves from their positions, calling for pre-term elections that would bring new generation into parliament to help the country address economic challenges. President Nazarbayev, agreed to the request, and the fifth session of Mazhilis of Parliament of Republic of Kazakhstan was dissolved and new elections were appointed on March 20th. All of the female deputies that I had planned to interview thus stopped working in their offices in Mazhilis and it was hard to find connections with them. In addition, almost every female deputy denied having interview with the student of Nazarbayev University, because of threat of using gathered data against them.

Only those who participated in the March elections agreed to take part in this research, because they thought it would somehow promote their campaign. All of the deputies I interviewed are former deputies from previous sessions, and some of them participated in sessions for more than one time. All names are kept confidential, and all information is anonymous. One of the participants preferred to remain unknown, and I conducted interview via her office phone. With the other four deputies, I met personally.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has described both the macro- and micro-level hypotheses that are derived from the literature. It has also provided an explanation for each hypothesis that is to be tested in subsequent chapters. The research questions for interview and potential difficulties that I faced while doing research are also described in this chapter.

We now turn to analyses of the data. Again, the two empirical chapters correspond to the general division of theoretical frameworks into macro and micro level explanation. Chapter 5 presents the first part of results that are found by doing cross-national analysis of macro-level factors. Also in chapter 5 is a description of whether or not the macro-level hypotheses introduced in chapter 4 are supported.

Chapter 5 Results, Part 1: Cross-National Analysis of Macro-Level Factors

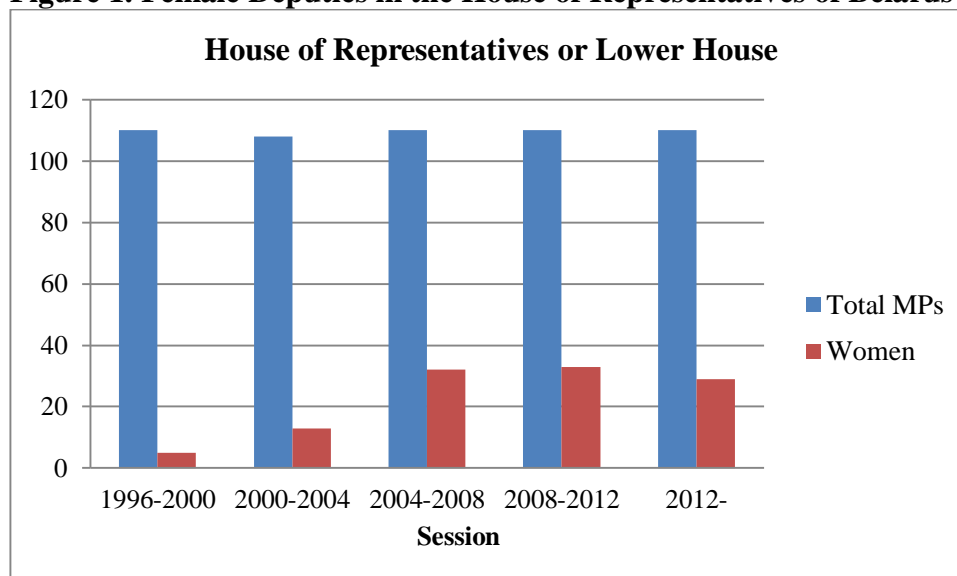
To analyze *female political participation*, I compare the number of women in parliaments of two countries. Parliaments in both Belarus and Kazakhstan have had five sessions (convocations or *sozzyvy*) that started in 1996 following the collapse of the Soviet Union, and have had almost same periods of sessions. The Parliament of Belarus has had relatively stable number of women through all sessions (average 25%), but the index has not been higher than 30% (Table 4). The number of female deputies in the House of Representatives has increased to 22% since the first session, while the number of women in the Council of Republic has remained stable between 29% and 31% (Figure 1, 2).

Table 4. Number of Female Deputies in Both Houses of Parliament of Belarus

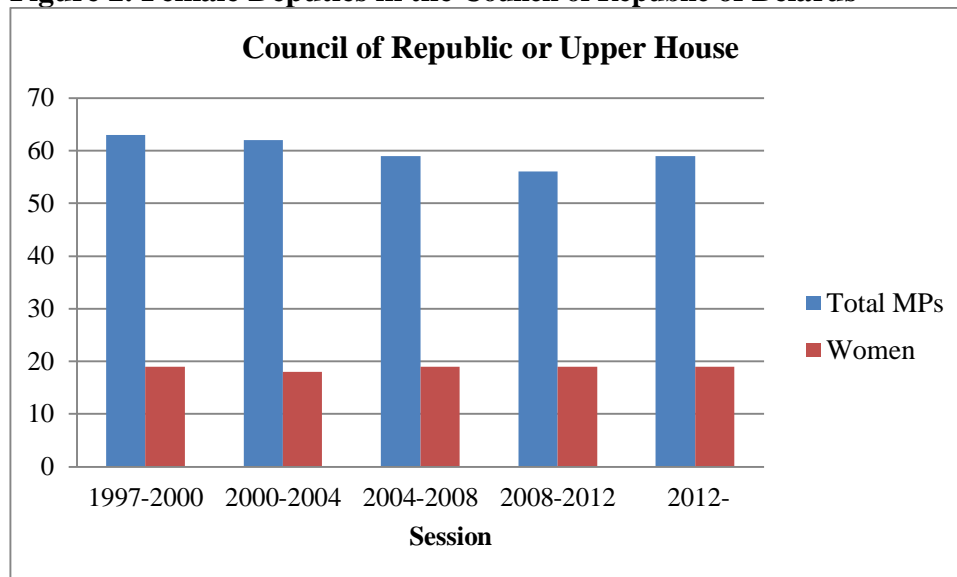
Session	House of Representatives or Lower House			Council of Republic or Upper House		
	Total MPs	Women	%	Total MPs	Women	%
1996-2000	110	5	4.5	63	19	30.1
2000-2004	108	13	12	62	18	29
2004-2008	110	32	29	59	19	32.2
2008-2012	110	33	30	56	19	34
2012-	110	29	26.3	59	19	32.2

Source: National Assembly of the Republic of Belarus, 2015.

Figure 1. Female Deputies in the House of Representatives of Belarus



Source: National Assembly of the Republic of Belarus, 2015.

