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POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF POST-COMMUNIST WOMEN

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ABSTRACT

My dissertation tackles an important question of democratic transition by addressing the apparent lack of political participation, specifically low intensity participation (LIP), of women across much of post-communist Europe. Based on available statistics, it is only in what once was East Germany, and to a lesser extent the Czech Republic, that a low LIP trend is not starkly visible. The regional pattern is contrary to past experiences of women in transition, particularly in Latin America, where women in authoritarian systems pushed for inclusion when democratic space opened. While some research has addressed the issue of high intensity participation (women in elected positions), many of the variables thought to be important (e.g. removal of quotas, electoral structure and party ideology), do not adequately address low LIP among the region's women. Based on 13 months of fieldwork in Poland, eastern Germany, the Czech Republic and Romania I propose that the communist legacy, the lack of an institutionalized women's movement prior to 1989 and gendered job displacement after are related explanations for low female LIP in Eastern and Central Europe during the initial transition period. The absence or limited intensity of one of these variables effects and mediates rates of female LIP, as is the case in eastern Germany (existence of a women's movement) and the Czech Republic (less dramatic gendered job displacement). Additionally, I argue that despite the many changes in women's lives since 1989, particularly related to the eastward expansion of the European Union and the growth of the NGO sector, these three factors remain important for explaining the persistence of low female LIP in much of the region today.

Chapter I: Female Political Participation in Post-Communist Europe

“It was the most important thing that ever happened to me – bigger than getting married and bigger than having children.” This was how an older Czech woman described the end of communism in her country. She went on to explain, “it was the most amazing feeling to wake up one day and realize that I was free.” For six months she said, she “awoke completely exuberant” (Interviews 2007-2008). The rather unexpected end of communism in Europe was indeed a momentous occurrence. It started in Poland, then Hungary and East Germany. Like dominoes, in the final months of 1989 the once stalwart communist governments of Eastern and Central Europe (ECE) toppled one by one. Building upon the work of underground reform efforts and feeling the cracks in the communist systems, hundreds of thousands of citizens, men and women, took to the streets of Berlin, Prague, Bucharest, and elsewhere successfully demanding change.

Following the victories of 1989, political space opened resulting in opportunities for building and directing both economic and political institutions in the region. Despite a significant presence in precipitating events, women were noticeably under-represented in the politics of transition.¹ Twenty years, a generation, later women in post-communist Europe remain largely absent from formal, and perhaps more significantly informal, political life (Coyne 2010; Gallego 2007; Conway 2005; Heinen 1997). This absence was and remains puzzling.

¹ Political space is a term often used to describe a time of structural or institutional change when old institutions disappear and new institutions are about to be built. It also entails the ability to express ones opinions openly and to engage in political discourse (Davis 1995, 214).

Low levels of female political participation are not unique to the states of post-communist Europe. However, given the visible position of women under communism, there was reason to be optimistic about the role that women would take in the post-communist transition (Penn 2005; True 2003; Einhorn 1993; Mickiewicz and Bell 1982). Women in communist society had a much different experience than women in the West.² They represented a significant portion of the workforce, they were the beneficiaries of extensive social coverage, and they held a number of political positions.³ As mentioned, women also played pivotal roles in the uprisings and protests that led to the end of communism in the region. From an outside perspective, women under communism appeared to be well ahead of women struggling for their rights in other parts of the world. Therefore, for the initial transition years (1989-1997) the lack of mobilization and female political activity, especially at the grassroots, is notable (Heinen 1997; Kaldor 1997; Knezevic 1997; Einhorn 1993).

Given their position under communism, it is rather perplexing that women did not “storm the stage” or attempt to fill newly available political space, even as the new governments of the early 1990s retrenched once “female friendly” policies. In fact, Heinen argues that contrary to expectation, after 1989 women had “fewer opportunities to participate in decisions concerning the whole community or their interests” than they did during the communist era (1997, 581). In fact, as will be

² “West” can be a rather unclear word. I use it throughout this dissertation in the same manner as used during the Cold War. The “West” refers to Western Europe, the United States and their industrialized allies. This was sometimes also called the 1st World. The East was the 2nd World, and included the Soviet Union and its allies. The 3rd World tended to refer to those non-industrialized states, primarily in the Southern hemisphere, from which the two major powers vied for loyalty.

³ Such benefits included generous maternity leave, elderly care, employment guarantees, and state provided childcare among others (Rueschemeyer 1998d; Einhorn 1993).

evident in the next section, those in the ECE region were less likely to participate in such activities as petition signing and attending lawful demonstrations in the 1990s than those in Western Europe and North America. A notable 58.9% of “Western” respondents to the 1999 World Values Survey indicating that they “have” signed a petition, yet only 29.9% of the ECE sample answered similarly. In regards to attending a demonstration, 32.8% of those from the West compared to 43.7% from the ECE region replied that they “would never” take part in such an activity. This reveals a regional trend. Likewise, within the region, answers to these questions display gender differences. In each case, women were less likely than men to say they have participated in such activities and more likely to say that they “would never” do so.⁴

Additionally mystifying is that despite twenty years of democratic transition and the coming of age of a new generation of women, one with few if any memories of communism, there appear to be only minor changes in female attitudes regarding political activity. *Therefore, focusing on low intensity political participation (LIP), this project seeks to understand what factors contributed to the low level of female participation in the ECE region during the initial transition away from communism. It also seeks to assess whether the state of political participation has changed now, a generation later.*

In analyzing this puzzle, it is my contention that the influence of the communist legacy, the weakness of an institutionalized women’s movement before, and gendered job displacement after 1989 provide the greatest explanatory power for understanding the level of low intensity participation among women in the early 1990s. I also argue

⁴ These statistics are presented and discussed in a forthcoming section starting on page 35.

that despite many changes in the region, specifically the influx of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the European Union's (EU) eastward expansion, these factors continue to be relevant for addressing continuing low, and in some cases dropping, levels of female LIP today. What follows are a description of important terms utilized throughout this project and a more in-depth discussion of the research puzzle. From there, I examine both high intensity participation (HIP) and LIP in the region during and after the early transition years. I then provide a review of the literature on this topic and address the significance of this work. Following, I articulate my dissertation argument. Finally, I provide a road map for the rest of the manuscript.

Terms and Definitions:

The most important term used in this project is the concept of participation.

Participation denotes taking part in or being involved in formal or informal communal activities such as membership in clubs or various recreational or policy-oriented organizations. This includes a wide-range of activities. Therefore, it is helpful to separate participation into political and social categories. Social participation entails belonging to groups that seek joint leisure activity for personal enrichment or in the pursuit of a hobby. This often results in positive social interaction. For example, joining an indoor soccer league or a book club would be forms of social participation (Putnam 1994). On the other hand, political participation describes such activities or organizations that serve to inform people about political processes or to act in a way so as to influence such processes. Schlozman and her colleagues explain that such participation can be, "...formal or informal, mainstream or unconventional, collective or individual" and refers to activities that "...seek to

influence either directly or indirectly what government does” (Schlozman *et al* 1994). While social participation is desirable and has been shown to be an important component in the development of civil society and consequently efficient democracy (de Tocqueville 18?; Putnam 1994; Howard 2003), it is political participation that is the main focus of this research because it has the most direct link to policy (de Tocqueville 2001 [1835]; Howard 2003; Putnam 1994).

Political participation is broken down into different types based on level of commitment necessarily. Literature distinguishes between high and low intensity political participation. These differ in regards to the time and energy required. High intensity participation, or more formal participation, requires a great deal of time and a high level of commitment. This type of political participation includes running for or serving in office, or belonging to the leadership of a political party, interest group or other type of political organization. Low intensity participation requires less commitment and is often associated with more grassroots activities. Voting, petition signing and party membership are, therefore, examples of low intensity engagement (Leal 1999). Low intensity participation, because it is most accessible to the average citizen and because it is voluntary, is of particular interest. Almost anyone, regardless of age, education or income can take part in LIP. It is this form of political activity that Almond and Verba (1963) and Putnam (1994) claim is critical for civic community and a vibrant democracy. Henceforth, when writing about women’s political participation, unless otherwise specified, I am referring to low intensity participation.⁵

⁵ For a detailed discussion on how I measure LIP, see Chapter 2.

A final and increasingly popular form of participating is working for non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Tunde defines NGOs as "... private, voluntary non-profit organizations independent of any government and funded through individual and corporate donations..." (1994, 60). Therefore, *Green Peace*, *Amnesty International*, and *Mothers Against Drunk Driving* are NGOs (or INGOs when they are international in reach). NGO activity can be political, social or both depending on the activities and goals of the organization. Due to its unique nature, however, NGO involvement in and of itself, is not considered here as a form of LIP. However, activities, such as petition signing or demonstrating that an NGO might organize are most definitely included. NGOs as a specific form of participation are especially significant when explaining the post-communist landscape during the middle transition era and the political situation for women of the region today. This is due to the dramatic influx of such organizations during that time and the apparent attraction of women toward NGO employment (Kapusta-Pofahl *et al* 2005; Mendelson and Glenn 2002). I address NGOs as a special category of participation in more detail in Chapter 7 of this dissertation.

A term commonly used in conjunction with participation, is *efficacy*. In fact, efficacy is often a sufficient condition for participation.⁶ The two concepts are complementary and reciprocal – the more one feels efficacious the more they participate, and hence they feel even more efficacious. Generally speaking, efficacy refers to how much an individual thinks their opinions and activities matter. A significant amount of political efficacy would indicate that people feel that their opinions are important and that those in power will hear them. Diminished or a lack

⁶ This is the case regarding participation that is voluntary and not coerced.

of political efficacy is a circumstances where citizens are frustrated and feel that their concerns are not important or acknowledged. Scholars sometimes separate efficacy into internal and external forms, though these certainly overlap in many instances. *Internal efficacy* refers to one's feeling that they have the resources and abilities to act within the political realm. *External efficacy*, in slight contrast, refers to an individual's feelings that the political system will be responsive to their efforts (Miller, Miller and Schneider 1980). In this dissertation efficacy alludes to both forms, often as a mechanism for linking female perceptions of political processes and the corresponding willingness of women in the ECE region to be politically active.

Another issue is how to properly label the period after 1989. In this dissertation, I often refer to the post-communist *transition* to describe the turn away from communism in 1989 and the political, economic and cultural construction of more democratic and capitalist systems. This is commonplace in the literature. However, it must be noted that "transition" can be a sticky concept. To begin, although often represented as if it indicates a forward moving path from A to B to C, a transition is not a linear process – and it certainly has not been in the post-communist region. There is a great deal of trial and error, as well as progress and setbacks in any transition period. Additionally, it is very difficult to know when a transition ends. In the post-communist context, there is no clear consensus on when, or if, the democratic transition ended.

Some scholars (e.g. Stark and Bruszt 1998; Bryant and Mokvzycki 1994) writing on the topic, object to the word transition altogether and use the term *transformation* to explain what has been a very lengthy process. For example, Stark and Bruszt write,

“we see social change not as transition from one order to another, but as transformation – rearrangements, reconfigurations and recombinations that yield new interweaving of the multiple societal logics that are a modern society” (1998, 7). Others talk of a situation where there has been a transition toward something, but that there has not yet been a total transformation (Buraway 2001). Finally, many, if not most authors, seem to use the terms to denote the same idea – the break with communism.

I would argue that the term transformation no more clearly addresses the issue of end-goal determination or articulates the ebbs and flows of the process than the term transition. Considering this, I prefer to continue using the word transition, because it is more common in the literature and it most accurately captures the notion that the countries of post-communist Europe have and continue to move from authoritarian toward democratic governance (O’Donnell *et al.* 1986). In this manuscript, the term transition therefore refers to a non-linear process that is not just about the alteration of political and economic institutions, but also encompasses the worldviews and expectations of the citizenry.

For temporal clarity, much of this dissertation focuses on the period immediately following the breakdown of communist rule in the region. I refer to this as the *initial transition*, which includes the years 1989 through 1997. This time period is of particular importance, because the decisions made and the people who were involved established the path that the transition would take and the trajectory of the countries in the region (Johnson 2001; Waylen 2000).

In regards to my regional categorization, I borrow the definition of *post-communist Europe*, from Political Scientist Marc Howard (2003). As he explains, “...my use of the category ‘the region of post-communist Europe’ is meant to encompass those post-communist countries on the European continent that have achieved at least a basic minimum of procedural democracy” (Howard 2003, 2-3). This is important, because I need to analyze states where civic engagement and female LIP is a genuine possibility. Requiring some level of democratization allows me to eliminate regime type (democratic, communist, theocratic) as a conflicting variable of explanation. This regional definition provides me a range of about 12 countries from which to make observations about the participation of women in the region as a whole as well as a range of countries from which to select individual case countries for further analysis.

Finally, before delving further into the particulars of this research puzzle, it is important that I address the generalization of the region’s women. There is a danger in talking about ECE women as if they represent a homogenous group. In truth, the millions of women in the region come from rich and diverse cultures, religions, ethnicities, economic circumstances and educational backgrounds. It is important to remember that these women are individuals, with their own opinions, histories and goals for the future. However, despite these many differences, women of the region did and in many ways still do share important commonalities, and the economic and political structures under which they lived, and currently live, molds their future paths. The common experience of communism and now of transition (even if attempted in different way) unites these women. Women’s experiences were certainly

varied under communism, but in many regards they all shared the pressures of the double (or triple) burden, they all had some access to social risk protection and they all lived under the guise of some form of gender equality.⁷ Explaining her feelings of kinship with all women of the post-communist region, Croatian journalist Slovenka Drakulic wrote, “I felt that the pattern of our (women’s) lives was identical. We had all been forced to endure the same communist system, a system that ground up people’s lives in a similar way wherever you lived; then of course, as women, we shared a perspective on life that was different from men’s” (1991, xvi). Therefore, to understand the influences of said structures, it is necessary to categorize and to generalize.

The Puzzle: Women of Eastern and Central Europe

During communism women appeared politically, and were clearly economically, active. From beyond the “Iron Curtain,” eastern women appeared to have reached a degree of female emancipation in the communist system. Given these indicators, labor force and political participation, often credited with leading to female empowerment during transitions from authoritarianism elsewhere, the apparent inactivity of women in the ECE region during the early transition years surprised many (Magyari *et al* 2001; Jaquette and Wolchick 1998; Knezevic 1997; Einhorn 1993). At least, women could have been the beneficiaries of transition had they mobilized for greater inclusion (Magyari *et al* 2001). The situation became more puzzling when early on many of the female friendly policies and social programs that protected women, such as nursery care and elderly coverage, retrenched or

⁷ The expectation that women worked and raised children was known as the “double burden.” The additional expectation that they participate in political life, belong to the Party and State run unions has been termed the “triple burden.”

disappeared all together and yet women remained largely politically inactive. Einhorn and Sever recalled that, “[t]he mobilization in particular, of those disproportionately affected by the social and economic hardship of transition, was keenly anticipated” (2003, 163). The transition was challenging for women as a group, but the expected mobilization generally did not occur. Even female LIP, the most accessible form of political activity, was not as high as one might have expected after the series of revolutions “from below” in 1989.

The lack of participation has had lasting and self-fulfilling effects. With few women involved in the politics of transition, issues such as social protection (e.g. nursery care), that affect women were not generally addressed favorably, further alienating women from LIP activity. Many of the small groups of politically motivated women during the early 1990s became frustrated in the early days of transition as others overlooked their ideas and concerns. Even though they helped end the totalitarian regimes, many of these women were quickly eliminated or marginalized from the meetings and decisions that determined state transitions.⁸ In some cases, women initially elected to post-communist parliaments (which saw few women to begin with) became so frustrated that they removed themselves from politics all together. Other women, who may have engaged in other forms of political participation, also chose to disengage during the initial transition and have not returned in substantial numbers (True 2003; Regulska 1998; Einhorn 1993).

Communist Emancipation

⁸ It is important to point out that even in these instances, while there were a couple of women in the higher rungs of leadership in opposition groups, they were the exception. However, women played a major, though often more covert, role mobilizing for the opposition (especially in Poland, East Germany, Czechoslovakia and Hungary). Women printed and disseminated documents arranged meetings, passed communications and participated in many other crucial ways (Titkow 1998).

In a system that did not have a great deal of immigration, initially lower numbers of men after World War II and a new Cold War to wage, women's roles as workers and mothers (the "double burden") were important to communist society (Einhorn 1993). Female labor force participation was especially high – representing as much as 90% of available women in some countries (see Chapter 6). Women essentially had a guarantee of employment. They were also provided assistance, such as the Housework Day (*Arbeitstag*) in East Germany that required employers to give women a day off for them to take care of their domestic "duties." State "protection," from exceptionally good maternity leave to financial assistance for single mothers, helped assure that women carried out both sides of their double burden. This created a situation where women in these societies relied on state benevolence to a larger degree than men. What resulted was a strong relationship between women and the father-like entity of the state (Ashwin 2000, 13). This had a large impact on the role that women played in communist society, but also in their perceptions of self. Rueschemeyer explains that it left many women with a greater sense of autonomy and voice (Rueschemeyer 1998b, 4). The double burden was difficult to maintain, but it became the accepted norm. "...the female inhabitants of those countries deeply internalized the double burden as something normal and linked to the difference of status between the sexes" (Heinen 1997, 580).

It was not only expected that women work inside and outside of the home, but they were "encouraged" to act in the political realm as well – the triple burden. Women were heavily encouraged to join parties (the Communist Party as it was), unions and to enter various levels of political office to receive personal favor for

themselves or their children; or in many cases, to keep themselves and their families from suspicion and police scrutiny (Huland, 2001; Interviews 2007 & 2008).⁹ As Drakulic described it, “[g]rowing up in Eastern Europe you learn very young that politics is not an abstract concept, but a powerful force influencing people’s everyday lives” (1991, xv). The result was a significant number of women involved in formal political activities. For example, women were visibly present in Eastern parliaments. In fact, women filled from 1/3 to 1/5 of the seats.¹⁰ At the regional level, women played an even more significant role and were able to wield significant power. The percentages of women who were active in regional and local offices, where more immediate power could lie, were higher than in many democratic states (Regulska 1998; Shaul 1982).

Despite what appeared from the outside to be remarkable strides for female equality in the economic and political realms, life for women in communist Europe was difficult. As True points out, “[p]eople can be simultaneously empowered and exploited by the impact of global forces” (True 2003). A large number of women had employment, but in some cases this was against their personal desires to stay home. Additionally, they often held more menial jobs. In the political world, although present, women did not wield great legislative power. In truth, the situation for women was more complex than many in the West thought. However, difficulties aside, women did have an established role under communism, a voice in political discussion (especially at local levels) and social issues were addressed that were

⁹ It is difficult to know how much this participation was the result of Party encouragement, or personal desire for advancement.

¹⁰ Some of this, though not all of it, was the result of government instituted gender quotas that set aside some positions for women (Einhorn 1993; Dalerup 2004).

generally favorable to women. There was also a degree of stability and security for women under such a system. This is stability that a number of the older women I spoke with across the region lament losing (Interviews 2007 & 2008).

Women in Resistance

In the communist system there was not always a means by which to express one's independence or efficacy. One way of doing this developed as the system cracked, creating some room for underground dissent.¹¹ Women were present in all dissident movements and activities of the communist era. Women filled the ranks of Poland's famed *Solidarity* (in fact represented over 50%) as well as *Charter 77* in Czechoslovakia and *First Forum* in East Germany. Women dissented across the region, even in countries where such activity was less organized than in Poland and the Czech Republic. They assisted in the copying and dissemination of banned literature (*Samizdat*), held meetings in their living rooms, helped smuggle materials across the Iron Curtain to and from the West and were often runners disseminating valuable information (Siklova 1997; Day 1999; Interviews 2007-2008). Women were generally successful in these activities, because they manipulated gender stereotypes to their advantage by using grocery bags and baby strollers as hiding places for outlawed documents or other communications (Penn 2006; Einhorn and Sever 2003; Day 1999). However, if caught or targeted, they faced similar punishment as men. In the course of my interviews, I spoke with a group of women who were imprisoned

¹¹ Many of those that took part in what could be classified as *dissident* activities, were not eager to embrace that label. For example, those adhering to Havel's suggestion of anti-politics and living "truth to power," did not see themselves as dissenting against the government, rather they saw their role as reformers. However, as Barbara Day, a British professor who organized underground lectures in Czechoslovakia points out, "...in a totalitarian society, any activity which does not conform to established rules is regarded by that society as oppositional and it becomes difficult to avoid use of the word 'dissident'" (Day 1999, 8). Today, these individuals are more willing to agree that they were dissenters (Interviews 2007-2008).

and then monitored because of their participation in these underground activities. They all explained that the physical and emotional toll was intense and long lasting. Despite participation in activities of dissent, even most of these women did not play a significant role in the transition processes in their countries.

Women in Authoritarian Regimes

The absence of women in the politics of transition in Eastern and Central Europe might not have been as notable, had not women elsewhere utilized similar political and economic upheavals to their advantage. During many “third wave” democratic transitions (and beyond), women mobilized and “stormed the stage.”¹² They pushed for gender quotas, for anti-discrimination laws and for equal wages (Baldez 2003; Jaquette and Wolcheick 1998). As Baldez describes, “[i]n countries as diverse as Argentina, Korea, Spain and South Africa, women saw popular demands for democracy as an opportunity to press for the democratization of everyday life and the extension of women’s rights” (2003, 253). Beckworth (2000) points out that it is often transition “moments” when constitutions are being written, which present the greatest opportunities for women to organize or exert influence on behalf of their sex. The demise of communism in Europe had the potential to be one of these moments where such mobilization was possible.

¹² Huntington (1992) coined the term “third wave” to classify transitions away from authoritarianism starting in the 1970s. First wave transitions were those that occurred from the period 1828-1926 and second wave refers to transitions from 1943-1962. Additionally, the idea of storming the stage was articulated by James C. Scott in his book *Domination and the Art of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (1990). In the work, Scott argues that there is an official or public transcript that people in the lower hierarchies of power will present on the public stage, whereas their hidden transcript (their true feelings) are kept in the private realm in various forms. He suggests that circumstances can abruptly change when someone or some group storms the public stage. By doing this, the power structure is demystified. Regarding third wave transitions, women in other parts of the world saw opportunities to storm the public stage and make their private concerns public in an effort to change political and social policies affecting women.

Much of the rise of women during third wave transitions was evident in Latin America. Despite a more traditional culture that might not appear conducive to female mobilization along gendered lines, women's political activity resulted in significant changes in Latin America during trying times.¹³ Women capitalized on the political opportunity structure that transition and crisis created to better their political, economic and social situations through joint action (Baldez 2003; Rakowski 2003).

Witnessing these changes in Latin America and considering the apparent advantages of women in the ECE region (in terms of economic and political participation), many women's rights advocates felt it was odd that, in Einhorn's words, "[w]omen in the former state socialist countries [did] not object vociferously to their high redundancy levels" (1993, 114). Yet, women were not visible during the early transition years in either formal or low intensity political participation.

Female High Intensity Participation in Post-Communist Europe:

While the focus of this project is on low intensity participation, it is appropriate to start by exploring female high intensity (formal) political participation in the region. HIP includes running for office, joining party leadership, or in some other way committing extensive time and energy toward a political undertaking. Under communism, gender quotas and party "encouragement" of female involvement in political life, created visible women on the political stage. As mentioned, women made up a significant percentage of eastern parliaments, though their power in

¹³ In this regard, *traditional culture* refers to the fact that Latin American countries tend to follow a conservative form of Catholicism that emphasizes the role of women in the family. The continent also tended toward military rule and had a history of hierarchical order (influenced by its religious and military structures) that seldom prioritized women or their specific concerns. This has changed to a degree in recent years, in large part as a result of the actions of women and women's groups during Third Wave transitions in that region. Today, as many as four Latin American countries have female Heads of State or Government indicating a marked degree of progress for formal female political leadership in the region.

communist legislatures is debatable. What is clear is that the number of women in formal politics dropped dramatically after 1989. Twenty years later, some of these figures are beginning to rebound, though the regional average still remains below 1989 levels.

The Relationship Between HIP and LIP

Scholars, especially those studying women and politics, have long recognized the relationship between HIP and LIP. Much of this research has focused on the rather low percentages of women in formal political positions around the world, and the role that LIP plays in creating a pool of women for HIP. The line of causation is blurry and it is difficult to fully determine if HIP leads to LIP or the other way around. In truth, it is likely a reciprocal relationship. It is reasonable that women in formal politics could serve as important female role models, that they might advance female-friendly policies, and might actively work to encourage not just more women in HIP, but female political activity at the low intensity level as well. On the other hand, LIP activity is often the basis from which women move from less intense to more intense political participation. Essentially female LIP could create an experienced pool or pipeline for women to increase their involvement from less formal to more formal political activities.

Regardless of the theoretical argument for a top down approach where advocates seek to place women in HIP positions to assist women, or the decision to advance more grassroots (LIP) activities among women, the importance of a pool of women is crucial. LIP is the most immediate creator of that pool of women. Over the last twenty years, scholars have moved beyond looking to gender and campaigning. In fact, recent studies done in the US found that once a woman is a viable candidate, or

has the support of her party, her sex is not a factors in voting decisions among the population (Matland and King 2002). Therefore, attention is now on the recruitment processes. Most prominent in this line of reasoning is the importance of the “gatekeeper,” often the party or elites within the party, who works to limit or advance women along the “pipeline” toward greater political involvement (Palmer *et al* 2001; Nevin 1998).

In general the pool of potential candidates for higher office are part of business or social networks that have connections. One way to enter these social circles and to become an attractive candidate is through LIP activities. For many women who might take time off from work or who may have difficulty getting into the right circles, grassroots and LIP activities can be even more important for creating that pool of political women.

Prior experience with either form of participation can be an advantage for furthering the reciprocal relationship between HIP and LIP. However, as will become clear throughout this dissertation, the perceptions of that experience is important. If there are positive feeling associated, then it is likely to build upon itself and encourage greater participation (LIP and HIP). On the other hand, if there are negative idea associated with political participation, it can be difficult to find a qualified pool of people (women in this case) willing to take part in LIP activities, let along more formal politics. The nature of past experience matters (Putnam 1993).

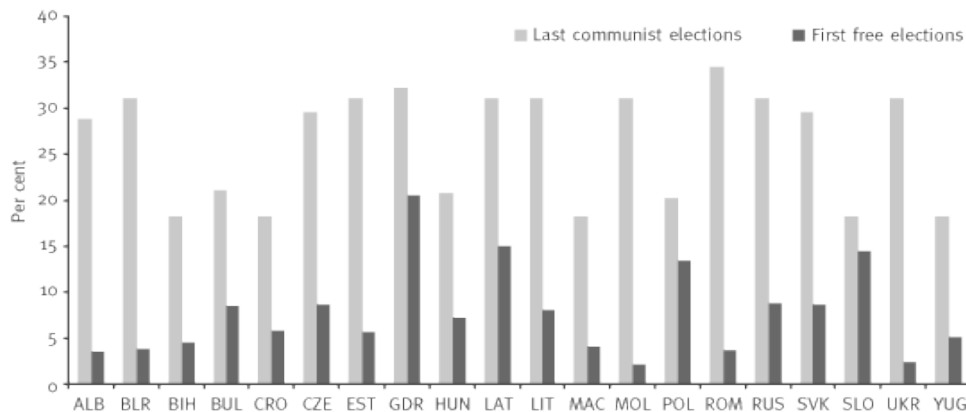
When HIP and LIP are closely correlated, we would expect to see countries with high female HIP also exhibiting high LIP and vice versa. In the ECE region the HIP and LIP correlation is visible. However, it is not absolute. Places like Romania,

Russia and Bulgaria are all on the low end in terms of female HIP, and they also have low figures for female LIP. Likewise, countries like Lithuania and Latvia are right around the regional average for women in both HIP and LIP. Yet, the cases of Poland and the Czech Republic suggest that the relationship is not a given. The Czech Republic has above average LIP; however it also has one of the lowest figures (as of 2008) of women in Parliament and in ministries. Poland is the opposite with notably high numbers of women in the Polish Sjem, yet below average numbers of women taking part in LIP activities.

Women in Legislatures: The Initial Transition Period

There was a dramatic decline in the number of women who were part of national legislatures after the first post-communist elections. The trend was visible across the entire region; including Southeastern Europe (the former Yugoslavia) and Russia (Einhorn 1993; Ruschemeyer 1998d; Irvine 1998; Millard 2004). In significant numbers, women chose to no longer engage in formal political activities during this period. This was as much, if not more, about women’s perceptions of formal political life as it was about how men conceived of women in politics.

FIGURE 1.1
Women in Parliament Immediately Before and Immediately After the End of Communism



Source: Wilcox et al 2003, Page 2.

Many scholars contend that much of the decline in formal female political participation after 1989 was a direct result of the elimination of communist era gender quotas. Without the institutional requirement, significantly fewer women were elected to national legislatures post-1989 (Wilcox 2003; Matland and Montgomery 2003). This surely played a role. However, concerns regarding the time needed for this high-level of political participation during an unstable economic situation, which employment statistics show disproportionately affected women, was also significant (Coyne 2010; Morgan 2008; Posadskays-Vanderbeck 2000). With time at a minimum and resources and jobs scarce during the initial transition, some argue that women discarded the third burden of formal political participation (Chiva 2005). Whereas under communism, formal political activity was in large part an obligation, in the 1990s it was a choice and many women simply did not have the time for HIP.

Another factor to consider was the general repudiation of reformers and dissidents in elections across the region in 1991 and 1992. As mentioned, a number of women were involved with dissident activities such as Solidarity in Poland and Charter 77 in Czechoslovakia. Some of these activists, significantly more men than women, immediately filled formal political offices during preliminary elections in 1989 and 1990. However, by the first rounds of formalized elections in 1991 and 1992 some of the challenges of transition had become evident resulting, in many cases, in a backlash against a number of the former dissidents. Therefore, the electorate ousted the few female dissidents who attempted formal political participation after 1989 with many of the other reformers from the communist era (True 2003).¹⁴

¹⁴ The exceptions were Vaclav Havel in Czechoslovakia (later the Czech Republic) and Lech Walesa in Poland who were the faces of dissent in their respective countries. Despite the repudiation of less

Between the removal of some gender quota policies and the rejection of dissident politicians during the early transition, fewer and fewer women were present in formal politics during the early 1990s. By the end of the 1990s, a slight upswing was evident in the number of women holding legislative office. However, figures remained much lower than under communist governance. As Matland and Montgomery (2003) reported, at the turn of the century, female representation in post-communist Europe was at 12%. This was lower than the 14% global average and it was certainly lower than the 25% average of “Western” states.

TABLE 1.1
Women in ECE Parliaments January 1997

<i>Country</i>	<i>% Women in Lower House 1997</i>	<i>% Change from 1988</i>
Bulgaria	13.3%	-9.7
Czech Rep.	15%	-14
Estonia	12.9%	-19.1
Hungary	11.4%	-11.6
Latvia	9%	-23
Lithuania	17.5%	-14.5
Poland	13%	-7
Romania	7%	-28
Russia	10.2%	-21.8
Slovakia	14.7%	-4.3

Source: IDEA Women in Parliament 1997

Analyzing the data presented in Table 1.1 it is clear that the trend persisted beyond just the first post-communist election throughout what I have termed the initial transition period. In all cases, in 1997 the percentages of female parliamentarians remained well below 1988 numbers. The drop remained especially stark in Romania, Russia, Latvia and Estonia.

familiar dissidents who joined political life after 1989, these two men rose to become popular post-communist leaders. Havel was able to use his earlier sentiment of anti-politics to his advantage for a time, as he continued to claim a position above politics. Likely preparing to take the mantle of leadership, in November of 1989, Havel told the West German magazine *Der Spiegel* that what the times called for was a symbolic representation that no politician could be, rather the times called for someone who could give hope to society (“Jetzt Fallen die Masken” 27, November 1989).

Women in Legislatures: Today

Rebuilding a female presence in the new Eastern Parliaments has been difficult and slow. Some women, such as Petra Buzková in the Czech Republic, did become popular politicians and garnered great support. However, Buzková is the exception, and even she retired from political life after a rather short career.¹⁵ In general it has been challenging to find women willing to engage in formal politics. Based on the recollections of women I spoke with in the region, and other literature on the issue, there appears to be three overarching obstacles to female formal participation in the region today: ideas of women in formal political life, lack of female recruiting and limited communication between women's organizations and female politicians.¹⁶

There remains a perception that formal politics is a "man's world" and that women have a tougher time getting elected to office. Once there, the feeling among many of the women I spoke with is that women have to work twice or even three times as hard as men to make any progress. Most of the female politicians I spoke with recalled the difficulties they faced. One in the Czech Republic explained how unofficial party gatherings still often took place at strip clubs, where she feels uncomfortable.¹⁷ At best this is simply a case of male politicians being insensitive. At its worst, it suggests a deliberate attempt to exclude female politicians (and possibly a few men) or to make them feel uneasy.

¹⁵ Petra Buzková, already much discussed in the media, created a huge episode when she had a medically necessary breast reduction. Male politicians made derogatory comments about the situation to journalists and also in parliamentary proceedings (Czech Interviews 2007-2008).

¹⁶ Formal political participation and the explanations for the lack of female HIP in the ECE region is not the primary focus of this dissertation project. These observations are included here to provide valuable context, and as a means of assessing to some extent the relationship between HIP and LIP, however, they should not be considered exhaustive.

¹⁷ The obstacles women face in the ECE region are not unlike many of the challenges facing women seeking political representation all over the world. However, given the history of the region as well as the mandates of EU membership, the fact that this is occurring in these countries runs counter to expectations of political life in developed societies.

Adding to the perception of formal politics as a man's game, there remain few avenues for highly political women in the region, and little pipeline support from the generally young, political parties. For the most part, parties do not recruit women for political positions, nor are qualified women often found in ministerial positions where higher ups in the parties can glean them to run for higher office. For example, Chiva notes that of the seven Romanian governments in place between 1990 and 2003, "only seven posts were occupied by women from an overall total of 147 ministers," which represents less than 5% of the total (Chiva 2005, 976). In the late 1990s, under the leadership of Prime Minister Milos Zeman, there were no females in the Czech Cabinet. Zeman explained, "I wouldn't want talented female politicians from the Socialist Democrats to be needlessly blemished by the decline of their popularity and prestige because of having to deal with immensely difficult and virtually unprecedented tasks" (True 2003, 145). Although there was some objection to this sexist claim by Zeman, the discussion quickly moved on and the Cabinet went unchanged.

One place where there has been a concerted effort to recruit and support female politicians, is in Poland. After 2004, the number of women in the Sjem (the Polish Parliament) rose and has stayed near 20%. However, there is some disagreement as to the reasons for the increase. Some point to the intensified activities of women's NGOs as well as EU influence. Others point out that a number of the new female parliamentarians are in parties from the Right (such as Civic Platform – PO, and Law and Justice – PiS among others) and many of them have little past political experience. These people comment that the Right strategically put more women up

for election so as to eliminate gender and women's rights as a potential campaign issue (Interviews 2007-2008). Interestingly, some of the women I spoke with in Poland, felt that many of the political women now serving in public office, are playing token roles, not unlike many of the female politicians of the communist period. This is a good example of where high female HIP did not build upon female LIP and as such, based on my interviews, does not appear to garner much support among the general population. Additionally, in the Polish case, more women in formal power has, so far, not led to a corresponding increase in female informal participation.

The political rise of Romanian President Traian Băsescu's daughter Elena, a 29-year-old former model and media-proclaimed "Paris Hilton of Romania," is an indication of the continued complexities of female formal political power.¹⁸ While the President's Party originally rejected Elena as a candidate for the European Parliament, claiming that she had too little experience, she ran as an independent. Documents arose soon after, indicating that her father instructed the Liberal Democrats to throw all of their support behind his daughter, which they did. Soon after her election, Elena renounced her independent status and joined the Liberal Democrats again (Turp 2009).

For those few women that do enter formal politics, and are successful, it is clear that they seldom maintain relationships with the nascent women's groups in the region. I heard this complaint at almost every women's organization I visited. For example, one woman I spoke with in Bucharest lamented the fact that her group

¹⁸ The fact that this woman bares the name of another important female politician in Romanian history, Elena Ceausescu, who also advanced due to her family connections, was not lost on some of those I spoke with in the country.

helped advance the prospects of a female parliamentarian who they believed represented the group's values. However, once in office, the politician cut all ties with the group. Having not spoken with this particular female politician, it is difficult to know exactly why she made this decision. It is possible that her political party encouraged her to make the break, but it is also just as likely that it was a personal decision. Other female politicians I spoke with stated that they did not foster such relationships with women's groups, especially once elected. They explained that they often agreed with the work some of the groups were doing, but commented that they were already in a tenuous situation in male dominated legislative bodies. They did not need the "baggage" that association with a women's group, even one that is not overtly feminist, would bring.¹⁹ They argued that association with women's organizations delegitimizes their role as legislators. None of the women interviewed had many solutions for ameliorating this situation.

Barriers aside, the percentages of women in formal political office have improved in some countries. It is notable, that in surveys I commissioned in three countries in the region, there was a fairly strong indication that many women do feel it is important to have women in office, even if it is not yet manifest in actually higher statistics of women in ECE legislatures to date.²⁰

¹⁹ Women's organizations are rather new, and controversial in the post-communist region. Women's association, and feminist groups (the two are more often than not conflated in the region) have a complicated history in post-communist Europe and the stereo-types about women's groups as feminist, anti-wife, communist and homosexual persist (see Chapters 5 and 7).

²⁰ For much more discussion on the findings from my case surveys, see Chapter 7.

TABLE 1.2
How Important Is It To You That Women Be Politically Active (HIP)

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not So Important	Not Important
Czech Rep.	39.3%	53.4%	5.0%	2.3%
NBL ²¹	38.9%	46.4%	12.3%	2.4%
Romania	27.5%	48.5%	16%	8%

However, in the region only the NBL, Poland and Slovakia currently have figures that match the percentages of women in their parliament under communism.