Figure 2. Female Deputies in the Council of Republic of Belarus

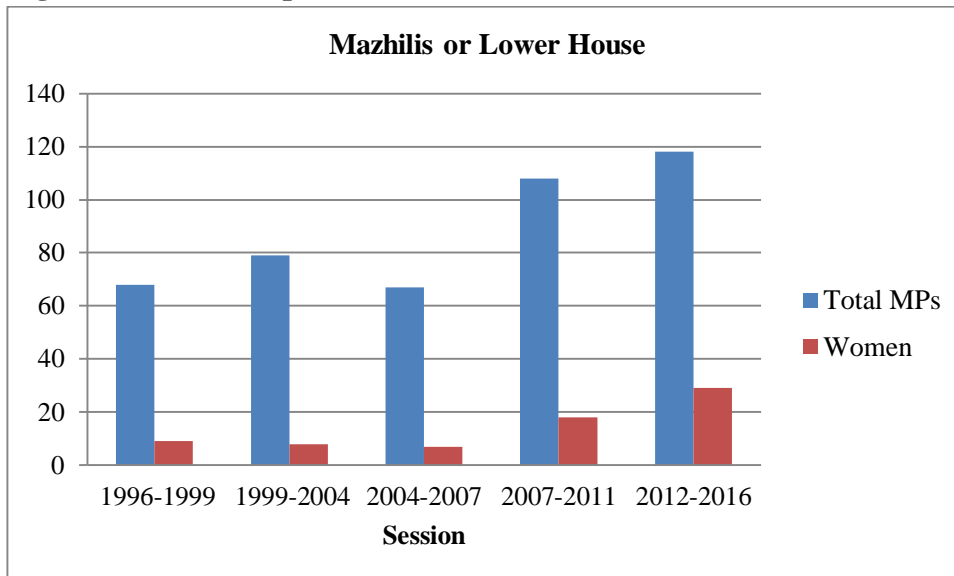
Source: National Assembly of the Republic of Belarus, 2015.

In contrast with Belarus' pattern, the number of women in Parliament of Kazakhstan varied since the first session. In the early sessions, female presence in the lower house, the Mazhilis was the same; only later in the third session, there was a sudden increase, due to the move to the party list system in 2004. Thus, more women were deliberately included from the party lists. The number of female deputies in Mazhilis has not exceeded 24% which was the highest index among all sessions (Table 5). The number of women in the upper house or Senate, however, decreased every following session. Surprisingly, in the first session more women were in the Senate in Kazakhstan (10.4%) and every following session the number of women notably decreased, while the number of male deputies increased (Figure 4).

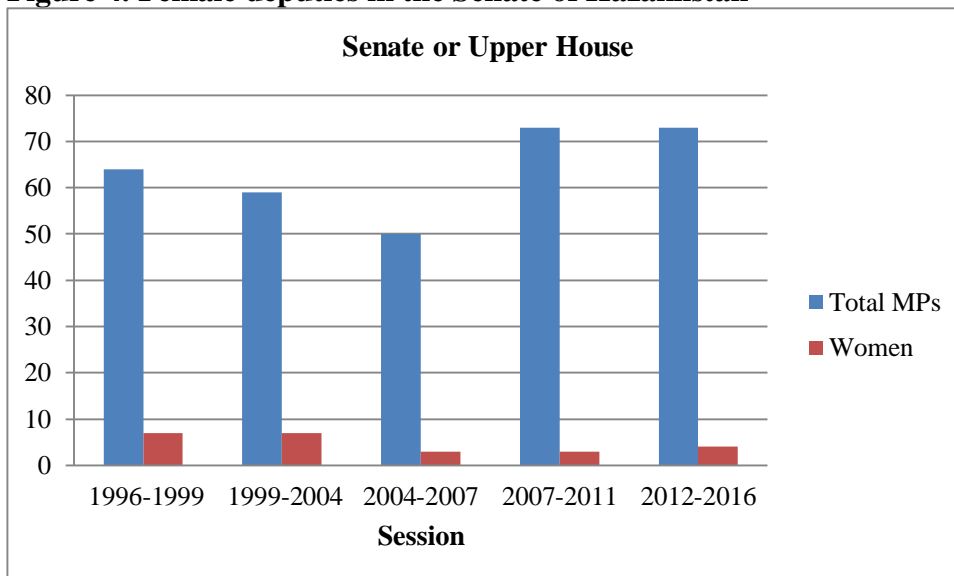
Table 5. Number of Female Deputies in Both Houses of Parliament of Kazakhstan

Session	Mazhilis or Lower House			Senate or Upper House		
	Total MPs	Women	%	Total MPs	Women	%
1996-1999	68	9	13.2	64	7	10.4
1999-2004	79	8	10.1	59	7	11.9
2004-2007	67	7	10.4	50	3	6
2007-2011	108	18	16.6	73	3	4.1
2012-2016	118	29	24.5	73	4	5.4

Source: Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2015.

Figure 3. Female Deputies in the Mazhilis of Kazakhstan

Source: Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2015.

Figure 4. Female deputies in the Senate of Kazakhstan

Source: Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2015.

To understand what causes this discrepancy in the number of women in parliaments of two countries and their trends over time, I test several hypotheses (macro and micro-level) that can explain the paradox. These hypotheses also tell us that female political participation does not only include an analysis of the number of female participants in parliament by

session, but also covers issues such as participation of women's interests, the process of electing female politicians, and the role of women in political processes.

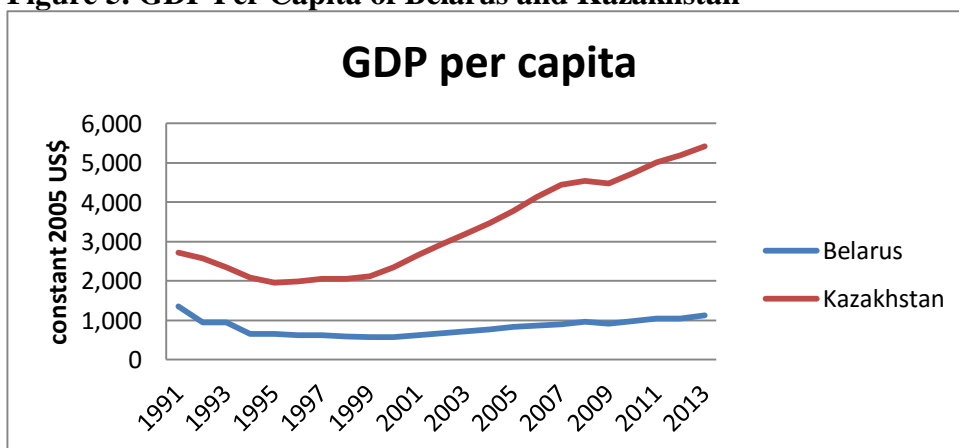
Testing Macro-level Hypotheses and Deviation from Theoretical Expectations

In this section, I present the hypotheses that were rejected based on the evidence/empirical findings from my two-country study. Rejected hypotheses include hypothesis 1 and hypothesis 2. In other words, theoretical expectations that income level/economic growth, and participation in CEDAW are significant influences on female political participation are not applicable to the Kazakhstani and Belarusian contexts. After I test and reject this subset of hypotheses, I return in the following section to my own, alternative explanations regarding hypothesis 3 and hypothesis 4. The data suggest that explanations of women's participation based on presidential goals and institutional mechanisms for accomplishing those goals have greater explanatory power. My alternative explanations are valuable because they serve as hypotheses that can then be tested and refined in other non-democratic contexts.