Surprisingly, percentages for the Czech Republic and Hungary remain essentially the same from the 1997 statistics. Additionally, with the exception of the NBL, none of the ECE countries examined are close to 30%, a figure that is widely held to represent a tipping point for real female influence in legislative bodies (Conaway 2006).²²

TABLE 1.3
Women in ECE Parliaments December 2008

<i>Country</i>	<i>% Women in Lower House 2008</i>	<i>% Change Since 1988</i>
Bulgaria	21.7%	-1.3
Czech Republic*	15.5%	-13.4
Estonia	20.8%	-11.2
Germany (NBL)	36.0%	+3
Hungary	11.1%	-11.9
Latvia	20%	-12
Lithuania	17.7%	-14.2
Poland	20.2%	+2
Romania	11.4%	-23.6
Russia	14%	-18
Slovakia	19.3%	+3

Source: IDEA Women in Parliament 2008

** Four of these countries have bi-cameral systems. The percentage of women in the Czech Upper House is actually almost two percentage points higher than those found in the Lower House where studies generally indicate more female accessibility. The*

²¹ German Democratic Republic (GDR) refers to the country of East Germany (1949-1990). The New Bundeslander-states (NBL) references what was previously East Germany and is now a part of a unified Germany.

²² Some long standing democracies, the United States being the most glaring example, also fall well short of the 30% mark. In fact, only 18% of the United States Congress is made up of women. Features of the US electoral system, the dual-party structure, the primary cycle and Presidential as opposed to Parliamentary governance are shown to hinder the election of women. Additionally, although their numbers are sorely under-represented in formal politics, women in the United States are highly present in LIP indicating that the basis is there for continued progress in female HIP in the country (Amer 2008; Conway 2005).

other three cases follow theory, with significantly fewer women in the Upper House as opposed to the Lower House. Upper House percentages: Poland- 8%, Romania- 5.8%, Russia- 4.7%.

Despite setback, these modest increases from the lows of the early 1990s do indicate a more optimistic picture of women in HIP than was present in the early transition period.²³

Low Intensity Participation:

High intensity, more formal, participation dipped dramatically after 1989, and it is only beginning to rebound some 20 years later. Low intensity, much less formal participation, was also quite low throughout the early transition years and beyond. Despite some positive evidence of increased numbers of women in national legislatures, at the lower levels of politics, there has been no corresponding increase in female LIP. Formal political participation is perhaps the most visible and significant area for research on the topic, however it is at the grassroots (the lower levels) where democratic participation is most important. In a democratic country, we would hope to see high citizen involvement in low intensity participation because this is the form of participation most commonly available to the average citizen, and especially to busy women. This is also the form of participation that Almond and Verba (1963), Putnam (1994) and others focus on when assessing the depth of democratic norms and processes.

It is difficult to examine statistics on female LIP during the communist era because reliable data is simply not available. However, we can review data from the

²³ Although not the focus of this research project, HIP in Poland is a particularly intriguing question. The effectiveness of these female parliamentarians would be an interesting research question for future investigation. The previously mentioned case of Romania and Elena Bâsescu would also be an intriguing area for further research. In both cases, the nature of how female HIP is occurring is relevant. There is a feeling among a number of women in Poland that their female parliamentarians are in positions based on political considerations, rather than on their skill and talent. The same is also often said of Elena Bâsescu. In neither case is there currently a positive trickle down effect that is encouraging women to become active in LIP activities. In fact, the opposite may be occurring.

initial transition period of the 1990s to determine the level of female LIP at that time. What is clear in the data is that there is a regional and gendered component to levels of LIP.

Regionally Low LIP: Initial Transition Period

LIP encompasses activities such as voting, petition signing or demonstrating. Doing these things takes a relatively small amount of time and minimal financial commitment. Unfortunately, voting figures collected from the region during the 1990s, and even in many places today, do not bifurcate exit polling by sex. Likewise, the World Values Survey (WVS) did not ask respondents if they voted in the relevant survey rounds. Therefore, I must eliminate voting as a means of measuring LIP during the early transition.²⁴ The WVS does include questions regarding petition signing and demonstrating. These WVS questions can be broken down to discern differences between male and female responses. Using data from the 1999 WVS, a period that represents responses from the end of the initial transition period, it is apparent that there are differences in LIP that separate post-communist Europe from the West.

Table 1.4 shows that when examining the questions indicating LIP during the initial transition period, the regional average for ECE was significantly lower than the average for the United States, Canada and Western Europe.

²⁴ I did include a voting question in my case surveys, and I asked people about voting practice during interviews. Therefore, voting becomes a greater consideration in the discussion of LIP today.

TABLE 1.4
Average in US/Canada/W. Europe 1999²⁵

	Petition Signing	Demonstration
Have	58.9%	26.0%
Might	27.2%	41.2%
Would Never	14.0%	32.8%

Average in East/Central Europe 1999²⁶

	Petition Signing	Demonstration
Have	29.9%	19.5%
Might	31.0%	36.8%
Would Never	39.1%	43.7%

What is notable about the above table, is not just the remarkable differences in “have” responses, perhaps that is a product of availability, but the high number of respondents from the ECE region who said they “would never” participate in such activities. This clearly indicates a regional difference among people of ECE and of Western states when it comes to their willingness to participate in two examples of LIP.

Gendered LIP: Initial Transition

Within the ECE region, it is quite clear, that there is a gendered difference in responses as well. Tables 1.5 & 1.6 present the statistics for countries in the region delineated by male and female responses to questions about petition signing and demonstrating (indicators of LIP).

TABLE 1.5
Petition Signing: Female Responses

	Have Done	Might Do	Would Never Do	Total
Bulgaria	9.8% (42)	32.6% (140)	57.7% (248)	100% (430)
Czech Republic	57.4% (546)	26.5% (252)	16.1% (153)	100% (951)
Estonia	20.2% (100)	30% (149)	49.8% (247)	100% (496)
Germany (East)	60.6% (312)	30.6% (158)	8.8% (45)	100% (515)
Hungary	14.4% (73)	29.4% (149)	56.1% (284)	100% (506)
Latvia	18.6% (95)	30.6% (156)	50.8% (259)	100% (510)

²⁵ Countries included: Austria, Belgium, Canada (2000), Denmark, Finland (2000), Western half of Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxemburg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, USA. There was no Norwegian survey taken in this WVS Round.

²⁶ This survey was released in 1999 however data was collected from 1997 to 1998.

Lithuania	27.8% (121)	36.7% (160)	35.6% (155)	100% (436)
Poland	20.5% (117)	25.5% (146)	54% (309)	100% (572)
Romania	9.2% (43)	27.8% (130)	63% (295)	100% (468)
Russia	11.5% (145)	26.1% (329)	62.4% (786)	100% (1,260)
Slovakia	58.9% (390)	21.3% (141)	19.8% (131)	100% (662)
Regional Average	29.2% (1,984)	28.1% (1,910)	42.8% (2,912)	100% (6,806)

Petition Signing: Male Responses

	<u>Have Done</u>	<u>Might Do</u>	<u>Would Never Do</u>	<u>Total</u>
Bulgaria	12.8% (50)	42.3% (166)	44.9% (176)	100% (392)
Czech Republic	60.1 (531)	27% (238)	12.9% (114)	100% (883)
Estonia	21.3% (88)	35.7% (148)	43% (178)	100% (414)
Germany (East)	61.7% (272)	29.7% (131)	8.6% (37)	100% (440)
Hungary	15.1% (68)	35.3% (159)	49.7% (224)	100% (451)
Latvia	19.6% (84)	35.5% (152)	44.9% (192)	100% (428)
Lithuania	27% (105)	40.9% (159)	32.1% (125)	100% (389)
Poland	24.9% (127)	31.8% (162)	43.3% (221)	100% (510)
Romania	12.2% (60)	43.6% (215)	44.2% (218)	100% (493)
Russia	11.8% (127)	38.2% (412)	50% (539)	100% (1,078)
Slovakia	59.7% (366)	24% (147)	16.3% (100)	100% (613)
Regional Average	30.8% (1,878)	34.3% (2,089)	34.9% (2,124)	100% (6,091)

Source: World Values Survey 1999

While the average response for those that claimed they have signed a petition is not significant between men and women (30.8% and 29.2%, with women representing a slightly smaller percentage), again the “would never” responses are instructive. Whereas 42.8% of women questioned in the region indicated that they would never sign a petition, only 34.9% of males gave the same answer. This represents an average difference of 7.9%, which was especially relevant in Romania’s gender gap of 18.8%. Additionally, stark is the fact that over 60% of female respondents in Russia and Romania reported that they would never sign a petition.

TABLE 1.6
Participation in Lawful Demonstration
Female Responses

	<u>Have Done</u>	<u>Might Do</u>	<u>Would Never Do</u>	<u>Total</u>
Bulgaria	15.1% (67)	31.4% (139)	53.5% (237)	100% (443)
Czech Republic	23.6% (218)	41.6% (384)	34.7% (320)	100% (922)
Estonia	9.6% (48)	27.7% (139)	62.7% (315)	100% (502)
Germany (East)	44% (224)	32.8% (167)	23.2% (117)	100% (508)
Hungary	4.2% (21)	25% (126)	70.9% (358)	100% (505)
Latvia	23.6% (123)	35.2% (184)	41.2% (215)	100% (522)

Lithuania	9.8% (44)	46.3% (207)	43.8% (196)	100% (447)
Poland	5.1% (29)	27.9% (160)	67.1% (385)	100% (547)
Romania	11.4% (58)	34.2% (174)	54.4% (277)	100% (509)
Russia	22.7% (296)	29% (378)	48.2% (628)	100% (1,302)
Slovakia	12% (75)	53.6% (275)	49.7% (311)	100% (626)
Regional Average	17.5% (1,203)	33.5% (2,333)	49.0% (3,359)	100% (6,895)

Participation in Lawful Demonstration Male Responses

	<u>Have Done</u>	<u>Might Do</u>	<u>Would Never Do</u>	<u>Total</u>
Bulgaria	14.5% (59)	45.5% (185)	40% (163)	100% (407)
Czech Republic	32.1% (280)	41.6% (363)	26.3% (229)	100% (872)
Estonia	13.3% (54)	35% (142)	51.7% (210)	100% (406)
Germany (East)	48.1% (209)	32.7% (143)	19.2% (84)	100% (436)
Hungary	5.1% (23)	34.3% (156)	60.7% (276)	100% (455)
Latvia	26.9% (117)	38.9% (169)	34.3% (149)	100% (435)
Lithuania	13.5% (54)	50.5% (202)	36% (144)	100% (400)
Poland	15.6% (80)	35% (180)	49.4% (254)	100% (514)
Romania	18.1% (96)	48.3% (256)	33.6% (178)	100% (530)
Russia	24% (265)	37.2% (410)	38.8% (428)	100% (1,103)
Slovakia	16.8% (98)	48.5% (284)	34.7% (203)	100% (585)
Regional Average	21.7% (1,335)	40.5% (2,490)	37.7% (2,318)	100% (6,143)

A similar pattern emerges when people in the region indicated their willingness to participate in a lawful demonstration. Table 1.6 shows a regional difference between men and women who responded that they would demonstrate (21.7% of men and a smaller 17.5% of women). However, as before, female respondents answered in significantly higher numbers, that they “would never” participate in a lawful demonstration (37.7% of male respondents compared to 49%, almost half, of female respondents – a 11.3% difference). This was highest for women in Hungary (70.9% of female respondents) and Poland (67.1% of female respondents).

The responses to these questions indicate the gendered dimension of low intensity political participation in the region, and also displays quite a bit of country-to-country variation. For example both men and women in the NBL appear more willing to participate, whereas in Hungary and Romania both sexes are less likely to participate.

Within these country trends however, in all cases men were more participatory than women.

Women’s Low Intensity Participation: Today

The World Values Survey, the source of the above statistics on LIP, compiles and releases data sporadically. There was a recently available 2005 WVS Round, however it is a smaller sample than previous surveys and does not include statistics for the entire region. Most importantly, researchers did not conduct the survey in the Czech Republic, a case of particular interest due to its outlier status as a country with above average female LIP.

Based on literature and my own surveys of three countries in the region (the Czech Republic, the NBL and Romania), as well as interviews conducted in four countries (the aforementioned three, plus Poland), female LIP remains rather low. There is a noted danger in comparing findings from different surveys. It is difficult to control for timing, survey structure and process. However, without a more current round of WVS, it is a productive means of estimating trends.

TABLE 1.7
Petition Signing: Female Responses

	Have Done	Might Do	Would Never Do	Total
Czech Republic	22.8%	72.1%	5.2%	504
Germany (NBL)	14.3%	47.3%	38.7%	450
Romania	5.1%	50.8%	44.1%	602

TABLE 1.8
Participation in Lawful Demonstration
Female Responses

	Have Done	Might Do	Would Never Do	Total
Czech Republic	8.7%	52.0%	39.3%	504
Germany (NBL)	28.2%	34.4%	37.3%	450
Romania	4.3%	38.1%	57.6%	602

In inquiring about LIP among ECE women today, I had survey takers ask about petition signing and demonstrating in the same format as the questions from the WVS. It is notable that large numbers of women still indicate that they would never take part in these LIP activities. In an attempt to go beyond the WVS questions, my survey takers also asked respondents about their willingness to explicitly participate or work with NGOs (dealt with in much more detail in Chapter 7). Again, over a third of respondents indicated that they would never do so, and only small percentages responded that they had taken part in such activities.²⁷

TABLE 1.9
Participate with NGO
Female Responses

	<u>Have Done</u>	<u>Might Do</u>	<u>Would Never</u>	<u>D/K</u>	<u>Total</u>
Czech Republic	16.7%	41.8%	31.0%	10.5%	504
Germany (NBL)	13.6%	42.4%	43.3%	0.7%	450
Romania ²⁸	2.5%	35.6%	61.9%	----	602

Another indicator of LIP is membership in political parties. Therefore, I included this question in my survey. Somewhat unsurprisingly, party membership was extremely low among women in my case countries, despite 20 years of democratic transition (see Table 1.9). The fact that Romanian women were more likely to join a party than respondents in the NBL or the Czech Republic is somewhat surprising given that one generally accepted explanation for low party membership is the fact that membership in the Communist Party was previously “encourage.” Romanians lived under one of the harshest communist governments, therefore, it is a little odd that Romanian women would be the most inclined of the three cases to belong to a

²⁷ I was unable to find a similarly worded survey question asked of western women. However, my sense is that western women would likely view NGO participation more favorably than those in the ECE region. NGOs have operated in Western Europe and North America for several decades now and tend to be accepted as a viable employment option for women as well as men.

²⁸ The fact that Romanian respondents did not have the “Don’t Know” option may skew the data slightly.

political party. However, the figure is very small. The political systems in the ECE do not require party declaration or alliance for voting, such as is the case in the United States where citizens must indicate Republican, Democrat, Independent or some other allegiance when they register to vote. Therefore, it takes a bit more motivation and involvement to join a political party in Eastern and Central Europe than it does to do so in the United States. Western Europe is more similar in terms of party affiliation process. The comparison here is less stark, yet still visible. For example, the 2005 WVS shows that 7.6% of female respondents in Italy, 9.4% in Great Britain, 14.1% in Finland and 16.2% in Norway answered that they were party members.

TABLE: 1.10
Do You Belong to a Political Party?²⁹
Female Responses

	Yes	No	Total
Czech Republic	1.2%	98.8%	504
Germany (NBL)	1.8%	98.2%	450
Romania	4.7%	95.3%	765

A current assessment of women’s LIP in the region today is presented in Chapter 7. At that point, I address the importance of EU eastward expansion, as well as the significant role of NGOs as they both relate to female LIP in the ECE region.

Based on the numbers provided here, LIP during the early-mid transition period did display regional attributes. On average, people in the post-communist region were less inclined to participate in LIP activities than respondents in Western Europe, the United States and Canada. Evidence also shows the gendered nature of LIP. In all cases, women in the post-communist region were less likely than men to sign

²⁹ Party membership is another example of LIP. The WVS does ask about party membership, however I did not include it in the earlier figures from the 1990s, as the number of respondents that said “Yes” were so tiny. Even in my 2008/2009 surveys, in all three cases the numbers of female party members remain very low.

petitions, attend demonstrations or join parties. The NBL are the outlier in this regard as women in the country responded rather highly that they would take part in LIP activities. Women in the Czech Republic and Slovakia also returned numbers that were above the regional averages. Based on surveys conducted for me in three ECE countries, though some increase is noted from the 1999 figures to today, average female LIP remains low in the region.

Literature on Women in the Region:

The fall of the Berlin Wall and the numerous transitions away from communism in East and Central Europe, have proven to be a small cottage industry for researchers, especially during the 1990s. Much of this literature looks at the collapse of communism: roads toward democratization, economic transitions, ethnic conflict and EU or NATO enlargement (see Linz and Stepan 1996; Bunce 1997; Offe, 1997; Solnik 1998; Barany 2004; Grillot *et al* 2010, to name a few). Much less literature has focused on the continuing hardships that women in the region faced since 1989 (significant exceptions include: Einhorn Draculic 1991; 1993; Rueschemeyer 1998; Irvine 1998; Gal and Kligman 2000; Matland and Montgomery 2003; True 2003; Penn 2005; Roth 2008, among a few others).

In general, the issue of female political participation at varying levels in Eastern Europe remains understudied, and appears to be diminishing as the communist era becomes more distant and other areas of study become more popular. Women as a specific category of research is a relatively young area of political science research whose practitioners have historically attempted to get more attention. However, the overall shift in attention from the ECE region is due, in large part, to a shift in geopolitical interests. Whereas for forty years, the ECE region was the front lines in

an ideological (and potentially devastating) war between East and West, since 1989 western military interests have moved elsewhere. During the 1990s, there was a great deal of interest in how the ECE would move beyond its communist past, but as transition progressed, these questions seemed less intriguing to policy makers. Today, much research is focused on the rise of potential economic powerhouses China and India. Additionally, the Middle East, especially since the events of 9/11 and the US led wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, has garnered more and more political and academic attention. A number of more recent political science publications that explore the issues associated with gender, have also moved into research in these new geographic areas of interest.

The shift from the ECE region, and specifically of women in the region, has meant less accumulation of knowledge on the subject. This has also resulted in fewer opportunities to learn about transition processes and how these processes affect women in particular and gender relations in general. The ECE transitions, and women's roles in them continue to be an important area of research. These are issues, which could be important considerations in the current popular areas of academic research as China is currently liberalizing economically, and a number of countries in the Middle East may soon go through their own political transitions.

In general, literature that does exist on female participation in post-communist Europe is characterized by three overlapping themes: women in formal politics, women as the losers of transition, and a focus on the incomparability of the communist and post-communist eras. In addition, the vast majority of these works are compilation pieces, which rely on a group of individual researchers analyzing single

cases in the region. At times, an article will surface that makes a direct comparison between selections of two, or possibly even three, cases. To date, there are few projects that thematically examine a number of cases side-by-side along specific variables and few that provide systematic data sets that can compare attitudes and political voice for women across the region as well as between given countries in the region. Therefore, limiting our ability to move beyond observation and make some real conclusions about outcomes.

Focus on Formal Politics

Much of the important research conducted on female participation has focused on the number of women in parliaments (e.g. Matland and Montgomery 2003). This is a natural place to start, though it focuses only on one form of political participation; a very high intensity form.³⁰ Some of this work has been quite insightful and has highlighted a number of structural and institutional barriers that limit the ability for women to gain high level political office (see Chapter 3).

Researchers have found that system type, list structure and number of parties are all factors in determining a women's likelihood for election to parliaments around the world (Kenworthy and Malami 1999; Dalurup 2004; Conway 2005). Additionally, some suggest that "pipeline factors" and a lack of female political connection also have important gender implication during the candidate recruitment process (Waylen 1994). My project utilizes the research and arguments of scholars looking at women in parliament to reach an understanding of the diminished rate of low intensity level political participation among the general female population of the post-communist

³⁰ At the beginning of this dissertation, I too started by addressing the situation regarding women and formal politics in the region.

region. It also addresses the relationship between HIP and LIP, adding an extra dimension to studies of political participation in the region.

Losers of Transition

Much of the limited literature on women in post-communist Europe focuses on women as the “losers of transition” highlighting the negative consequences of capitalism, such as a marked increase in sexual exploitation through the sex-industry and human trafficking (Brunnbauer 2000; Behrend 1995). Even beyond the sex trade, there is an emphasis on female job loss (an issue addressed in this research as well) and, the increase in domestic violence against women among other issues. For example, in 1996 Polish academic Urszula Nowakowska wrote “[w]omen are the most visible victims of the period of transition, and they are going to pay the biggest price for economic and ideological reforms (revolutions) (1996, 29). To be sure, the transition process did negatively affect women in the region in a number of ways. Women did “lose out” in regards to the retrenchment of social coverage. Additionally, the growth and prosperity of the sex trade in the region is of grave concern (True 2003).

Sometimes forgotten in these pieces, though, is the undeniable fact that the post-communist transition has brought a number of benefits for women as well (Rellen 2004; True 2003). These include greater access to food products and material goods (e.g. affordable appliances), freedom from government oppression and an enhanced ability to travel and exchange ideas and experiences with other women around the world (Interviews 2007-2008). Many of the women I spoke with in the region emphasized the complex nature of how the transition has affected women – both good and bad. Therefore, the image of female victimhood is not complete and does not

fully explain the situation (for better and for worse) of women in the region under and after communism. This project, therefore, attempts to present a more nuanced explanation of women in the region's social and political life.

Impossibility of Comparison

Another trend in some of the literature is to devalue the comparison between women under communism and women today (e.g. Brunnbauer 2000). These scholars argue that female participation before 1989 was generally token participation that did not amount to a real voice. This argument is particularly prominent in studies that look solely at representation, because they can focus on the elimination of gender quotas after 1989 to explain the drop in female HIP.

It remains debatable if women in communist style politics felt a sense of efficacy. Some researchers (True 2003; Rychard 1998; Regulaska 1997) argue that many of the female political positions were token, but some do contend that the presence of women, in and of its self, was significant. The simple fact that women were "at the table" gave them some access to policymaking channels and to powerful networks. As Millard points out, "[h]owever ritualistic the formal sessions, women gained a degree of experience in the public domain. Setting a high official value on women's participation added a symbolic dimension, even given the palpable domination of communist politics by men" (2004, 184-185). Einhorn agrees, explaining that "[t]he question of tokenism aside, there is no doubt that women were more politically active under state socialism. First it was an integral part of official discourse that women were citizens with equal rights in all spheres of life, and indeed that they had an obligation as well as a right to involve themselves at the political and decision-making level of society" (1993, 163). It is also important to remember that the power

of eastern parliaments was limited for all members (men and women), and controlled to a large extent from external Party forces and elite groups. Therefore, all parliamentarians of the era had limited power. It is true, however, that men had more opportunities to reach the higher echelons of the Party structure, and that women were seldom in extremely powerful positions (Reuschmeyer 1998).³¹

Disregarding the comparison, due simply to the unique nature of communist rule, is misguided. In fact, it is the extensive differences between the two eras that are most intriguing because we are dealing with process and continuation rather than just two totally separate and stagnant periods of time. While I do not attempt to make a direct comparison between women's participation before 1989 and after, I do argue that there were reasons to suspect that women would be involved in transition politics. These included: high numbers of women in the labor force, considerable female dissident activity and experiences from elsewhere in the world where women did mobilize during times of transition. Additionally, I will argue in the proceeding chapters, that the institutions (both formal and informal) of the communist era, have affected women's participation in the post-communist era. Therefore, it is my contention that attempting to understand women's political participation in the region in the 1990s, and even today, is impossible without a thorough examination of their participation, and indeed their position, during communism.

Project Relevance:

The political participation of women is important, because it has a direct link not only to women's place in society, but also to their place as citizens. The specific relationship between the communist state and its female population created a situation

³¹ As will be seen in Chapter 5, there were some women (e.g. Elena Ceausescu) who did wield significant power under communism.

unique to the region. This relationship was drastically altered after communism's demise, but continues to influence how women view government, their own efficacy and hence their willingness to engage in political activity. The drastic differences between life for women under communism and today, as well as the lack of participation at such a crucial moment as the early 1990s, make this an important project. As Fuszara explains, "[i]t is crucial to study the mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion, which affect not only women's participation in politics but also the opportunities thereby available to them" (2000, 261). As such, this project also generates insights into the means and motivations of participation in general.

The scope of this research will go beyond the field of political science. The position of women in post-communist society is not only informed by their position in relation to the political structure, but by social and economic structures as well. Therefore, the conclusions will have relevance for those doing research in area studies, history, psychology, women's studies and economics.

A Fertile Testing Ground:

The fall of communism and the subsequent transitions away from totalitarianism provides an exceptional testing ground for questions about the creation and sustainability of democracy, the role of identity and the shadow of the past (Howard 2003; Linz and Stepan 1996). An exploration of the reasons contributing to the relative absence of women in the politics of transition across post-communist Europe can provide important information regarding these concerns. This is especially relevant in regards to female LIP, given that LIP is generally a much more common and accessible form of political participation than HIP. Indeed, understanding female participation levels and motivations can compliment much of the literature on

democratization and civic society. There are a number of significant questions that this research on female political participation in post-communist Europe can inform. For example: What role does female political participation play in the transformation process? What are the effects of transition on different forms of political participation? How might participatory trends be reversed? What does a transition to democracy look like from a female perspective, twenty years on?

In addition, this work will indicate how the specific actions of the state can affect women differently than men, especially in a post-communist system where women were previously a “protected” group. Writing about the role of the state in post-communist Europe, Knezevic contended that, [t]he issue concerns not only the disappearance of women from the political or public space, but also, as a consequence of this, the loss of previously acquired special rights, or the renewed systematic jeopardization of those rights” (1997, vii). Women’s citizenship in Eastern Europe dramatically changed after 1989.

Citizenship is a key concept when dealing with female political participation in the post-communist region of Europe. If one looks at T.H. Marshall’s delineation of citizenship, there is a stark difference between communist Europe’s experience and those of liberal democracies. Marshall (1950) describes three types of rights: civil, political and social. These correspond to legal fairness, paths toward political power and finally more everyday participation in society (Howard 2003). Communist systems downplayed the civil and political rights of citizenship, although they claimed advancement of a highly circumscribed version of political rights, and focused on social stability. This is especially evident in the communist motivation to

provide for social risk, which simultaneously operated to both emancipate and constrict women in the region (Fallon 2003). Because citizenship under the communist system emphasized social citizenship, the transition toward democracy after 1989 and the corresponding focus on civil and political rights has in itself required a transition for women.

Currently, some researchers argue that there is an imbalance between citizenship rights in post-communist Europe because the social rights once granted are diminishing, especially for women (Corrin 1999). Heinen explains this alteration by explaining that, “[i]n those countries where the concept of ‘worker’ replaced that of ‘citizen’ and ‘mother-worker’ replaced ‘mother-wife’ the employment guarantee and the social cover that went with it, as well as the subsidy system that met certain basic needs (food, lodging among others) gave a minimum protection to the individual” (Heinen 1997, 583). Ashwin (2000) and Einhorn (1994) agree, arguing that the lack of female participation is very much an issue of women’s citizenship rights, and about how women view their relationship to the state. Einhorn also points out that the movement away from social citizenship, in particular, has affected women as female-specific issues have been largely pushed aside in favor of capitalistic goals.³² Issues of development and economic expansion, today often overshadow female concerns.

Einhorn extends the discussion of female citizenship beyond the rights outlined by Marshall, explaining that citizenship writ large “implies active agency, the assertion of full individual autonomy within a community dedicated to the well being of its members, who are bound by broader ties than those of family or kinship” (1994,

³² Initially, the economic struggles associated with transition overshadowed social considerations. This continues to some degree as the transitions in these countries deepen.

3). Therefore citizenship in a modern democratizing state should include the participation of women and the acceptance of a female voice and role in the political world.³³ Fallon agrees, stating that, “[e]ven today, political rights, such as voting, lobbying, and representation within the government, are central to women improving their citizenship status” (Fallon 2003, 227). Women’s citizenship is only complete with female activity and the acknowledgement of the necessity for a gendered perspective on policy. This project then provides insight on how institutional changes affect not just the citizenship rights of women, but how it can also change societal relationships between men and women.

Theory:

In this dissertation I present a multistep explanatory chain to explain levels of low intensity political participation among women in post-communist Europe. I use the “theory of logic,” which defines the concept of “cause in the individual case as a variable value that is necessary and/or sufficient for an outcome” (Mahoney 2008, 417). A small N, case oriented, study is particularly conducive to this type of analysis (Goertz and Starr; Mahoney *et al* 2009). In real world situations, there is not just one cause for an outcome, but there are often causes that operate together, or relate to each other in given patterns, to affect an outcome (Mahoney 2008; Pierson and Skocpol 2002). Here I use a two-level theory to address both primary and secondary causes for the outcome of interest.³⁴ In the next paragraphs I explain the necessary terms as well as outline my dissertation argument regarding low female LIP in post-

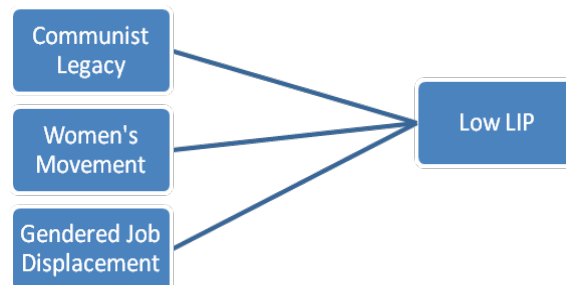
³³ “Voice” is not normative in this sense and does not necessitate a “feminist” perspective or agenda.

³⁴ Goertz and Mahoney (2005) explain that, “[t]wo-level theories offer explanations of outcomes by conceptualizing causal variables at two levels of analysis that are systematically related to one another” (497).

communist Europe. After briefly outlining and visually representing my argument, I provide an explanation of the variables and causes as well as their theoretical basis.

Theoretical Structure

I propose that there are three factors, which are particularly important for addressing the observed outcome of low LIP among women in the initial transition period.³⁵ Mahoney *et al* write that often it is the case that “multiple causal factors combine together to produce particular outcomes” (2009, 124). Pierson and Skocpol (2002) refer to interactions and the related nature of multiple causal variables as a *causal configuration*. In my argument I propose that the communist legacy, the weakness of an institutionalized women’s movement and gendered job displacement each increase the likelihood of low female LIP in the countries of the ECE region during the initial transition period. The strength of these causes affects the intensity of the LIP outcome. For example, if gendered job displacement is not long lasting, LIP figures are likely to be higher than they would be in places where gendered job displacement is especially harsh and long lasting.



Communist Legacy

It has become clear in many areas of investigation that the end of communism in the ECE region, though bringing great changes, did not create a blank slate (Offe

³⁵ Obviously, as with all social science puzzles, the outcome is over-determined. However, it is my contention that these three contributing factors are the most relevant for explain the situation of low LIP in the ECE region after 1989.

1997; Howard 2003). Forty years of communist experience in Europe had a significant and enduring effect. The relationship between the State and its citizens under communism ingrained certain expectations, coping mechanisms and norms (Rueschemeyer 1998b). These were not patterns that simply disappeared in 1990. As Rychard put it, “[t]he complexity of the actual transformations is yet more evidence that communism was not simply an imposed system but had created its own dynamics and a certain degree of social rootedness” (1998, 29). The norms of everyday life and the suspicions associated with government policies persisted, influencing women’s willingness to participate politically in the early transition period.

All of the countries of the region have had to restructure their political, economic and cultural systems simultaneously, which has proven to be a time consuming and difficult task (Offe 1997). Women’s communist experiences and their “Soviet inheritance” characterized how they reacted to the transitions (Ashwin 2000, 20).

Women of the region faced similar concerns in the long transition period: employment, social protection, physical security to name but a few issues. To deal with these new concerns, while rejecting the formal institutions of communism regarding their gender (e.g. quotas that placed women in political positions and created female tokens), women in the region relied upon informal institutions (specifically family networks) from the communist era. After 1989, these networks, which often revolved around the private lives of women, took on an enhanced role as a source of familiarity and stability for women. The result of communist imposed female tokenism and networks previously was a specifically gendered communist

legacy of distrust that left women of the region especially weary of government and suspicious of activities that called for the emancipation or advancement of women.

Women's Organizations

One thing that had the potential to mobilize ECE women for LIP during the 1990s was the retrenchment or total elimination of social policies that previously did acted to specifically assist women.³⁶ Despite the transitional upheavals that disproportionately affected them, in most cases, women in the region had little experience fighting for gendered concerns. Those women who did attempt to get involved often quickly found that their concerns were not priorities of their new governing systems and efficacy eroded as a result. The fact is, in the early 1990s women did not have the resources or experiences to protect their interests or the institutionalized base from which to mobilize as women. The protections that women enjoyed during communism (healthcare, housing, employment), were granted from above (from the state), they were not fought for by organized groups of women acting to better the position of women in the various countries (Offe 1997). With little exception, there was no strongly institutionalized women's movement in the region prior to 1989, or anything that could have served as such, for women to draw upon after communism ended.³⁷ A women's movement also could have been a creator of

³⁶ Certainly, women do not have to simply be politically active *as women*. However, scholars often link female political activity with a women's movement, because the movement is an institutionalized basis that seeks to encourage such activity specifically of women (Beckwith 2005).

³⁷ A women's movement, as defined by McBride and Mazur (2010), is gendered discourse by women and regarding women. Women's organizations, groups that organize to specifically assist women or advance women's rights, are important components of a women's movement, but they alone are not sufficient. A women's movement develops when those groups coalesce around a few specific issues, when they begin to pool their resources and form a network. A women's movement is institutionalized when it has existed for such a time so as to become an accepted public entity, when membership is consistent and when there is an expectation of movement persistence. In some instances it may even develop physical infrastructure and become professionalized.

female efficacy, which after 1989 could have further encouraged women to be politically active despite the challenges of transition.³⁸

During the communist era, women of the region seldom thought in terms of gender. For them, there was a unity with all those that had lived under communism – even female dissidents fought for human rights with little attention spent on issues of women’s rights. Many interviewees described it as an “us versus them” mentality that did not distinguish between men and women (Interviews 2007-2008). Because there was little differentiation, and a recognition of communal suffering among the sexes, women seldom saw themselves as a unified group with unique concerns.

There were women’s organizations prior to communist governance (pre-WWII) that advocated for women’s rights. A number of these groups were aligned or tied to early communist parties – based on the notion that the communist ideology, which claimed gender equality, would benefit women. Soon after coming to power in the USSR and then Eastern Europe, the Communists declared that women were free and emancipated; therefore there was no longer a need for feminism or women’s groups. In doing this, the communists effectively eliminated gender as a means of mobilization and claimed the issue space in much of the region for the next forty years. Although the Party worked to prevent non-state women’s organizations, they implemented policies that were aimed specifically at women. This created a public perception that erroneously linked women’s advancement to communism – in truth the system made women dependent on the state for social protection (Wolchik 1998, 129).

³⁸ As will be seen, the GDR was the only place where such a movement existed.

Gendered Job Displacement

Finally, perhaps the greatest post-1989 change was the drastic rise in unemployment and decrease in labor force participation across the region. To live in a society where almost everyone was required to work and had guaranteed employment, and then to have massive and persistently high rates of unemployment was challenging. The end of communism in the region required a significant amount of economic restructuring. Countries attempted different variants of gradualism and shock therapy in their attempts to recalibrate their economies to better integrate and eventually compete with the capitalist societies of the West.

Unemployment affected all citizens in post-communist Europe, but women were hardest hit. There was an elimination of feminized jobs where women, who previously made up a significant portion of the labor force (in some countries women were nearly 50% of the labor force with over 80% of available women employed), suddenly faced high redundancy rates. Women were the first to lose jobs and feel the economic pressures of transition, because they held many of the low paying, industrial jobs (Kotzeva 2006). Theory suggests that female employment, even in what might be considered menial jobs, is often a means of efficacy creation (Schlozman *et al* 1999). Under communism, the ability to exert this efficacy was often restricted due to the structure of the governing system. After 1989, when those opportunities to further develop efficacy and use it in other arenas of participation increased, there was a corresponding decrease in female labor force participation. Hence limiting, for ECE women, the potential of the theorized link between labor force and political participation.

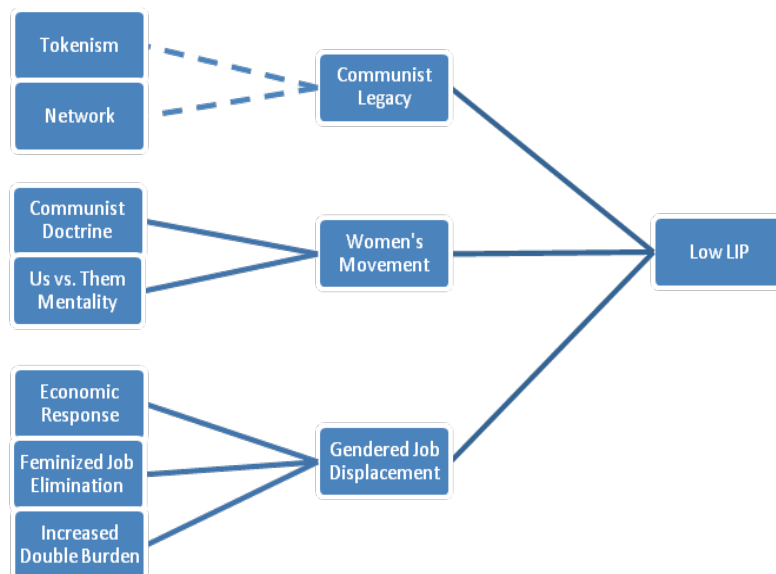
One might assume that the elimination of large numbers of women from the labor market would mean that they had more time to take care of their homes and families or that this could have encouraged gendered mobilization. However, perhaps counter intuitively, the double burden of work and family actually increased for women in the early 1990s. The need for an income, especially for the large amount of single mothers who had previously received support from the state, though not often from their ex-husbands or the fathers of their children, remained high, but jobs were scarce. Women often had to spend increased time looking for employment, and they continued to have to find food and material goods that were now available, but often were more costly than before. At the same time, in most ECE societies women are expected to take care of the home, their children and elderly parents. With political participation, the third burden, now voluntary, time consideration was one of the influences pulling women away from participation.

Two-Levels

I enhance the understanding of my argument by presenting a two-level theory.³⁹ In exploring the basic-level causes of regionally low female LIP in the ECE region, I want to go a step further and examine the secondary factors influencing those causes. The communist legacy, institutionalization of a women's movement and gendered job displacement themselves have important components, and indeed causes.

³⁹ This means that there are basic-level (more proximate) causes explaining the outcomes, and then there is another layer of secondary causes related to the proximate causes. Though she did not articulate it as a two-level theory, Goerts and Mahoney (2005) use Skocpol's *States and Social Revolutions* (1979) to articulate the two-level concept. Skocpol argues that peasant revolts and state breakdown together serve as basic causes for social revolutions. At the secondary level she explains that that peasant autonomy or landlord vulnerability leads to peasant revolts (base cause 1) and that dominant class leverage and agrarian backwardness along with international pressures result in state breakdown (base cause 2).

Secondary-level causes relate to basic-level causes either *causally*, *ontologically* or *substitutably*. A causal relationship indicates that the secondary factors directly influence the basic-level factors. An ontological relationship means that the secondary factors are not indicators, but “elements that literally constitute basic-level phenomena” (Goertz and Mahoney 2005, 498). For example, elections ontologically relate to democracy – they are part of democracy. The third type, substitutable causes, are “alternative means of achieving ends represented by variables at the basic level” (Goertz and Mahoney 2005, 499). Most and Starr (1984) explain that “[a] substitutable relationship refers to a set of secondary-level variables that are individually sufficient but not necessary for the presence of a given basic-level variable; they are various means to attain a given end.” None of the relationships in the second-level are simply operationalizations of variables at the basic-level. The secondary-level factors are all variables that contribute or lead in some way to the outcome of interest (Goertz and Mahoney 2005, 503).



Therefore, taken from the discussion above, I argue that during the initial transition, the basic level cause of the gendered communist legacy is ontologically reached by secondary causes of female tokenism and networks – these factors are contained within the communist legacy. The next basic level cause is the lack of a strong women’s movement. Here the secondary level relationships are causal. It is my contention that women’s groups did not exist or were inherently weak in most of the region before 1989 because of an *us versus them* mentality among the population and because communist doctrine claimed to have solved the “women’s question.” Finally, the basic factor is gendered job displacement. At the secondary level, the economic response, elimination of feminized jobs, and increased double burden help us better understand the reasons behind and effects of gendered job displacement.

In sum, the (gendered) communist legacy, the weakness (or absence) of a women’s movement under communism and gendered job displacement after, as well as the secondary-level components that created them, are important for understanding women’s political activity during the early post-communist transition. These three variables coalesced in the early 1990s, effecting how women specifically viewed themselves, government and their role in the political sphere.⁴⁰

Historical Institutionalism and Path Dependency

The argument presented in this chapter generally draws from the work and theoretical contribution of historical institutionalists. Whereas institutionalists more generally investigate processes and relationships as they relate to the political world, historical institutionalists examine these same ideas over time (Katznelson 1997). As

⁴⁰ My research indicates that these three interrelated factors provide a strong argument for the likelihood and intensity of female LIP during the initial transition period. There are, however, alternative explanations such as educational attainment, economic development or religious propensity. These are explained and addressed in detail in Chapter 3.

Pierson and Skocpol articulate, historical institutionalists are those scholars that have “substantive agendas,” make “temporal arguments,” and who pay special “attention to contexts and configurations” (Pierson and Skocpol 2000, ?). My work here follows this pattern as I am articulating a structural argument that focuses on the constraints that formal and informal institutions of communism placed on women through an extended period of time.

Historical processes are “path dependent.” Path dependency does not simply mean that history matters, it also means that the *order* of historical events is important. For a path-dependent argument, once a certain path is determined, later options are restricted, and reversing courses becomes extremely difficult (Esping-Andersen 1999). As additional choices (paths) are made, they often reinforce or further institutionalize the previous choices in what Pierson describe as “the dynamics of self-reinforcing or positive feedback processes” (2004, 10). As time progresses, the choices originally available may no longer be options. This can occur because opportunities change, or expectations alter, and retrenchment becomes difficult (Pierson 2000).⁴¹

Since they follow a specific path and close off additional options, these *juncture moments* or times of decision, have long-term consequences. At a certain “moment” the decision is especially heightened. Such “critical junctures” occur after times of great upheaval, war, or the death of a ruler. For the people of Eastern and Central Europe (ECE), 1989-1990 was a critical juncture with far reaching consequences. Initially, the implementation (by choice and by force) of communism after WWII led

⁴¹ This is not to say that some options are totally eliminated, but they could be extremely difficult to implement.

the region on a given path, and the revolutions of 1989 and the decisions of the early transition altered the path. As evidenced, because ECE women lived in different circumstances than men due to their sex and to the female specific policies of the communist system, their experiences of that system affected their own sense of efficacy, their trust in government, and ultimately their willingness to participate in political activity in the early 1990s.

Conclusion:

A generation after the fall of the Berlin Wall much has changed for women in the post-communist region. No longer are women expected to work and have children to support the socialist state, but also no longer are women guaranteed jobs, housing or generous social risk coverage either. At a time when many expected women to participate politically, few did so. As will be seen throughout this project, the communist legacy, the weakness of a women's movement prior to 1989 and gendered job displacement after the end of communism all contributed to low levels of female LIP during the initial post-communist transition in Europe.

Outline

In Chapter 2, I explain my research methodology and provide basic background information on my case studies. Although the bulk of the manuscript addresses the argument articulated in this chapter, there are additional variables that one might consider relevant for addressing female LIP in post-communist Europe. Therefore, Chapter 3 explores alternative explanations and demonstrates why my argument provides the greatest explanatory power. In doing so, I determine that the alternatives fall short. For example, the often cited explanation for the lack of female political participation in others parts of the world, is educational attainment. In the ECE

region, this is not especially helpful as women were well educated during and after communism. Along with the educational argument, I present and reject economic development as well as religious and democratic advancement arguments.

After determining that alternative explanations are not as helpful in addressing the most important contributors of low female LIP, I then organize the dissertation as empirical chapters that correspond with the three basic explanatory variables of my argument. In Chapter 4, I examine the nature of female communist experiences and how this has influenced their political perceptions after 1989. I determine that female worldviews throughout the 1990s were very much constrained by their communist pasts. In Chapter 5, I explore the role of an institutionalized women's movement on female political participation. Again, the communist experience is important here, as it became clear that there were intentional policies implemented by the communists that eliminated the issues space of women's potential concerns hindering the development, in most cases, of a women's movement. The last of the empirical chapters, Chapter 6, explores gendered job displacement and specifically addresses the policies and consequences of economic restructuring on the female population of the ECE region. The conclusion is that unemployment became gendered, and as such that much of the potential for a labor force and political participatory link diminished for women during the early transition years.

Finally, in Chapter 7, I address female LIP in the region 20 years after the end of communism. It is here that I review the responses to my country surveys, which show that a number of women today see women in political participation as important. However, there remain a number of women who still say they would not personally

be involved in such activities. The findings show very little evidence of a generational difference in views of female LIP. In this final chapter, I also address the role of NGOs and EU expansion as it relates to female participation. I conclude that although the process of EU expansion and the increase in NGO activity in the region over the past two decades has in many ways advanced the position of women, it has yet to have a corresponding effect on female LIP. Instead, the issues of the communist legacy continue and the development of a women's movement in the region that could specifically target female political activity remains nascent. Additionally, gendered job displacement and employment competition all are issues that continue to influence the degree of female LIP in the region, twenty years after communism ended.

Chapter II Research Design

Introduction

My objective in this research is to explore why women in the post-communist region did not participate in low intensity political activities in significant numbers during the initial post-communist transitions. I also address those instances where the trend did not hold, and explore why certain countries exhibited higher levels of such participation among women. The argument presented in this dissertation generally explores the post-communist region of Europe, but specifically addresses the conditions present in four cases: the Czech Republic, the New States of Germany (NBL), Poland and Romania.

What follows is an explanation of my methods for exploring the research question. From there I explain the case study selection and address the inherent difficulties associated with the chosen cases. Finally, in the end I provide an introduction of the four case studies addressing their communist past and some of their post-communist challenges, establishing context for the forthcoming empirical chapters.

Approach

The puzzle under investigation informs methodological decisions, as does the overall objective of the project. Because I am dealing with a relatively small number of cases (even if I include the entire region, the number of cases is still limited), and a rather broad research question, it is difficult to pursue a purely positivist approach looking for direct causation that can be generalized to a significantly broader population. What I am able to do is determine a series of important variables that

operated together to create a situation where women in the ECE region were largely not compelled, and in some cases systematically discouraged, to participate in low intensity political activities. In doing this, both a local and regional approach is necessary.

Initially following the fall of communism in Europe, there was a tendency among journalists, politicians and even scholars, to lump the states of post-communist Europe together. Given the joint history of these countries, in many ways it was appropriate to take a regional approach to exploring interesting puzzles. However, as the Communist Bloc dissolved, it became obvious that there were several differences emerging among the various countries that comprise Eastern and Central Europe. While it is still beneficial to analyze trends across the region, additional in-depth-analysis of given states are warranted (Einhorn 1993; Linz and Stepan 1997). Therefore, this project examines post-communist Europe as a region, but also includes case study analysis of four case countries: the Former East Germany, Romania, Czech Republic and Poland.

Methods

Dealing with complex, and in many ways intangible, concepts like efficacy and desire to participate requires a large toolbox; utilizing mixed methods. For my project, this included collecting data from a variety of sources, relying on both qualitative (process tracing) and quantitative analysis (cross-tabulation and factor analysis) and conducting extensive in-country fieldwork. By analyzing different data sources and by employing a wide range of tools, I can triangulate the results and present a well-evidenced argument.

Secondary Sources:

To complete the project, I have compiled and reviewed a variety of sources. Initially, I did a thorough search for secondary sources to provide a solid understanding of the situation for women in Eastern Europe both before and after 1989. I found much of this information in published journal, books, newspapers, open sources on the Internet and various archives. Sources included newspaper articles, government publications and procedures and academic articles.

Newspaper and government accounts prior to 1989 provided context for what was accessible to people in the ECE region from official sources, and they gave an indication of government policies and priorities. Those published after 1989 highlight government reaction to the early transition period and pointed to the pressing issues of the early transition process. Reading underground publications, available at archives and on the Internet, I was able to determine the grievances and issues of average citizens.

Another valuable resource was academic journals and books that addressed the post-communist region and the effects on women. These sources indicated possible variables that could potentially explain female LIP, which I then was able to assess in this project (see Chapter 3 on Alternative Explanations). Finally, of huge importance were the compilation books in which women of the region reflect on their lives and their futures within a few years of communism end. These provided me insights into the feelings and thoughts of average women, who were commenting on those times as they were living them.

Most of the sources I reviewed were available in English. I also read some material in German and some Romanian language publications. When necessary, I

received local assistance to translate documents from Romanian, Polish and Czech into English.

Fieldwork in Eastern Europe

Secondary sources lay the groundwork for investigation and are invaluable in providing a framework. However, there is no replacement for visiting the places of research and speaking with people. Therefore, to understand the motivation of women in post-communist Europe, I spent 13 months in the region doing on-the-ground research (Summer 2007-Fall 2008). While abroad, I conducted a number of semi-structured elite and non-elite interviews in the Czech Republic, eastern Germany, Romania and Poland.⁴² Elites included public officials who hold office or work in government ministries. For me, these were mostly women, though a couple of men as well, who had run for or served in political office, were in their Party hierarchy or who had worked on campaigns. I contacted these people through publically available information (Internet sources primarily). During interviews, I asked elites if parties have specific gendered policies, if they have worked to mobilize women politically, and where parties or organizations focus energy and resources, among other questions.

Non-elites, representing the bulk of those interviewed, were average women who live and work in the countries under investigation.⁴³ These less formal interviews allowed me to get a real feel for what average women in the region think about and

⁴² Specifically- the Czech Republic (Prague, Klando); Germany (Leipzig, Dresden, Weimar, Halle, Berlin); Romania (Bucharest, Cluj Napoca); Poland (Warsaw, Gdansk, Torun).

⁴³ I conducted interviews in English and German and used voluntary translators when necessary. I conducted interviews in a variety of settings- offices, coffee shops and apartments were most common.

where their concerns lie.⁴⁴ I asked interviewees about the proper role of women in politics, their willingness to act politically, and the reasons they do or do not feel efficacious (See Appendix A for sample interview questions). Some, though certainly not a majority of these women, belonged to women's organizations or were affiliated with local universities. Some of the women in my informal interviews were older women, in their late-50s and older, who talked with me about their lives under communism, their perceptions about the early transition period and about the current situation.⁴⁵ A group of women in each country were also in their twenties; too young to remember much about communist governance. Despite this, these younger women added their insights into how the communist era and the early transition years affected women in their respective countries. However, they were most helpful in discussing the current situation regarding women and their willingness to participate in low intensity political activities today. This first post-communist generation of women is especially important, as they provide a measure indicating the depth of the legacy of communism in the region. Howard (2003), for example, suggested that the communist legacy would be strong enough to influence the socialization processes of even those born long after the system changed.⁴⁶ All of the women I spoke with in the region added interesting commentary on my research topic.

⁴⁴ As required by the University of Oklahoma's Internal Review Board (IRB), in no cases were interviewees compensated for their time or compelled to participate in the project.

⁴⁵ The women I interviewed are broken down into three categories. The first are those that I often refer to as young or younger women. These are females in their twenties and early 30s, who represent the first generation of women to come of age after the end of communism. The second group, the middle generation, are women I interviewed who are in their mid-thirties to mid 50s. This group of women were young adults during the early transition period. Finally, the third classification is the older generation of interviewees who were in their late 50s or older. This group is made up of women who came of age in the 1960s or 1970s who were middle aged in 1989.

⁴⁶ One of the earliest theorists on generation change is Karl Mannheim (1958 [1928]). Mannheim argues that significant "social events" influence generational socialization process for years to come.

Both elite and non-elite interviews were determined by snowball sampling where an interviewee would suggest additional people to interview. It was not uncommon for an interviewee to make calls to contacts on my behalf as our interviews were concluding. University contacts in each country were also very helpful in providing interview leads.⁴⁷

Visiting Eastern and Central Europe allowed me to conduct a number of interviews in person, which provided a significant basis for the arguments put forth in this dissertation. Doing fieldwork also gave me access to a number of country resources, such as government archives, as well as organizations and libraries focused specifically on gender (e.g. the *Gender Studies Centre* in the Czech Republic and the *Frauenforschungs Bildung und Informaztionzentrum* in Berlin). At these places, I perused books that were unavailable or obscure in the United States, found extensive additional secondary sources and spoke with curators with expertise. Finally, I was given access to universities in the region (including their libraries) and met with a number of academics doing gender related research or post-communist studies, which allowed for a real discourse over my research topic. None of this would have been available without fieldwork.

Opinion Polls

In conjunction with my interviews, I also wanted to get a scientifically representative sample of women's popular perceptions in certain countries in post-communist Europe. Opinion polls are a useful tool for gauging, and indeed numerically calculating, public perception of various issues. In addressing female LIP

⁴⁷ This method does not provide for a random sample. However, it is debatable if a random sample is ever truly possible with interviews. Given this fact, I took special effort to ensure that I spoke with women of various ages, backgrounds, economic circumstances and opinions. The telephone surveys were also a means by which to enhance the sample selection.

in the post-communist region, statistics derived from survey questions asking respondents to indicate their willingness to participate in different LIP activities, their views of government and their assessments of life before and after communist rule are highly instructive.

Ideally, I would have explored opinion polls from the communist era that asked questions regarding perceptions of political participation and that asked respondents to indicate their level of participation. However, there is great difficulty in finding reliable data from the communist era, if data exists at all. There are few, if any data sets available that ask opinion type questions that would represent women during communism (Fuszara 2000). Opinion data that does exist from the time is highly suspect. It is hard to imagine a scenario in communist societies where representative samples were polled and even more unlikely that respondents felt secure in providing their true assessments. Any opinion figures released by the state or the Party, was likely a means of propaganda for advancing a political cause. Even polling from the time conducted by Western sources is not likely to present an accurate picture, due to the aura of fear and invasive spying - any respondent could potentially be compromising their own safety and that of their family (Ibid).

Though polling data from before 1989 is generally not available, there are available statistics from the post-communist era that specifically ask respondents about their participation in LIP activities and their views of the political system. The World Values Survey (WVS) conducts a series of surveys in the region every ten

years or so.⁴⁸ World Values Survey statistics from the mid 1990s are, therefore, available and utilized in this study (see Chapter 1).

In an effort to get more up-to-date opinion statistics, which would indicate how often women in the region participate or are willing to become involved in LIP activities today, I contracted with local research agencies and universities to conduct telephone surveys.⁴⁹ My surveys are of a representative sample in three of the case countries: Czech Republic, NBL⁵⁰ and Romania.⁵¹ Sample size was generally 500 female respondents.⁵² Survey takers asked women of different ages, personal backgrounds, economic situations, living situations and educations throughout the given country a number of questions in their native language. Going beyond the basic questions of the WVS, my questions were more specific to the region and LIP. In my surveys, interviewers asked women questions relating to their ideal work situation, their lives today, trust in government and where relevant, how they compare their situations now to their lives before 1989. These answers give me a good indication of what women in the region are feeling and they provide useful insights for assessing the political and social situation of women in the region today.

⁴⁸ The WVS project conducts surveys all over the world. Due to the massive amount of data collected, compilation takes some time and there is generally a lag between data collection and when it is made available to the public.

⁴⁹ Another goal of my fieldwork was to find appropriate agencies that could conduct my surveys. Although I could have potentially made these contacts from a distance, it was better to make them in person.

⁵⁰ I instructed NBL survey takers to talk only with women who had been born or grew up in the GDR/NBL. We took every effort to ensure that western women were not part of the sample.

⁵¹ IPSOS- Prague, Czech Republic (504 women); FGM Research- Leipzig, Germany (450 eastern women); Bucharest University Department of Sociology- Bucharest, Romania (700 women). Students at the University of Bucharest collected my Romanian data as part of University-related project that went through its own university IRB process. I investigated doing a Polish survey in conjunction with Nicolaus Copernicus University, but the expense was beyond my research budget.

⁵² Since the WVS indicates a gendered difference between men and women's willingness to take part in LIP, my surveys focused only on women. This was also a financial consideration. The average of 500 participants was selected to provide a statistically reliable indication of opinion. This is a figure that is generally accepted to provide around 95% confidence (Moore and McCabe 2003).

Quantitative Tools: Crosstabs and Factor Analysis

Coupled with qualitative tools, I also analyze the WVS and my own surveys, by quantitative means. This is particularly helpful as I gauge the level of female participation in the early transition period and today. To measure LIP, I utilize questions from the World Values Survey (WVS), which ask respondents about taking part in petition signing, political discussion and demonstrations. I am limited to the battery of WVS questions, but this provides a clear measure of responses. For contemporary comparison, I asked similarly worded questions in my telephone surveys conducted in three case countries on my behalf in 2008.

The feelings of women in these societies are numerically measurable using the tools of cross-tabulation and factor analysis. Cross-tabulations enhance basic descriptive statistics. They allow for a more detailed comparison of variables against each other to provide a percentage of respondents that meet both variable requirements. For example, I can see in table format, what percentage of women who live in a rural area indicated that they would sign a petition. Factor analysis, on the other hand operates to see which survey questions “hang together.” This allows me to see if responses to certain questions were related to responses of other questions. When this occurs, there is thought to be an underlying value or motivation that is driving the relationship. Therefore, if all of the questions about specific forms of LIP factor together, it is likely that there is value (negative or positive) attached to participation that is leading toward similar answers from respondents.

Finally, logistic regression is not generally the best method for assessing scaled surveys. However, it can indicate the statistically significant role of chosen variables that might influence survey responses. Therefore, I conducted regressions on a

number of demographic variables (age, education, marital status among others) against each survey question.

Evidence and Variables

I have proposed that the communist legacy, the lack of or weakness of a woman's movement prior to 1989 and gendered job displacement afterward, are important factors for understanding low female LIP in the post-communist region during the early transition. The objective of the project is to tell a theoretically grounded story that best explains the outcome of low LIP among women in post-communist Europe. Therefore, for each of the important variables, I look for indicators that show the story's path. This can take the form of persistent themes that run through interviews, historical trends or common ideas that become apparent. In the next section, I address how I examined each of the three aforementioned variables.

Communist Legacy

In exploring the relationship between the communist legacy and female LIP, I examine the formal and informal institutions of gender during the communist era and address their role during the early transition away from communism. To do this, I investigate the formal policies of communist governance specifically geared toward women. At the same time, during the communist era, informal institutions materialized, in particular small family and service networks, which allowed women to function despite the limits and intrusions of the state. I also attempt to see how these two features of communism operated to create a situation where women were especially suspicious and distrustful of government and of people beyond their closed family networks.

The initial goal was to establish official government policies related to women in politics during communism. From there I address female (and male) reaction to such policies. To assess the communist legacy, I rely heavily on official documents and communications between party officials and members of the Politburo. I also read historical accounts of reactions to the early implementation of some of the gender policies of communist times, and analyzed how negative thoughts about government, which developed under communism, are still evident in these recollections after 1989. While conducting my fieldwork, I was able to speak with a number of women who were old enough to discuss how gender policies personally affected them during the 1960s, 70s, and 80s. These same women also supplied invaluable information about the tactics they used to endure communism. Additionally, they provided insights into how these institutions (formal and informal) affected their level of trust and corresponding desire to act politically during the early 1990s. I also asked younger women to reflect on the role of the communist legacy in their lives. Finally, my surveys highlight areas of communist attitude persistence.

A Women's Movement

Another important variable is the strength of an institutionalized women's movement that can serve as the structure upon which to build efficacy and to encourage effective and organized female mobilization that can in turn influence female LIP. In this project I utilize McBride and Mazur's definition of a women's movement as "...collective action by women organizing explicitly as women presenting claims in public life based on gendered identities as women" (McBride and Mazur 2010, 226). A women's movement generally corresponds with enhanced desire among the female population to take part in additional activities beyond the

women's organizations themselves. Women who are active in a women's organization learn important organizational skills, they can create domestic and international networks of support and a sense of purpose among members. Such participation can also lead to personal empowerment and enhanced efficacy, which can serve as means of encouraging women to become involved in other areas. An institutionalized basis also provides women who are active in the movement, and even those who may not be, a known institution and a level of legitimacy for advancing women's issues.

Where a movement exists and is relatively institutionalized we would expect to see higher levels of participation because a venue for the expression of female concerns is available.⁵³ As the women's movement strengthens, so too do options for female involvement increase. On the other hand, in instances where there is no women's movement or the movement is especially weak and disorganized, a possible means of female efficacy creation is absent and we would expect to see a correspondingly low statistic for female LIP.

To test this among my cases, I look for the existence of groups that had autonomy from the communist State, which were voluntary, and which represented women acting for women. I explore the activities that these rare groups undertook. This requires looking through public records found in archives as well as publications from groups that could make up a women's movement. The expertise of women working today on women's issues in the region is helpful in this regard as are the recollections of women in the general public. I looked for instances where the perceived benefits of

⁵³ Again, institutionalized refers to a formalization that occurs overtime where legitimacy and longevity are assumed.

involvement in women's organizations (the foundation of a women's movement) are evident. Did women comment that their activity in women's groups led to a greater sense of confidence or ability. Did they learn skills (e.g. organizational skills, communications skills) that might translate well into the political sphere? Do women who might not be active in the women's movement, see organizations associated with it as a means of having specifically female concerns addressed? Finally, do any of these women go so far as to say that their involvement in the women's movement encouraged them to be more politically aware or active?

Conversely, in those places without a movement or a weak movement, I look to signs that there was a dearth of benefits as a result. Did interviewees point to the lack of a women's movement as a reason for why they do not think in gendered terms or do not mobilize as women? Or at a more basic level, do women comment that they did not feel efficacious, or did not feel that their gendered concerns mattered? Reviewing the means by which women could organize under communism and the recollections of women interviewed and surveyed, the importance of the women's movement variable as a creator of female efficacy and experience that could influence LIP becomes clear.

Gendered Job Displacement

A final important factor contributing to low female LIP was the gendered job displacement experienced after 1989. Theory suggests that labor force participation can correspond with political participation; that participation in one realm can lead to participation in another realm (Almond and Verba 1963; Pateman 1970; Sobel 1993). Employment is thought to be important for political participation because it leads to enhanced skills, information sharing and efficacy development which can result in a

greater desire to participate in the political arena. Therefore, I initially assess the levels of female involvement in the labor market, paying special attention to the post-1989 drop. If gendered job displacement relates to female LIP, I would also expect interviewees to emphasize the value of labor participation, to point out that employment gave or gives them personal satisfaction and a sense that they can control their lives. Additionally, I would anticipate comments about the importance of the skills they learned on the job, the value they place on information sharing and socialization as well as perhaps comments regarding the financial independence that labor force participation allows them. I specifically seek indications that efficacy was or is created on the job, and a sense among women that this produced an inclination toward participation beyond the labor market. I am arguing that it was the drop in female labor force participation, and removal for many women, of a venue for efficacy creation. Therefore, I also sought indications that there were negative feelings associated with job loss and economic upheavals that related to the ability to create efficacy.

Labor force participation is determined by examining official records from the four case studies as well as the region as a whole. Labor force figures as well as employment figures are readily available. To measure the effect of female labor force participation on political participation, I assess literature and interview data looking first for evidence that employment does result in the aforementioned benefits. For example, was there information sharing about dissident activities or political concerts, despite the fear of spying? In addition, did women express sentiments that employment is important and empowering to them? Once I am able to establish that

employment can result in learning, information dissemination and efficacy, I then seek a link between the positive externalities of labor market participation with the desire to be active politically. Again, it is necessary to see if interview respondents claimed that because they felt empowered through their labor force participation they were inclined to seek out political empowerment. Additionally, did the loss of employment result in a weakened sense of control or efficacy that discourages political activity after 1989.

Case Study Design

Over the next pages, I articulate my case study selection. In doing so, I outline the specific conditions I was looking for as I scanned the region for possible cases. In choosing the Czech Republic and eastern Germany, I have picked data rich cases that are crucial to the region, but these are also two of the most challenging cases for examination due to the simple fact that the very nature of their existence has changed since 1989. I explain why I included these two countries and discuss how I address their inherent challenges. Finally, having explained my case selections, I present a brief overview of each of the four cases.

Scope Conditions

The area of formerly Soviet influence is expansive. The specificity of post-communist Europe, however, winnows down the options. For my purposes, it was necessary that the cases be countries where democratic transition has begun – where LIP was and is voluntary.⁵⁴ It is unlikely that one could find significant LIP in places where the process of democratization has not started. Based on these qualifications, I eliminated cases such as Georgia and Belarus where democratic development has

⁵⁴ Howard (2003) also eliminated those countries in the former Soviet Sphere, which had not yet begun the road toward democratization.

been slower and remains tenuous. These requirements also removed the countries of the former Yugoslavia, which were embroiled in a series of wars throughout the 1990s, the time period of much of this investigation.

My scope conditions limited my possible cases to about 12. My goal was to find three or four cases that represented both similarity and difference along my explanatory variables. Ultimately, I selected four cases that represented a wide geographic expanse, differing cultural and religious proclivities as well as dissimilar levels of dissent during communism. However, all of the cases showed high levels of women in formal politics during the communist era, evidenced high levels of female educational attainment and all had social policies that allowed for generous social coverage for women but also imposed a series of expectations or “burdens.” Although there were obviously some stark differences between these four countries during the communist era, in general there were a great many similarities. Their economic structures, political systems, gendered policies and educational attainment levels were essentially alike (Bunch 1999).

	<i>Female Edu. Attainment</i>	<i>Female HIP during Pre-1989</i>	<i>Female Labor Part. pre-1989</i>	<i>Dissident Move.</i>	<i>Role of religion in pol.</i>	<i>Outcome: LIP</i>
Czech Rep.	High	High	High	Active	Low	Above Average
NBL	High	High	High	Active	Low	High
Poland	High	High	High	Active	High	Low
Romania	High	High	High	Limited	Low	Low

Two of the cases, Poland and Romania, are geographically, linguistically and culturally quite separate. In terms of dissent during communism, the two were also dissimilar. Poland became home to Solidarity, one of the most famous and large organizations of the last century, which actively worked to enlighten citizens to the contradictions and injustices of the communist government. In Romania, a communist

country that was relatively isolated and tightly controlled, there was very little room for such dissent. However, these differences aside, both Poland and Romania indicate low levels of female LIP. These two cases represent what Van Evera (1997) would call “typical cases” in that they represent some of the differences in the region, yet are within the majority of cases when examining the outcome (female LIP) of interest.

My other cases, the Czech Republic and the NBL present one of the best pairs of similar cases in the region. Both industrialized before WWII, both were the sites of uprisings early in their communist histories (1953 in the NBL and the 1968 Prague Spring in what was then Czechoslovakia). By 1949, both countries had been created by exogenous rather than endogenous forces. Additionally, both had dissident movements where women played active roles. Despite these similarities, the NBL indicated high female LIP during the initial transition period, and while the Czech Republic had above average LIP, it was significantly below the NBL numbers. The Czech Republic and Poland also represent some similarity, yet they have quite divergent levels of female LIP as well.

In sum, there is a significant degree of variation in levels of female LIP among the four cases. Romania and Poland have rather similar low levels of female LIP. On the other hand, according to WVS statistics, the Czech Republic has moderate levels and the NBL has the highest rate. Therefore, there must be additional factors responsible for the variation exhibited along the dependent variable. This selection of cases provides a broad and diverse area for study that will allow me to make country-specific observations as well as to generalize to a degree to the entire region of post-communist Europe.

Difficulties with Chosen Cases

Obviously one of the most glaring challenges in dealing with the cases I have selected is the fact that one of the cases (the GDR) is no longer a country, and another (the Czech Republic) did not exist in its present form until 1993. The easy thing to do would be to find other cases to explore. However, by doing this, I would be eliminating arguably two of the most significant and data-rich cases in the region. Both cases and the NBL in particular, have made available a number of documents and personal recollections from the communist era. There are archives and libraries in these two countries, again particularly in Germany, that provide important insights into the daily lives of women during the communist era and the early transition years. In regards to the Czech Republic, the fascination with the Prague Spring and the publications associated with Charter 77 (as well as the documents themselves), resulted in a number of important documents and assessments of communist life in Czechoslovakia from western sources. Additionally, there has been an effort in the Czech Republic to collect some of the Samizdat publications, which also serves as valuable resources. Therefore, challenges aside, the GDR and the Czech Republic are both data rich sources, and they played pivotal roles in the events of the communist era and its decline. They are vital cases for any understanding of the region during the 1990s.

Despite its designation as Czechoslovakia, under communism the country was a federalist entity with both the Czech and the Slovak lands retaining much of their ethnic homogeneity throughout the history of Czechoslovakia (Bunce 1999). Therefore, data collected during the initial transition years and before the Velvet

Divorce of 1993, designate easily into the Czech Republic and Slovakia despite the fact that the two countries had not yet separated.

The GDR presents a slightly more difficult situation. The GDR existed from 1949 until October 3, 1990 when it officially joined with West Germany. Unification (or reunification) has undoubtedly created a unique situation in Germany and particularly in the New States (NBL). Though unification is certainly an important component in many regards, it would be a fallacy to claim that unification fully explains all current German puzzles.

The NBL, more than perhaps any other state in the ECE region, has made available to researchers a wealth of resources relating to the communist era and to the early transition years (Kolinsky and Nickel 2003). These include the opening of security files, numerous museums and archives around the country as well as university divisions devoted to the study of the communist and post-communist eras. In order to minimize the effects of unification, I have separated the statistical data from the early transition to reflect the former East Germany. In my own telephone survey, only those respondents who claimed that they were born or raised in East Germany or the NBL were included. Additionally, in those instances where unification does in fact affect a variable in question, I unapologetically address it as such.

The Cases

The selection of the Czech Republic, the NBL, Poland and Romania provides cases that exhibit variation on the female LIP outcome of interest. They represent a broad sample, they are among the most important countries in the region and they are data rich. In order to provide some context, in this section I present a basic history of

the four cases under investigation. This will serve as a basis for the forthcoming empirical chapters.

The Czech Republic:

After 1989, capitalism brought the women of the Czech Republic access to goods and products that made their lives substantially easier. However, capitalism in the Czech Republic has necessitated a dual income for most families, meaning that women need to work. Even if women wanted to stay home, very few could afford to do so. At the same time, latent sexism of the communist system became blatant during the early transition and has become common practice. Despite growing attention to gender inequalities, and above average levels of female LIP, high-level positions in business and politics remain limited for women. Additionally, sexual harassment is commonplace and sex trafficking through the Czech Republic is a notorious problem. Czech women, like those in the entire region, have experienced a number of ideological shifts that have altered their position in society and in political life.

In the years between the two World Wars, Czechoslovakia earned its independence and became one of the more industrial states in Europe. The years of the First Republic (1918-1939) were progressive times as the new country developed into a democracy. The country's President, Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, was not only quite popular, he was open to the ideas of gender equality, encouraged the enfranchisement of women and pushed for more women in higher education. He also actively supported the creation and development of a young but growing women's movement during his years in power. Masaryk explained, "Let women be placed on an equal level with man culturally, legally and politically" (Paletsek, Pietrow-Ennker

179, 2004). Part of his support of women's rights likely came by way of his marriage to an American activist (see Chapter 5).

In 1938, the country fell to the Nazis, after the doomed Munich Agreement. When WWII ended, the Russian Army liberated the country and many Czechoslovakians embraced the Soviet system. By 1948, the Communists had grabbed power via a coup, with minimal resistance. In the spring of 1968, Alexander Dubček proclaimed that he would create "Socialism with a human face" in Czechoslovakia. Even the leader of the Women's League, an organization commonly viewed as a Party appendage, was actually quite active in attempting to reform the Party internally in 1968 and 1969. During that time, the League pushed for greater attention to women's issues and advocated for stronger protections for working women and mothers (Interviews 2007-2008; True 2003).

Many of those I interviews described the Prague Spring of 1968 as a time of greater freedom and cultural expression. However, the Prague Spring would prove to be short lived when in August of that year Soviet troops and Warsaw Pact members offered "friendly assistance" to put down the cultural unrest. A policy of normalization was undertaken and was the official policy until the end of the communist era. There were many victims of normalization process. One was the leadership of the Women's League, which the Party quickly replaced with women deemed to be more loyal to the communist cause. By 1970, the only organization that claimed to represent women developed even more fervently into a Party controlled entity (Interviews 2007-2008).

Though facing great opposition, oppression and grave consequences, in 1977 a group of Czechoslovakian citizens, among them a significant number of women, signed the document *Charter 77* to challenge government hypocrisies. The government had signed the Helsinki Accords in 1975 claiming to uphold the ideals of human rights and dignity, yet these were not luxuries afforded the citizens of Czechoslovakia. Eventually, as many as 2,000 Czechoslovakians signed the Charter (True 2003; Day 1999). From Charter 77 sprouted VONS, (the Committee for the Defense of the Unjustly Persecuted) which specifically sought to provide information about and support to the dissidents wrongly imprisoned by the State. VONS also included a number of active female dissidents (Day 1999).

On November 17, 1989, with little violence, the “Velvet Revolution” occurred. The spark came after a small protest commemorating a Nazi atrocity, resulted in police aggression and quickly turned into a massive referendum on Czechoslovakian communism. In this, Charter 77 and its female leaders and members were instrumental. These women helped transmit information and they joined the thousands of other citizens in protests against the system. By 1993, political issues resulted in the Velvet Divorce with the Czech Republic and the Republic of Slovakia declared their separation into independent countries (Havelkova 1997).

Today, women in the Czech Republic are becoming more involved in advancing their joint concerns and examining their roles in society. There are new female organizations (e.g. *Forum 50%*, *Czech Women’s Lobby*) that seek to educate women in the country as well as gender study programs that are becoming more common at major universities (e.g. at Charles University in Prague). One of the tactics of these

women's groups is to draw upon the history of female political activity during the First Republic – there is an attempt to replace the enduring legacy of women's experiences under communism, with the legacy of female activism from the First Republic. However, despite these efforts, successes so far have been limited (Interviews 2007-2008).

Romania:

A middle-aged female explained the political situation of women in Romania by stating that, “[t]here are two acceptable images of women here. Be sexy and manipulative or be smart and man-like. The second gets the respect, but the first gets the attention.” Although women in Romania are more politically (both high intensity and low intensity) involved now than they were in the early transition period, they remain among the least represented in the region. Sexist employment practices, diminished social services, violence against women and sex-trafficking all remain issues with which the country's women contend. Despite these joint concerns, there have been only minor efforts to unite women to challenge obstacles to their sex. A large part of the problem comes from the historical view of politically active women, so negatively associated with former First Lady Elena Ceausescu in what is termed the “Elena Effect.”