Hypothesis 1. The income level/economic growth affects the female political participation in Kazakhstan and Belarus. [Matland (1996), Stockemer (2009), Fallon et.al (2012)]

To test this hypothesis I refer to TransMonEE Database (2015) on GDP per capita with constant 2005 US\$.

Figure 5. GDP Per Capita of Belarus and Kazakhstan



Source: TransMonEE, 2015.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Belarus and Kazakhstan moved to market oriented economy from capitalism. As the figure shows the levels of economies of two countries significantly differ, but the directions are analogous without any dramatic decreases. In 1990s Belarus also suffered from economic crisis as Kazakhstan, and the presidents became more powerful, so the stories are quite similar. According to my hypothesis, countries with high income level tend to have more female political participants, because such countries have more opportunities to care about gender issues. However, the figure demonstrates that this hypothesis is not supported, because Belarus' GDP is lower than Kazakhstan's, but it still has more female representatives in parliament than Kazakhstan. Therefore, Hypothesis 1, *The income level/economic growth affects the female political participation in Kazakhstan and Belarus*, is rejected.

Hypothesis 2. Participation in/ratification of CEDAW has a positive/has no impact on female political participation in parliament in both states (Kazakhstan and Belarus). If positive, to what extent does the number of women in parliament increase [Lombardo (2008), Kenworthy and Malami (1999), Thanikodi and Sugirtha (2007), Fallon et.al (2012)]?

As was previously mentioned, Belarus signed CEDAW in 1980 and ratified it in 1984 while being the member of Soviet Union. However, after careful analysis of reservations and declarations, I found following statement under the list of countries that ratified CEDAW: "In communications received on 8 March 1989, 19 and 20 April 1989, respectively, the Governments of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic and the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic notified the Secretary-General that they had decided to withdraw the reservations made upon ratification relating to article 29 (1). The reservations were identical in essence, mutatis mutandis, to the reservation made by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. For the text of the reservations, see United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 1249, pp. 117, 121 and 133." (Treaties.un.org 2016). It means that Belarus ratified this convention only later in 2003 (Laws.newsby.org 2003). Thus, Belarus ratified

CEDAW later than Kazakhstan, and has more female MPs, which means that it has some different mechanisms that affected the number of women in parliament, rather than norms of CEDAW that could have affected the increase of female MPs in parliament. Thus,

Hypothesis 2, Participation in/ratification of CEDAW has no significant impact on female political participation in parliament in both states, is rejected.

Hypothesis 3. A country's regime type affects female political participation. [Thanikodi and Sugirtha (2007), Stokemer (2009), Levitzky and Way (2002), Inglehart et al. (2002)]

To test this hypothesis I examine each country's level of democratization according to different measures. First of all, I analyze the number of elected vs appointed female deputies. Assuming that democracy promotes women's right to participate via elections, in autocracies as Belarus and Kazakhstan most female deputies are expected to be appointed. However, according to the data Belarus has unexpected low number of appointed female deputies in comparison with Kazakhstan (Tables 6 and 7). This might tell us that Kazakhstan despite the assumption of greater Westernization and international integration, in reality is more connected to former Soviet norms where women in politics were appointed. To elaborate this

Table 6. Belarus (Elected vs Appointed Female Deputies in Both Houses)

Session	House of Representatives or Lower House			Council of Republic or Upper House		
	Women	Elected	Appointed	Women	Elected	Appointed
1996-2000	5	5	0	19	17	2
2000-2004	13	13	0	18	18	0
2004-2008	32	32	0	19	18	1
2008-2012	33	33	0	19	19	0
2012-	29	29	0	19	19	0

Source: National Assembly of the Republic of Belarus, 2015.

Table 7. Kazakhstan (Elected vs Appointed Female Deputies in Both Houses)

Session	Mazhilis or Lower House			Senate or Upper House		
	Women	Elected	Appointed	Women	Elected	Appointed
1996-1999	9	9	0	7	4	3
1999-2004	8	8	0	7	6	1
2004-2007	7	7	0	3	2	1
2007-2011	18	16	2	3	3	0
2012-2016	29	27	2	4	3	1

Source: Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2015.

assumption, I look at levels of democratization of these two countries.

To operationalize the independent variable *regime type*, I refer to the Democracy Index (Democracy Index, World Rankings 2014), which shows the measures of Belarus and Kazakhstan's correspondence to democratic regime and its categories. According to this index, Belarus and Kazakhstan are listed under countries with authoritarian regimes. Following categories show that Belarus' overall score of democracy index is higher than Kazakhstan's, despite the fact that Kazakhstan's index was higher than Belarus in early 2006 (Table 8 and 9).

Table 8. Democracy Index of Belarus

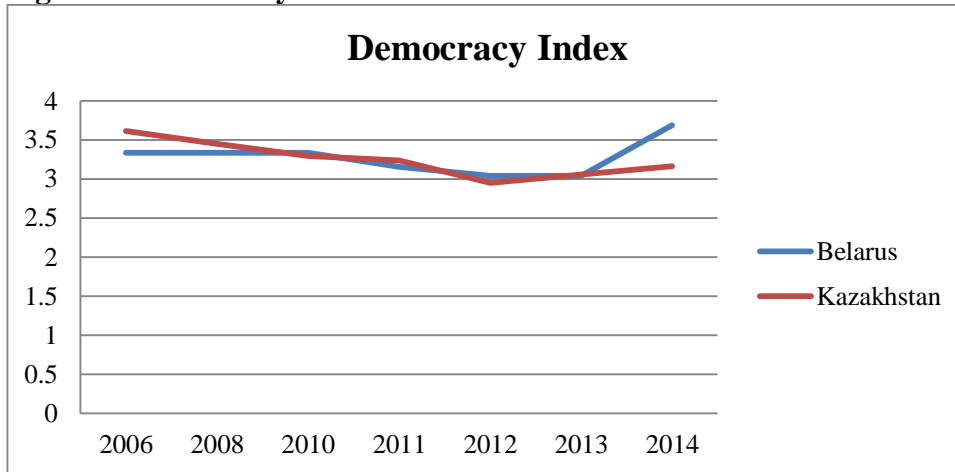
Indicators	2006	2008	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Electoral process and pluralism					1.750	1.750	1.750
Functioning of government					2.860	2.860	3.930
Political participation					3.890	3.890	3.890
Political culture					4.380	4.380	6.250
Civil liberties					2.350	2.350	2.650
Overall score	3.340	3.340	3.340	3.160	3.040	3.040	3.690

Source: Democracy Index, World Rankings, 2014.