Born into a poor family in rural Romania Elena Ceausescu found herself at the center of Romanian history in the 20th century. With little education and few prospects, young Elena became involved with the Communist Party and married the man that would become its leader. Standing at her husband's side, Elena held high status and power in communist Romania in her own right for over 20 years. However, much of it was to boost her image. She claimed titles and degrees that she had not

earned, she took a position as a minister in her husband's government, and she encouraged him to fill his cabinet with her family members. A cult of personality was built around the two, her no less than him (Siani-Davies 2007). In fact, many felt she was the brains behind the dictatorship and the restrictive policies, particularly regarding the brutal anti-abortion policies and prenatal restrictions that became pervasive after 1966. When the events of 1989 percolated in Romania, she and her husband fled the capitol by helicopter only to be found, put on trial and shot on Christmas Day of that year.⁵⁵ Elena Ceausescu rose higher than any other woman in Romania but her fall was not only dramatic, it had far reaching consequences for her sex and their future political voice in the country. For almost two decades, the image of "Romanian political women" bore the negative image of Elena Ceausescu, leading men and women alike to disregard female political activity at any level.

Romania presents an intriguing case for other reasons as well. Of particular interest is the fact that the country was a late-industrializer, which had consequences that specifically affected women. The country was a predominantly agricultural society when the communists took over. Contrary to the Czech Republic or Germany, Romania did not industrialize before World War I or even between the wars. Industrialization in the country occurred almost entirely after communism was introduced. In fact, the country retained a significant proportion of its agricultural base well into the 1970s. Often cited as a traditional society, perhaps partially due to the agricultural necessities of the family, gender roles in Romania before 1945 were

⁵⁵ The legality of these events, as evidenced by the speed of capture, filmed trial and execution in the course of a few days, remains questionable (Tismaneanu 2003).

fairly paternalistic. In fact, women in Romania did not get the vote until the communist came to power and made it official in 1948.⁵⁶

When Ceausescu came to power in 1965, he did so as a reformer. As elsewhere in the region, a decreasing population became a serious concern, with little immigration into the country to bolster lowering birthrates. The demand for labor was even great given that industrialization was occurring at the same time. Romania transitioned from an agricultural society to an industrialized one in a remarkably short period of time. At the end of the 1940s, an estimated 80% of Romanians worked in agriculture. By 1989, that figure was only 28% (Pasea Harsanyi 1995). With increasingly more women leaving the countryside and finding industrial work, there was a natural decrease in births. In an attempt to increase the population, the government created a number of incentives for families, and especially women, to encourage larger families. For example, a mother of 6, 8 or 10 children would receive National Valor Awards for her “support” of the communist cause (Ciochira 1996, 134).

Where encouragement failed, the government instituted policies outlawing abortion and all other forms of contraception. This was unique under European communism, where abortion (even in Catholic Poland) was fairly accepted, cheap and available. The lengths taken to ensure that women (and doctors) were following the laws were extensive and invasive. Ironically, though initially birthrates rose after passage of the 1966 abortion ban, they soon fell again because women took extraordinary steps to insure against unwanted pregnancies (Pasea Harsanyi 1995).

⁵⁶ Finland was the first European country to extend suffrage to women in 1906. A number of Western countries, including the United States, allowed women to vote without restriction during the period of 1918-1921. Most ECE countries also changed their laws and allowed women to vote just after WWI: Russia in 1917; Germany (then unified), Poland, Latvia and Estonia in 1918; Belarus and Ukraine in 1919, Albania and Czechoslovakia in 1920 and Georgia and Lithuania in 1921 are just some examples.

Unlike elsewhere in the region, there was not a significant dissident movement in Romania and certainly there was no women's movement during that time. One woman explained, "[d]issident activity in Romania was essentially doing small things that were not allowed (e.g. celebrating Easter). People found small ways – through culture, education and art." However, a couple of people did protest the policies of the Ceausescu administration, and a couple of them were women. Acting as an individual, not as representative of any specific dissident or women's movement, Professor Doina Cornea was one of the few that publically spoke out against the communist system in Romania. In 1983, Cornea lost her university job over an assignment that veered from the accepted communist curricula. Officials later jailed Cornea and her son for distributing information critical of the government. Though often cited as the most important dissident in all of Romania, in her writings and speeches, she does not speak of inequalities among the sexes or present a gendered perspective. Whereas Professor Cornea might have presented a more positive image of female political engagement to counter the "Elena Effect," this is not a position she sought.

When the "revolution" came, it came from the masses. Romania experienced one of the few violent transitions away from communism in Europe. Even after the protests, riots, and political executions of December 1989, uncertainty remained. Many have argued that the transition is far from complete, with many facets of the old system in place and many of the old guard claiming the reins of power (Ibid; Tismaneanu 2003). Corruption and scandal dominated the 1990s and today the lack of trust in government is high even in a region notorious for governmental distrust.

Women have not found much of a voice in the new Romania. This is especially true among some of the minority populations. The country is quite diverse, claiming 19 different ethnic groups. Of these, the Hungarian and Roma populations are significantly large. Roma women in particular face dual discrimination based on ethnicity and gender.⁵⁷ There are some women in the current Basescu administration. However, in most cases these are very attractive women with ties to the President. His daughter, ironically named Elena, for example has moved up the ranks quite quickly and many interviewed see her and other women currently in high political office simply as “sex symbols.” This new image of political women in Romania, though perhaps less damaging than the image created by Elena Ceausescu, is likewise not encouraging women to be politically active.

The New German States

Escaping some of the serious problems of sex trafficking and violence against women that have plagued many of its neighbors further East, women in the NBL still deal with hiring prejudices, large wage discrepancies and underlying sex discrimination in everyday life (Hempele 1997). This is further complicated by the cultural and social differences that unification with the more traditional West Germany has brought to the fore. These issues aside, the NBL statistics indicated the highest level of female LIP during the 1990s.

At the close of World War II, the Russians took out the frustration and fatigue of fighting a lengthy and deadly war on the citizens of Germany. Most of the people that inhabited the eastern zone at that point were the mothers, daughters and wives of

⁵⁷ The political and social situation of the Roma (or Gypsy) populations in Romania is a compelling yet all too understudied situation. Of particular interest, is the dual challenge that Roma women face based on their sex and their race. Although not the focus of my project, this would certainly be an interesting avenue for further research in the region.

soldiers. These women would feel the physical wrath of Russian anger as eastern women were beaten, abused and raped across the Russian occupied territory of Germany (Interviews 2007-2008; Beevor 2002). Few escaped the assaults.⁵⁸ With no Marshall Plan and reparation demands from Russia, it was these same women who piece by piece, brick by brick, cleared and rebuilt the formerly great cities of Berlin, Dresden, Leipzig and others. These became the *Trumelfrauen* – the women of the rubble.

Despite the atrocities committed by many Russian soldiers, a number of people in the eastern zone were willing and enthusiastic about creating a socialist utopia in East Germany. While West Germany dealt for years with Nazi guilt, the East was able to avert much of that due to their decision to create a communist country in the GDR. Many women were also in favor of the communist Party (Joppke 1995).

The building and fortification of the Berlin Wall in 1962 isolated the country. Though there were a number of attempts to cross into the West, and music and literature opposing some of the positions of the state was always present, there was only limited dissent until the 1980s. By then, a number of groups developed to encourage change within, though not removal of, the government. Many of the groups gained protection under the auspices of Church related activities. As the end of the decade neared, dissident groups had grown in number, yet they were dissimilar to dissident groups elsewhere. Rather than advocating for human rights, they focused

⁵⁸ One East German woman told me that she and her younger sister went to the countryside to stay with an aunt during the spring of 1945 in the hope that they would be safe from the Russians. However, it was not long before the Red Army came through the village. The woman described her own abduction and rape by two Russian soldiers, which resulted in significant blood loss and the contraction of an STD that put her in the hospital for two weeks. She also told me of her aunt who was like-wise attacked, and who days later took her own life out of shame. These stories are not unique.

on peace and the environment. In the GDR, there was still a sense that the system was fixable, with few within calling for its end. Even the famed author Christa Wolf, who openly criticized the GDR regime, was a proponent of communism until the very end (Ibid).

Women were pivotal members in these groups, as they were in Solidarity and in Charter 77. What is unique to the East German dissident movement, however, is that often the women who participated did so specifically as women, not just as citizens of the GDR. There were a number of groups made up solely of women who sought to change communist policy to ease the pressures placed on their sex (see Chapter 5). In East Germany, as nowhere else in the region, dissent had a gendered nature in the sense that women were mobilizing for changes to female policies, not just to the state system. The surprisingly bloodless escalation of events in Leipzig in the fall of 1989, led to similar protests in East Berlin. These activities involved a number of German women including activist Bärbel Bohley, the so-called “the mother of the revolution” (Joppke 1995, 156). On November 9, 1989, the Berlin Wall opened.

Throughout the spring of 1990, East Germans voted in a series of elections eventually deciding to unite with West Germany. During this time, there were a number of roundtable talks in each of the East German states. Women were quite visible in the early roundtables as well as in the early elections for the short-lived East German government. Discussions addressed issues regarding the effects that unification, social retrenchment and economic transformation could have on women. For example, concerns about the elimination or downsizing of state-run nurseries were a major concern of eastern women. However, as time went by, officials spent

less and less time on these concerns. Those parties and women who had brought these issues to their political platforms also did not fare well. Unfortunately, many of them allied with parties that were not in favor of immediate reunification. In the momentum of those months, the desire to unify trumped all else and the citizens of East Germany went to the polls for the more traditional, and western, Christian Democrats (CDU). Despite these events, women in the NBL continued to engage in low intensity political activity during the early transition years.

Poland:

In the early 1980s, much of the world was watching Poland in awe as a group of shipyard workers in Gdansk led a lock-in strike challenging government policies concerning their wages, working conditions and general treatment. Before long, similar strikes were taking place throughout the country. History often recalls the vibrant man at the center of this struggle, the leader of Solidarity and the country's first post-communist President, Lech Walesa. However, less familiar to the world is that fact that one of the sparks that set the strikes in motion was the firing of crane operator Anna Walentywicz.⁵⁹ Women played other important roles in the Gdansk drama. Many took part in the strikes and wives and sisters would come to the facility gates everyday bringing food for those barricading themselves inside. There are also accounts of events inside the shipyards, which indicate that it was a small group of women that pushed to keep the Gdansk strike going in support of the entire country's striking workers when government officials agreed to concessions that would only benefit those in Gdansk (Penn 2003).

⁵⁹ Eighty-year-old Anna Walentywicz died in April 2010. She was one of many leading Polish figures, including President Lech Kaczynski, who perished in a plane crash in Smolensk, Russia.

When the government reacted with force a year later to put down Solidarity, then estimated at 10 million strong, and imprisoned Walesa and other leaders, again women continued the struggle. In her book, *Solidarity's Secret* (2003) Penn tells the story of a group of women who ran an underground newspaper that published accounts of prisoners and government abuses. Walesa himself suggested that these women played a significant role in preserving the movement while he was in prison (Penn 2003).

The fact that these women would fight for the Polish cause is perhaps no surprise. There is a prevalent notion of the ideal Polish woman that centers on the image of the self-sacrificing mother. This notion comes from the image of the Polish mother found in Polish lore and arguably bolstered by the Catholic faith. As one young Polish woman explained to me, there is an “idealism of motherhood, of Mary. Women take pride in the sacrifices that they make for the family and the state. Part of this is not seeking recognition of these sacrifices” (Polish Interviews 2008). Penn and others have suggested that it is this female image that is the reason why, despite their great activity historically in fighting for Polish independence through the centuries, that women are always in the background filling in when the men are gone. A politically active woman I spoke with agreed, stating that the image of “Mother Poland is the number one issue” that she must deal with when recruiting women.

The image of Polish womanhood is arguably conflated by the importance of the Catholic Church in Poland, which some believe presents a certain ideal. For example, in 1979, much beloved Pope John Paul II spoke to women about their place in Polish society in a general address. He said, “I want to remind young women that

motherhood is the vocation of women...It is women's eternal vocation'' (Nowakowska 1996, 29). It has also been suggested that due to the Church's role separate from the communist state, a situation rare during the era, the Church was poised to fill the space left by the communists after 1989. "The Church helped end communism, and for that they get a lot of respect" (Polish Interviews 2008). Yet, as indicated in Chapter 1, there are a growing number of women in Polish formal politics. Although a number of them are from the Right, which tends to take a more traditional view of gender relations and in Poland is more aligned with the Catholic Church, the fact that they are there should not be discounted. This runs counter to the notion that in what might be considered a more traditional society such as Poland, women are necessarily excluded from political participation.

Women in Poland deal with similar issues as women elsewhere: sexism, finding affordable daycare centers, violence against women. One of the other situations has been the massive migration of Polish people (men and women) out of the country. With the possible exception of the NBL, more than anywhere else in the ECE region, Poles have left to work in other countries (particularly Great Britain and Ireland) and they seldom return.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have articulated the methodology and tools used to address my research question. I have also explained my process of case selection (the Czech Republic, the NLB, Romania and Poland) and provided a brief look at the history of my cases and the past and current situation for women residing within them. In the forth-coming chapters, I explore these four cases by way of exploring the literature, news pieces and political communications as well as by relaying my interviews with

some of the women in the region and reviewing contracted opinion polling. Before moving on to that discussion, the next chapter addresses alternative explanations to the observed outcome of regionally low female LIP in the ECE region during the 1990s.

Chapter III

Alternative Explanations

Introduction

In this chapter, I address alternative explanations for understanding low LIP among the women of post-communist Europe during the initial transition. I look specifically at the most plausible explanations; low educational attainment, removal of gender quotas, development theories and the role of a patriarchic culture to determine their potential explanatory value for the post-communist region. After a systematic evaluation of these alternative explanations, it will be apparent that they do not adequately address the outcome of interest. Specifically, educational attainment was quite high during the communist era, the previous existence of gender quotas rather than encouraging actually discouraged LIP, development has not correlated with female political participation and the patriarchic culture is not unique to the region.

There are a number of possible explanations for why most women in East and Central Europe did not rush the stage after 1989. However, a number of the arguments put forward to explain the lack of women in formal or high intensity politics, such as the removal of gender quotas or electoral system structure, lose their explanatory power when used to address low intensity participation patterns. Some alternative explanations that are quite compelling in other parts of the world, for example educational attainment, prove to be less so when assessed in the post-communist region.

Examining Levels of Female Low Intensity Participation

There are few studies that specifically explore the causes of varying degrees of low intensity participation. However, there are arguments put forth explaining the lack of more formal, or high intensity, participation among women. Past studies have utilized available statistics on percentages of women holding executive leadership positions or seats in legislative bodies. In these investigations, a number of supply and demand side factors have arisen for explaining why there tend to be significantly lower numbers of women in parliaments around the world. Studies have shown that parliamentary systems, multi-members districts, multi-party systems, left-leaning parties, gender quotas and linkages between politicians and women's groups are more conducive to women seeking political office than their alternatives (Paxton and Kunovich 2003; Kenworthy and Malami 1999). For example, parliamentary systems are more "female friendly," as are closed list systems where women might be placed in specific list positions. On the other hand, two-party systems are less likely to produce female legislators. A multiparty system allows various women to represent different issues and opens up more avenues for female candidates. However, too many parties can be just as bad as a dual party system for benefiting women's prospects. Too much diffusion of interest can leave women on the outskirts of electoral politics often pushing them into small, issue-specific and ineffective parties (Kenworthy and Malami 1999).

Investigating HIP, it is now common to differentiate paths and obstacles to political participation through a supply and demand approach (Norris and Lovenduski 1993 & 1995; Paxton and Kunovich 2007). In examining female HIP, demand side

explanations address structural or external features that can either help or hinder female inclusion. For example, as previously explained a multi-party system (3-5 parties) creates more opportunities for women to run and serve in political office. On the other hand, supply side factors are internal. An example of a supply side argument for low levels of female HIP might be the availability of education or the fact that women often start later in politics due to child rearing concerns.

Some of the explanations listed here and above, such as multi-member districts and multi-party systems do not translate to the LIP level. The number of political parties and the type of electoral system are not directly relevant for addressing LIP among women. However, other arguments derived from research on female HIP, education and cultural attitudes for instance, could also be important for understanding women's LIP. In the next section, utilizing the demand and supply concept, I address possible HIP factors that could translate to LIP (e.g. gender quotas, education and political culture). I also present a few other possible explanations (e.g. democratization and economic development) advanced by scholars for specifically examining LIP.

Demand Side Factors

Alternative Explanation #1: Democratic Development

In practice, democracy has not always included the voice of women. However, today democracy tends to advance the notions of civil and political rights for all citizens, including women. Therefore, there is an expectation that as countries move closer to the democratic ideal, there will be a corresponding increase in women's rights, opportunities and political position. Essentially, there is an expectation that democratization will "[i]ncrease women's ability to organize and to demand political

representation” (Saxonberg 2000, 146). The guarantee of women’s rights should provide women the means and motivation to act in their interests.

The effects of democratic development on women’s rights and female political participation have been apparent in many corners of the world. For example, as Argentina moved toward a democratic system of governance in the 1980s, women organized and have remained active in the post-authoritarian regime (“Despite Recent...” 2010). Citizens of the country even elected a woman, Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, to the presidency in 2007 (Barrionvero 2007).⁶⁰ The transition away from authoritarian rule and toward increasingly democratic governance, contributed to more women seeking to advance their rights (Waylon 2000)

The process of democratization includes the implementation or progression toward free and fair elections, the right to speak out against the government, and the ability to assemble and protest freely (Dahl 1991). The democratization of post-communist Europe has been extremely positive in many regards. In these countries, there are now (quickly implemented after 1989) a number of new checks and balances of the political process that operate to protect democratic measure and to limit the possibility of a return to authoritarian or oligarchic rule. Additionally, citizens have the ability to protest peacefully and to openly disagree with their governments. Elections have also become structured and legitimate modes of power transition. Some issues remain, as this is an on-going process for the region, however by any measure democracy was progressing in the early transition period and today is

⁶⁰ This is an example of the LIP to HIP relationship. Women were active in politics, often with and through the help of what developed into a women’s movement in the country, during and after the transition away from authoritarianism. Female participation in low intensity activities, in significant ways provided a basis for more women in HIP, all the way up to Kirchner’s election as the first female president of the country.

accessible, available and in large part internalized among the population (Tavits 2005; Linz and Stepan 1996).

Yet, as democratization has advanced, in regards to female LIP the expected correlation is not apparent. While some countries of the region appear to have increased their female LIP from the 1990s with enhanced democratic development, others have not. There does not appear to be any clear pattern. This democratic development theory does not provide a great deal of explanatory power, because the correlation, more democracy and greater female LIP, is not apparent (at least not yet) in the ECE region. The two events are not happening as theory would suggest, therefore we cannot conclude that one, democratic development, is causing the other, greater LIP.

Alternative Explanation #2: Economic Development

There is also an economic developmental approach to female political participation. The theory states that the more economically developed a state, the more willing its female population to participate politically. It is best to measure economic growth by examining a country's gross domestic product (GDP); the sum of goods and services produced within a given country. This positively correlates with standard of living and is therefore viewed as a positive indicator of a country's economic prosperity (Demetriades and Hussein 1996).

An economic development theory pertaining to female political participation suggests that as a state develops economically, there is a corresponding growth in material availability and want leading to enhanced competition for jobs and resources. With enhanced competition comes a desire for greater justice: a realization of gendered disadvantages and a growing sense of female identity. Matland (1998)

suggests that development leads to a lessening of traditional, female disadvantaging values, which should encourage more women to get involved politically. When a significant number of women have resources, which come with economic development, these women will begin to fight for protection and enhancement of their rights via political avenues (Matland and Montgomery 2003).

Economic growth also allows for the consideration of other concerns, because with basic needs met there is simply more space for articulation and advancement of additional issues. Kenworthy and Malami explain the theory along these terms suggesting that, “[t]he wealthier the country, the less politics may be dominated by concerns of economic growth and well-being, and the more willing parties and voters may be to allow other considerations” (Kenworthy and Malami 1999, 241). One such consideration could be the inclusion of women in the political sphere (Kenworthy and Malami 1999). Therefore, from a rational perspective, women should act to level the playing field to enhance their position.

Though the theory sounds plausible, Norris and Inglehart point out that there has been significant research to dismiss the idea that socio-economic development is necessary for female involvement in the political system. Such research would include Matland (1998) who determined that development is significant and related to female political formal participation, but only in fully developed states. Kenworthy and Malami (1999) came to a similar conclusion about developed countries. Matland and Montgomery (2003) also found little evidence to support an economic development theory specifically in the post-communist case. In a global assessment, they found that development did in fact correlate with female political representation

but only in PR systems. However, their findings specifically did not indicate that the pattern was relevant in the ECE region.

TABLE 3.1
GDP as Per Capita In ECE Countries

	1992 (global rank)	1997	2002	2006 (global rank)
Romania	\$1,100.98 (106)	\$1,564.51	\$2,101.74	\$5,645.24 (53)
Poland	\$2,198.00 (75)	\$4,064.21	\$5,179.67	\$8,864.73 (38)
Slovakia	\$2,215.51 (74)	\$4,005.72	\$4,557.85	\$10,223.34 (35)
Czech Rep.	\$2,903.08 (60)	\$5,544.87	\$7,379.28	\$13,877.02 (31)
Hungary	\$3,592.75 (54)	\$4,443.29	\$6,566.87	\$11,226.70 (34)
Latvia	\$1,755.93 (80)	\$2,503.36	\$3,984.08	\$8,797.00 (40)
Bulgaria	\$1,214.51 (97)	\$1,246.98	\$1,982.08	\$4,089.22 (66)
Estonia	\$2,903.08 (70)	\$3,528.87	\$5,379.59	\$12,236.60 (32)
Lithuania	\$2,314.14 (72)	\$2,793.13	\$4,075.14	\$8,770.09 (41)
Russia	\$3,095.09 (59)	\$2,748.92	\$2,377.64	\$6,932.33 (46)

Source: Nation Master. (<http://www.nationmaster.com/index.php>).

Table 3.1 shows one indicator of economic development in the ECE countries from the early transition through to 2006. With some downturn in the Russian GDP at the turn of the century, it is the only country that did not exhibit consistent growth. By 2006, Russia too seems to be rebounding. Also notable is the ranking increase of these countries. For example, whereas Romanian GDP per capita in 1992 indicated it was the 106th highest along this indicator of economic development, by 2006, it was the 53rd highest. Clearly, the post-communist countries of Europe continue to develop economically, as is the case with the democratic development theory. Yet, there is no consistent correlation between economic progress and female LIP. Returning to the Romanian case, GDP has increased substantially, yet female LIP has not. In fact, in my Romanian survey explored in Chapter 7, Romanian women questioned were extremely hesitant to take part in LIP activities with the figures actually dropping since 1999.

Other scholars reached similar conclusions in their own investigations and a review of GDP growth throughout the 1990s does not correspond with female LIP

rates at that time, nor do they today. The countries in the region all have relatively similar levels of economic development, yet as explained earlier, there is variation in terms of female LIP among the countries. While I reject the economic development theory that women will participate when economic indicators are moving in positive directions, I do argue that one aspect of economic development, employment, is relevant. Yet, I argue that it was the elimination of employment opportunities (that specific occurrence) had an effect of female LIP during the initial transition period (see Chapter 6).

Alternative Explanation #3: Elimination of Gender Quotas

Many scholars (e.g. Wilcox 2003; Jaquette and Wolchik 1998; Havelkova 1997) agree that the elimination of gender quotas, a common protocol among most of the states of communist Europe, is at least partially responsible for the dramatic decline of female legislators after the first post-communist elections. This is a reasonable argument for explaining why women held as much as 30% of seats in communist legislatures before 1989 and why those percentages dropped significantly after the first post-communist election. In most cases, policy no longer reserved a number of legislative seats for women, which contributed to a visible decline in female politicians.

Those that advocate for gender quotas generally argue that the effects of quotas go beyond electoral representation. Quotas assure women a political voice and indicate the party or the state's commitment to greater female inclusion. It is the hope of quota proponents that these facts will also encourage women to increase their participation at all levels of political intensity (Baldez 2004; Jones 2004). Therefore,

it is plausible that the removal of existing gender quotas could have an adverse effect on female LIP.

The usage of gendered quota systems has been one method by which women's groups and countries have attempted to bridge demand side obstacles in the hopes of getting more women into political office. Baldez explains that, "[q]uotas are seen worldwide as the most viable instrument for increasing participation of women in political decision making" (Baldez 2004, 4). For this reason, there has been a marked swing toward the creation of gendered quota systems around the world (Dalerup 2004). Quota systems are an attempt to alter the political structure of voting rules to help mediate for possible discrepancies brought on by economic and or cultural causes.⁶¹ By requiring that the electoral system reserve a given percentage (often around 30%) of candidates to legislative office be women, the policy aims to lessen barriers that women face as they try to join the formal political arena (Jones 2004).⁶² Gender quotas have become quite popular and appear to be successful in increasing female LIP globally. For example, Htun and Jones found that quota systems are effective at increasing the numbers of women elected to legislative office. Their research showed an average eight point increase in female legislators among states around the world after they instituted gendered quota systems (Htun and Jones 2002). However, while various countries the world over are embracing gender quotas, ECE

⁶¹ Though the merits of gender quota systems are highly contentious, that particular debate is not relevant for this project (Baldez 2004; Dalerup 2004).

⁶² There are different types of quota systems (party quotas, candidate quotas, reserve quotas and others), yet the candidate quotas are most prevalent.

countries quickly removed them after 1989 and in large part remain adverse to what many continue to view as a communist-style policy (Interviews 2007-2008).⁶³

One could argue that the removal of gender quotas meant fewer women in political office, which in turn led to fewer women taking part in LIP activities. However, this appears to be a rather tenuous argument. On the contrary, I contend in Chapter 5 that the very existence of such quotas during communism, rather than their elimination after 1989, has affected the willingness of women to engage in low intensity political activities. Whereas the elimination of quotas surely led to fewer women in political bodies, the existence of policies that required gender quotas during the communist era had a more direct effect on female LIP after 1989 than the removal of such policies. We know that past experience with female participation, HIP in particular, can have negative effects on both female HIP and LIP later. This was the case in much of the ECE region. There was, and in some instances continues to be, an association of political women with communist ideology, which was manifest in policies, such as gender quotas requiring female inclusion. The communist attachment and the desire to reject things visibly associated with the communist era, is an important component of the communist legacy, which helps explain low levels of female political activity during the initial transition period in the region. Essentially, the elimination of quotas was an indication of the public's dislike of the policy, an effect of the communist legacy, rather than the cause of low intensity participation (see Chapter 5).

⁶³ Most quota advocates make a distinction between the communist gender quotas and those being advanced today. The main difference is that most gender quota policies are the product of grassroots activity and extensive open debate as opposed to the communist systems that were imposed "from above." Additionally, advocates claim that the token nature of the communist quotas is not nearly as common in the newer forms (Dalerup 2004).

Supply Side Explanations

Demand side theories, such as economic and democratic development, were unable to convincingly address low female LIP during the initial transition period. We now turn from inadequate demand side explanations, to an examination of possible supply side factors. Supply side explanations relate to the pool of people (women in this case) available for political participation. In this section, I examine supply side arguments such as educational attainment, patriarchic culture and religiosity to determine if they might be instructive for understanding low LIP in post-communist Europe.

Alternative Explanation #4: Educational Attainment

In analyzing participation and women's rights globally, research indicates that educational attainment is a good indicator of female political involvement (Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980; Conway 2005, 53). Some research shows that in countries where women have substantial access to education, they receive better treatment, have an enhanced sense of efficacy, and therefore participate in higher numbers than in countries where fewer women are educated. Scholars hypothesize that educated women are available for public office and should be invested in political society. Additionally, the more educated women are, the more likely they are to feel efficacious and participate in political and social organizations. Evidence suggests that this is a fairly strong link (Paxton et al 2007; Schlozman *et al* 1994, 974-975). To test this argument, scholars often examine the relationship between education and HIP such as holding office or party leadership. It is also quite plausible that educational attainment could correlate with LIP among women such as protesting, petition signing or voting as well.

Though a strong indicator for female political participation (HIP and LIP) elsewhere, Eastern and Central Europe may be an exception to the educational attainment theory. The argument that high levels of female education will correlate with high levels of female LIP in post-communist Europe does not hold, because levels for female education in the ECE region were, and remain, quite high. Even though there is some variation in education levels, it is not nearly as large as the variation in female LIP evidencing no clear relationship between the two.

TABLE 3.2
Sample of Female Educational Attainment in Europe

E. Europe	Pre-Primary/Lower Secondary	Upper Secondary	Tertiary	Upper Sec + Tertiary
Romania	47%	45.3%	7.7%	53%
Poland	33%	55.9%	11%	66.9%
Slovakia	31.6%	59.8%	8.7%	68.5%
Czech Rep.	27.6%	63.9%	8.3%	72.2%
Hungary	37.8%	40.6%	11.5%	52.1%
Slovenia	38.1%	47%	14.8%	61.8%
Latvia	30.7%	51.8%	17.5%	69.3%
Bulgaria	40.5%	39.1%	20.3%	59.4%
Estonia	17.2%	42.9%	28.9%	71.8%
Lithuania	30.5%	28.1%	41.0%	69.1%
W. Europe				
Portugal	83.6%	8%	8.4%	16.4%
Italy	63.1%	28.4%	8.4%	36.8%
Greece	61.5%	26.7%	11.8%	38.5%
Austria	37.7%	52.4%	9.8%	62.2%
Luxembourg	51.2%	33.2%	12.2%	45.4%
France	50.6%	31%	18.4%	49.4%
Spain	68.1%	13.2%	18.7%	31.9%
Sweden	19%	42.5%	22.6%	65.1%
Belgium	52.4%	25.6%	22%	47.6%

Source: *Statistical Yearbook of the Economic Commission for Europe 2003.* (www.unecce.org/stats/trends)

*Germany looked similar to Austria, but from this data it was impossible to separate East from West.

One of the positive advancements that came out of 40 years of communist rule was the decision that both men and women should be educated for the good of the socialist state. Though not among my case studies, Albania provides an example “...before the communist takeover, the majority of women were still illiterate. By 1955, illiteracy had been eradicated among all women (and men) under the age of 40

and, in the 1980s, half of Albania's university students were female" (Brunnbauer 2000). Across the European communist region, women were educated in high numbers, on par with the educational attainment of men. In fact, by 1989 women often received more education than men and certainly more than many of their West European counterparts (Emigh and Szeleny 2001, 9).

Despite the many upheavals of the region's transitions, the desire for and means to achieve an education has not changed. Women in post-communist Europe remain amongst the most educated in the world (Fuszara 2000). Table 3.2 shows that the majority of women in East European countries are currently educated at the upper-secondary or tertiary levels. When taken together, no East European country is below 50% of female education above the upper secondary-level and most are well past with more than 60% of their female populations educated beyond the lower-secondary rank. This is not the case for many West European countries in the sample. In terms of female education, this puts the region on par with Sweden, long considered one of the most liberal and female-friendly countries in the world (Dalerup 2004; Esping-Andersen 1999). Francis Millard explains that because there are so many educated women in the ECE region, "there is no real sense to doubt the availability of a 'pool' of women capable of political action" (2004, 190).

As evident in the above table, there is some variation in educational attainment across the region. Likewise, there is some variation in female LIP as exhibited by the WVS data presented in Chapter 1. However, the variation in both data sets does not appear to correlate. For example, in the above table, Estonia has one of the highest figures for female education in upper-secondary (42.9%) and tertiary levels (28.9)

totaling a high 71.8%. Yet, Estonian responses to the WVS question about willingness to participate in legal demonstrations presented one of the highest “would never” statistics at 62.7%. Poland likewise, had numbers that suggest the weakness of an educational attainment and LIP relationship. Additionally, the surveys conducted for me in three countries of the region do not support the educational attainment argument (see Chapter 7). Regressions run on the participatory survey questions did not indicate that education level was statistically significant in influencing women’s responses to participation questions.

One could argue that the education provided under the communist system was substandard. I will not debate this assessment, as it is known that a great deal of educational time and money was spent on teaching ideological doctrine. However, this does not rectify the educational attainment argument in this case. The education received by communist students, at least at the preliminary levels, was relatively the same despite one’s gender. Additionally, the educational attainment levels of women in the region have remained consistent through the communist and now post-communist eras. The curriculum advanced today in the region is undeniably more in-line with Western standards. It is clear that women were highly educated in 1990, and they remain an educated population today. This fact means that the education level of women in post-communist Europe does not adequately account for their low LIP levels during the initial transition period or today.

Alternative Explanation #5: Patriarchic Culture

There are also a number of scholars that argue in favor of more cultural explanations for addressing low female LIP. Cultural arguments look toward shared identity and experiences that influence actions. Ross explains the role of culture as “a

system of shared meanings and symbols” (Ross 1997). One such cultural argument is that women living in more patriarchic or “traditional” societies are less likely to participate politically. Scholars such as Paxton and Kunovich (2003) and Kenworthy and Malami (1999) suggest that in these societies there is a shared view, internalized by men and women alike, of politics as a “man’s game,” which can be perceived as a culturally indoctrinated image that discourages women from political participation.⁶⁴

Norris and Inglehart’s examination of the WVS does suggest that there are different attitudes regarding motherhood and the role of women in post-communist Europe as compared to other areas of the world. What Norris and Inglehart discover is that people in the region as a whole views female representation in government positions as less important than those living in the Nordic countries or Western Europe. The authors attribute this to cultural factors. Norris and Inglehart, though, fail to provide a strong causal link between culture and the attitudes they find. The idea that the private sphere is the domain of women, and the public sphere (especially politics) is the realm of men is certainly pervasive, but it exists elsewhere and hence does not explain what is unique to the region.

Culture is important and certain aspects may harbor greater influences in certain case countries. However, I would argue that cultural values influence institutions, but it is the institutions that provide the “rules of the game” and constrain options. These institutions, such as the informal networks developed to manage life under communism, are included in my analysis. While a patriarchic culture could influence some institutional arrangements, in general it does not provide the most compelling or

⁶⁴ Both sets of authors develop a tool to measure paternalistic culture and then determine a correlation with the number of women in Parliament.

direct explanation for addressing the outcome of interest in the post-communist region.

Alternative Explanation #6: Religious Conservatism

Another cultural explanation, one often linked to traditional patriarchy, is religious conservatism (Baranievska 1997). In regards to women's participation, some suggest that the mores and values placed upon the female image in more fundamental faiths, Catholicism, Islam or more traditional views of Protestantism affects the willingness of women to act politically (Ibid). Therefore, in countries where there is a high level of religious affiliation or citizens attend church services regularly, we would expect to see less women participating politically.

Moving beyond culture, one could also make a structural argument for the effects of religious conservatism on female LIP (e.g. Kenworthy and Malami 1999 looking at female HIP). This argument focuses on the structure of the institutions of faith. Where hierarchy is revered and there are canonical barriers to female inclusion in those institutions, there appears to be a corresponding social and political hierarchy among the sexes. For example, the Catholic Church places high-esteem and a historical legacy in its hierarchy: Pope, Bishop, and Priest etc. While there is room within the Catholic Church for nuns and laywomen (as well as an important position given to mother's of religious men), the very structure precludes female involvement in the higher echelons of the faith. Therefore, the argument is that in societies that adhere strongly to these hierarchical, traditional, religions, society mirrors the religious structure and provides institutional and societal barriers to women's political involvement.

Both the cultural and institutional arguments in this regard are instructive, yet they provide more context than causal explanation. For example, the importance of the Catholic Church in Poland and its impact on the daily lives of Poles is undeniable. However, low LIP is evident in other less religious countries in the region. The Catholic Church could not be responsible for lower participation among women in Estonia, Russia and other non-Catholic states. Conversely, other Catholic countries, Slovakia for example, exhibit LIP on the slightly higher end for the region. Interestingly, Matland and Montgomery (2003) found that in looking at the relationship between female political participation (in their study HIP), Catholicism was a significant indicator in Western Europe, but not in Eastern and Central Europe. This does not indicate the religious conservatism is not an important factor, yet it does mean that the investigation must continue for explanations with greater applicability across the region.

Additionally, even so-called religious states, such as Catholic Poland, pose an interesting contradiction. As mentioned in Chapter 1, both Poland and Bulgaria today have relatively high percentages of women in their legislative bodies (HIP), yet they also both are among the lowest in the region regarding female LIP (see Chapter 1). This indicates that the relationship between religiousness and female participation is not as clear as one might expect.

It is difficult to totally discount the influence of cultural factors in addressing how women in the region perceive their efficacy and hence their willingness to get involved in LIP. Therefore, in an effort to mediate the potential effects of culture, for my case selection (see Chapter 2) I intentionally sought cases that evidenced some

cultural variation in terms of pre-War history, religious orientation, and views of female identity.

Conclusion

Developmental, cultural and educational arguments do not adequately explain the noted variation in levels of women's LIP in post-communist Europe. These theories, while in some cases helpful for addressing female participation in other areas of the world or in examining HIP, do not provide enough clarity or uniqueness to be reliable explanations for low female LIP in the ECE region during the initial transition period, or today. Democratic and economic development is growing at a much fast and more consistent pace than female LIP. Gender quota elimination after 1989 did not affect women's willingness to be politically active, yet their very existence previously is likely a more important contributor. Female educational attainment is also not satisfactory as it was commonplace before 1989 and remains so today. In addition, variation in education levels does not seem to correlate with variation in LIP levels. Finally, cultural arguments suggesting that patriarchy or religiosity is responsible for low female LIP, also do not adequately explain the regional trends.

On the other hand, my argument that the communist legacy, the weakness of a women's movement prior to 1989 and gendered job displacement after, are interrelated factors helping to explain low female LIP in the post-communist region holds up. The relationship and intensity of the three variables also accounts for variation on LIP among the cases addressed. Having reviewed the literature, addressed the research puzzle and examined alternative explanations, the rest of this manuscript goes in-depth to explore the three variables that I argue provided

significant explanatory power in understanding levels of female LIP in the ECE region.

Chapter IV

Gendered Communist Legacy

A history that unfolds peacefully seems to flow somewhere beyond people's awareness, but a history full of uprisings and reversals, occupations, liberations, betrayals and new occupations enters the life of a people and cities as a burden, as a constant reminder of life's uncertainties...forty years of the totalitarian system have left behind a material and spiritual emptiness and filling this emptiness will be full of difficulties, tensions, disappointments and tragedy
(Ivan Klima 2000, 57).

Almost twenty years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, I spoke with Edith Kramer in a small village in the former West Germany. Frau Kramer was born in Berlin in 1921. As a young mother, she witnessed the destruction of that city during the closing days of World War II and the events that ensued when the Russians sought their retribution on the women of Hitler's Germany. After the war, she was one of the *Trümelfrauen* who brick by brick cleared and rebuilt many of East Germany's cities. Although she had feared he was dead for over a year, Frau Kramer eventually reunited with her husband and together the family fled East Germany. They left behind friends, parents, siblings and cousins. The construction of the Berlin Wall 15 years later separated them more permanently. Frau Kramer relayed to me her memories of November 9, 1989 and the fall of the Berlin Wall. Despite the passage of time, she explained that she cried with happiness for the end of the GDR government, but also with sadness for the times lost, the memories missed, and the friends and loved ones she had left. She cried the hardest for those who did not live to see the destruction of the wall. Twenty years later, the scars were still fresh. Likewise, for those who lived in East Germany, 40 years of communism left a powerful legacy.

The communist legacy has affected nearly every aspect of people's lives in the post-communist era, including how citizens view government and their place in the political sphere. Thomas Magstadt put it well when he wrote "[t]he tendency of old habits and values to stick to the social fabric of post communist societies is a common problem that afflicts even the most transitional state in Eastern Europe" (1998, 4). Though relevant to all people in post-communist Europe, the communist legacy has a specifically gendered nature. It is inaccurate to say that the transition away from communism affected women more than men. However, women's realities were different and they faced particular challenges *as women*. The communist legacy, and its unique gender attributes, has had lasting effects on the political participation of women in the post-communist region. Due to state actions that sought to encourage women to be both mothers and employees, while also making them heavily dependent on the State as opposed to the traditional male breadwinner, women experienced communism differently than men. The residual effects of communism during the initial transition were also dissimilar for men and women. In particular, women were especially affected by the removal of social policies, such as state-provided nursery care, and the corresponding changes in the relationship between women and the previously father-like state.

In this Chapter, I argue that a legacy of distrust is an important component contributing to a lack of female LIP in much of the ECE region during the early transition years.⁶⁵ Political activity requires time and energy, as well as a willingness to extend one's social circle and work together for common goals. Given the creation

⁶⁵ The communist legacy, as well as a general weakness of a women's movement in the region and gendered job displacement, help explain the regional trend toward low female LIP during the initial transition years.

of a negative image of politically active women, created by communist party tokenism, and the persistence of fear, characterized by the female centered personal networks, many women chose not to engage in LIP during the initial transition years.

The Gendered Communist Legacy of Distrust and Female LIP

The communist system created an aura of distrust – distrust of government and of other people. This was universal, however due to the nature of communist rule and the Party-established paternalistic relationship between women and the government, this distrust was particularly evident among women in the region. The communist-instilled lack of trust is one of the significant legacies of the communist period that persisted well into the post-transition period and even currently remains influential. For a number of women in the region, the communist legacy of distrust played a key role in their determinations about LIP after 1989.

From a female perspective, distrust was fostered and affirmed under the communist system by the formal institutional practice of establishing token female political actors and in the informal strategy of forming close, personal networks, which often centered on women and the safety of the private sphere. These two factors, *female political tokens* and private sphere centered *personal networks*, therefore, contributed (secondary causes) to the communist legacy that deterred female LIP, because they related to how women viewed their political and social positions during as well as after communism.



Political tokenism denotes the policies and practices implemented by the government to place women friendly to the Communist Party in political positions. This was done to pay homage to the official communist doctrine, but it did not necessarily correspond with a genuine commitment of the Communist Party to equality between the sexes. The rejection of more formal institutional arrangements that sought to put women in token positions in the communist political infrastructure has resulted in a backlash against women in politics of any form. Tokenism created a negative image of female political participation, manipulated and controlled from above, that endured past 1989 and discouraged many women from even low intensity political participation.

On the other hand, networks refers to the insular, small, close-knit relationships that citizens developed as a means of protection from state encroachment and as a means by which to get the often scarce goods needed for daily life. Because the home was generally the only space beyond the watchful eye of the state, and due to the female responsibility to find food for the family, women often became the centers of these informal networks. While these networks originally developed as an informal strategy of protection from the state and as a corresponding means of ensuring some level of privacy, during the initial transition period their purpose altered somewhat. There was no longer an invasive government intruding into the private lives of its citizens, particularly its women, yet this was replaced by a great deal of uncertainty and instability. Continuing to rely on networks, especially the family networks, allowed women (and surely men in some cases) a sense of continuity. The networks after 1989 were stable, known and comfortable for the women who often played

significant roles within them under the previous system. Therefore, in this sense, the networks were part of the communist legacy that continued to be significant, though in a slightly different way, after communism ended.

What follows is an explanation of women's lives under communism. Then I address the communist legacy factors of tokenism and networks in greater detail and show how they relate to the low LIP outcome. In doing this, I examine the communist legacy of distrust in my four case countries: the Czech Republic, NBL, Poland and Romania. All of the cases had similar communist experiences and all of them have had to deal with the communist legacy. From there I explore the theoretical underpinnings that lend support to the argument put forward in this chapter.

A Gendered Communist Legacy

The Nature of Communism

Prior to 1989, despite cultural and historical differences, the economic and political structures of East and Central Europe were quite similar. Forty years of communist-led governance and the concerted effort of the Party in each country to control its citizens resulted in a group of countries that formed a cohesive region and produced citizens that had similar experiences and out-looks (Cermáková 1995). Formal institutions in communist Europe shared common characteristics across the region. Bunce highlights four communist institutional characteristics. The first was the “ideological mission of the ruling elite” which sought not stability, but transformation and control of the economy, society and the population (1999, 21). The second feature was that in each country, the party had “a conjoined and political monopoly” where it was difficult to determine where the state began and the Party ended. Third was the “fusion...[of the] party and the state” (Ibid, 23-23). Bunce

explains that the Party so thoroughly controlled the state that “the state apparatus was never free in an institutional sense to make decisions.” Finally, the fourth institutional characteristic was “...the extraordinary institutional penetration of the party-state.” The communist system was especially invasive, attempting to monitor and control economic, cultural, and personal interactions and relations (Ibid, 23-24). This intrusive characteristic resulted in a “surrender of autonomy” (Ibid, 24). Citizens had little voice and few opportunities to create civil or political society out of the sight of the watchful eye of the state (Ibid; Howard 2003). The formal institutions created by the state were relatively consistent in each country, and the tactics and informal means by which each of the populations dealt with life in the communist era were also similar across the region.

The residual effects of communism affected everyone: men and women. However, the effect on the sexes was dissimilar, which led to different reactions to political life both before and after 1989. European communist governments served as a paternalistic force in the lives of women. This is true to a degree for men as well. However, the State’s involvement in the lives of women, as workers, mother, wives and grandmothers was different than for men. So often, this relationship between the State and its women was created through policies that both advanced women, and held them back. Through this, women became much more reliant on the State during the communist era, than men did.⁶⁶ They provided a number of social benefits through formal gender policies, but also expected women to sacrifice time and energy

⁶⁶ This in no way is meant to indicate that women had it tougher under communism than men. Rather, it is simply an explanation that the system affected the sexes differently and in fact was built in such a way so as to do so.

to the state.⁶⁷ The policies of the communist governments and the nature of the informal institutions that developed during that time, created a female perspective that influenced the actions and reactions of the region's women after 1989. Due to past actions of the State, women after 1989 were suspicious of policies that claimed to advance their sex and they chose to rely on the known informal family networks that previously provided genuine security and after became a place of stability. The gendered communist legacy has affected how women experienced the early transition and how they viewed their political and social roles. Heinen noted that, "...[It] is clear now that the changes in mentalities will take much more time than changes in structures: a Communist system based on the respect of hierarchy and general apathy has molded ways of thinking and acting for a lasting period. On the whole, these factors tend to discourage the 'normal citizen' (and women more than men) from taking part in the re-foundation for the new political framework" (1997, 590).

Fear and Distrust

Personal experience and stories of life under communism recall fear, spying and betrayal (Sperling 1999; Howard 2003). A westerner living in the region during the early 1990s explained that "fear permeated everything. No one wore color and everyone walked around with bowed heads to avoid attention and eye contact." The invasive nature of state-controlled civil society during communism created a vicious cycle. The norms that participation in that society fostered, such as distrust of politics, government and in many ways each other, were norms that continued despite system alteration. This occurred because norms do not suddenly change, past experiences

⁶⁷ As explained in greater detail in earlier chapters, women were provided generous social coverage that included extensive paid leave to have children, provided free childcare facilities and assured housing for single mothers.

continued to play a role in how people reacted to the changing conditions of the early transition period. The instability of the early 1990s in some ways reinforced the norms, for example women often continued to rely on the family networks that developed under communism, because during the early transition period they represented what was known and familiar. This increased as social benefits women received previously, which were viewed by many as obligations of the state, just as nursery care were eliminated by the new governments (Einhorn 1993). It has also prevented women from mobilizing politically. Due to the fear and distrust previously, there was little sense of female identity strong enough to mobilize around after communism.

The everyday realities of communist rule meant that children socialized into the system developed a specific and deeply engrained worldview: a legacy of distrust and individualism (White 1979). On the one hand, as will be seen, many hated the system under which they lived and hoped for something different. This accounts for the rejection of many of the more visible symbols and formal institutions associated with communism during the early 1990s. On the other hand, the socialization of more informal practices and institutional arrangements remain a strong component of the post-communist era (Racioppi and See 1995; Misher and Rose 1997; Brunnbauer 2000). It is ironic that an ideology lauding the primacy of the communal would in practice result in a system that in many ways enhanced individualism.

The communist legacy does not persist in isolation. The post-1989 resilience of certain features of the legacy relate to early socialization processes and the expediency of retaining familiar informal institutions. It was not simply that these

earlier proclivities existed, but that the transition period proved unstable and the expectations for the transition away from communism were seldom met, certainly not at the speed that many desired.

Informal Institutional Persistence

In the early months of the transition, there was an overwhelming sense of joy and optimism. However, the changes undertaken were massive and few could have imagined the sacrifices that transition would require (Jaquette and Wolchick 1998; Interviews 2007-2008). A middle-aged Czech woman described the early transition period as “a weird and difficult time” where she felt both ecstatic about being free, but uncertain about what the future held. Another slightly older woman told me that there was “great enthusiasm and then disillusionment and frustration” as unemployment and the cost of living increased. The promises made were slow in coming and the consequences, particularly the precipitous economic decline across the region, were widely felt. This left many grasping for something familiar, and the old survival techniques provided that necessary sense of stability (Johnson 2001, 253). The uncertainties, economic difficulties, and general instability of the early transition period reinforced some of the features of the communist legacy and earlier socialization processes. Whereas women relied on the informal networks that often revolved around women, after communism they still looked to the close-knit groups that had developed for a sense of continuity, trust and stability (Johnson 2001; Misher and Rose 1997).

Throughout the early 1990s, states quickly dismantled and replaced the formal institutions of the communist era with western models. By the end of the decade, although some remnants remained, there was little doubt that the formal institutions

of communism were gone and that institutional structures geared toward democracy and capitalism were evident (Bunce 1999). This has been an extensive process, one that is still incomplete.⁶⁸

The communist system epitomizes Putnam's vicious cycle of governmental distrust and cynicism. This cycle continued to affect perceptions after 1989. For example, Misher and Rose (1997) found that trust in the political institutions in the region was rather low during the early transition, with most respondents to the 1994 New Democracies Barometer battery of questions evincing high levels of government skepticism. These scholars explain that communist memories "provide[d] a powerful common frame of reference" and that "[t]he consequence [of relying on past informal institutions] was massive alienation and distrust of the Communist regime and a lingering cynicism toward both political and civil institutions" (Misher and Rose 1997, 426-427).

To see just how long lasting the effects of the overall communist legacy were consider an experiment done by economists Alberto Alesina and Nicola Fuchs-Schündeln. The authors examined the case studies of East and West Germany, addressing perceptions of government responsibility and redistribution policy. East and West Germany presented a natural experiment because they were originally one country, which separated because of exogenous politicking by the Allies after WWII, rather than any internal division. Therefore, the evident large-scale variation can reasonably be attributed, at least in some part, to the differences in their governing and economic structures from 1949-1989. Almost 20 years after unification, Alesina

⁶⁸ A transition is not a linear process with a set time frame. While it is easy to indicate when the post-communist transition began, it is much more difficult to determine when it will or if it has ended.

and Fuchs-Schündeln found that there remained vast differences in expectations about the role of government between the two sides of the formerly divided country. It is especially revealing that these tendencies were apparent even among easterners currently living in what was West Germany (Alesina and Fuchs-Schündeln 2007, 1,507). My own interviews in Germany (eastern and western) support the fact that these differences are apparent among women of the two sides of the formerly divided country. Eastern women lamented to me that they felt different than their western sisters and that they felt their roles were dissimilar, even twenty years after unification. My survey of NBL women asked respondents if they felt they had different opinions about family, work and politics than women who grew up in the western half of the country. In each case over 75% of the NBL women responded that there was a difference. Given the length of time since unification, these findings emphasize the profound impact of the communist legacy, especially during the early years of transition. This is a legacy that affects all countries of the post-communist region of ECE.

Tokenism: State Mandated Female Participation

One of the factors specifically contributing to the sense of distrust among women during the communist era was the concerted effort, by the communists, to place females in political life via official state policy. The Party, in many cases mandated specified percentages of women in political bodies. At other times, the Party placed women with connections or certain pedigrees in high positions. Because there were originally few women in political posts and it was essentially a decision from above, political women often became and certainly many, not in these positions, felt these the Party women were tokens. As a Romanian women explained, “[t]hese women just

did what they were told.” An interviewee in the Czech Republic went further, explaining that the women chosen to fill communist quotas were “handpicked by the Party because they were uneducated [unintelligent], opportunistic or had psychological problems.”⁶⁹ This was not a positive image of female politicians. Those women who shunned female political participation because of this image, had few other avenues in which to find empowerment. Labor force participation could have served this function, and certainly resulted in the development of important skills that could have encouraged greater participation in the political arena, yet the political structure during communism made that realization difficult (see Chapter 6). For some women, dissident activity served as a means of empowerment. For other women, empowerment came from their position in the home and their role in the informal networks that centered in the private sphere (see next section).

Communist doctrine called for gender equality, so the Party attempted to make women more visible in the public sphere (Chylinska 1965). Policy and practice developed to place women in political positions within the Party, the governing infrastructure, and legislative bodies. The formal structure of the system also officially encouraged women to be politically active in the Party (Chylinska 1965). The Party often tied such participation to employment and educational opportunities for women.⁷⁰ Serving the Party in this capacity opened jobs to members and their families that were unavailable to less active citizens. Although the true munificence of communist officials is debatable, the means by which the Party attempted to

⁶⁹ This was the stereotype though not always the reality. As explained elsewhere, women in the ECE region were highly educated and those that chose to get involved in the Party may have done so out of a devotion to the Communist Party, or they may have seen it as a means to get ahead.

⁷⁰ Men were also “encouraged” to participate.

politicize women did display an egalitarian image before the rest of the world.

However, there is little evidence of genuine dedication to deeper inclusion of these women in general (Einhorn and Sever 2003).

Tokenism has a negative connotation. It denotes the idea that a single person or small group of people are the embodiment or representation of a larger group of people, but that they are generally symbolic rather than agents that wield any legitimate power or control. Literature has traditionally analyzed tokenism in terms of sex or race in specific sectors of the labor force. These “tokens” generally face a number of challenges as they attempt to live up to the standards of their profession and deal with discouragement from those who have historically occupied the given field. At times, some companies, organizations and agencies may seek token representatives to advance their own agendas. By having such employees, these bodies can claim to be diverse and open. These minority representatives become token when they lack internal and external credibility, when they fail to receive a long-term commitment from above that continues to advocate for their genuine participation, and when they fail to advance (Yoder 1994). This is what occurred with women in communist society. Despite the rhetoric and policies placing women in political office, there was no continuing support from the Party to see that these women were included and heard. There were also very few that actually advanced up the ranks, and those that did were the ones that strictly followed policy line.

Ironically, because the communists claimed to advance gender equality, policies that assisted women became associated with the governing system: despite the contradictions. Because political participation was heavily encouraged, and connected

with communist practice, it has a very negative association in much of post-communist Europe. This is quite evident in discussions about gender quota systems. Many men and women in the region continue to associate gender quotas with the communist system (Interviews 2007-2008). As Marin explained (1997), ideas of liberated women were associated with ideas seen in communist propaganda. Even today, many in the region view women in politics, even grassroots politics, in comparison with the female tokens of the communist era.

Many people in the ECE region did not like the former image of politically active women, but in large part, it was women themselves who rejected the idea of political participation due to this association. Women explained to me that they were then, and some are even now, weary of the association with the communist style image of political women. In fact, Anti-communist rhetoric “disabled many individuals and groups from participation in the political process, most importantly labor unions, former dissidents and women (True 2001 13). Women were skeptical that political activity would result in a positive outcome for them. They also have been suspicious that government policies aimed at women are genuinely for the best interests of women. This concern is directly related to their communist experiences as well as those of the early transition period when guarantees (primarily social) aimed at helping women were retrenched under the new democratic governments. This deterred women from political activity. The tokenism of the communist period was manifest in the Party “encouragement” of politically active women, the existence of gender quotas and the policy-like practice of nepotism.

The Triple Burden

Much has and will be written about the “double burden” of work and family placed on the women of communist Europe. There was a government encouraged, societal expectation that most women would join the labor force, and work long and often strenuous hours. At the same time, women were encouraged to have a number of children (often via financial incentive) and to care for those children as well as the household responsibilities with minimal help from their husbands. The state attempted to make both of these duties manageable, but life was challenging for many of the region’s women.⁷¹ It was rather common that a woman would work a long shift and then would stand for hours at the local market to see what goods were available that day.⁷² Women in the region also often went without or were slow to get cars, washing machines, dishwashers, and other products upon which western women relied (Siklova 1996; Einhorn 1993; Drakulic 1991).⁷³

Unlike women elsewhere in the world, women in communist Europe carried not just a double burden, but in actuality a “triple burden.” Not only were there the duties of work and home, but there was an additional responsibility that women participate in party activities. There was an expectation that citizens join the Communist Party, and even if they did not formally do so, they often had to attend party rallies, advance the party ideology, join state-monitored organizations, and make sure their children became “good communists.” Failure to participate could raise suspicions of

⁷¹ This is not unique to communist Europe. Women are quite often expected to manage the home and in many societies, these same women work full time. What is unique is the concerted effort made by the communists to place women in the workforce (“forced emancipation”) without a large-scale grassroots movement to advance women into the labor market. Additionally, was the additional expectation that women also be involved in political activities (see Chapter 6).

⁷² The lines were especially evident in the 1980s.

⁷³ The lack of household appliances is clearly also evident in the developing world. However, the Communist Bloc was tied to one of the two great powers of the 20th Century, the Soviet Union, and it very much considered itself part of the developed world.

conspiracy against the government or of having democratic sympathies; something few people wanted to do in a system where the government and police informants closely monitored citizens. One Czech woman in her 70s recalled that, “[a] lot of us had to join the Party, despite not wanting to. There was a lot of shame about that.” Although their dedication may have been lacking, many I spoke with reported that they did attend Party functions and did claim Party membership. One woman explained that to not do so could negatively affect her children’s future opportunities, so she did what was necessary.⁷⁴ Therefore, despite the apparent dislike of the Party among many, women made up large percentages of the communist parties and were often found at Party functions or meetings. Though they complied when necessary to avoid the punishment of ostracism or potential demotion at work, few women appeared to embrace the communist triple burden (Interviews 2007-2008).

After 1989, many women attempted to ease their load (Interviews 2007-2008). Family responsibilities remained, and though the second burden of work often became difficult to fulfill, the necessity for employment or a means to help support one’s family persisted. In fact, women I spoke with explained that a means to earn money after 1989 was of utmost importance, and hence not really something they felt could be eliminated (see Chapter 6).⁷⁵ Although many of the food lines disappeared

⁷⁴ Government record keeping was extensive. A child’s records would follow him or her throughout their entire life. Parents had to take this into consideration when they made choices about their political participation.

⁷⁵ In Chapter 6, I argue that gendered job displacement is a contributing cause of low female LIP in the early 1990s. The comments by those interviewed, reflect the ease of giving up the third burden. For many, giving up family responsibilities was not an option, although we do see an increase in the marrying age and the age at which women had their first child from the 1990s on. The possibility of eliminating the “burden” of work was also not really an option for many, yet work became more and more difficult for women to find. Therefore, the time that women did have, was often spent either looking for employment, or was time spent actually at a job. The elimination of many of the

after 1989, women still felt a responsibility to search out cheap goods and continued to spend significant time dealing with "...the constraints of daily life" (Heinen 1997, 587). Therefore, for many the third burden of political activity was the easiest to abandon. In many ways, women during communism were over extended, and this part of their "burden" was often the easiest to give up once given a choice. Women interviewed frequently stated, that with the desire to maintain the well-being of their families and the need to work or look for work, "we just didn't have a lot of time." Additionally, because women's participation had been a requirement of the communist state, diminishing their political activity was a means of rejecting a formal communist institution, and the communist ideology. One German woman remembered, "...we wanted a choice and didn't really have time for politics." Therefore, the triple burden was in large part rejected by eastern women after communism ended.

Communist Gender Quotas

The most formal means for creating the illusion of gender equality during the communist era was in the implementation of political gender quotas. Looking globally, quotas traditionally set aside a certain number of seats, electoral slots, or list positions for women. These are generally done through constitutional decree, electoral law, or party determinations. In general, the policy aims to bring more women into the political realm in an attempt to remove gender barriers to formal participation. Today, gender quotas garner high praise from women's rights activists who see them as a proactive policy to enhance formal female political participation and consequently, many hope, a female voice in policy. The intention is that these

communist gender-specific social programs meant that there was less help for women who tried to balance work and family, let alone additional political commitments.

women will be full political participants, not tokens with little tangible influence.⁷⁶ In fact, Dalerup (2004) comments that there is a sort of global “quota fever” driving more and more individual parties as well as governments to implement such policies.⁷⁷

Quota systems encouraged today, however, are dissimilar to the ones that were found in communist Europe. In most countries of communist Europe, with the exception of East Germany, policy dictated that women should represent at least 30% of legislative bodies. However, in the communist system, this was not necessarily an attempt to remove electoral barriers to advance the political prospects of qualified women. Rather, it was a means to provide an image of equality, and in many cases, it was established as an incentive for women to be active in the party and to continue to follow the party line. To be sure, quotas did grant political positions to a number of able women who likely would not have had such opportunities otherwise. It is also possible and plausible that holding office created a sense of efficacy and value for some of these female officials in a system where efficacy was difficult to develop. However, only minimal power was centered in the legislative bodies, and decisions were instead made at the Politburo level, where no women were present. Therefore, communist era quotas had minimal impact on women’s participation in substantive decision-making, and in essence often created political tokens rather than female politicians (Brunnbauer 2000).

⁷⁶ For more on recent implementation and effectiveness of gender quotas around the world see: Gray 2003, Baldez 2004, Wahlen 2007, and Dalerup 2004.

⁷⁷ In fact, in international efforts to assist in the democratization processes in Iraq and Afghanistan, gender quota structures have been included in their newly written constitutions (Norris 2006).

Many men and women in the region did not hold women who filled political quotas under communism in high esteem, and instead considered those female politicians of the communist era to be “greedy, self-promoting, unintelligent, party props.” Based on interview data, these were labels more often attached to female Party members of the communist era, than to male politicians. The token nature of quota placement made female politicians more visible, and left many questioning their motives and qualifications. I heard comments noting the fact that these women did not earn their positions, that they were Party props or simply ambitious women that were in political life to advance themselves. A number of women I spoke with explained that they did not want to join politics during the early transition because of this negative association. “Life was hard enough, why would I want to fight that [image] as well?” explained one respondent.

Communist gender quotas instilled an image of female political activity that was ridiculed throughout that period and beyond. A young woman in the region explained, “[w]omen who enter politics [in any form] are viewed as overly aggressive or bitchy and they have trouble advancing women’s rights or even joining with other women in politics.” She also mentioned the on-going association of female political activity with communism. Explaining that, “it is harder to get women involved” (Interviews 2007-2008). As a result, gender quotas under communism, rather than encouraging female participation, have deterred women from the political arena after 1989. Women did not want to be political cogs, nor did they often readily embrace the now ingrained, negative image of political women (Interviews 2007-2008; Jaquette and Wolchik 1998).

Nepotism and Association

Under communism women were also placed in political positions based on their past party activity, their associations, or family connections. Quotas provided a means through which to advance loyal women. However, nepotism and patronage also assured that a small group of women was promoted into ministerial posts or more influential party positions. The few women of the communist era who actually held any substantive power, reached those heights not usually on merit, but rather their relationships to those high up in the party. Clientelism and patronage were quite common for both sexes, but again because there were so few women in top-level positions, their gilded paths to power were often more visible. These women were not token in the sense that they had no power, in actuality they often had quite a bit, but they are token in the sense that they in many ways molded and presented a tangible image of what political women should be. The most famous examples are East Germany's Margot Honecker, and Elena Ceausescu of Romania who both played important roles in their husbands' administrations, and helped shape (along with the unpopular triple burden and gender quotas) the image of communist women and legacy of distrust that persisted long after these women left the scene in 1989.

Margot Honecker was an active socialist early in life. By her early 20s, she had joined what would become East Germany's Communist Party, the SED, and became romantically attached to one of the Party's rising stars. After her marriage to Erich Honecker in 1953, she found her position improved and quickly moved up the ranks of the party. Despite the fact that she received no formal education after the elementary level, in 1963 Margot Honecker became Minister of Education, a position she held until 1989. In this capacity, in 1978 she implemented a law requiring all 9th

and 10th grade students to receive military training in school. She argued that this policy would better prepare students to defend the socialist state. The policy was highly contested by many sectors of the public, but Honecker refused to reconsider and the training was implemented (Kellerhof 2007).

Mandatory military training in schools was unpopular, but it was her role in pushing the policy of forced adoption that solidified Margot Honecker as “East Germany’s most hated woman” (Kellerhof 2007).⁷⁸ She implemented a policy of forcibly taking the children of political dissidents and giving them to “loyal” families.⁷⁹ There are few records linking these children to their biological parents and due to the young age of many of the children, they have no memories of their former families. Often the children did not know they had been adopted, and when they did, they were simply told that their parents had abandoned them.⁸⁰ As of 2009, there were still some 2,000 people seeking information regarding their missing children, taken more than 20 years earlier (Kimball 2009). For the women of East Germany, and those in the rest of the Communist Bloc, Margot Honecker represented a very striking, negative image of women in power. One eastern German woman I spoke to said, with noted disdain, that Margot Honecker “was no role model!”

⁷⁸ She was often called the Purple Dragon or Blue Eminence due to her oddly tinted white hair (Kellerhof 2007).

⁷⁹ In a famous case, Jutta Gallus was caught attempting to escape East Germany with her two daughters. She was imprisoned and the girls were taken from her. Upon her release she was deported to the West without the girls. While in this case the family of the father raised the children, Jutta was not allowed contact with them. Once in the West she lobbied politicians for her children and even took to protesting at Checkpoint Charlie (the border station) everyday for several years. She also joined with others in the West in search of their own children who had likewise been taken. Gallus was finally reunited with her then teenage daughters in 1988, after six years of separation (Verth 2006).

⁸⁰ This is a practice also used in Argentina during the Dirty War, in Australia with “the missing generation” of aborigines and elsewhere.

Farther east, another powerful woman advanced to the forefront of communist politics. From the outside, Elena Ceausescu looked like a Romanian national hero and the epitome of the strong political women that communist ideology sought to produce. However, Ceausescu's national image was as a usurper, a fraud who gained positions she had not earned, encouraged pre-natal policies that "betrayed her sex," and lived lavishly while average people suffered (Tismaneanu 2003; Interviews 2007-2008). Even almost twenty years later, many I spoke with still describe her in extremely negative terms and claim that she was the puppeteer that "pulled the strings" of the Romanian dictatorship.

Elena Ceausescu was born to a peasant family in rural Romania, and never received an education beyond the 4th grade. When she was a young woman, she moved to Bucharest where she became active in the Communist Party. Later, in 1957, she married Nicolai Ceausescu and with him rose up the ranks of the Party. Once her husband gained power, Elena made it her goal to advance herself and those closest to her. She especially pushed for the promotion of women she had befriended (Tismaneanu 2003).

Ceausescu basked in her husband's power and sought adulations for herself. Citizens were required to mark her birthday with festivities; the government commissioned plays and songs to celebrate her glory. For example, on one birthday she was described by journalist Ilie Purcaris as, "[t]he woman who today, side by side with the man at the country's helm, is taking upon her shoulders – fragile as any woman's shoulders but strong and unswerving through strong and un wavering beliefs – overwhelming missions and responsibilities, securing the nation with a

devotion that none of our women has attained before” (Ibid, 219). In another instance, a Party official read the following statement to the crowds of “admirers:” ““The entire country highly appreciates the outstanding activity you carry out in the fields of science and technology... Your valuable work – crowned by some of the most prestigious scientific, cultural and educational institutions from around the world – represents, much to the pride of all our people, a greatly important contribution to ensure the flourishing of the nation...” (Ibid, 214). The image painted was outwardly glowing.

However, little of the visible adulation of Elena was genuine affection on the part of the citizenry. In fact, Elena represented a visible hypocrisy. The communists claimed to value education and to seek gender equality. Yet, here was a woman who received rewards for her scientific endeavors, which were completely contrived (Fisher 1998). For example, she was awarded scientific degrees and claimed authorship of scientific articles and findings despite having done none of the work. This contradiction was not lost on the citizenry (Interviews 2007-2008).

In particular, many women felt betrayed by Elena, feeling that she was a traitor to her sex. One woman I spoke with in Bucharest called her a “witch.” Another woman in Cluj-Napoca described Elena Ceausescu as “evil.” The pre-natal policies enacted in her husband’s administration were ones that she championed and for which many still credit her with articulating and advancing. The intrusive nature of these policies, which required women to have quarterly gynecological exams at their places of employment, breached the sacred private sphere and led to an even greater distrust

among Romanian women; of the state, women in politics and other people in general.⁸¹

Research suggests that she was not a true role model to Romanian women under communism, and in fact, the image of womanhood and particularly women in political life that she represented was quite negative. One woman in Bucharest stated emphatically, “Elena was not a woman, but an institution!” The hatred for her had the potential to unify women against her and the policies that she helped implement. Yet, dissent was not much of an option during the harsh Ceausescu regime, and ironically the negative image of politically active woman that Elena created, prevented this from happening after her death. This did not happen, in many ways due to a very real fear that the women who mobilized as women against her policies, would become associated with her.

After Elena Ceausescu’s death in 1989, researchers and journalists addressed this “Elena Effect” which greatly skewed the image of strong women (Oprica 2008). The Elena Effect is credited with deterring many Romanian women from seeking political office, or even less formal political activities (LIP), during the initial transition years. An interviewee in Cluj-Napoca explained, “Elena provided a negative role model and served as a scapegoat, discouraging women from participation.” Another young Romanian woman said of earlier generations of women, “[t]hey didn’t have a model, but did see what wasn’t working (Elena) yet still they weren’t able to produce [their] own model.” Men did not want to deal with women who were ambitious, and women did not want to be associated with the negative image of Elena and other political

⁸¹ This is hauntingly depicted in the 2007 Romanian film *4 Luni, 3 Saptamini, 2 Zile* (4 Months, 3 Weeks, 2 Days) directed by Cristian Mungiu. The film won the acclaimed *Palm d’Or* at the Cannes Film Festival that year.

women. The Elena effect was especially significant during the early transition, though it remains an obstacle for Romanian woman in political life today. One woman I spoke with, who recently found employment in a government Ministry, explained that to this day, the few politically active women in the country, such as herself, must often contend with the negative image of Elena. This was an obstacle she faced in her own career and a comparison that even this successful woman admitted she “ran from” for many years.

Persistent Negative Image of Political Women

From the demands of the triple burden, the implementation of symbolic gender quotas, and the nepotistic practice of putting wives and sisters in important party positions, the communists created a formalized female tokenism and a corresponding skepticism of policies and practices claiming to advance women.⁸² For forty years under communism, policies sought to place a number of women in political life in Eastern and Central Europe. Because officials mandated these policies from above, and were often manipulated by and associated with the communist party, they altered the region’s image of the visible, politically active woman. Marin (1997) asserted that political women in the communist era were more hated by the public and were actually considered more dangerous. Due to their numbers, they were also more noticed. The image associated with Honecker, Ceausescu and other women in political life affected women’s perceptions of political participation, their trust in government, and their willingness to become involved once given the choice. In many

⁸² It is interesting to note that there is a difference in perception about gender quotas and those sorts of policies that attempted to put women in office or in certain jobs and the social programs that women became reliant upon. Women I spoke with looked very negatively on the placement policies, yet saw the social programs as more of an obligation of the state. Childcare for example, was something that the state should provide for mothers. Even today, there is a sense that the state should include those types of programs.

ways, men also reacted to the image of political women of the communist era. However, while sexist attitudes have been an additional barrier to female participation, it would be a misinterpretation to suggest that women failed to participate politically during the transition due to sexism against women. In large part, women made these determinations for themselves based on their experiences under communism and during the early transition.

Networks & Trust

As mentioned, the Communist Party attempted to monitor and control almost every aspect of daily life. The result was a genuine fear of the state and its Party apparatus that could easily fire someone without cause or flag someone's educational record that would preclude certain employment opportunities. The state was able to accomplish this bureaucratic feat by utilizing, via incentive and threat, average citizens. For example, officials estimate that as many as 500,000 East German citizens were informants for the Stasi (Koehler 2000, 9). This situation meant there was very little trust among the general population.

The only area where there was opportunity for personal expression, individuality and security was the private sphere: and even that was not always beyond the reach of state influence. True explained that [b]ecause possibilities of exercising influence in an outward direction – in the public sphere – no longer existed, people diverted more of their energy in the direction of the least resistance, that is, in the private sphere” (2003, 34). In an attempt to protect themselves citizens in communist Europe often rallied around the private sphere, creating very small groups that they relied upon. Women were often at the center of these networks “[b]ecause women were traditionally responsible for the private sphere they commanded both the

representation of this sphere and the politics within it” (True 2003, 50). Small, close-knit networks of the communist era represent a more informal institutional practice of communism, one that continued into and was reinforced during the transition period. An older woman in Prague echoed other comments I heard, explaining that, “close networks of trust were, and to many remain, important.” Whereas once these networks were a means of getting material items or preventing spying by the many paid informants, after 1989 for women of the region in particular, they were an arena of familiarity, comfort and stability.

Networks as Survival Strategies

Networks during communist times were a means to get goods, to remain secure and to build small social communities (Heinen 1997; Howard 2003). These networks functioned as “...an atomized society, one in which trust [was] confined to small local pockets of interaction” (Sapsford and Abbott 2006, 62). Such social strategies were apparent across the region as Cermáková pointed out, “[o]ver the years of communist rule, social structures underwent a certain degree of homogenization” (1995, 75).

Howard (2003) explains that there were two types of networks that developed out of the communist institutional structure. There were what Howard refers to as *family networks*, comprised of trusted family members and very close friends. Given that the state controlled much of the public lives of its citizens, private relations became especially important, as it is only people in those networks that can be trusted. One woman recalled that, “[l]ittle routines were very helpful in former times.” People saw “...the family as a refuge...as the only space permitting the development of personal initiative and autonomy” (Heinen 1997, 579). The other type of association was

opportunistic or *service networks* (Howard 2003). These developed out of material want and economic scarcity. Given the existence of long lines (especially during the 1980s) and limited goods, it was always helpful to have a network of people from whom you could get services or special consideration. If a grocery clerk was part of your service network, he might keep some butter or sugar off the shelves for you to purchase without having to wait in line and potentially go without. Clearly, there were times when the two types of networks overlapped (Howard 2003, 28). It is also important to point out that there were times where personal networks might mobilize, such as in times of dissent, though they always remained rather insular.

Considering the threat that strangers and potential spies played in communist times, it is not surprising that people in the region remain rather skeptical of those they do not know. In fact, the distrust runs so deep that I was told more than once, that these many years later I was only being given an interview due to references from contacts I had previously made. As I was told by a Czech interviewee, “[t]here is a long tradition of keeping the private, private.” People continue to rely on these close networks and maintain distance from those that are not personally connected.

There is a strong understanding throughout the region that people mind their own business; there is a legacy of taking care of one’s own (Nash 2006). An American scholar I interviewed who lived in Prague during the early 1990s explained a situation in which she witnessed a young woman who was standing too close to a streetcar when it passed.⁸³ The woman’s backpack got caught on a rod on the tram, which

⁸³ This woman moved to Prague early on during the transition. Although she did not experience the Velvet Revolution, she did witness first hand what the city looked like during the 1990s. She was a reporter at that time, paying particular attention to what was happening in the city. She was instrumental in establishing the Prague Post and has now lived in Prague for twenty years.

propelled the young woman off the ground, spun her around, and threw her to the sidewalk. What so startled the professor I spoke with was that the streetcar did not stop, nor did anyone on the crowded street help the dying woman. When she relayed the story to her Czech friends, they were sad for the young woman who died, but did not find it odd that no one stopped to offer assistance. In a society that monitored the activities of its citizens, even the simple act of stopping to help an injured person could lead to unwanted attention or suspicion. Citizens avoided any potential interaction with government officials, because it could lead to greater awareness of a person's daily activities, a concern that carried over from communist times.