Table 9. Democracy Index of Kazakhstan

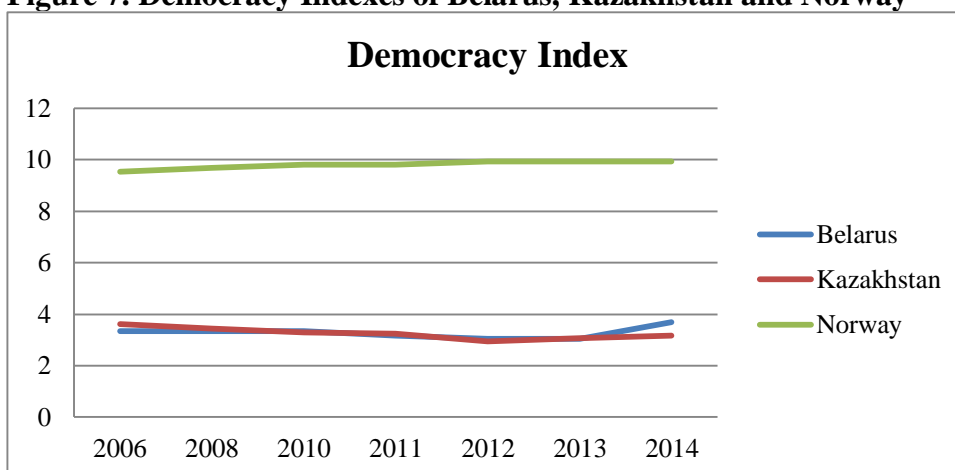
Indicators	2006	2008	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Electoral process and pluralism					0.500	0.500	0.500
Functioning of government					2.140	2.140	2.140
Political participation					3.330	3.890	4.440
Political culture					4.380	4.380	4.380
Civil liberties					4.410	4.410	4.410
Overall score	3.620	3.450	3.300	3.240	2.950	3.060	3.170

Source: Democracy Index, World Rankings, 2014.

Figure 6. Democracy Indexes of Belarus and Kazakhstan

Source: Democracy Index, World Rankings, 2014.

Belarus had lower index of democracy than Kazakhstan in early 2006 and 2008, and it even decreased during 2011-2012, but suddenly it started to escalate after 2013 (Figure 6). As mentioned above, I compare these two countries to the third democratic country (Norway) that has higher index of democracy (Figure 7), simply to show how high is this index in the country that has been democracy for more than 30 years (Levitsky and Way 2002). This comparison may explain that the time which a certain country needs to become a real democracy is one of the main reasons of low indexes of Belarus and Kazakhstan.

Figure 7. Democracy Indexes of Belarus, Kazakhstan and Norway

Source: Democracy Index, World Rankings, 2014.

Measures given in this hypothesis tell us that despite the fact that Belarus and Kazakhstan are both being under the same regime type have two different numbers of female

participants represented in politics. This leads us to the assumption that each country has its own internal mechanisms that promote or prevent women from participating in politics. The authoritarian regime implies a strong presidency in the country; therefore, all decisions are made based on a single leader's interests. Belarus and Kazakhstan, as countries with such a regime, still have an executive power system as was in Soviet times, where the main leader and ruling elite surrounding him were the ones who played the main role in politics.

Therefore, the number of women in politics might not be the indicator of female political participation or representation of interests of women in the country, but rather representation of authoritarian leader's interests. If we know Belarus and Kazakhstan as dominant presidential systems where legislature is weak relative to the executive, we need to know why it is important for presidents of both countries to have more women in parliament and what kind of goals they pursue. Thus, we will be able to know if women's interests are represented in authoritarian countries, and how this process is implemented.

The Belarusian Experience: Domestic Focus

According to the President of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenka, women should cover almost 30% percent of parliament of the country. In his words, "Women should be widely represented in parliament. Then the parliament will be stable and calm." (Koulinka 2006, 1).

This necessity in increasing the number of female MPs is less connected to the implementation of constitutional norms of equal opportunities of all sexes (Constitution of the Republic of Belarus 1994). By increasing the number of women in parliament, Lukashenka planned to stabilize the parliament, which after parliamentary elections in 2002 became more independent, and by increasing female MPs he intended to have more members that would adhere to his ideas. According to a Belarusian critic of the Lukashenka regime, Natalia Koulinka, "Having more women in parliament would, Lukashenka says, catalyze

male Members of Parliament (MPs) to work ‘properly,’ by which the president meant that women would be more likely than men to carry out his agenda.” (2006, 1).

Koulinka further underlines the strong connection of country’s leader (*batska*) with Belarussian patriarchal dominant culture (Kulakevich 2016). Also, it is important to emphasize that the majority of men of this country do not find the low number of female deputies as the problem that needs solution, which also can be explained by preserving strong connection with traditional norms of Belarussian culture where “have different predestination” other than being politically represented. According to the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), 61.1% of Belarussian men believe that “there are enough women in parliament, while 4.7% thought that there are ‘more than enough’” (UNDP in Belarus 2016). In other words, the president’s perceptions are linked with major part of male population’s patriarchal perspectives, which state that women being naturally weaker than men and are dependent on men, rather than sources of alternative perspectives driven by the goal to represent women’s interests. This is a very different conception of women’s role in politics than that which informs diverse representation in the West or in the democratic ideal.

It was the President of Belarus who initiated support for women’s candidature (2004), an unexpected development for the opposition and the majority of the citizenry, who were used to seeing fewer women in parliament. His strategy was led by the idea that the more women are given opportunities to be in parliament, the more they will support his campaign and presidency. To reduce the number of independent male MPs, Lukashenka easily substituted those considered a potential challenge with female MPs who then became loyal to him because he was their power base. Again, Koulinka’s analysis is instructive; she writes:

Indeed, patriarchal social attitudes, especially the belief that women should be dependent on men, and the absence of other legal mechanisms facilitating women’s upward mobility would highlight female MPs’ perception that their success was due solely to Lukashenko’s support. This in turn would ensure their allegiance to Lukashenko and his policies (2006, 3).