A lack of trust and a heavy reliance on family networks in particular, operated as a survival technique for citizens in the entire region. This was true throughout the communist period, but became more significant at certain times, such as instances of government crackdown. For example, following the early successes of the Polish Solidarity movement, the government sought to end the union's momentum and instituted curfews and several new restrictions on the movements and communications of the Polish citizenry. After Poland was placed under Martial Law in 1981, citizens had to be even more careful about whom they talked with and where they went. The protection of family networks, as in any time of crisis, dissent or war, therefore, was extremely important. A middle-aged woman I spoke with in Poland acknowledged that "[i]n Poland, people think of self and family, not of common good. [This] comes from communism" This was also quite evident in Romania. Of all the countries in communist Europe, attempts by the Romanian government to breach the private sphere and control the interactions between individuals was perhaps the

most aggressive. This meant that family and service networks were, by necessity, especially close and guarded. This informal institution, networks, did not disappear when the Berlin Wall fell, and became even more ingrained and took on slightly different roles during the uncertainties of the early transition period. People, especially women, maintained this familiar and “safe” informal institutional practice.

Family, Women and the Private Sphere

Family, and to a significant degree service networks, centered on the private sphere and hence around the lives of women (Day 1999). Women often determined who was in the network and how it would function. The special function of the private sphere as one of the few areas somewhat guarded from state interference, further heightened women’s roles in the home and family. Therefore during and after communism, family and service networks were especially relevant for the region’s women. Women were in charge of taking care of the family including children, parents, and in-laws. The private sphere was the only place where people could retain their identities and where women could protect and educate their children and families (Marin 1997). One women interviewed explained, “the role of mother creates stability – women keep things together” Additionally, women did almost all of the household chores, including the shopping. It was women who had to find the means to get what was left of butter at the market, or who had to find shirts and pants for their family members to wear. Women were the ones that got medicine for their children’s maladies and took the elderly to their doctor’s appointments. Therefore, women were crucial, and often the primary actors within both family and service networks (Interview 2007-2008; Day 1999).

The importance of networks, and women's position within them, particularly older women, was expounded by the living arrangements of communist times. Not only did many families of East and Central Europe retain close ties to their families, but they also often resided under a single roof. This was not always simply a cultural disposition to retain a multi-generational home, but rather an economic necessity given the dearth of homes and apartments.⁸⁴ Children would wait years to get their own apartments, and more often than not would stay at home or move in with in-laws. It was not uncommon to have three generations sharing a two or three bedroom apartment (Drakulic 1991). This closeness and connectedness of families during this home, further acted to maintain women's position within the private sphere and the networks that came to characterize social interaction during the communist era.

Network Persistence

The need for service networks has diminished somewhat with the introduction of liberal capitalism and the eventual influx of goods, although past patterns of bartering and bribery continue to some degree in the new markets (Interviews 2007-2008).

Although service networks have lost some importance, there remains a comfort with the family networks and a general distrust of those outside one's social group. Having developed a means of economic and political security during communism, the family networks in particular evolved into an area of stability during the uncertain times of the early transition. "That is how you are trained in this part of the world," Drakulic wrote. "[N]ot to believe that change is possible. You are trained to fear change, so

⁸⁴ In most cases, the state controlled the sale of homes or apartments. In some cases, such as Romania, apartments were given to families at minimal cost, but there was often a very long wait, sometimes many years for an apartment. Families would often trade in one size apartment for another, always monitored by the state apparatus. Drakulic (1991) explains that in many instances, apartments would be shared to provide room for another family, often one chosen by the state, and kitchens and bathrooms would be shared.

that when change eventually begins to take place, you are suspicious, afraid because every change you ever experienced was always for the worse” (1991, xiii). The fear that communist governance had instilled in the population did not simply disappear in 1989; while state intrusion and heavy-handedness disappeared new anxieties, particularly economic anxieties set in. As a Romanian woman recalled, “under communism the path was dictated and it was hard to divert from that path. When things opened up, it was hard to know which way to go.” Obviously, women’s paths were not as determined as this woman seems to indicate. However, her point that there was at least an illusion of stability, (guarantees of employment, housing, childcare options) existed. With this structural instability, old survival tactics were employed to deal with the new situation. The strength of the family network was one such strategy that remained and took on new functions during the transition.

Theory:

The reaction of women in the region follows theoretical reasoning. Specifically, theory suggests that institutions and institutional patterns matter. Even when formal institutions, such as the policy of placing women in political positions, disappeared, the reaction to the practice can continue or evolve under new structural arrangements. On the other hand, despite the alteration, and in this case rejection of formal institutional policies, people (women in this case) tend to hold onto informal institutional practices, such as the discussed family networks, to guide them through uncertain times. Here I look at the concept of institutions and explore the theoretical underpinnings of the argument presented in this chapter.

Institutions

Institutions are formal and informal structuring devices that direct and constrain action. They are the rules and boundaries that dictate proper behavior (Helmke and Levitsky 2004; Johnson 2001; Lichbach and Zuckerman 1997). In the formal sense, institutions might be the official ministries of government, electoral systems, or the programs of a welfare state. These guidelines and structures are clearly written down and spelled out, though they may not always function effectively. Informal institutions are less official practices that engrain and develop over time. These are "... socially shared rules, usually unwritten, that are created, communicated, and enforced outside of officially sanctioned channels" (Helmke and Levitsky 2004, 727). They include an expectation of certain actions and responses. Often, informal institutions will develop to bolster formal institutions for enhanced effectiveness.⁸⁵ In some cases, informal institutions might become especially beneficial and develop into a more formal practice. In authoritarian systems or in cases where state action is ineffective, informal institutions often develop as a substitute for governing institutions or as an effort to compete against formal systems (Helmke and Levitsky 2004, 228-229). The unofficial, yet consistent, activities of citizens in communist Europe, such as grafting at work or bribery of officials fall within this classification.

In exploring informal institutions, it is important to distinguish them from inconsistent behaviors in reaction to the inefficiencies of weak states. Informal institutions are also different from the closely related concept of cultural norms. In this instance, Helmke and Levitsky point out that an informal institution relies on "shared expectations," whereas cultural norms center on "shared values" (2004, 728).

⁸⁵ For example, the informal institution of seniority in the US Senate operates to more effectively organize the activities of that formal body.

Finally, North (1990) advises focusing on the “rules” as opposed to the “players” of the game to maintain a distinction between informal institutional practices and informal organizations. Although all institutions are somewhat resilient to change, informal institutions, especially substitutive ones that are reactionary in nature, are especially resistant, even in instances when the formal institutions they are reacting to are altered (Helmke and Levitsky 2004).

Early Life Socialization

Because the legacy of distrust, and the formal and informal institutions associated with it, develop from experience through a process of socialization and learning, it is important to understand something about the learning process. In a number of academic disciplines, scholars have sought to understand social learning. Research has found that childhood experiences are important indicators for how we act as adults. Children develop values and learn norms and ideas early in life. These views are reinforced as we mature (Hayward and Gorman 2005; Denzin 2010 [1977]).

It has been determined that political activity and awareness at a young age fosters later involvement. Research also shows that we often take on the values of our parents and that to some extent their experiences influence us as well (Sears and Valentino 1997; Orum *et al* 1974). In fact, studies in the United States have long shown that children often develop the same political leanings as their parents. Early socialization is not just important because it influences our political outlook, but also because it is rather consistent and inflexible. As Pierson explains, “[o]nce established, basic outlooks on politics, ranging from ideologies to understandings of particular aspects of governments or orientations toward political groups or parties, are generally tenacious. They are path dependent” (2000, 260). It is not simply about how

people self-categorize their ideological position, but also about how they feel about government. In this regard, Mishler and Rose present a lifetime learning model in which trust in government develops at an early age and is “reinforced or challenged by subsequent experiences” (Mishler and Rose 1997, 434). Our overall political worldview, therefore, forms early and stays relatively stable throughout the life cycle.

While new rules and structures can rather quickly eliminate formal institutions in times of change, the coping norms that we develop in childhood often remain with us. Similarly, the informal institutions followed by our parents, are relevant in our lives as well. For forty years, the communist system of Eastern and Central Europe played a central role in the political socialization of those populations.

Theory also suggests that there is a connection between legacy and political participation or civic involvement. Political Scientist Robert Putnam (1993) famously explored civic participation and faith in government as they relate to government effectiveness during a time of regional governmental restructuring in Italy.⁸⁶ Putnam explained that civic participation fosters norms of reciprocity and trust resulting in a self-reinforcing equilibrium or virtuous cycle. The result of such a cycle is a wealth of social capital and efficacy in self and in government that results in high levels of government effectiveness. A legacy of positive interaction has long-ranging effects and can sustain citizens through difficult times. Putnam describes this in Northern Italy where citizens tend to be politically active and their regional governments tend to be responsive. On the other hand, Putnam explains that the opposite occurred in Southern Italy where a lack of participation correlates with deepening norms of

⁸⁶ In *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (2000), he went on to investigate this relationship between civic engagement and government responsiveness in the United States.

distrust and corruption, creating a vicious cycle of mistrust. Given this situation in Southern Italy, citizens have developed survival techniques and have come to rely in large part on informal institutions, namely the Mafia, for needs that the government is not fulfilling. A vicious cycle can be particularly difficult to bring to an end despite changes in formal institutions. However, over time, new norms and increased civic participation can turn a vicious into a virtuous cycle.

Putnam's observations in Southern Italy are relevant to an examination of female political participation in post-communist Europe. After 40 years of authoritarian and highly invasive governance, a vicious cycle of distrust evolved. Despite changes to the formal structures of the state and the economy, a lack of trust remained, and the survival strategies citizens relied upon through the era of communist rule persisted with some alteration. During the initial transitions period, this link between civic-ness or political participation and the common good was not apparent. This is perhaps most evident when Drakulic (1991) described the lack of good will and "ownership" of common space that characterized the communist era. People, in general, did not feel a need to keep their streets and parks clean and with the consequences of helping potentially detrimental, little was done.

Conclusion:

Utilizing tokenism (the result of formal institutional practices) and networks (an informal institution); I have argued that both formal and informal institutions created a legacy of fear and distrust after communism that uniquely effected the region's women and their willingness to take part in low intensity political participation. The formal institutions and structures associated with communism were quickly eliminated, with little thought to the sometimes beneficial structure they provided.

This was especially the case with regard to gender quotas and political equality policies that contributed to female tokenism.⁸⁷ These policies resulted in suspicion during the communist era, creating an image of female political activity that was extremely negative. The result was a continued rejection of that image after 1989 and a persistent distrust of the state and in particular state policies claiming to benefit women as a group. Not wanting to be associated with this image, nor feeling trustful that those in power would work to advance their concerns, in general women in the region have abstained from LIP.

On the other hand, a number of informal institutions, the ways in which the average citizens (specifically women) conducted their daily lives, their coping strategies and methods of survival, persisted for many women after communism, though taking on new purpose.⁸⁸ Networks evolved in part, due to fear of the state and of other citizens. The networks carried over into the post-communist era as some of the fear experienced earlier did not automatically disappear. Also, for women who came to dominate these networks, after communism they altered some in purpose to provide stability and control over the lives of women and their children during uncertain times. This internalized inward-looking proclivity aspect of the communist legacy, also contributes to a lack of desire by women in the region to be politically active

⁸⁷ Some aspects of female tokenism, specifically more informal practices of nepotism and patronage, have also persisted, though generally to bolster men in politics rather than women. However, formal institutions were quickly eliminated.

⁸⁸ For example, we know that informal institutional practices such as bartering and bribery developed in large part to deal with the shortage economy of communism are still quite acceptable today.

Chapter V Institutionalized Women's Movements

Introduction:

In the spring of 2008, I sat in Dana Nemcova's Prague apartment talking about her experiences living under communism. This was the same apartment that Dana had shared with her husband and their seven children. Mrs. Nemcova was one of a group of Czech and Slovak women who joined the dissident movement of the 1970s and 1980s.⁸⁹ She was a member of VONS, a signatory of Charter 77, and she served as a spokesperson for the Charter 77 organization. Mrs. Nemcova also paid heavily for her participation with jail time, the demotion of her children's educational opportunities, and intensive interrogation. Despite the obstacles, she continued to support the Czechoslovakian dissident movement. Given her activist experience, I wondered why she and women like her did not organize in greater numbers, as citizens but particularly *as women*, to promote their interests during the initial transition away from communism. As she explained, under the old system there was no women's movement and no thought of women's rights. "It didn't really cross our minds," she said. "We didn't think in terms of gender, we thought in terms of us against them (the state)." Women across the post-communist region echoed these comments (Interviews 2008). Yet once regime change came, and the unifying force of state oppression diminished, few women mobilized as citizens and even fewer as women.

One known means of facilitating female political participation is through forums that instill female efficacy and empowerment. A women's movement is one the

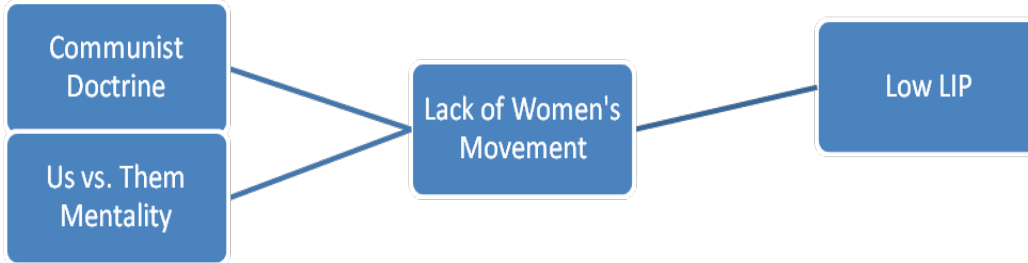
⁸⁹ Her incarceration and interrogation while she was pregnant was included in one of the official documents of Charter 77, which were submitted to the government as the group attempted to point out the injustices of the communist system (Skilling 1982).

greatest creators of female efficacy and therefore can serve as a mechanism for political participation. However, due to the very structure of communist governance, few ECE countries saw the development of such a movement, or even the women's groups that make up a movement, before 1989. Without this basis, fewer women were politically active than might have been had a women's movement been in place to provide an institutional basis for female participation after communism.

The dramatic changes resulting from the end of communism created opportunity for the development of new political and economic structures and for the empowerment of the average citizen. As mentioned, however, even with new freedoms and opportunities after 1989 women did not act in large numbers to fill the political space. In this chapter, I argue that an important component of low LIP during the early transition years (along with the communist legacy and gendered job displacement) was the fragility of a women's movement in much of the region. Where mobilization did occur under communism, primarily in the form of dissident organizations, issues pertinent to women were not specifically addressed. A women's movement could have provided women the institutionalized structure from which to mobilize, a venue for the airing of grievances and an avenue for gender-based efficacy. Without such an organization, there was little direction and positive institutional memory around which women could coalesce.⁹⁰ Therefore, the lack of or weakness of an institutionalized women's movement in most countries in the region

⁹⁰ As explained in Chapter 1, a women's movement is often made up of a number of women's groups or organizations that pool and network together to eventually unify around a couple of significant issues and become a women's movement. Such a movement is institutionalized when it has existed for a period of time so that people give it some legitimacy and expect it to persist into the future. It also generally means that a degree of professionalization among leaders in the movement and their workers occurs.

meant there were few means of mobilizing women and enhancing their efficacy that would have encouraged greater female LIP after communism.⁹¹



In addressing the lack of an institutionalized women’s movement in three of my cases (the Czech Republic, Poland and Romania), I contend that an *us-versus-them* mentality against the state resulted, which bridged gender differences unifying men and women.⁹² Additionally, I argue that communist gender dictates often obscured genuine gender concerns and instead created a negative association, first with women’s rights and bourgeoisie attitudes and then with such rights and communist governance. Essentially, *communist doctrine* claimed to have answered the so-called “women’s question,” removing gender issue space and influencing the ability for a women’s movement to develop.

Case Studies:

	Gendered Communist Legacy	<i>Institutionalized Women’s Movement During Communist Era</i>	Level of Female LIP During Early Transition Period
Czech Republic	Yes	No	Moderate
GDR	Yes	Yes	High
Poland	Yes	No	Low
Romania	Yes	No	Low

⁹¹ One other way of doing so is via labor force participation. However, the transition away from authoritarianism resulted in steep cuts in jobs traditionally held by women, thus also limiting the role of labor force participation for the empowerment of women (see Chapter 6).

⁹² For a larger discussion of “institutions” see Chapter 4 of this manuscript. Briefly, here the term “institutionalized” refers to a set of either formal or informal acknowledged rules and expectations that constrain action. An institutionalized women’s movement would mean that there was some form of accepted organization and structure.

Of the four cases under investigation, East Germany is unusual in that women organized along gender lines in the later years of the GDR. In the 1980s, a small-scale women's movement encompassed a number of groups, which focused specifically on the position of women in society (Ferree 1994). The existence of the East German women's movement correlates with higher LIP among GDR women after 1989. The previous existence of a women's movement, as will be evidenced toward the end of this chapter, allowed for a continuity of female leaders and though the groups took different forms after communism, women previously involved continued to join together to face some of the challenges of the post-communist transition.⁹³

In Poland and the Czech Republic, and to a much lesser degree Romania, women joined dissident organizations and fought alongside men to advance human rights. However, there was little in the three countries that classified as a stable or institutionalized women's movement. In examining the NBL, it is clear that the country exhibited characteristics of both the communist legacy of distrust (Chapter 4) and certainly gendered job displacement (Chapter 6). However, I argue here that due to the development and growing institutionalization of a women's movement in the GDR during the 1980s, the country's women had a basis upon which to organize and mobilize as women during and after 1989. This accounts for the fact that women of the NBL displayed markedly higher rates of female LIP than their neighbors.

In the following sections, I provide a definition of what constitutes a women's movement. I also provide the theoretical underpinnings relating the existence of a

⁹³ This refers to the fact that the West and East German women's movements had some difficulty in finding common ground and determining how they might best operate to meet their desired goals. The NBL women's movement is addressed later in this chapter.

woman's movement to female political participation. I then explore the factors, specifically the us-versus-them mentality and communist doctrine, which hindered the development of such a movement in Czechoslovakia, Romanian and Poland. From there, I address the GDR's women's movement; the positive linkages between such a movement and female LIP are evident. In the end, I conclude that the absence or presence of a women's movement is a strong factor for explaining female LIP in post-communist Europe after 1989.⁹⁴

Lack of Women's Movements in Communist Europe

Defining a Women's Movement

A social movement, be it for the advancement of women or other segments of society, is one of those things that is often known when seen, but difficult to define. Dalerup describes a social movement as "conscious, collective activity to promote social change, with some degree of organization and with the commitment and active participation of members or activities as its main resource" (Dalerup 1986, 218).

Today, most still examine the women's movement as a sub-category of social movements (Beckwith 2005; Ray and Kertweg 1999). Ray and Kertweg, for example, broadly define a woman's movement as "...the range of activities in which women engage to better the circumstances of their lives" (1999, 48). The key components of a women's movement include a wide network, group activities that seek to protect or promote the position of women, and the ability to mobilize groups and members around issue areas. McBride and Mazur, draw a more narrow classification, describing a women's movement as "...collective action by women organizing

⁹⁴ As will be seen in Chapter 6, though women's LIP in the Czech Republic was affected by the lack of a women's movement during the communist era, the minimal gendered job displacement experienced in the country during the initial transition mediated this cause.

explicitly as women presenting claims in public life based on gendered identities as women” (McBride and Mazur 2010, 226).

In some cases, the terms “women’s movement” and “feminist movement” are interchangeable. However, it is best to address a feminist movement as one type of women’s movement because the two concepts do not necessarily denote the same thing (Beckwith 2005). McBride and Mazur claim that a feminist movement has the “goal of changing the position of women in society and politics.” Actors in it seek “to challenge and change women’s subordination to men” and seek to “challenge and change the structures of gender-based hierarchies” (McBride and Mazur 2010, 236). On the other hand, a woman’s movement is a situation where women join as women to improve their lives and give voice to their concerns (McBride and Mazur 2010; Ray and Kertweg 1999). It is the more encompassing term, “women’s movement” that is the focus here.

I rely on McBride and Mazur’s definition of gendered discourse by women representing women throughout this chapter because it is narrow enough to capture activity that is specifically gendered with a goal beyond simply gathering as women, yet broad enough to include potential cultural differences. To uncover evidence of a women’s movement in the four case countries, I rely on the indicators provided in McBride and Mazur’s classification. When analyzing discourse they state that it must show “identity with women as a group,” in terms that are “clearly and overtly gendered,” and on the terms of “women representing women as women.” They further define collective activities as formal and informal organizations apart from the state that espouse this gendered discourse. Participation in the movement must also be

voluntary and absent external coercion (McBride and Mazur 2010). If such evidence is found, the level of adherence and general recognition of legitimacy of such discourse gives an indication of strength and institutionalization.

East European Regional Experience

During the communist era, there was no enduring (institutionalized) movement separate from the state, with the exception of the GDR, that actively mobilized women to advance their concerns as women. While pockets of women in various countries attempted to organize as women, nothing became engrained. For example, in the early 1960s women in Czechoslovakia mobilized briefly to end, what some considered, an over-reliance on overnight nurseries. In the same decade in Romania women wrote letters to protest Ceausescu's abortion ban. These had the potential to develop into organizations and even to lead to a women's movement. However, these did not cause great enough attention to supersede the threat of state retaliation or the focus on issue of human (rather than women's) rights to develop into a wider women's movement. In both of these cases, much of the gendered opposition was done via very loosely organized letter writing, with no real organization of women that could have led to a greater realization of joint female concerns. In the end, these and other small instances were short lived and women returned to their daily activities.

There were some organizations of women that claimed to represent women's concerns, however these were controlled by the state and therefore would not classify as part of a women's movement (see next section). With few exceptions, the political, economic and social structures of East European countries under communism did not foster the development of mobilizing networks. Without an institutionalized women's

movement, many of the women of Eastern and Central Europe were without a venue for their gendered concerns. There were few resources dedicated solely to the advancement of women's issues, nor was there a progression of female leaders who advocated for women over time (Jacquette and Wolchick 1998). Therefore, a crucial entity of female efficacy creation was missing in many countries of the region prior to the transition.

Studies have shown that it is easier to redefine the mission of an organization or movement rather than to create a new one (Keohane 1984). In post-communist Europe, the general lack of a women's movement meant there was no institutional structure in place that could have adapted to women's post-1989 challenges. Additionally, there was a lack of experience fighting for gender rights and for female equality. This makes sense from a historical institutionalist lens (see Chapter 1). As people develop organizations with a specific goal and purpose in mind, they chose an initial path and structure. This creates the framework upon which an organization or broader movement exists. As new issues, concerns and goals arise, this institutional framework becomes a reference point for additional choices and paths. If it is to be persistent, the building blocks must be sturdy, yet flexible enough to adapt to changing situations. There were likely those who were inclined to stand up for greater attention to gender concerns in the early transition years, but no such venue to air their gendered grievances existed, nor were the institutions in place that could have harnessed female potential at a pivotal time. A Polish woman who has been involved in one of the early, now defunct, women's organizations in the early 1990s, lamented to me the lack of impact her group and others had. She explained that they simply did

not have enough confidence that they could make a difference or enough experience organizing “from which to grow” (Interviews 2007-2008).

Many of the rights granted communist women, such as employment and social protection, were “given” from above (O’Connor 1993; Hašková 2005). The historical lack of fighting for equality from below meant that women in the post-communist transition did not have many past experiences to draw upon, nor perhaps the inclination to think that such rights and guarantees would be rescinded after 1989 (Offe 1997; Interviews 2007-2008). The result contributes to the low levels of female LIP in much of the ECE region. Hašková and Křížková explain that, “[i]n the first half of the 1990s, ... women’s civic groups lacked experience, expertise, wider recognition, and contact with state bodies, politicians and other social actors” (2008, 156). Part of the problem was simply a lack of organizational skills, but accompanying that, many I spoke with indicated that they just did not feel like they knew what they were doing and many quickly came to think that their actions were not making a significant difference. As female friendly social policies retrenched during the initial transitions period, women I spoke with, said it was more difficult to think that mobilization made an impact (Interviews 2007-2008).

With the exception of East Germany, there is no evidence to suggest that an institutionalized woman’s movement existed during the communist era in Central and Eastern Europe. Though, as elsewhere in Europe and North America, women’s movements were developing in the ECE region before World War II, the introduction of communism halted those efforts and dismantled remnants of their existence for forty years. The communists prevented the development of new women’s movements

through the manipulation of communist doctrine and by way of the intrusive nature of communist governance that united citizens against the State, hence diminishing social cleavages, such as gender, that might have led to the creation of women's movements and a corresponding inclination for political participation after 1989.

Theoretical Implications of a Women's Movement:

A women's movement can have direct implications for women's political participation. Theory based on research conducted around the world, suggests that the existence of a women's movement is often linked to the desire of women to be politically active, especially in democratic societies. Nelson and Chowdhury (1994) explain that women's organizations often determine the degree to which women participate in political life. After all, a women's movement is one means by which to fill the space between the home and the government – sometimes called the realm of civil society (Eihorn and Sever 2003). In fact Waylen (2007) argues that a women's movement (coalition) is specifically needed to advance women's issues during a transition period. She explains, “[i]t is impossible to envisage positive gender outcomes without the efforts of an organized women's movement” (Waylen 2007, 523). This occurs because women's organizations provide a foundation for mobilization. They also provide valuable financial and social resources as well as female leadership. Women's organizations also actively pursue the political engagement of women, which studies indicate has been rather successful. For example, in her investigation of women's participation in Ghana, Fallon (2003) discovered that when members of a women's organization contacted women those women were much more likely to vote than when no contact was made. Studies have

also found that women, more than men, need to be recruited and asked for their participation (Ibid). A women's movement can serve this function.

The Value of a Woman's Movement

During the later part of the 21st century, women in countries around the world pushed to have their voices heard in times of transition. In perceived conservative countries like Spain and South Korea, women fought to make changes that would better their newly democratic lives.⁹⁵ Out of these struggles came milestone legislation promoting equal wages, fighting gender discrimination, and assuring representation through gender quotas. Around the world, women who fought for these changes saw democratization as an opportunity for greater gender equality (Baldez 2003, Rakowski 2003).

Specifically examining the situation in Latin America, Baldez (2003) determined that one of the significant reasons women rose up during Latin America's Third Wave transitions, was because prior to regime change, an active and institutionalized women's movement existed. A degree of institutionalization was in place that could be built upon and mobilized when opportunities presented. Therefore, when space opened during the times of political transitions in the region, it was a matter of mobilizing the various women's organizations to push for greater change. What is particularly remarkable is that in many of these cases, women did not conform to North American and Western European feminist ideas rather they organized on their own terms – often as mothers. In South America women's organizations pushed for enhanced rights and protections, yet they did so in a way that respected the idea of

⁹⁵ The terms conservative and traditional are used to denote the idea that these countries are thought to be more religiously grounded or socially conservative. Countries like South Korea and Spain are not generally places where one might expect to see women's advancement as a social or political ideal.

womanhood from their perspective. Hence traditional values were not a barrier to these women (Baldez 2004; Gray 2003).

A women's movement provides a known venue for the airing of grievances. With an established women's movement, generally encompassing a number of women's organizations, there is an avenue for women's concerns. Women know of various groups that specifically seek to address issues relevant to the female population, which they can seek out for assistance. This helps alleviate feelings of isolation and expands the voice and concerns of women beyond the private sphere. The institutionalization of the movement, its existence and organization, means that the venue is known and legitimate. It also provides a collection of people that can be mobilized when necessary.

The resources, both financial and intellectual, that a women's movement gathers are also significant. Intellectual resources, such as experience organizing, advocating and pushing governments to change can be learned when one is part of such a movement. Women gain knowledge of how to mobilize as women and for women, as well as the tactics that are most effective. This experience is invaluable during times of upheaval or when opportunity structures change and greater activity is possible. Resources also include internal networks of women that provide able bodies to mobilize and spread communications. Additionally, international network resources allow women's organizations to learn from groups around the world, to disseminate information abroad, and to solicit foreign financial aid for programs and other activities. The existence of a women's movement can provide these resources and hence increase female participation (Wahlen 2000; Waylen 2007a). The absence of

the movement negatively affects female efficacy and can, and in many cases did, lead to limited overall female political participation and low LIP.

Beyond providing institutionalization and resources, developing skills is also a means of efficacy creation for women. This is perhaps especially the case in more traditional societies where women might not learn organizational or leadership skills that can prove beneficial in other areas of their lives. The efficacy creating potential provided by a women's movement may lead to continuing participation with organizations of women, but also in the public realm in general. Research suggests that activists are more likely to stay involved throughout their lifetime (Jaquette 1994). There is a clear correlation between women who participate in the organizations that make up the women's movement and female political participation at the grassroots. For example, Jaquette discovered researching in Latin America that, "[w]omen in movements often speak of how their participation has changed their lives, expanded their awareness of the unjust structures of society, and given them new self-esteem – even when their involvement brings them into conflict with husbands, children, and other family members" (Jaquette 1994, 225).

“Us versus Them”

Under an oppressive regime, people often see the joint suffering inflicted by the state. In communist Europe, many citizens knew that they and those around them were mistreated. They were the victimized “us” and the state and the Communist Party was the “them” inflicting injustices on the population. The common enemy united the citizenry. In this way, communism did create a sense of equality among the population. It was an equality of “have nots” and of suffering. The result was a unified suffering, but also the inclination to look internally to one's family or small

networks for fear of state action or incursion (see Chapter 4). Several people I spoke with in the region stated that there was a realization fairly early on that all people, men and women, were mistreated in the communist system.

This meant that although women did experience communism in ways differently than men, and had concerns that were specific to their sex (maintaining the double or even triple burden for example), they tended not to see or at least not to bring attention to those differences. As noted Czech sociologist Jirina Siklova phrased it, “[a]s women we were suppressed not by men as such, but by a political system that lacked distinct sexual characteristics” (1996, 77). This is not to say that racism and sexism did not exist, assuredly they did, but communism masked these issues due to the larger concerns of material want and political oppression (Interviews 2007-2008; Huland 2001). In her discussions with women across the region in 1990, Drakulic noted, “[i] realized we don’t blame men easily, as if we don’t have the heart to do so even if it would be good for our self-esteem” (109). She continued, “[i]t is hard to see them as an opposite force, men as a gender, hard to confront them as enemies. Perhaps because everyone’s identity is denied. We want to see them as persons, not as a group, or a category, or a mass” (Drakulic 1991, 111).

The unifying effects of a “common enemy,” are well articulated (e.g. Olson 1966; Axelrod 1988). In situations where people perceive a common threat, citizens often overlook differences that might separate groups, people, or countries. This can make it difficult to mobilize people according to class, race or gender because these cleavages are blurred. For many in communist Europe, the State served the function of a common enemy during communism. The mobilization that did occur in the ECE

region during the communist era (organizational dissent waxed and waned throughout the decades) centered on issues that affected all citizens. The struggle was one of human rights where women's rights seldom entered the conversation. People perceived the advancement of women's rights as frivolous, considering that oppression affected all people in these societies.

Women in many ways did not have the luxury to think of their concerns or to organize as women. Those who were active, in the dissident movement for example, seldom thought about how the system specifically hurt them as women. In Poland, Romania and the Czech Republic, women old enough to remember those times, stated without fail, "we didn't think in those terms," or "we were part of something larger than ourselves." Speaking about her activities in the underground culture, Siklova commented that, "[w]e women simply did things in cooperation with men as a sort of voluntary duty. We did not know anything about feminism" (Siklova 2000, 266). Another former dissident explained that men were being hurt and mistreated as well, and in many cases, she claimed, "emasculated" and "castrated" by the communist system. She argued that women felt sympathy for their men at that time and they worked especially "hard to help them."

In places like Poland, the us-versus-them mentality was especially engrained. During centuries of predominantly German and Russian occupation, Poles ardently fought for their independence and the advancement of the Polish culture, though with few successes. During times when those struggles intensified, women were heavily involved in the national resistance, as they would be in the 1980s. However, as also occurred later, it was often to support the greater cause of Polish independence and to

bolster their male compatriots. The Polish image of the ideal woman emphasized the role of motherhood (Mother Poland) and the self-sacrificing behavior of women to advance not just her family, but also the national cause of the Polish state. The communist government used this image to advance its own notion of the position women should play in Polish society. The imposition of communism by force rather than choice furthered the image of a common enemy throughout the last century, and women's concerns remained secondary to the greater issue of independence (Penn 2003).

Alternative Organization

Although underground activities occurred to varying degrees, which should properly be labeled as political, they were thought of in different terms. Whereas communist politics was seen as “dirty,” involvement in what became known as “anti-politics” in Poland and Czechoslovakia was a moral inclination and a social activity (Rugluska 1997, 86). Dissent activities exemplified this us-versus-them feeling.

In Czechoslovakia for example, “dissent” centered in large part in the urban centers of Prague and Bratislava. Though few considered themselves dissidents, a significant number of intellectuals, religious leaders, artists, and average citizens worked in various ways to first ameliorate and then end the communist system. In Havel's words, some began to “live within the truth.” By the mid 1970s, this culminated in the creation of the VONS organization, the drafting of the famous Charter 77 declaration, and the network that took the same name: Charter 77.⁹⁶ In all

⁹⁶ Charter 77 was never an organization in the traditional sense. There were few meetings and only minor hierarchy. Rather it was a loose collection of people that aligned themselves with the cause of changing the communist system from within. This was often done by writing letters to those in power to point out government-inflicted hardships and ask for change. In this, Charter 77 “members” would

of these, women were present, and in many cases visible. Significantly, 20% of signatories to the original Charter 77 document were women, and from 1978 until the early 1990s, one of the three spokespersons for the loosely organized movement was a woman. Women also formed the majority of the VONS organization, which monitored and reported on judicial proceedings (Siklova 1997). Among dissident activity, there was minor mention of gender. In some of the documents that followed the original Charter 77 declaration, the leadership did address gender wage disparities, as well as the need to continue to protect women from being mistreated by police. However, these issues received only short shrift. Additionally, there was never a branch of women within Charter 77 (Haskova 2005).

Though short lived, in 1980 women in Poland formed their own branch of Solidarity and pushed for inclusion of gender consideration in the union's demands from the government. They created the *Leagues Extraordinary Congress* to advance their goals. Martial Law in 1981 not only pushed Solidarity underground, but also squashed this attempt at female advancement (Fuzara 2005). Though gender rights were not a salient issue in Poland during the period of Martial Law, it is significant that it was women associated with Solidarity that went into hiding and covertly operated to keep the movement alive when the government jailed the male leaders. A small group of women published an underground newspaper (and series of Samizdat-underground literature) that informed the population about the activities of the government against its citizens (Penn 2006; Einhorn and Sever 2003). However, as

often sign their names to these documents, which was quite dangerous, but it signified their personal dedication to the country and to the notion that they were going to speak the truth.

before, women undertook these activities, but they were not explicitly gendered in nature.

Finally, in Romania there was not only little female dissent, there was little dissent at all. As elsewhere in the region, many Romanians I spoke with referred to the seemingly unanimous distaste for the communist government, generally encapsulated in the persons of Nicolae and Elena Ceausescu. In a previously mentioned instance, in 1967 women became active by writing letters of protest to the government when the Ceausescu administration officially banned abortion. However, there was no real mobilization, nor organizations in place to create any influence as citizens or as women (Interviews 2007-2008). The us-versus-them mentality was an important reason why so few institutionalized women's movements developed in the ECE region during the communist era.

Women and Communist Doctrine

The us-versus-them mentality was significant in preventing the creation of a women's movement in the region during the communist era and hence eliminating the opportunity for a women's movement to be the motivator of female LIP after 1989. A contributing factor blocking the development of such an organization was the usage of communist doctrine to stall the progress of women's organizations before World War II and to pacify women under communism. Early communist and socialist parties attempted to address the issue of women and their proper role in Marx's egalitarian society. Marx's proletariat, after all, was comprised of workers, those who had become the means of production and had lost control over their output; this included both men and women. While ideology dictated equality of workers, it did not foresee the difficulties of implementing policies of gender labor equality, or the

social externalities of such policies. Under communism in practice, women in Eastern and Central Europe represented a group that was both protected and severely constrained by the State.

The Women's Question

Marxism appealed to many women in the early years of the 20th century, who saw the ideology as a means to achieve greater gender equality. It was not uncommon to link Marxists and feminists both ideologically and politically. Marx, and especially Engels, discussed the position of women, calling them the most abused group under the capitalist system. Engels blamed the oppression of women on the introduction of private property (Engels 1884; Evans 1981, 766). The quandary of how to bring women out from under the “yoke of capitalism” famously became known as the “women’s question.”

For many communists, the answer to the women’s question was the emancipation of women through the labor market. The theory espoused by Marx and Engels explained that once women were able to work and control their own labor, they would be liberated and would by extension attain personal fulfillment. In an interview with German socialist Clara Zetkin, Lenin addressed the situation of women in a similar vein stating that, “[t]he women must be made conscious of the political connection between our demands and their own suffering, needs and wishes. They must realize what the proletarian dictatorship means for them: complete equality with man in law and practice, in the family, in the state, in society; an end of the power of the bourgeoisie” (Zetkin 1920, page unknown). Five years later, Trotsky articulated an analogous point of view: “[j]ust as it was impossible to approach the construction of the Soviet state without freeing the peasantry from the tangles of serfdom, so it is

impossible to move to socialism without freeing the peasant woman and the woman worker from the bondage of family and household” (Trotsky 1925 PNK). Throughout the communist era, women’s labor was the primary focus of gendered policies. Even prominent women in early communist movements, such as Rosa Luxemburg and Zetkin herself, did not focus much on the position and concerns of women in the private sphere (Fröhlich 2010 [1939]; Corcoran 2008).