What becomes clear is that women in Belarussian parliament are not elected according to norms and values of democratic country that entails women to be equal with men, and participate in fair elections. Instead, Belarus follows norms of a country with authoritarian regime that has strong presidency responsible for selection of female MPs: “One of the causes of selective business or political representation of women hides in patriarchal mentality of many Belarusians. The majority sticks to the installation that men should have the prerogative of making money, whereas women should adhere to household chores.” (Kulakevich 2016).

The Kazakhstani Experience: International Focus

We can contrast the political orientation of Belarus focusing on domestic support with that of Kazakhstan which that focuses on international support. The President of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev, is more focused on international recognition of the country. Considering all norms of democracy regarding equal female political representation he tries to meet its requirements: “Gender equality was seen as beneficial to the state, as it improves the state’s image of democracy, promotes the use of half of the population in the economy, culture, politics, and other fields, promotes social justice, and reduces social tensions and poverty” (Shakirova 2015, 214). In his Strategy-2050, gender politics and active integration of women into parliament is one of the aims of social modernization. He declared his Strategy on Gender Equality for 2006-2016 to increase the number of female politicians to 30% (Nazarbayev Gender Equality Strategy 2005). According to the strategy, the more women participate in politics the more stable and prosperous society will be. Underlining abilities of women to be communicative, less bribable and caring about social issues, Nazarbayev highlights the importance of these qualities in solving issues regarding economic and social problems of Kazakhstan.

By addressing these problems, the president promotes Kazakhstan’s ability to get

higher positions in world ranking of gender development, and would be highly assessed by global society. His careful attention given to international integration with global community is priority of this strategy. It has certain aims and steps to achieve, and mainly they are addressed to leading party “Nur Otan” and non-governmental organizations. Thus, it was after the implementation of the strategy (2005) the number of female MPs considerably increased.

However, considering the functioning of female MPs in the parliament, it is worth noting that these women were not involved in decision-making or were not always promoting women’s issues. Despite certain goals set by the president, due to lack of experience and certain institutions, women could not get to the executive level of promoting gender issues. As Shakirova (2015) notes “However, in spite of the fact that gender inequality was recognized as an important problem by the legislative and high officials, on the level of executive power there was lack of competence and proper understanding of gender issues” (p.216). Thus, according to a UNDP report from 2012 “the higher the level of decision making, the lower representation of women.” (Inform.kz 2016). This conclusion appropriately describes situation of female deputies in parliament of Kazakhstan.

A Shared President’s Goal: Maintain Power through Formal Political Institutions

Thus, we see that political dynamics of Belarus and Kazakhstan are quite the same, because presidents of two countries are pursuing their own strategies and aims, but the levels of their application seem to be different. Both of them strategize recognition, but on different levels: Lukashenka aims at holding his control over the parliamentarians, accordingly seeking internal or domestic recognition; Nazarbayev aims at improving international rating of the country, thus seeking external or international recognition. This idea is revisited in Hypothesis 4, where I test Globalization Index’ impact on the number of women.

Kazakhstan has a mechanism of party list system in elections that might be used by

the President Nazarbayev to improve women's representation in politics, but Belarus, surprisingly, does not much activate party in its "democratic" elections to improve women's political representation. The last parliamentary elections that were held in 2012 Kazakhstan had seven participating parties, and the leading presidential party "Nur Otan" won 83 seats out of 98 (Psephos.adam-carr.net 2012). Belarus had nine parties, and the Communist Party of Belarus supporting Lukashenka won only 3 seats out of 110, and most of the seats were occupied by independents that got 104 seats (Nordsieck 2012). This analysis suggests that Nazarbayev's intentions to promote his party are based on the issue of inclusivity: country's leading party is the face of a country that needs to show that ethnic minorities, women and other social classes are represented. Despite the fact that there is one dominant party, democratic representation takes place not between or among competing parties, but rather within the presidential party itself. Thus, in pursuing external recognition Nazarbayev wants to show international community that representative democratic norms are practiced in his country.

Belarus, on the contrary does not have dominant party, which is common for authoritarian countries. Hence, Lukashenka tries to eliminate anyone's access to the power and is not concerned about international recognition: "The existence of a multiparty system in Belarus provides an opportunity for the government to display a bit of window dressing as evidence that it is not authoritarian. In reality, many of the parties supporting the government have only maintained a nominal existence while the freedom to operate for opposition parties has been severely blocked." (Kulakevich 2015).

To conclude, there is a certain mechanism from above that demonstrates the president's decision and interest in affecting female political representation. Both Belarus and Kazakhstan are described as authoritarian countries, but mechanisms used by their presidents are different. Perhaps, it is avoiding international recognition or eliminating party list system

are the mechanisms that made number of women in parliament of Belarus to be high.

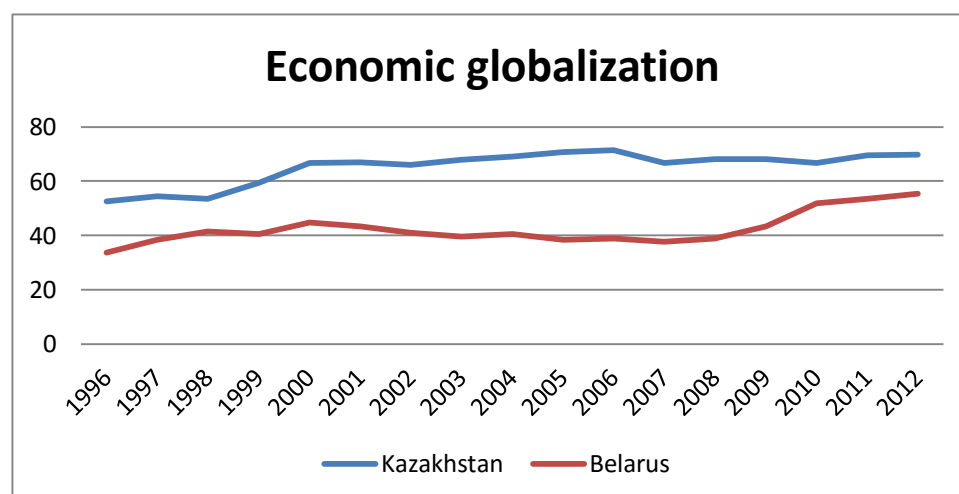
Perhaps, it is focusing on international recognition is mechanism that affected low number of female MPs in Kazakhstan. In any case, the numbers that are given in the list of MPs cannot indicate the representation and participation of women in decision making process.

Therefore, we can conclude that non-democracies can have high number of women in parliament, but their representation may be low or that the number might be low and representation might be low as well. Thus, Hypothesis 3 can be supported only in case if we state: *A country's regime type affects female political participation only if we clarify what kind of country is it and in the case of presidential autocracy what are the goals of its leadership.*

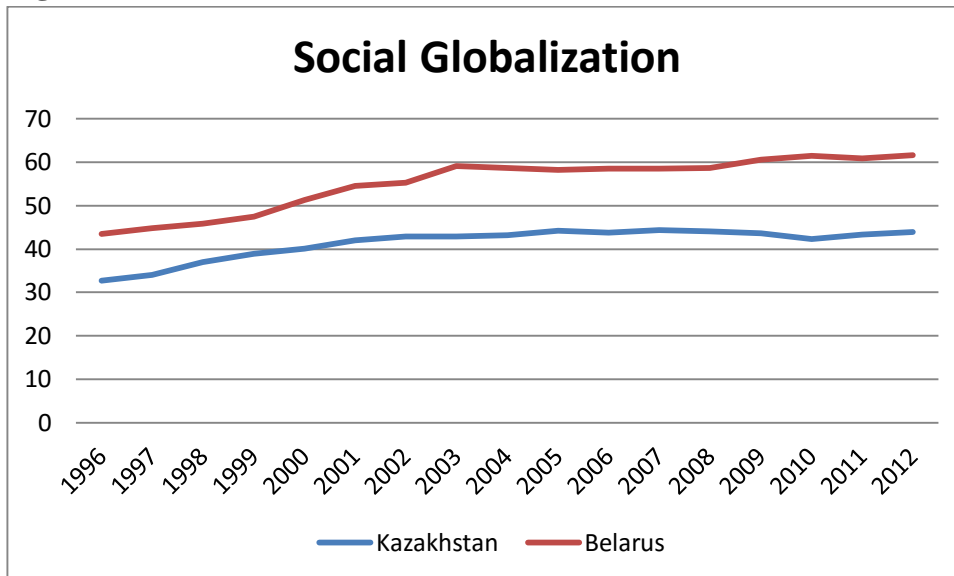
Hypothesis 4. The specific post-Soviet political orientations of Belarus and Kazakhstan influences female political participation in each state. [Stockemer (2009), Moses (1976), Lapidus (1975), Danilovich (2010)]

As was stated above, Kazakhstan is more focused on international recognition than Belarus. To test to what extent Belarus and Kazakhstan are focused on international integration with other countries I refer to Globalization Index (KOF Index of Globalization 2015).

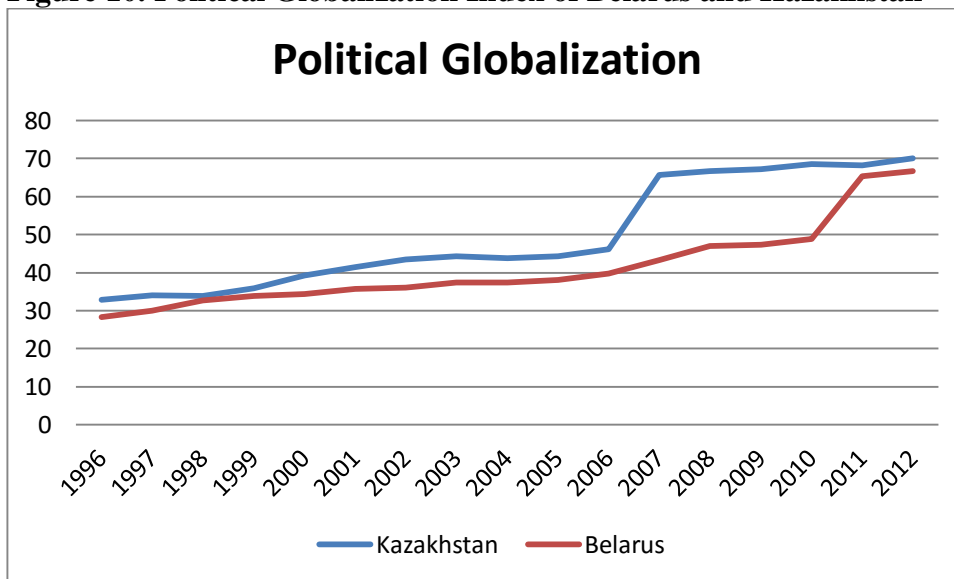
Figure 8. Economic Globalization Index of Belarus and Kazakhstan



Source: KOF Index of Globalization 2015.

Figure 9. Social Globalization Index of Belarus and Kazakhstan

Source: KOF Index of Globalization 2015.

Figure 10. Political Globalization Index of Belarus and Kazakhstan

Source: KOF Index of Globalization 2015.

There is a certain variation in the indexes of globalization of two countries (Graphs 8-10.) In economic globalization Kazakhstan does better than Belarus, but despite the fact that Belarus has lower level of political and economic globalization it still has higher number of women in parliament. This might tell us that Belarus indeed concentrates on domestic goals, and justify our assumption that Kazakhstan highlights its international recognition and values external factors more. The high number of female political participants in Belarus comparing

to Kazakhstan, can be explained by social globalization index. Considering social globalization's impact on improving gender equality, Belarus seems to be under the global trend of improving gender gap issues and promoting women's social interaction and participation. Thus, Hypothesis 4, *The specific political orientations of Belarus and Kazakhstan influences female political participation in each state*, is supported.

Chapter Summary

This chapter demonstrates that two hypotheses on the macro-level are supported, and another two are rejected. The results of the analysis show that factors such as a country's income level, or economic growth, and participation in CEDAW do not affect female political participation. In contrast, the understudied factors of political orientation and regime type impact female political participation.

In chapter 6, we move from the macro to the micro level. Individual-level explanations for women's political participation reflect the hypotheses generated from the review of the literature and are applied to analyze the case of women in parliament in the Republic of Kazakhstan.

Chapter 6 Results, Part 2: Micro-Level Analysis of Women Parliamentarians in Kazakhstan

In chapter 5, we looked at macro-level factors that affect female political participation, and compared Belarus and Kazakhstan in cross-national analysis. In this chapter, we take a deeper look at micro-level factors, and analyze interviews conducted with female deputies of Parliament of Kazakhstan. To do so, we return to the individual-level hypotheses derived from the literature and described in chapter 2. Results come from in-depth, semi-structured interviews with women parliamentarians conducted in the spring of 2016.

Hypothesis 1. Personal background and experience influence female political participation. [Kaufmann (2012), Skard (2015), Sheckels et.al (2012)]

I divided personal stories of interviewed women into several groups: the beginning of political career, family, and political party involvement. These subthemes also include the motivation that these women pursue while working in parliament, economic problems that they consider as one of the barriers to political participation, and gender discrimination that they face in politics.