Following the guidelines of Marxist doctrine, during the 1920 Soviet women were encouraged to enter the labor force in large numbers. There was a corresponding attempt to create neighborhood laundries, daycares, eating counters, and other initiatives that would contribute to more communal living and free women from the perceived constraints of the home. Here the focus was on the economic position of women, heavily favoring their positions as workers (Evans 1981). As occurred some 20 years later when communism spread throughout Eastern and Central Europe, communist ideology coupled with the demographic and economic needs of the State motivated the emphasis on female labor force participation. In the Soviet Union after World War I, and later in communist Europe after World War II, labor shortages were rampant, and women’s employment was a solution to this demographic problem.

Throughout the 1930s and 1940s, the image of the ideal Soviet woman changed again (Evans 1981). Lenin had died, Leon Trotsky, a strong advocate for women in the labor economy, was in exile, and Joseph Stalin was taking the Soviet Union in new directions. Whereas Lenin had focused the women’s question on employment and communal living, by the 1930s Stalin declared Lenin’s gender policies a success due to the advancement of women in the labor market. Stalin then moved to mold an

image of the ideal Soviet mother and worker (Racioppi and See 1995, 821). As Racioppi and See explain, “[t]he Leninist state’s image of woman as worker was soon modified by the Stalinist regime to create a new ‘superwoman’ image that combined woman as worker with woman as mother” (1995, 822). This meant encouraging women into vocational areas often associated with male labor such as manual labor in factories, mines and agriculture. It also meant a renewed focus on the family and the role of women as breeders of new communists. Fidelis suggests that, “[t]he Stalinist system offered women a set of multiple, yet limited, identities: women could be workers, mothers, wives, labor heroines, or political activists (2004, 303). Hence, women bore the mantle of economic and biological producers. However, during the Stalinist era, there was also a retrenchment of many of the communal initiatives and programs put into place a decade earlier, making the actualization of these communist superwomen difficult.⁹⁷ Whereas with Lenin the pendulum may have swung too far from the hearth, Stalin created an idealistic view of women that few could meet.

During the Stalinist era, in the Soviet Union and later in Eastern Europe, Party officials made great efforts to portray the communist superwomen (Chylinska 1965). In 1935, a column in the Soviet publication *Robotnitsa* read, “‘One of the most base, disgusting, bourgeois legends is that it is impossible to combine motherhood with equal rights for women and their participation in political and social life’” (cited in Evans 1981, 765). Propaganda was pervasive. The state often commissioned painters,

⁹⁷ These programs were abandoned for three reasons: 1) They were difficult to maintain financially. 2) It was taking some time for them to become commonplace. 3) Stalin’s Soviet woman also maintained the home. Therefore, there was a need to reestablish some of the elements of home life that the communal laundries and eateries eliminated (Evans 1981).

play-writes and even musicians to produce works that glorified the communist superwoman.⁹⁸ This was an effort to create an image for women to aspire to reach. In particular in paintings and films, artists portrayed women on tractors, in the mines, and in factories. Women in these images were attractive, but also sturdy and seemingly contented in the work they were doing. Often children were also in the images, ostensibly demonstrating the successes of women in both the private and public spheres (Reid 1998).

After Stalin, some of the superwoman expectations were removed, though this varied by country. The determinations about what constituted masculine and feminine jobs came from the Party. Acceptance of the classifications by men and women was never complete. Soon there were efforts to limit women in more physically demanding jobs, based on reports that materialized claiming the dangers to childbirth that such work could have on women.⁹⁹ At this point, the state became more concerned with birthrates than they were with adhering to the letter of Marxist doctrine. In Poland, women who had enjoyed their employment in the mines fought the new policies, yet they received little support (Evans 1981; Heinen and Water 2006). While women did stay in some “masculine” jobs, many of them were encouraged into “feminine” jobs.¹⁰⁰ Throughout the rest of the communist era, across the region, governments tried to find the balance of women’s position in both the economy and the home (Fidelis 2004). However, despite the various policies, in every

⁹⁸ Art was heavily monitored by the State in the Soviet Union and the Eastern Bloc countries. Work that was not deemed to represent the proper image of communist life was banned (Reid 1997).

⁹⁹ The validity of these reports is somewhat questionable. It is clear that Party officials (and perhaps some average men) created and used the reports as an excuse to dismantle some of Stalin’s policies encouraging women into traditionally male work. This allowed a greater emphasis to be placed on the home, though obviously working remained important. It was also seen as a means by which to create a more manageable social order between the sexes.

¹⁰⁰ In the early years, governments actually had lists describing jobs as feminine or masculine.

country, there continued to be an expectation that women would work – it was a guaranteed right, but also a responsibility. At the same time, the role of mother remained essential.

Despite what was occurring within communist Europe, the efforts to create a stylized image of communist women was successful beyond the region. Many outside of the communist sphere saw the region's women, for better or for worse, as emancipated and independent. Feminists in the West were seeking many of the same rights and guarantees that women in Eastern Europe had already been granted. Therefore, there was not much of an effort on the part of western women's groups to communicate or assist women in Eastern and Central Europe. As Siklova laments, “[t]he Iron Curtain was getting rusty in the 1980s, and through its openings we were receiving a lot of information and books from tourists and émigrés. We circulated, translated, read, and copied Orwell, Popper, Ahrent, Dahrendorft, von Hayek, Althusser, Eurocommunistas, punk, pop music, porno and so on. But feminists did not send anything!” (1997, 260).

The communist governments of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union did attempt to find different means to create a balance with women's work and family that adhered, at least on the face of it, to communist doctrine. They also adjusted the details of women's double burden based on economic and demographic considerations. Even as they fluctuated, the result of these policies was that the official line was to claim gender equality. With the women's question officially resolved, there was no need for women's organizations, nor was there a role in communist ideology for feminism, which by this point had received a bourgeois label

(Siklova 2000, 266). Some women in Poland, for example, were vocal about their concerns, as Party policies displaced a number of women from the new occupations (traditional male jobs) that they had been encouraged into in the late 1940s. Women such as Ludwika Jurczak and Zofia Wasilkowska saw this change as a challenge to communist doctrine. These Party women spoke out, but despite the potentially effective communist theory framing, their concerns were not addressed (Fedelis 2004). Debate on the issue dropped, and even women in the Party who ardently fought for greater attention to women's issues eventually fell silent.

Women's Organizations Before and Between the Wars

The weakness of a movement for the advancement of women at mid-century and through the 1980s was not inevitable. In fact, for some time it appeared as if the opposite would occur as in a number of places around the world at the turn of the 20th Century, there was momentum in favor of the development of women's organizations. As far back as the nineteenth century and certainly the time between World War I and World War II, there was a noted rise in gender awareness across Eastern and Central Europe. Had events occurred differently, it is possible that these efforts would have continued throughout the ECE region eventually resulting in a mature and effective women's movement(s). The groups of the 1920s and 1930s attempted to advance their causes, but war and politics effectively halted this momentum for at least two generations of women.

Czechoslovakia:

In Czechoslovakia, a young Republic elected a liberal-minded President who made female advancement in politics and business a platform of his administration. Even before independence, the former professor and future Czech President, Tomáš

Garrigue Masaryk, worked to advance the position of all Czech and Slovak peoples, including women. Masaryk felt the influence of his American born wife, Charlotta Garrigue Masaryková, who until the time of her death in 1923, also fought for enhanced recognition of women's rights (Nedvěová 2006, 308). In 1890 Masaryková, who had learned Czech, helped translate Mill's famous piece, *The Subjection of Women* into Czech. She often wrote for American and Czech magazines arguing for women's rights and suffrage. It is no coincidence that upon Masaryk's election in 1918, he fought for and won the inclusion of women's suffrage in Czechoslovakia's new constitution (Nedvěová 2006). Masaryková also actively participated in, and in some cases helped create, a number of organizations that sought to advance the position of women. She and others were involved in the *Czech Women's Club*, the woman-friendly *Czech-Slavic Social Democratic Party*, the *Central Association of Czech Women*, the *Association of Women and Girls Employed Along their Domestic Production and Work*, as well as the *Committee for Women's Suffrage*.

Influenced greatly by Masaryková and her husband, Milada Horáková is another woman of significance in the Czech lands before and between the two World Wars. Horáková earned her law degree in 1923 and for some time provided legal council for the *National Council of Women*. She also worked with a number of local women's groups and continued to lecture for women's rights throughout her lifetime. Horáková often worked with Františka Plamínková, the head of what was a young but quickly institutionalizing women's movement in Czechoslovakia in the 1920s and 1930s. Plamínková founded both the *Czech Women's Club* and later the *National Council of Women*, and was heavily involved in international women's groups such as the

International Alliance of women for Suffrage and Equality Citizenship (IAWSEC) and the *International Council of Women (ICW)*. Quite notably, she also served as a popular Senator in the Czechoslovak National Assembly (Hendrychová 2006).

Plamínková and Horáková, along with Charlotta Masaryková, are responsible for much of the enhanced social awareness of the position of women in Czechoslovakia during the first part of the 20th century.

However, when the communists came to power in 1948, the organizations that flourished prior to the war were disbanded. Additionally, much of the leadership of those groups had died. By mid-century, three of the country's most ardent supporters for women's rights, Plamínková, Horáková and Masaryková, were gone. Masaryková died of natural causes in the early 1920s, though her husband continued to advance her causes until the Nazis occupied the country in the late 1930s. In 1942, the Nazis executed Františka Plamínková for her continuing activities to advance Czech culture. A decade later, Milada Horáková, despite her early participation in the Czechoslovakian Socialist Movement, fell victim to the purges of the 1950s when she too went before the executioner.¹⁰¹ With Horáková's death the chances to build off the inner-war framework all but disappeared.

Poland

There were over 80 groups working to advance the position of women in Polish society by the time World War II began (Fuzara 2005). In fact, as early as 1840, there existed a Polish group operating solely to advance women. By 1918, women received

¹⁰¹ It is rather ironic that Horáková, an avowed Marxist who had worked for many years supporting the Communist Party, should find herself before the communist firing squad. Even more ironic perhaps, is the fact that it was a female judge, a woman of the Party and of the communist controlled Czech Union of Women, who decided the verdict (True 2003). Today, there is a street in downtown Prague honoring Horáková.

the right to vote with the declaration of an independent Poland; this occurred in large part due to the activities of a number of dedicated Polish women.

Before and between the wars, such groups as the *Union of Equal Rights for Polish Women*, the *National Council for Polish Women*, the *Progressive Women's Political Club*, and the *Women's Association for Civil Labor*, among others, sought to advance the cause for greater gender equality. By 1930, the *Women's Association for Civil Labor* boasted over 30,000 members.¹⁰² The high membership is evidence of the importance and strength of the organization. Of additional notoriety, the *Union of Equal Rights for Polish Women* earned the distinction as the “most radical feminist organization of the period” (Ibid). Famous women in Polish history, such as Zofia Daszyńska-Golińska, Paulina Kuczalska-Reinschmit, Theodora Męczkwska and Justynia Budzińska-Tylicka led these groups. Daszyńska-Golińska is significant because she served in the Polish Senate between the wars. Budzińska-Tylicka, a medical doctor, was famous throughout Europe for her work, which included the opening of the first Polish birth control clinic (Ibid).

Due to some of the activities of these women and many others, during the interwar period, the Polish parliament passed significant legislation aimed at assisting women, particularly mothers. There were laws put in place that protected pregnant and nursing mothers from working in heavy industry and provided all women extensive social services. “Indeed, the conviction that women and men should perform different kinds of labor was so strong in Polish society that all interwar

¹⁰² This figure indicates the significant involvement of women in this group. However, finding membership numbers is especially difficult for these early organizations. However, based on the fame and popularity of many of their leaders (not to mention political position of some) and the success of their activities (female suffrage for example) it is reasonable to assume that they had some level of influence, even if the actual membership numbers are unknown.

women's organizations vigorously supported protective labor legislation measures for women workers as a group. Unlike in the West, no strain in the Polish feminist movement argued that the index of prohibited jobs was in any way discriminatory to women" (Fidelis 2004, 308-309).¹⁰³ Before 1945, many of the smaller women's groups willingly joined to form the Women's League.¹⁰⁴ The goal of the organization was to encourage and promote professional women, provide assistance with children and increase education (Fuzara 2005, 1,063). However, it was not long after that the communists disbanded the group and established one in its stead that was firmly under the Party's control and influence.

Romania

One of the biggest advocates for Romanian women before World War II was Princess Alexdrina Cantacuzino. Princess Cantacuzino was involved in the formation of no fewer than five women's groups, she became the early movement's international representative, and she was one of Romania's delegates to the League of Nations. Much of her success came from blending nationalism with the advancement of women's rights. She argued that it was a duty for Romanian women to advance themselves, and it was their important role in society to protect Romanian culture, the glory of the state and their political voice (Cheșshebec 2006). To this end, she argued not just for enfranchisement, but also for greater female education and a larger female presence in the public sphere. In this effort, she worked alongside Calypso Botez, Maria Baiulescu, and others (de Haan *et al.*, 2006).

¹⁰³ This is an example of where the definitions of feminist organizations and women's organizations diverge. While the activities of these organizations might not be considered feminist by western standards, there is every indication that they identified as women and spoke for women as women.

¹⁰⁴ This league is not to be confused with the groups of the same name, which were under the control of the Communist Party in later times.

Despite being a predominantly agricultural society, with deeply held traditional and religious values emphasizing the role of Romanian women around the hearth and family, a number of these women joined and supported important and influential women's groups (Magyari et al 2001). Eugena de Reuss Ianculescu founded the first suffrage association, *Women's Rights*, in 1911.¹⁰⁵ Other organizations dealing with suffrage and gender equality also existed. Among these were the *National Council of Romanian Women*, the *Union of Romanian Women*, the *Association for Civil and Political Emancipation of Romanian Women*, and the powerful *National Orthodox Society of Romanian Women* (de Haan et al., 2006). Princess Cantacuzino co-founded this last group in 1910 and it functioned under her leadership from 1918 through 1937. Cantacuzino also conceived and served as the first president of the *Little Entente of Women* (LEW), which brought together women from Poland, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, and Greece to address common concerns (Cheşshebec 2006, 91).

Romanian democracy was not long lived. By the end of the 1930s, King Carol II retook power and reinstated the Romanian monarchy. For the next decade, he led the country as an authoritarian ruler. The role of the women's groups that had thrived during the 1920s began to diminish under King Carol's dictatorship. The Communists, who came to power in 1947, first under Soviet rule and then Romanian control, would eliminate almost all traces of what had been a small but important Romanian women's movement during the early parts of the 20th century (de Hann et al., 2006).

¹⁰⁵ Despite these efforts, women in Romania did not win full suffrage until 1948. In fact, it was only once the Communists came to power, that full suffrage extended to women, which further strengthened perceptions about the links between communism and feminism.

Organizations of Communist Women

When the Communists came to power in Eastern and Central Europe, one woman I interviewed described it as, “a practical liquidation of the women’s movement.” In the 1940s and 1950s, the communists subsumed feminist organizations and women’s groups, which as explained above, had grown substantially in number in Eastern Europe between the wars. Party-controlled organizations, often called the *Women’s League* or *Union of Women*, replaced the women's groups that existed prior to World War II. These leagues became quite important for advancing women within the party, and in some regard, they did provide a place for women to meet socially.

Haskova remarks that in the Czechoslovakian case, members of the *Czech Union of Women* wielded some policy-making power, especially when it dealt with issues relating to motherhood (Haskova 2005, 1,081).¹⁰⁶ This was the only state-recognized organization of women, and it considered itself a branch of the Party. It was also from this organization that the Party found women to fill communist party electoral quotas (Siklova 2000, 266). However, across most of the region, these groups never filled the role that their predecessor groups did in seeking to gain political and social advances for women.

Current recollections of these women’s groups are extremely negative, as was apparent in two interviews from the Czech Republic. An elderly woman who never joined the *Czech Women’s League*, yet interacted with them in her experiences as a newspaper reporter, vehemently decried the organization – which interestingly has continued since the Velvet Revolution. She explained that many women felt forced to

¹⁰⁶ For sometime there was a *Czech Union* and a *Slovak Union* of women. They merged and separated at various time throughout the communist era. Yet, they essentially served the same purpose when separate entities as when unified.

join the group, and that it was nothing more than a means of “mind control.” With the possible exception of the leadership during the Prague Spring, the women who ran it “betrayed their sex,” and sought only to advance their own political goals. According to this woman, many considered the women in the leadership “single minded, evil, easily manipulated by the Party, and deranged.” A 25-year old female Czech student writing her Masters Thesis on the organization echoed these remarks. In referencing the current Women’s League, she said they are a “bunch of old, angry women who complain that communism is gone.”¹⁰⁷ Women I spoke with in Poland and Romania made similar comments about the former women’s unions of the communist era. The perception of these organizations is certainly negative.

Despite the existence of these groups, it would be inaccurate to claim that they represented East European women’s movements. The women’s organizations did not meet the definition of a women’s movement as articulated by McBride and Mazur. Specifically, the women’s leagues did not constitute a women’s movement because they were not organizations separate from the State, nor were they women engaging in gendered discourse as women. Under the communist system, these organizations were not even part of civil society, rather they were a state apparatus organized to influence and control the position of women in communist society.

Though they varied across countries and through time, the communist parties of Eastern Europe claimed early on to have answered the women’s question and

¹⁰⁷ Although the comments of this young women refer in some part to women of the current Women’s League, it is interesting that the old perceptions of the group have persisted and in some regards been passed down to women of the post-communist generation. In fact, as will be seen in Chapter 7, there is a socialization process that is occurring where the values and view points of mothers and grandmothers (especially regarding work, family and politics), developed under communism, are being transmitted to a degree to their daughters and granddaughters despite the end of communism.

encouraged women to be both mothers and economic laborers. At the same time, they vilified feminism and decried it as not just unnecessary, but a bourgeois ideology. Hence, the communists took away issue space that in other circumstances might have allowed women to form groups that were representative of a women's movement (Busheikin 1996, 16). Removal of this issue space coupled with the internalized us-versus-them mentality, there is little evidence of a an institutionalized women's movement in the region. Without a women's movement, the region's women were without an institution that could have guided them, as women, through the uncertainties of the early transition. As it was, women did not necessarily know how to organize nor did they have the bases or leadership continuity upon which to build and become politically active, even at the LIP level, during the early 1990s.

Women's Movement and Female LIP in Post-Communist Europe

A women's movement is important because it can provide a venue for women to voice their opinions and concerns, it develops and enhances resources and it cultivates female leaders. These are all factors that can enhance female efficacy and lead to greater political involvement. In the post-communist transitions of Central and Eastern Europe, women may not have envisioned the opportunity to mobilize as woman, and if some did (and surely, some did) women did not act in great number. The lack of women storming the stage after 1989, and certainly the absence of women organizing as women for women, is related to the weakness (or in most cases relative absence) of women's movements in these countries during the communist era. In large part, this occurred because women did not have experience, personal resources and in some cases a sense of efficacy to draw upon, something a woman's movement could have provided. A women interviewed simply said "we didn't have

the time or skills to fight” as women (Interviews 2007-2008). East European women during the uncertainties of the early transition seldom had the venue, connections, experience, or female leadership to push for gendered causes.

As previously explained, the *us-versus-them* attitude that prevailed in communist Europe and the attempt by the Communist Party to answer the woman’s question affected the development of a women’s movement in many of the region’s countries. Authors argue that issue salience is crucial; there must be an issue that arises that is serious enough to diminish the importance of other identities so as to unite women as women (Baldez 2003, 254).¹⁰⁸ However due to the us-versus them mentality, differences were obscured and there were few issues that arose that women could mobilize against. Likewise, the capture of women’s rights by the Communist Party further precluded much possibility of women organizing as women in support of women throughout the communist era.

The events of 1989 created a critical juncture where economic, political and social upheavals created space for new paths for the countries of the ECE region to take. Admittedly, the challenges were difficult, and would have been with or without a women’s movement. However, without one there was no institution in place that unified women as women and could help mobilize them to protect their interests as their countries began transitioning toward democracy. There was no female leadership that could provide continuity through the uprisings of the late 1980s and into the instability of the early transition. Without a women’s movement prior to 1989, women in much the region were without a potential avenue for gendered

¹⁰⁸ In Latin America, Baldez argues, the important cleavage was class conflict. This allowed for the focus on new identities, which first coalesced around socio-economic status and then around one’s sex.

efficacy building, and in large part failed to think that their input was valuable. At that time it was common to hear women say they felt that they were not able to affect policy decisions, that they did not think that women's issues mattered (Jaquette and Wolchik 1998; Interviews 2007-2008). This too contributed to the rather low LIP numbers evidenced during the initial transition years. The path chosen during the critical juncture of 1989 and 1990 did not heavily consider women as having specifically gendered concerns. Having made those decisions at that moment, it was and continues to be difficult to change course.

A True Women's Movement: East Germany

Because of the manipulation of communist doctrine and the nature of governance, which eliminated cleavages and pitted the average citizen against the state, the creation of a women's movement in communist Europe was extremely difficult. However, in the GDR in the 1980s, a women's movement did arise. This occurred, because of the complex nature of German communism after 1945, which in many ways diluted the us-versus-them mentality that prevented a woman's movement from developing elsewhere in the region. The country also retained greater international (Western) connections than the rest of the region, due to some degree of proximity. The political and geographic history of East Germany juxtaposed to both the Nazi past and the East-West separation, arguably made the country more conducive to the creation of a woman's movement, which in turn provided the basis for women to participate politically in higher numbers in the GDR.¹⁰⁹ Dissimilar to the rest of the

¹⁰⁹ Exactly why a women's movement developed in the GDR and not in the rest of Europe is an intriguing question. While I make reference to some possible links, answering this question is beyond the scope of my research. What is significant, is that a women's movement started in the early 1980s, and that it had an effect on how women viewed political activity nearly a decade later when communism ended.

region, the existence of the women's movement in the GDR in the 1980s laid the foundation for female political activity during the early transition and beyond.

Before and Between the Wars

In the early decades of the 20th Century, Germany, like the rest of the region, saw the advent of a number of attempts to improve the lot of women. This primarily came in the form of advancing the right to vote to women and increasing their labor force participation. Women won suffrage in 1918 and by the end of the 1920s, women also made up a sizable share of the German labor market.¹¹⁰ In fact, at that time, female unemployment rates were lower than the rates of German men. At the same time, women were entering educational institutions in large numbers - resulting in a number of female lawyers, educators, professors,¹¹¹ dentists and physicians (Pauwels 1984). The entry of women into these fields was advanced by a number of women's organizations, which had begun advocating for gender equality throughout the first decades of the 20th century. As elsewhere, women activists of the time were drawn to socialist parties. For example, Clara Zetkin was a highly influential woman who helped create the *German Communist League* (KPD) and pushed for the creation of International Women's Day, which is today celebrated on March 8th in various locations around the world. Between the wars, especially, German women made significant strides to advance their sex.

When the Nazis came to power in 1933, they moved to quiet the growing women's movement. In fact, the Nazis generally advanced a more conservative ideology that sought to clarify the proper roles of men and women: men as protectors,

¹¹⁰ Having formally unified the German flag in 1871, these statistics represent a unified, though rather young country. In fact, by 1989 Germany had been historically a united country only 30 years longer than it was two countries.

¹¹¹ The country promoted its first female full professor in 1923.

women as mothers. Nazi propaganda minister Goebbels went so far as to declare National Socialism a “masculine movement” (Pauwels 1984, 11). Hitler summed up his position on women stating that “ [a] woman must be a cute, cuddly, naïve little thing — tender, sweet, and stupid” (as quoted in Pauwels 1984, 3). Nazis argued that women in the 1920s were “...neglecting their ‘natural’ duties to ‘the race’ — marriage and motherhood. They had yielded to the siren call of the emancipation movement and were increasingly involving themselves in such ‘unfeminine’ activities as employment outside the home and university studies” (Pauwels 1984, 16). Therefore, upon gaining power, significant steps were taken by the Nazis to return women to the private sphere.

The Nazi Party promoted masculinity and sought to redefine what had become a rather liberal feminine identity. In this effort, the Nazis removed women from institutions of higher learning and took steps to encourage women to leave the labor force. In fact, Nazi policy forced married women, no matter their background, to leave their employment and return to the home (Evans 1981). Additionally, many of the groups that organized for women’s rights at that time had ties to the communists, a party the Nazis had violently engaged in the streets of Germany for much of the previous decade. Given this history and the focus of the Communist Party, it is not surprising that they disbanded these women’s organizations upon coming to power. When the communists took over after the war, as in the rest of the region they claimed that the women’s question was answered and therefore differences between the sexes were not significant concerns.

The GDR Women's Movement

By the 1980s, the peace movement had taken hold, and strengthened under the roof of the Protestant Church, where the Communist Party permitted gatherings (Joppke 1995).¹¹² In 1982, when the issue of female military conscription came to the fore, concern arose that affected and united women as a group separate from men. Women around the country rallied to oppose the proposal for female military conscription. Issue salience was strong enough to unite women and to start the region's only institutionalized women's movement under communism. Soon, it became apparent to a number of these women that they had other concerns that affected them specifically as women. They also realized that these problems were largely ignored not just by the state, but also by the peace organizations of which many were members.

That year, 1982, Bärbel Bohley and Ulrike Poppe founded *Women in Peace*.¹¹³ This was followed by a number of similar organizations across the country. Suddenly, it seemed that women were meeting for a number of causes pertaining to their unique role in the GDR. There were a number of chapters of *Women in Peace* in cities throughout the country and meetings and large-scale gatherings took place to discuss women's issues. For the first time, lesbians were also forming groups to have their voices heard (Ferree 1994). The increase in female activity corresponded with new publications, women's art shows and women's political clubs. What this meant, was that there was a foundation upon which to build and mobilize women. These groups

¹¹² Whereas dissent in much of the rest of the region focused on human rights and the actions of the governments against their people, in the GDR dissent was centered on the peace movement and on internal reforms that could strengthen the socialist state.

¹¹³ Bohley, often called the "mother of the revolution," continued her political activity in the unified country. She recently died in the fall of 2010. Poppe too maintained a political presence. She married much respected academic Claus Offe in 2001.

also broadened social networks to some extent and brought important issues to the fore.

Many of the active women, and the groups they represented, joined other groups to form *New Forum*, which was one of the organizations pushing the events of October and November 1989. In fact, it was two other women who are often credited with escalating the Montags Demos (Monday Demonstrations) at St. Nicholas Church (*Nikolaikirche*) in Leipzig that swelled in number throughout the month of October and eventually led to the better-known events in East Berlin on November 9, 1989.

Shortly after the fall of the Berlin Wall, women formed the *Independent Women's Association (Unabhängiger Frauenverband* or UFV) to bring together women's groups during 1990. Women in the UFV spent considerable time working to educate the population about possible retrenchment of female friendly policies. However, with unification taking precedence in the minds of many voters (including a number of female voters) and the voter exhaustion that seeped in with the seemingly endless Volkskammer elections throughout 1990, the UFV lost momentum. Additionally, a number of the former activists went their separate ways throughout that year. There were established parties from West Germany, like the Social Democrats (SPD) and the Greens that attracted a number of these women (Ferree 1994). The established and institutionalized parties had few links to the Eastern women's movement (Beckworth 2000). This broke up the peace activists and it also dispersed members of the GDR's women's groups, making gender a less unifying political identity. Ironically, the cleavages that became apparent earlier and made the women's movement possible,

after 1989 led to further splintering of identities.¹¹⁴ Despite the decreasing role of the East German women's movement after unification, it did not disappear but rather was altered to an extent by the unification process. However, the efficacy, organizational skills and institutional memory continued to influence how women viewed their political position even in the new, unified, Germany.

It is anyone's guess how women's groups would have fared without the prospect for unification and the incursion of West German politicians and their resources. What is clear is that there was an East German women's movement, which in many ways provided a means for mobilization. It also developed experience and enhanced the efficacy of its participants to be active, to work as women for women. This background and the resources provided by the women's movement filtered down and encouraged women to take part in LIP in significant numbers. At the basic level, these women remained relatively engaged throughout the early transition. In fact, as World Values Survey results indicate (see Chapter 1), women in the eastern German states continued to be politically active at the grassroots, LIP, during the early 1990s.

The East German women's movement gained strength during the final days of 1989, but began to lose its influence by the time of unification between East and West eleven months later. There was notable frustration on the part of those women who participated in the UFV and women activists elsewhere were saddened to see what appeared to be female marginalization in the GDR during unification negotiations.

¹¹⁴ It is inaccurate to say the East German women's movement ended upon reunification. Rather the movement underwent a transition itself. It did suffer some set backs and its membership did splinter in different directions to a degree. The movement also had to reconcile its aims and goals with the women's movement, which developed in West Germany during the years of separation. This was a difficult, and an on-going process (Interviews 2007-2008; Hemepele 1997).

Other concerns took significant time away from activist women, but it did not mean that women ceased their participation or no longer cared (Ferree 1994).

These losses aside, women in the GDR have stayed more political active than many of their eastern neighbors. In fact, they also look different in this regard when compared to their sisters in what was West Germany. At the LIP level, women in the GDR and later the NBL were involved in higher numbers than those in Romania, Poland, and the Czech Republic, despite their marginalization during unification. A significant reason for this is the fact that the country had a women's movement in the 1980s, in which women learned how to organize, how to fundraise, and how to spread their message. These women had the attributes of a known venue, resources, and continuity (to some degree) of leadership. Women in the NBL were more participatory at the LIP level in the 1990s because they knew how to be. The existence of a women's movement in the GDR, created a sense of female efficacy, that continues to be tested, but which sustained a sense of "voice" among a number of the women of the NBL, even throughout the uncertain years of the early transition.

Chapter VI

Labor Force and Political Participation

Introduction:

In propaganda, the communist woman is an impressive, stylized figure. The images portray strong, powerful women expertly conducting their work in the fields and factories. They are attractive women, with bright eyes, and flashing smiles who appear not only able to do the work before them, but happy to contribute to the glory of their country and the Party. The post World War II *emancipation* of women into the labor force became a significant feature of communist Europe's economic development. Though it varied across country and time, a large majority of the region's women worked for a salary outside the home during their lifetime (Gal and Kligman 2000; Reuschmeyer 1998d). In fact, labor force participation was a right and duty of communist women. In many instances, this female obligation was equal only to the expectation that women become mothers. As discussed elsewhere in this manuscript, governments took great strides to encourage and assure that women met both of these duties (burdens for some) accordingly.

The dissolution of communism and process of economic restructuring caused a rapid and deep plummet in available employment across the ECE region. Before 1989, the countries of the region enjoyed near full employment, but seemingly overnight, unemployment became a serious concern. Layoffs and large-scale industry closures affected everyone. However, women were especially susceptible to economic fluctuations because their jobs were often the most tenuous and yet they retained responsibility for the care of children and elderly parents. As Kligman (1998) explained in the Romanian case, “[i]n the face of job redundancy, women are more

vulnerable. Once laid off, solid data indicate that women are more likely to remain unemployed for longer periods than are men; women are less likely to be retrained first and they are more disadvantaged in the search for new employment” (Ibid 75). This pattern was evident across post-communist Europe (Morgan 2008; Posadskaya-Vanderbeck 2000).

The alteration of available employment for the region’s women affected their willingness to participate politically. In the labor force one can gain efficacy, develop confidence and learn skills that can be utilized in other venues: potentially the political world. The economic situation for women before and after 1989 presented an irony. Employment opportunities existed under communism, creating enhanced socialization and to some degree skill development for women. It had the potential, and as my interviews show, did undoubtedly create confidence and efficacy among *some* women. However, due to the authoritarian, non-democratic nature of communist rule, there were often few avenues of political life where citizens could channel their experiences from labor force participation into political participation. When communism ended, and the political situation opened up creating more space for such activities, the economic structures were overhauled and women left the labor market (by force and by choice), thus largely eliminating the possibility of a participatory link between women, labor and political participation.

The large-scale departure of women from the labor force also meant they fewer women were able to learn organizational skill or to socialize at their place of employment any more. This was a process that occurred over time, yet as more female jobs were lost, and the prospects for new employment grew more dire, female

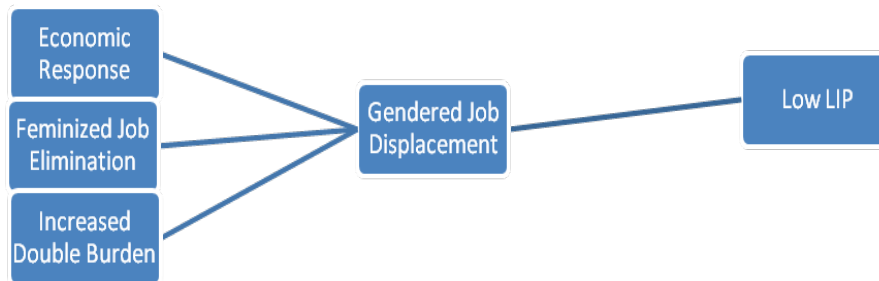
efficacy that might have been created on the job diminished. One woman lamented, “if I can’t even find a job, what good am I to anyone else” (Interviews 2007-2008).

In this chapter, I round out my dissertation argument by exploring the effects of what I call “gendered job displacement” on female LIP in the post communist region. This term encapsulates the idea that there was a significant shift in not just the number of women unemployed in the region, but also in the percentages of women in the labor market as a whole. Gendered job displacement did not simply occur when communism ended. Rather it was the result of choices made to respond to the new system of competition after 1989. To understand the depth of the importance of gendered job displacement, we must look at those factors that led to the alteration in female labor force opportunities.

In the following pages, I contend that the *economic reaction* of individual countries and the specific *elimination of feminized jobs* are largely responsible for gendered job displacement in the early transition period. The government decisions regarding economic restructuring after 1989 often determined how painful and extensive the process was going to be. To be competitive with the newly opened West, countries of the region downsized dramatically. Most quickly to go were factory jobs, which were by that time “feminized jobs.” Related was an increase in *private sphere responsibilities* as communist policies that operated to provide a social safety net for women was removed at the same time that jobs, in general and especially for women, became more scarce. In many cases, the continued double burden of eastern women without government social coverage made finding employment even more difficult. This was particularly the case for single mothers

with young children who suddenly had few daycare options and yet needed to work to meet the basic survival needs of their families. These three factors: economic reaction, elimination of feminized jobs and the increase in private sphere responsibilities are the substantive dimensions responsible for gendered job displacement in the region during the 1990s. Gendered job displacement contributed to a loss of female efficacy, or in some cases the prevention of future efficacy creation, therefore, playing a role in the low female LIP experienced in much of the region during the early 1990s.

Gendered job displacement produced mechanisms that discouraged a number of the region's women from political participation during the 1990s. First, as mentioned above, a venue for potential socialization, information sharing and efficacy building disappeared for many women as jobs became scarce. Secondly, there were emotional repercussions to the loss of employment. Finally, due to extensive female labor redundancy, women's priorities turned toward seeking and maintaining employment, a challenge that was largely new to them. Immediate needs dominated women's lives and it was difficult to see how political action would help alleviate such concerns. All three of these mechanisms were more strongly felt the longer the delay in wanted employment. These three results highlight why gendered job displacement is a critical variable in explaining the low female LIP experienced throughout much of the region in the early 1990s.



All countries of the ECE region suffered from great economic fluctuations, and in all cases restructuring disproportionately affected women through layoffs and factory closures. However, the Czech Republic’s economic fluctuations were less severe than elsewhere in the region and they were the first country to economically rebound to some extent (Mickiewicz and Bell 2001). Therefore, in this chapter, the Czech Republic is the divergent case. Because of the shorter duration of gendered job displacement, the effects of the other variables (communist legacy of distrust and the lack of an institutionalized women’s movement) lessen to an extent, helping to account for the moderate (above average) level of female LIP in the Czech Republic.

Case Studies:

	Gendered Communist Legacy	Lack of institutionalized Women’s Movement During Communism	<i>Long-term Gendered Job Displacement</i>	Level of Female LIP During Early Transition Period
Czech Rep.	Yes	Yes	No	Moderate
GDR	Yes	No	Yes	High ¹¹⁵
Poland	Yes	Yes	Yes	Low
Romania	Yes	Yes	Yes	Low

In the next sections, I lay out the terms for analysis. I then more fully present my argument that gendered job displacement limited socialization and efficacy building for women on the job and hence has limited their desire, experience and availability

¹¹⁵ As will be seen in this chapter, the NBL faced very tough gendered job displacement after communism. As discussed in Chapter 5, there was a women’s movement in the GDR before 1989, which created a basis for female political participation after.

for low intensity participation. In doing so I look at the economic responses, the structural elimination of feminized jobs and explore how gendered job displacement has changed the responsibilities of the double burden in the region. Specifically, I do this by exploring three of my case countries, the NBL, Poland and Romania, which have experienced significant and persistent gendered job displacement. I then explore the theoretical underpinnings that inform my argument connecting labor force and political participation. From there, I address the situation in the Czech Republic where gendered job displacement was shorter lived. Finally, I also aim to examine the job displacement variable as it relates and interacts with the other two variables advanced in this dissertation.

Terms:

In this chapter, it is important to clarify the terms; gendered job displacement, labor force participation and unemployment. Though sometimes conflated in the literature, labor force participation and unemployment are varying measurements. Labor force participation relates to actual engagement in the labor force. It is generally the percentage employed out of a given population. On the other hand, unemployment looks at those seeking or available for work (often recorded by a state agency). The unemployment measure is important, but it often only captures those that fill out necessary paperwork (for benefits) or those that officials record as seeking employment. If someone is laid-off and decides not to re-enter the labor market, unemployment figures do not account for them. A further complication is the varied methods countries utilize when counting the unemployed. Additionally, unemployment figures often under-represent people working in the black or gray

markets or those that may be too embarrassed to register as unemployed (Economic Survey 2003).