The Beginning of One's Political Career

Almost all women interviewed had one main similarity in their political backgrounds: They began their political participation after Kazakhstan gained independence from the USSR. The average time of their political tenure is twenty years. Only one woman out of five started her political career before the collapse of the Soviet Union, when the Supreme Council of Kazakh Soviet Social Republic (KazSSR) existed prior to the Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

As Interviewee #1 explained, she came into politics because she studied political science at university and at that time this profession was quite popular, so she decided to

continue working in this sphere. Also, she argues that during Soviet times it was easier to get into politics for almost every interested student, because Soviet policy covered certain clearly laid out hierarchical steps for active political participation starting from university times, when she was *komsomolka* and then *kommunistka* (Communist Party of the USSR had separate notions for their members according to their age i.e. *komsomolka* is for female members of 16 age and older, and *kommunistka* is for all female members of Communist party).

Among the five interviewees, Interviewee #1 is the only woman who was not involved into business, and dedicated her whole life to political sphere. The other four female deputies started participating into politics after becoming businesswomen or entrepreneurs. Even though they were willing to be politically involved, they could not afford it due to economic crisis that came with the change of regime and power. As Interviewee #2 explains:

I dreamt about being politician and making contribution to politics of my country, but instead of it I gave up my political ambitions, and went to local market [bazar] to sell products. Because the whole country suffered from crisis, I had no choice, but to work as an entrepreneur [chastnik]. This is how I started my own small business. Later, I found it very interesting. After I gained a certain position as a private business owner, I tried my fortune in participating in parliamentary elections.

Most of women in Mazhilis started their careers first of all as businesswomen, and then they combined it with political participation. Nowadays, they consider themselves as entrepreneurs working in parliament.

Table 10. Female Deputies of the Fifth Session of Mazhilis of the Parliament of Republic of Kazakhstan Who Have Business Background

Name	Business Background
1. Baymakhanova Galina Alexandrovna	Director of LLP “Areal”,
2. Iksanova Gulnar Mustahimovna	General Director of JSC “Khabar”
3. Kadraliyeva Svetlana Haydarovna	Founder of LLP Trading House “KazRos”
4. Kazbekova Meruert Aytkazhievna	Chairman of the Association of Legal Entities “Union of Women - Entrepreneurs of Kazakhstan”
5. Karagusova Gulzhana Zhanpeisovna	President of the Public Fund “Institute for Financial Markets”
6. Klebanova Darya Vladimirovna	President of Independent Company “Rakhat TV”
7. Nazarbayeva Dariga Nursultanovna	Member of the Board of Directors of JSC «Nurbank»
8. Nikitinskaya Yekaterina Sergeyevna	General Director of «House of the Financial and Tax Advisors of the Republic of Kazakhstan»
9. Nurkina Aigul Kabdushevna	Director of Foundation “Zanger”
10. Romanovskaya Svetlana Yuryevna	The Founder of the Press Center of “Dialogue”
11. Solovyeva Aigul Sagadibekovna	Member of the Expert Council of the Government for the Development of Small and Medium Businesses
12. Yakovleva Tatiana Ivanovna	General Director of Travel Company “Astana-Tan”

Source: Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2015.

As one of the interviewees notes, it is hard to improve business without political support and vice versa. Perhaps, business is one of the possible ways of getting into politics. Women come to politics when they are economically independent, because their financial situation might limit them in promoting their political activities. Thus, the collapse of Soviet system, and the economic crisis in the country affected involvement of women in politics in early 1990s. Therefore, it explains the small number of female deputies in the first sessions of the Parliament.

Family

The five deputies that I interviewed highlighted the importance of family in their political participation. Most of them faced the problem of combining family duties as being a

wife and a mother, with being politically active. Interviewee#3, for example, said that she had to spend less time with her children at the beginning of her political career, which led to divorce with her husband. In contrast, Interviewee#1 does not have children and is not married, and sacrificed her personal life in order to be politically successful. As she explains her situation:

I had a choice between family life and career. At that time, I did not think about any circumstances, and thought I can improve my career and later get married. This work required a lot of time, and I could not manage to associate my work with my personal life. I could not get married, simply because my parents needed financial help, and especially in 90s when the country was in terrible economic situation, I could not leave them and make my own life.

Interviewee #4 argues that women always have to sacrifice something to be politically active. If a woman is in politics, it demands lots of energy and time, which strongly affects her personal life. Because of her busy schedule Interviewee #4 works till late night, and eventually she does not have time for her personal life. These deputies all state that these problems appeared due to lack of social institutions that help women to manage combining her family life with political career. At the beginning of their political careers these women had fewer opportunities than nowadays. Today, various NGOs, associations and organizations that promote female political participation help these deputies, as well as younger generation to overcome this obstacle. First of all, all except for Interviewee#1, consider themselves as mothers and wives that need to care about their families, and then they care about the politics. As Interviewee#2 said:

Firstly, I am a mother that needs to take care of her family, control whether children are fed, healthy, dressed warm and have everything they need. Politics for me is my second family, and at work I consider myself as a mother that also needs to take care of people being fed and healthy.

Political Party Involvement

While interviewing these women I also considered their involvement in political parties. Three deputies were from Kazakhstan's dominant presidential party Nur Otan, one

woman was from Democratic Party “Ak Zhol”, and the last one was an independent candidate. The format of interviews was different according to each party member. Women from Nur Otan started and ended their conversations from mentioning Nazarbayev’s name several times. The deputy from Ak Zhol also mentioned this name in the interview. These women have similar attitudes towards Nazarbayev’s policy and consider his strategy and gender policies to be supporting factor in their political participation. Interviewee#2 (from Nur Otan):

After the leader of the nation Nursultan Nazarbayev implemented gender policy in the country, we saw an incredible increase in the number of women in politics. He supports our political involvement and encourages the idea of female political importance. Our party had twenty eight percent of female deputies in the last sessions of parliament, which is higher than the previous sessions, and this is a great contribution that our president has made.

Thus, in general, deputies from political parties had positive insights about their position in parliament and the president’s role is significant factor in their political career.

Surprisingly, the interviewee who had no party affiliation and ran as an independent candidate, did not mention Nazarbayev’s name and expressed both positive and negative sides of her position as a female deputy. While asking about her preference of any political parties, she did not to say anything. Not saying it directly, she implied that decision-making in politics is the fact that is focused on the interests of a certain person, and because of it, women are not always in position of making any changes by their own. Also, Interviewee#4 mentioned that women in politics in Kazakhstan are often perceived as an evidence for global community that they are participating and playing significant role, which is not always true. As she explains, “In fact, there are many women that make contribution into politics, but remain unknown, and [give more opportunities for men to show-off]”. There is no balance between female and male parliamentarians, and “there is lack of understanding and support for female political participation from above.”

Even though Interviewee#4 was the only one deputy with no connection to political parties; I consider her case as an interesting difference from others. Thus, women with involvement to political party, support president's position and consider him to play significant role in their political participation. Their expressions are often positive, their answers are similar and sound more as pre-election campaign. It can be supported by statement made in macro-level hypothesis, that women would support president and be thankful for being in parliament: "The winning women personally would feel grateful if not indebted to the man whose help was indispensable to their move up the socio-political ladder" (Koulinka 2006, 3). However, the case of Interviewee#4 sounds closer to reality, and covers mostly negative sides of female political participation. This can be analyzed in her diverse opinion from other deputies about gender discrimination.

One of the main questions that I asked of every woman deputy was about their practice of facing gender discrimination as politicians. Unexpectedly, women with connections to political parties (Interviewee #1, #2, #3 and #5) said that they have never faced discrimination at their workplace, and that they are on equal positions with men in parliament. Whereas, Interviewee#4 explained that gender discrimination is constant practice in parliament, but is often invisible. When assigning a certain task or issuing legislative bill, the final decision is always made by men. While interviewing to a new position in parliament, woman is always asked if she has young children or if she is planning to have. In this case, privilege is given to a man.

During interview, she asked me several times to keep her name and personal information anonymous in comparison with other four deputies. This can be explained by Bush and Jamal who argue that: "...in autocracies, where accurate political information is scarce and people hide their true political preferences" (2015, 37). This led me to conclude that under the support of political leader, female deputies follow his policy, acknowledge him

as an important figure in female political participation, and overestimate the work of institutions in promoting female political participation. Whereas independent deputies realize that their participation in decision making in politics is low, and that women not supporting president's ideas face difficulties in improving their political career.

To conclude, there are two main factors that affect female political participation for all five deputies: economy and family. Economically independent women tend to have more opportunities for developing themselves in politics, because they do not have to financially depend on anyone. More women come to parliament having their own business, and succeed in combining these two spheres, because as in business, in politics managing and critical thinking skills are highly valued. When it comes to family, female politicians struggle in combining family with politics, and plan their priorities. The common trend that most of women share in parliament is the reference to popular saying by Nazarbayev: "The main mission [prednaznachenije] of a woman is first to be a mother". After becoming a mother, most of them start to be politically active, while some of them succeed in combining family duties with political activities. Even though, there are similar features that these women have, each female deputy I interviewed has her own story and own experience that brought her to parliament. Thus, Hypothesis 1, *Personal background and experience influence female political participation*, is supported.

Hypothesis 2. Individual political style affects political participation. [Costantini (1990), Kaufmann (2012), de la Rey (2005), Sheckels et.al (2012), Skard (2015), Welch (1983), Kruschke (1966), Trimble (2007)]

Each woman in the interview expressed her own political style that she had sharpened through years of experience. Interviewee#2 said that at the beginning of her career when there were no institutions or associations that could taught her particular political style or the way of behaving in parliament as a woman. She was radical feminist and considered her

policy to be better and stronger than male deputies’. Later, she realized that such kind of strategy did not lead to consensus with opposite sex, and started applying “soft power”:

Today is the era of soft power, when women in politics are no longer aggressive. Perhaps, hard times after Soviet collapse, and building new country affected us, and women were always nervous and aggressive. Nowadays, using calm speech and soft approach towards male deputies is more effective...I think in politics as at home I am open, kind, positive, always ready to help, and most important – I care about others. This differentiates us from male deputies.

Another deputy has also mentioned these qualities in female deputies, and also added that women are well educated, resistant to stress, less bribable, and have longer life expectancy for twelve years than men.

Each woman described her own political style, and all of them have common pattern. Therefore, Hypothesis 2, *Individual political style affects political participation*, can be supported only if we say that *political participation* implies different styles of women and men. In another case, political styles of female deputies are similar to each other.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has described the results of the analysis of micro-level factors that affect female political participation. Two hypotheses that test personal experience and individual political styles of female deputies, and their impact on female political participation, are supported. Women who participated in the research mainly tried not to touch upon the theme of political regime type, except for the members of dominant parties as Nur Otan and Akzhol. As mentioned above, female politicians in autocracies tend to be less open regarding their political preferences (Bush and Jamal 2015). The main contribution of this study to the extant literature is the factor that female deputies under authoritarian regime try to fulfill interests of country’s leader that elected these women to strengthen own power. Moreover, these women support the strong presidency and, as mentioned in macro-level hypothesis 3, try to please the

president and consider their own individual political participation to be successful due primarily to the president's successful strategies.

Next, the concluding chapter summarizes the research and makes conclusions based on previous chapters. It describes the overall contribution of this work into the literature of female political participation beyond the Western world in presidential autocracies.

Chapter 7 Conclusion

My research investigates the factors that affect female political participation, as found in prior studies. First are macro-level factors such as economic growth and income, ratification of CEDAW, regime type and political orientation that affect female political participation in Belarus and Kazakhstan. Second are micro-level factors, such as personal background and political styles of women in Kazakhstan that affect female political participation in particular country contexts. Despite the two country's similar characteristics, there is a discrepancy in the number of female deputies in parliament. Therefore, I suggest that even if there are common features that we might expect to lead to similar outcomes, certain different factors that will cause unexpected outcomes might occur as well. This paradox encourages us to study each case deeper from different economic, political and social perspectives to understand the puzzle.

The results of my research justify that women in parliament seem to be less about participation and democratization, and more about authoritarian resilience. Presidents increase women's political participation to legitimize their norms and rules to domestic and external audiences, and to decrease the chances of political opposition. Some scholars argue that parties and parliaments are tools for autocrats to remain in power, but they do not clearly specify how this mechanism is implemented (Matsuzato, Koulinka, and Bush and Jamal). My study of women in parliament shows how president views and utilizes parliament for the purpose of increasing his own support and power relative to other political actors and institutions.

Out of this puzzle emerges a stronger theoretical perspective on and explanation of women's political participation in non-democratic regimes. Most of the literature to date emphasizes differences between democracies and authoritarian regimes or differences in participation based on electoral systems in democracies. Very little research explores

variation within authoritarian regimes. My research represents an important step in this direction. Many of the predictions derived from the literature either fail to explain differences between Kazakhstan and Belarus or underestimate women's representation in Belarus and overestimate women's participation in Kazakhstan. I develop explanation that takes into account macro and micro level factors affecting women's participation in non-democracies, in particular those with extensive executive power and a legislature that is often deferential to the president. An in-depth examination of Kazakhstan and Belarus thus forms the basis for theory generation that can be tested against other presidential autocracies. Importantly, my explanation can serve as the basis for hypotheses to be tested in other non-democracies, whether in Eurasia or beyond the post-Soviet region.

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