Both of these terms are helpful in this assessment, and I use them where appropriate. Labor force participation rates of women clearly indicate the drop in the percentage of women in the ECE labor markets after 1989. On the other hand, unemployment figures show the percentages of women registered as seeking employment during the initial transition period. Both rates show the gendered nature of employment restructuring in post-communist Europe. Therefore, to capture both of these ideas as they relate to the ECE region post-1989, I use the term “gendered job displacement.” This includes both the dramatic change in women’s involvement in the market economy as well as the large increase in unemployment figures during the early transition. These numbers do not correlate perfectly. Female labor force participation dropped at a more significant rate than female unemployment rose. This occurred due to the aforementioned reasons of early retirement, purposeful withdrawal and black market “employment.” Therefore, while I employ the term gendered job displacement to include both of these occurrences, where necessary to differentiate between the two, I do so.

Women’s Labor Force Participation Under Communism:

In rhetoric, the emancipation of women under communism evidenced the practice of genuine equality for all citizens, per the communist doctrine (see Chapter 5). Today, much of the literature calls this communist *encouragement* of women into the labor force, “forced emancipation” or “emancipation from above” (Nagy 1994; Molyneux 1995; Matland and Montgomery 2003). The state, not women themselves, created a situation where large percentages of women went to work outside the home.

Many of these jobs were in light-industry, education and medicine (Jaquette and Wolchik 1998).

Scholars often use the concept of forced emancipation to differentiate this type of “equality” from the motivations of Western women’s rights activists who have argued that increasing opportunities for female employment outside the home are a critical step toward female empowerment. The term forced emancipation seems to suggest that women did not want to work. Some women I interviewed insist that this was not always the case, pointing to the fact that early female communists were instrumental in pushing for more women in the labor force. These interviewees explained that despite other negative features of communist governance, the Party’s motivation to have women in the labor force derived primarily from ideology resulting in some positive demographic externalities (Interviews 2007-2008). For other women in the region and some scholars, women’s encouraged entry into the work force *en mass* was negative as it increased the responsibilities of women who retained their duties in the home.¹¹⁶

Regardless, what is clear is that across the region, with only slight variation, women entered the public arena in extremely large numbers after World War II. For example, in Czechoslovakia, in the 1930s, women made up 30% of the labor force, by 1967 they made up 46%, almost half of the entire labor market (True 2003, 31). In fact, with minimal deviation, women represented well over 40% of those employed

¹¹⁶ The goods that allowed women in other parts of the world, primarily the United States and parts of Western Europe, to keep up with the needs of the home while entering the labor market in significant numbers were not available in communist Europe. Whereas a woman in the late 1960s in New York could more efficiently maintain her home by using washing machines, driers, fancy vacuum cleaners and prepackaged frozen dinners, only the most affluent women in communist Europe were personally familiar with those items.

across the region. From 80% to almost 100% of available women were working outside of the home (Claussen *et al* 1993).

In the early years of communism, there was a concerted effort to encourage women into more traditionally male labor, yet this altered some across the region and through the decades of communism. In general, “[i]n the 1980s, women in the Eastern Bloc countries were much more likely to be highly skilled professionals, specialists and technical workers than women in Western Countries” (True 2003, 31). However, despite early attempts at greater distribution, certain labor became “feminized.”¹¹⁷ Women were generally in industry (textiles, glass), food processing, health, education and social services (Ibid. 32). What is remarkable is that these same women were having children, sometimes many, as those figures also reached beyond 80% of women in childbearing years. Women in communist systems did not have to decide between work and family, rather they were heavily *encouraged* to pursue both.

Ideology aside, after World War II there was a definite need for female workers across the region. In a system that did not have a great deal of immigration, initially lower numbers of males after two deadly wars and a new Cold War to wage, women’s roles as workers and mothers were important to communist society. To encourage women into the labor force, the State implemented a series of social protections aimed at easing women’s responsibilities in the home.¹¹⁸ From exceptionally generous maternity leave to financial assistance for single mothers,

¹¹⁷ Here the term “feminized” is meant only to indicate that these jobs were populated primarily by women.

¹¹⁸ Though these services were generous and in some ways likely did ease some of the household responsibilities of women, there was very little attempt to encourage men to take on more responsibility in the home. The State also created a situation where the region’s women became somewhat reliant on these social protections.

there is no doubt that women in communist societies relied on state “benevolence” to a larger degree than men did. This state “protection” assured that women carried out both sides of their double burden. Females were valued under the communist regimes as workers helping to build the communist countries and also as breeders of the next generation of communists. This was perhaps most evident in Romania, where women received special recognition, and even medals for having large numbers of children (as many as eight and ten).

In many ways, what some could perceive as an egalitarian role of women under communism is misleading, and intentionally so. As explained in detail in Chapter 5, it was beneficial for the Party to show female laborers as vital members of the communist workforce. This fed a discourse of the superiority of communism. It was also a tactic to present an example for women to follow. Kotzeva wrote that, [t]he image of a socialist woman was elaborated to reinforce the unique mission of a woman to sacrifice herself in order to assist in the establishment and further development of the system towards a ‘shining future’” (1999, 85).

Women were set apart from men, and though they received a number of social benefits, the personal costs of such protections were high. This included an expectation that women would return to work after having children, that they had little assistance running the home, and that they be reliant on the state run nurseries resulting in significant time away from their children. In Czechoslovakia, for example, in the early years it was not unusual for women to put their children in overnight childcare facilities where they would only see them during weekends (Interviews 2007-2008). The structure of the communist system led to the

development of a relationship that centered on women and their duties to the state, rather than their relations with each other or their husbands (Ashwin 2000, 13).

Communist Employment as Efficacy Creator

It is difficult to determine if women's substantial role in the labor force created genuine efficacy and a desire to participate during the communist era. As explored in Chapter 4, during communism there was a real sense of fear that discouraged group mobilization. There were many structural barriers in place that prevented the true expression of employment created efficacy. Yet, despite this, it is possible that such efficacy did develop.

It may seem counterintuitive that in a society, which heavily encouraged female labor force participation and the employment of women into what many might consider undesirable jobs could create a system where women did in fact develop a sense of pride in their labor. However, a number of the older women I interviewed, those who worked under the old system, did describe an empowerment that came with employment (any employment) during communism. An interviewee in Romania focused on the stability that employment of the old system created explaining that, "[u]nder communism people were forced to work, but they had that job for life, which created security." A Polish woman I spoke with recalled that, "[s]alaries were low, but at the same level we found our work rewarding" she went on to say that, "[w]e could be independent to a degree and we learned skills." As one woman I interviewed in the NBL said, "political participation at work was limited, but it made me feel full." In general, my interviews corresponded with Einhorn's observation that, "[i]ndeed there are many voices which suggest that women's self-esteem and even their sense of self was integrally bound up with their [women's] working lives"

(Einhorn 1993, 140). These statements, and similar ones I heard elsewhere, suggest that even though the work women performed during communism was arguably mundane, it did provide some benefits in terms of personal well being and confidence building.

In interviews and published works, women also recall socialization and information sharing that occurred at work, even during communist times. True explained that, "... women workers made special efforts to socialize their workplaces, 'making them more like home.' They sought to infuse the public, state-controlled elements from the private, thus subverting the real production with the activities and symbols of social reproduction" (True 2003, 32). Women learned coping mechanism and developed the resources for activity (especially adverse to state power) on the job. Contributing to this, there is little doubt that citizens socialized to a degree and shared information at the worksite, which often bolstered dissident activity.¹¹⁹ It is not surprising that Solidarity began as a Union supporting employees of Poland's shipyards, or that Charter 77 members in Czechoslovakia often had professional connections (Interviews 2007-2008). This suggests that having women in the labor force likely increased women's chances of hearing such information and taking part in different forms of dissident involvement. There were a number of women who participated in large and small ways in dissident activities. I was able to talk with some former female dissidents in the region. They explained specifically that the skills they learned on the job became invaluable in their dissident efforts. Knowing how to disseminate information discreetly and to large groups of people, and

¹¹⁹ Due to the fear of state power, information sharing was done carefully and likely much less openly than would be the case in a less authoritarian society. However, my interviews suggest that it did occur.

communication were valuable lessons. For example, a number of those that distributed *Samizdat* literature actually learned printing and editing skills at their jobs. This type of dissident organization was often quite informal, yet it was voluntary and was quite dangerous.

Evidence shows that despite the limits of communist life, positive externalities that could affect political participation derived from female labor force participation before 1989. Even in the most banal job, women under the communist regime learned how to multi-task, communicate with others, organize their time and share information, from the trite to the extremely important. At least in some instances, it also appears that employment created efficacy among women. Based on interviews and literature, a number of women valued their contribution to their families and valued the independence that employment afforded them.¹²⁰ The efficacy created at work did not always have an external avenue, such as politics, in which to extend. However, the basis was there. After 1989, the barriers to advancing efficacy into other realms diminished. The pool of employed women declined and the potential for employment as an efficacy building mechanism for women decreased due to extremely high rates of female labor displacement.

Gendered Job Displacement:

The transition from a planned economy to a capitalist system had immediate and lasting effects. The industrial infrastructure of much of Eastern Europe was outdated and its citizens were untrained in new technologies. This corresponded with inconsistent foreign direct investment. The result was economic instability and a steep drop in labor force participation (“Wages in Eastern Germany” 2007; Stein 2004;

¹²⁰ In fact, with significantly high divorce rates and rather inconsistent and unenforced alimony and child support laws, this independence from spouses was crucial for women in the region.

Fleishman 2004). If one considers that these countries had all enjoyed near full employment, the decline is even more dramatic (Rellin 2005).

TABLE 6.1
Labor Force and Employment Changes for Some Post-Communist States

	Labor Force 1985-2001¹²¹		Employment 1985-2001	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Czech Republic	1.8	-5.6	-5.2	-15.2
Estonia	-7.9	-27.1	-19.8	-36
Hungary	-22	-32.1	-26.9	-35.4
Latvia	-10	-29.5	-22.9	-37.7
Lithuania	1.6	-11.7	-18.4	-24.2
Poland	-1.9	-10.9	-18.4	-28.6
Romania	5.6	11.2	-1.9	4.6
Slovenia	7.7	-10.4	-13	-16
Russian Fed.	1.5	-11.7	-7.9	-19.2

Source: Economic Survey of Europe, 2003 No. 1

Table 6.1 shows the dramatic decline in both labor force participation and employment from 1985-2001 for both sexes. The table indicates that this occurred in all cases except Romania. However, the numbers for Romania are somewhat misleading. The country was industrializing from a primarily agricultural society throughout the 1980 and into the 1990s, which skews the figures during the timeframe presented in the table. Pases Harsanyi wrote during the early transition that in Romania, “[l]ittle has changed for women, except for now there is unemployment. Most of the unemployed are women- 60% of the unemployed in 1992 were women” (Pases Harsanyi 1995). Reviewing the table, it is significant that the effects of economic transition were still largely visible in 2001, an entire decade after the fall of communism. The table also shows the gendered nature of unemployment and labor force participation. Across the region, women’s employment and labor force participation took a more drastic decline than that of men. Though not included in the

¹²¹ Represents percentage drop of men and women participating in the labor force.

table, labor force participation of women in eastern Germany fell from 89% in 1989 to just 58% twelve years later in 2001 (Matysiak and Steinmetz).¹²²

With unemployment soaring, women lost their jobs in large numbers, and others willingly left the workforce. The Economic Survey reported that “[c]ombined with the erosion of real wages this reduced further the economic value of women” (Economic Survey 2003, 199). Employment figures are likely even more stark than the available data suggests. Many women were never included in unemployment figures, because they took early retirement or decided not to search for a new job after the initial employment upheavals (Economic Survey 2003, 200). In many of the countries, there was also an effort by the new governments to encourage older women to retire early with rhetoric explaining that in harsh economic times women, especially older women, needed to leave jobs for men (Interviews 2007-2008; Gal and Kligman 2000). The exit of women from the labor force in most of the countries of Eastern and Central Europe, often for an extended period of time, affected LIP by removing a means of meeting with other citizens, learning valuable skill and sharing information, be it general or political. It also eliminated an avenue for female efficacy building, which research shows can affect one’s willingness to participate in other arenas, such as politics.

Gendered job displacement is an important component in understanding low female LIP in the ECE region. The elimination of a number of jobs held by women was driven in large part by the choices made by policy makers in the individual

¹²² This is a 31% drop in the labor force participation: a significant decline. Some, though certainly not the bulk of this, can be explained by the migration of women from the NBL to the western states of Germany. It is worth noting that migration and emigration from the NBL has had a gendered, indeed a female, dimension with significantly more women leaving than men (Rebling 2007).

countries. How governments decided to deal with the economic restructuring of the 1990s had an impact on female political participation. Gendered job displacement was also specifically due to the redundancy of certain job fields, specifically textiles and manufacturing, that disproportionately employed women. Of my case countries, the New German States, Poland and Romania have all dealt with deep and long-term gendered job displacement.

Economic Reaction:

*Shock Therapy or Gradualism*¹²³

Economic restructuring is a difficult and in many ways painful process. A short discussion of the case's approaches to economic transition is included here to provide context for the larger discussion of gendered job displacement. There are two common ways that a country generally accomplishes economic restructuring: through gradualism or shock therapy. Governments that opt for gradualism institute a series of smaller reforms over a period of time. While this may take a longer time to reach the desired goals of a competitive and growing economy, the hope is that the changes will be small enough as to keep the hardships for individuals and companies to a minimum. The opposite philosophy is shock therapy where a massive program of changes is implemented in short order. The "objective is to take decisive steps to ensure that existing structures and interest cannot derail reform" (Murrell 1993, 113). Murrell explains that steps often include privatization; price deregulation; removal of barriers to institutional change; bank restructuring; tax reforms; credit allocation; job retraining among others. Utilizing this prescription generally means that the hardships

¹²³ It is not my intent to delve too deeply into the various and complex series of policies put into effect during this time. Rather the goal here is to show that economic restructuring had consequences, some positive and some negative, which had an effect on employment rates of both men and especially women in the individual countries of post-communist Europe.

of restructuring are intensive, but hopefully the new economic goal will be reached quickly. It is this latter option that the majority of countries of post-communist Europe chose, though as will be shown later in this chapter, the Czech Republic employed a more moderate form of shock therapy.

Poland was one of the first countries in the region to implement policies of shock therapy. The effects were immediate, painful and much more long-term than officials had originally forecast (Poznanski 1993). In fact, experts estimate that shock therapy policies were responsible for a dramatic dip in the Polish standard of living, ranging from 15% to 30% (Murrell 1993). Poznanski reported that,

At the end of 1992, the gross national product was more than 20% below the 1989 level and way above the 5% target spelled out in the government's 1990 program (while industrial output fell approximately 30% below its 1989 level) Rather than incur a 4-5% rate of unemployment, for which the government was originally prepared, the country registered 12.5% at the end of 1992 (with some regions exceeding 25%) (1993).

The Romanian government also, with the help of an IMF bailout, eventually attempted to enact the policies associated with shock therapy in the mid-1990s. However, Grinda (1997) argues that for Romania, the process of shock therapy operated to reduce industrial and agricultural production dramatically, concurrently contributing to the high rate of unemployment.

For the NBL, unification with West Germany dictated the path of economic restructuring. There too, the government implemented a process resembling shock therapy, as West German financial systems rather quickly became the institutions of the unified country. Within short order, the Deutsch Mark was implemented as the national currency and the Bundesbank of the former West Germany became a

guidepost for financial crediting and lending in the eastern half of the country (Dornbusch and Wolf 1994).

Foreign Direct Investment

One means of strengthening a national economy, especially one in transition, is through an influx of foreign direct investment (FDI). FDI can be defined as “...establishing a majority or minority ownership in another country’s business entity” (Jermakowicz 1995, 70). Such investment helps to put more money circulating throughout the local economy, and it also signals to others that this is a desirable destination for their investment capital. It is felt that this type of investment was crucial for advancing economic growth after the fall of communism. Zloch-Christy points out that “...on the macro-economic level it [FDI] can positively affect the introduction of new business standards, the creation of a new business ethic, and the urgently needed education of Eastern European managers...” (1995, 4). There was significant FDI in the region, primarily from Germany (West), the United States, France, Great Britain, and to a lesser extent Austria. However, it was inconsistent and the results were somewhat debatable (Zloch-Christy 1995).

For the New German States investment was somewhat slow.¹²⁴ Whereas unification certainly provided a number of benefits, in terms of the labor market, it has proven to be somewhat challenging. Like the rest of the region, much GDR industry was inadequate and after 1989 factories quickly closed down. The newly unified government did attempt to prop up the eastern economy, specifically by systematically privatizing what had been “public” land and infrastructure. A

¹²⁴ Certain areas, such as the eastern side of Berlin, Potsdam and Leipzig have enjoyed significant investment and rebuilding projects. However, even in these areas, there remain sections where buildings and roads are still in disrepair.

Treuhandanstalt (Trust Agency) took control of over 8,000 firms and millions of employees. However, this was met with resistance by many western Germans who felt they were paying the costs of restructuring, and by East Germans who saw the agency eliminate a substantial number of jobs. External investment was also rather slow in coming. Investors generally looked farther East to Hungary, Poland, and most recently Romania and Bulgaria where wages and living costs were lower and they did not have to deal with German rules and regulations (Ibid).

Unlike eastern Germany, Poland and even Romania were more appealing for foreign investment.¹²⁵ Facilities, land and wages were low in these countries. However, there were concerns about the abilities of eastern workers and it was not unusual for foreign employers to send a number of their own workers to retain most of the newly created high and medium level positions. The economies of both Poland and Romania, and much of the region, struggled throughout the 1990s and early 2000s. For example, Poland had difficulty when it implemented its shock therapy policies, particularly regarding privatization, which helped create a deep and extensive recession in the country during much of the early transition period. Poland's level of FDI grew after 1989 setting it behind the Czech Republic and Hungary in amount of investment. However, if one looks at it per capita, its level of FDI was average for the region (Jermakowicz 1995, 84). Romania too saw improved levels of FDI after 1989, but by 1993, those figures dropped. It is only recently, in the last decade, that Romania has legitimately made progress toward sustained economic recovery.

¹²⁵ Government instability in Romania delayed extensive foreign investment in the country until the mid and late 1990s.

Elimination of Traditionally Female Jobs

With the economic situation in mind, we now turn to the specific effect official economic reaction had on the region's women. As mentioned, economic restructuring resulted in significant worker redundancy across the region. A noted majority of those jobs eliminated by the advancements of new economies were jobs that throughout the communist era had become associated with "women's work." Despite efforts, particularly early on when doctrine was still fresh, to encourage women into fields traditionally dominated by men (e.g. bricklayers or drivers), women still often ended up working in specific fields. For example, they were the majority of workers in the textile and shoe industries. They were also apparent in the more traditional female posts in education and healthcare¹²⁶ (Brunnbauer 2000, 153). The gendered nature of communist employment continued into the post-communist era, but with so much redundancy, especially in areas where women generally worked, finding employment was difficult. Beyond that, Kligman noted that there was no attempt to hide the gendered view of employment. "Job availability is now gender explicit: many advertisements openly specify who may apply – attractive female receptionist and male managers" (1998, 75).

It is clear that the number of women in the labor market dropped after 1989 across the entire post-communist region. Along with the elimination of a number of jobs and positions previously held by women, there was also a concerted effort to talk women into early retirement (Behrend 1995). Therefore, the number of women who were seeking to reenter the labor market dropped.

¹²⁶ The legal profession also employed a number of women as lawyers and even judges (CITE).

The Perceived Value of Employment

Women all across the region talked with me about the personal value they placed on employment, regardless of the inherent difficulties. For those that lost their jobs during the early 1990s, and the many that spent significant time out of the labor force despite their desire for employment, a job was (and often remains) important. For women especially, employment means financial independence. However, beyond financial considerations, the development of various skills, growth of personal confidence and a sense of self-worth can come with labor force participation. These attributes can serve women well in areas outside the labor market. On the other hand, the loss of efficacy creating employment, especially if the condition becomes long-term, can have negative effects.

The efficacy creating potential of female labor force participation during the communist era, discussed earlier in this chapter, remains open to debate. The negative feelings associated with loosing employment after the end of communism are clearer. All of the women I spoke with in the region, who were of an age where they were employed in the 1980s, discussed how awful they felt when they lost jobs during the economic restructuring processes of the early transition. For those that did not want to stay home, and there were many who did not or felt that they could not for financial reasons, the depression of persistent job loss was emotionally damaging. The women I spoke with that experienced this talked about the significant lack of confidence that resulted with losing those jobs. Many women I talked to felt a deep sense of demoralization. An elderly woman in the region recalled loosing her job as a doctor with visible embarrassment and disdain. She commented that she felt like she lost a part of herself. An NBL woman told me that she willingly drives 90 miles a day to

her job. She explained that it is the only job she can find, but she says she would feel lost without it. In Poland I heard a similar sentiment when a woman suggested, “[w]omen see jobs as part of their identity.” Another Polish woman said that even now, “[m]ore and more women want to work, but can’t. Work means socialization, which is important” and in Romania an interviewee said, “[w]ork is also important for women here. It leads to self-confidence and independence in women.”

The desire to work outside the home is especially evident among women in the NBL. This is likely due to the fact that women in what was West Germany, were much less accustomed to working especially when their children were young.¹²⁷ This has changed somewhat in the last 20 years, as more western women are working, but female full-time employment is still not the norm.¹²⁸ Unification has made this difference more apparent. A young man in Leipzig summed up the situation well when he stated, “women in the NBL want to work! Career is very important and a creator of identity, even more so than motherhood” (Interviews 2007-2008). A young woman also said, “[c]areer is often a female’s top priority, motherhood is just a bonus” (Interviews 2007-2008). In fact, none of my 35 interviewees in the NBL failed to mention the importance of work for the women of the New German States.

¹²⁷ Because my focus in this project was specifically on women from the NBL, female LIP in what was West Germany has not been explored in depth and I did not conduct fieldwork relating to western German women. However, it should be noted that female LIP in the western states of Germany, was lower in the 1999 WVS than that of women in the NBL. For example, 8.8% of NBL women responded that they “would never” sign a petition whereas 17% of women in the western states said they “would never” do so. It is possible that labor force participation plays a role, but I am not prepared to make that declaration at this point.

¹²⁸ The nurseries system in the west was also much different than in the GDR and it was the western approach that became policy with unification. It is still unusual that day care facilities take children for full days, often only taking them for a half day. It is also especially difficult to find a nursery that will take children under the age of three. There is an institutionalized, western German norm that mothers should be with their children when they are young, or that they should only work a couple hours a day. From the perspective of social coverage regime type, West Germany (and in large part a unified Germany by default) represented a familial system, where as the GDR resembled a more social-democratic structure where the state assisted in such matters (see Esping-Andersen 1999)

German author Martina Rellin heard similar responses when she visited with a number of Eastern women in the early 2000s to discuss the changes that had come since the fall of the Berlin Wall. As Rellin explained in her book, and further expounded upon in a 2008 interview with me, lack of employment would inevitably enter the conversation (Rellin 2004; Interviews 2007-2008). One of those she interviewed put it this way, “I love and care for my children. However, I need to work for myself, for my self-fulfillment. Even if I had a million dollars, I wouldn’t stay home. It isn’t about the money, I need the confirmation that work provides, and the interactions with colleagues, the sense of citizenship” (Rellin 2004, 255).

Increase Private Sphere Responsibilities

The end of communism did bring many benefits for women in Eastern Europe. Goods were in the shops and technology found its way East, which should have eased the carrying out of household duties. Yet the “burden” of taking care of the home and family not only continued to fall to the region’s women, but it in many ways grew heavier as they sought to find employment in the changing economy (Havelkova 1997).

The pressures of capitalism meant increased competition for jobs. At the same time, there was an increase in prices and work time (or time spent searching for work), yet most women received little additional help from their husbands or the fathers of their children.¹²⁹ The end of communism did not ameliorate the double burden of the communist era, and in some cases, it got even heavier as needed employment grew scarce and material wants increased. A middle-aged woman in the

¹²⁹Though marking some improvement, many of the women I spoke to (even of the post-communist generation), commented that men still do very little to help out at home and still expect a great deal from their wives, mothers and girlfriends (Interviews 2007-2008).

region recalled, “[o]ne thing that hasn’t changed [lessened] is the expectations placed on women.” As a young woman in Romania put it, “[t]he [only] men that stay home are the ones that are unemployed.” And, she lamented, “they still don’t help out.”

Before 1989 there was an expectation that women be employed and contribute to the state-run economy. The maintenance of the home and family were important female responsibilities as well regardless of claims of communist gender equality. The private sphere, as in many cultures around the world, was “women’s domain” during communism and it retained that association during the transition period.

Ripping the Social Safety Net

The social structures that made the double burden somewhat manageable, retrenched to varying degrees across the countries of the region. State run nurseries closed, housing assistance diminished and policies significantly reduced childcare benefits, meaning that the responsibility and stress associated with women maintaining the home increased (Hempele 1997). Referring specifically to Romania, Magyari and her colleagues commented that, “[t]he ‘social safety nets,’ which were critical under the communist regime, became utterly inadequate during the transition to the market economy” (Magyari et al. 126). These comments described much of the region.

The closing of a number of state-run nurseries across the region was (and remains) one of the most frustrating issues facing ECE women. Putting children in nurseries or daycare facilities, sometimes for several hours, was accepted practice during communist times and women came to rely on the assistance. This was especially the case in East Germany where only a few children did not at some point stay in a state-run nursery. In fact, Mieczkowski (1982) argued that East Germany

actually had one of the most well developed nursery systems in the world. A number of the women I spoke with in the NBL still consider it odd that some women in western Germany view nursery care in a negative light. Comments such as, “we went to them and we had no problem putting our children in them” were common among women I spoke with in the NBL as well as in the other countries I visited.¹³⁰

The closing of nurseries across the region had far-reaching consequences. For example in Poland, about 60% of childcare facilities closed in the early years. Those left were extremely expensive (Nowokowska 1996). In the NBL, a single mother in her late twenties talked with me about her decision to drive 45 minutes each direction to take her 3 year old son to daycare. She said that it is either this, as that was the only spot available, or she quits her job. She lamented the difficulty in the daily commute, but she felt it was important that she continue working for her own personal sense of accomplishment. A Polish woman explained that, “Nursery spots are [still] hard to come by.” This is one of the reasons young women in the region have, in many cases, put off having children and are having fewer children than their mothers before them (“Eastern European Population...” 2000).¹³¹

Political Participation

Having a job outside of the home has the potential to empower and train women to be active in other areas: politics for example. The lack of, or in the case of post-communist Europe, removal of employment opportunities for women eliminates one

¹³⁰ It is unclear, and obviously debatable, just how well run communist nursery care facilities were. In many regards, it probably depended a great deal on location. Although some of the women I spoke with in the region admitted that nurseries were not the “fanciest” facilities, none of them indicated to me that the nurseries were inadequate, and a number of them brought up fond memories from time spent in such care (Interviews 2007-2008).

¹³¹ The significant drop in birthrates across the country after 1989 has been the focus of interesting academic work. With small increases in recent years, there is concern that any rebound will be too late and the already depressed pension funds will not sustain much longer.

avenue for female efficacy creation. Correspondingly, the decrease of female labor force participation after 1989, due in large part to economic restructuring played a significant role by not providing a basis for political activity among women in the region. I heard it a number of times in my interviews, yet a woman in the NBL summed it up best when she stated that, “unemployment keeps getting worse, this is why more women are not political.” She went on to declare that, “[s]ocialization on the job is real and it is important!” When pressed further, she explained that she talked to people at work, learned new things and though always guarding against getting too close, she felt like part of something. She was referring to a sense of efficacy that was created through her labor force participation.

“Women are mentally affected [by job-loss]” a German woman explained. Across the region, when I asked women about the transition away from communism and about their own political participation, the conversation almost always turned to the lack of employment opportunities. This was especially the case with the middle aged and older women I spoke with who had experienced the communist system. Yet, when I asked these women if they were politically active, specifically in LIP activities, during the early transition period when their jobs were disappearing, most responded that they were not. When I sought reasons for the non-participation, along with some of the other issues addressed in this section, I heard comments like “I didn’t feel it would matter” and “I was depressed without a job and was just trying to make due.” These feelings encouraged isolation rather than political motivation.

Finally, in Poland one of the women I spoke with echoed sentiments that I heard across the region. “Women still get little help from their husbands in the home and

the raising of the kids. Other help is expensive.” She went on to say the four words I heard over and over again when I asked women about their willingness to participate politically. Explaining that during the initial transition and still today, women did not have time to participate because they were looking for work and worrying about their responsibilities at home with little help from husbands or from the state as previously. She and so many others simply said, “Women are so busy!” The limits on time are related to efficacy in the sense that given time constraints, coupled with a feeling that their problems are unimportant or that their actions will have little effect, there is less of an inclination for women to be politically active.

In sum, the disappearance of a number of jobs that could have provided a platform for female efficacy, along with the frustration and stresses associated with losing employment deterred female political participation throughout the early 1990s. Contributing to this, the double burden intensified to some degree with the end of communism. All leading to my Polish interviewee’s observation, that many women had little time, nor the efficacy to engage in LIP. These observations make gendered job displacement after 1989 an important component in addressing the low levels of female LIP recorded.

The Labor Force and Politics: A Theory of Efficacy Creation

Gendered job displacement in the post-communist region created a situation where many women did not have the time, nor in some cases a source of continuing efficacy development, to be politically active. The potential participatory attributes of employment have a solid theoretic basis. Almost 50 years ago, Almond and Verba (1963) found that *civicness* was a behavior that could be learned and advanced in adulthood. They argued that participation begets participation. For example, they

claimed that participation in the labor market instilled and encouraged a desire to participate in the political realm. They suggested that the skills (e.g. organizational and communication skills) learned at work were similar to those needed to participate in civic activities such as voting, demonstrating and joining parties. The connection was strongest for those that worked in jobs that allowed them decision-making capabilities, leadership opportunities or the ability to be creative and mold the final product outcome.¹³² The probable relationship between employment and civic involvement is now widely accepted (Almond and Verba 1963, Pateman 1995 [1970]). Over the last half-century, researchers continued to investigate the nuances and dimensions of the participatory link (Verba *et al* 1995; Sobel 1993; Milbrath and Goel 1977). One branch of this research supports the significance of a participatory relationship between the labor force and politics specifically for women (Pateman 1970; Norris 1987, Schlozman, Burnes and Verba 1999, Kenworthy and Malami 1999, Pollert 2005, Morgan 2008).

Studies have found that all forms of labor force activity significantly and positively relate to women's political participation because the pool of women available for political activity increases. Essentially, that there are more women in the public sphere who are learning valuable skills and interacting with a large scope of people. Scholars argue that labor force participation provides an arena for enhanced confidence, skill development, socialization and efficacy (Almond and Verba 1963, Sobel 1993, Verba *et al* 1995, Schlozman *et al* 1999). This means that the number of women with transferable skills increases and the potential for on-the-job recruitment

¹³² This and further studies led to a research boom, especially in regards to the development of organizational and management theory.

grows. Kenworthy and Malami (1999) found that working outside the home can have important externalities such as skill development and personal confidence building that significantly enhances the likelihood that a woman will then also choose to be politically active.

All forms of work have the potential to create female efficacy. However, not surprisingly, some studies have found that the link between labor force and political participation is strongest for women in management positions where they have the ability to make important decisions.¹³³ Although the correlation is slightly weaker, studies confirm a link between non-managerial work and female political participation as well. At a basic level, the value of labor force participation for other forms of participation is a process of socialization, networking and skill development, the simple occurrence of a woman being out of the home and at a job means that at least some of these benefits could accrue. However, there is no guarantee that this will happen.

Sobel too argued that, “[o]ne learns to participate by participating” (1993, 239). He further explained that the hierarchy of formality is important and that the roles one plays at work prepare one for participation in similarly structured environments such as politics. Therefore, if one is in a managerial position, they are more likely to take part in high intensity political activity, such as running for office. If someone works in a factory, this level of employment would encourage workers to participate in lower intensity politics, such as joining a party or attending a demonstration. From

¹³³ The direction of causation regarding women in management is somewhat unclear. It is possible that having the ability to make important decisions and to control work place functions will result in a corresponding desire to engage in the political realm. It is also plausible that those women who are motivated and driven to reach the higher echelons of their chosen profession, are likely predisposed to also seek policy input in the form of political participation.

assessments done around the world, it is also evident that the benefits of work on other forms of participation (e.g. political participation) are greater for those that work fulltime (Schlozman *et al* 1999). Because there tend to be fewer women in the labor market and because women of childbearing years often leave their employment for various lengths of time, women are more likely than men to miss the socialization process that employment facilitates.¹³⁴ Women outside the labor force are often also outside of social groups and information sharing that can lead to greater political involvement. Exploring the issue from the other side, Schlozman and his co-authors (1999) determined that globally, “stay-at-home” wives and mothers face considerable isolation, which further removes them from political processes and interactions. Gurin also argued that staying home reinforces traditional gender roles (Gurin 1986, 177). This can bolster the position that women should not play a role in the public sphere (political activity), but should focus their energies in the private realm.

The Positive Externalities of Employment

The ability to socialize with others at work, with varied experiences and backgrounds contributes to a greater exchange of ideas and points of view. It also allows for the development of skills, such as time management, organization and communication that transfer well to politics (Nelson and Chowdhury 1994, Schlozman *et al* 1999, Burns *et al* 2001). This does not mean that all people who work are inclined toward political participation, rather it suggests that there are benefits derived from employment that have the potential to encourage people toward greater political participation. Verba, Schlozman and Brady refer to one of these

¹³⁴ In truth, there are not a lot of part time jobs available to women in the ECE region. It is not a common practice. Nor is the option of working from home and teleconferencing in to meetings. This may change as technology and businesses continue to evolve. This could improve the situation for parents who are having a difficult time finding nursery care options.

externalities as the development of *resources* in the sense that one gains personal skills on the job that facilitate political participation (Verba et al 1995).

Carole Pateman (1970) found that through socialization, the workplace creates political efficacy. This can occur because people interact with one another, work on projects together and form relationships that bolster self-worth and confidence. The knowledge that one is contributing to the family income creates a sense of worth and value. For women in particular, an income means self-sufficiency and independence. On the job, the ability to produce a product or provide a service often creates a feeling of accomplishment. These feelings increase as one gains expertise, or advances in the company. Confidence has a spillover effect empowering some women to become politically active (Campbell *et al* 1954; Pateman 1970; Verba *et al* 1995).

Related to learning and greater socialization, the workplace is a significant means of disseminating information (Schlozman et al 1999). From gossip to politics, new bands to recipe ideas, employees exchange all kinds of information at the proverbial office water cooler.¹³⁵ This is especially important in regards to LIP. Social relationships established on the job put women in situations for recruitment in political activity, and provides a place to discuss and learn about political opportunities such as petitions or rallies. Even in instances where employers discourage this type of discussion, employees will often find ways to exchange information. Hence, on the job networking can lead to political recruitment. This might be especially relevant in oppressive regimes, as work becomes a means of passing dissident information (Siani-Davies 2007).

¹³⁵ This was especially the case in the pre-cell phone, pre-internet and pre-on-line social networking era.

Considering the confidence building and possible efficacy creating externalities of female employment, the elimination of employment can have harsh psychological effects. Just as employment enhances one's sense of value, unemployment can result in depression and diminishing confidence. As efficacy relates to a desire to be politically active, the lack of confidence that results in the elimination of a job or the inability to find employment can have the opposite effect: a lack of efficacy and hence less political involvement (Almond and Verba 1963, Sobel 1993, Pateman 1995, Clavero and Galligan 2005).

The psychological effects of job loss and unemployment on men are well studied (e.g. Kasl and Cobb 1970; Topel 1990). However, little literature looks at the effects joblessness has on women – especially long-term unemployment. This absence is not because women do not feel the effects of job loss, rather it is because men have traditionally made up a larger portion of the labor market and hence have received greater academic and sociological attention. Only more recently have scholars sought to explore the effects of job loss on women (e.g. Farber 1997; Kendler *et al* 2001).¹³⁶ Women who cannot find work do not have the ability to influence or control policies within an important environment such as the work place and they can lose the “contributor” identity that studies show employment provides for many women (Einhorn 1993, Rueschemeyer 1998b, Titkow 1998). As evidenced earlier in this chapter, for a number of the women I spoke with in the ECE region, this indeed appears to be the case. This is not to say that women can only feel empowered

¹³⁶ Early studies find that male and female emotional and physical reactions to job loss are rather different. Men are more likely to exhibit physical responses such as high blood pressure, enhanced chances of heart disease and diabetes. This can lead to negative behaviors like alcoholism and domestic violence. Women too experience severe depression and agitation, resulting in weight-loss or gain, trouble sleeping and other maladies (Kendler *et al* 2001).

through employment. I explained in Chapter 5 that activity within a women's movement can also lead to a sense of accomplishment, which can likewise create externalities conducive to political participation. However, it is clear that female efficacy *can* result from employment and *can* encourage women to be more politically active.

The Czech Republic: Mediated Gender Job Displacement

As presented in Chapter 1, the Czech Republic displayed moderately high levels of female LIP after the initial transition period. One of the contributing factors is the intensity of gendered job displacement, which affected women and their willingness to participate elsewhere in the region. Gendered job displacement was not as drastic or long lasting in the Czech Republic as elsewhere. While labor force participation levels of women did drop more than men's in the early years, the economic situation has not been as dire. Therefore, there were still a number of Czech women who retained or found new employment during the 1990s. While the increase in the double burden was similar in the Czech Republic as the other cases examined, many women did not have the added pressure of job hunting or long-term unemployment.¹³⁷ Hence, there continued to be women socializing on the job and for some employment became the efficacy creator that theory suggests it has the potential to be.

Economic Reaction

Unlike Poland, Romania and the NBL, the Czech economy has shown relative resilience and strength after some initially trying times in the early 1990s. The Czech Republic was slightly ahead of the curve when the transition came. They continued to maintain their favorable position throughout the early transition by closely monitoring

¹³⁷ For example, like its neighbors Czech parents faced limited childcare options after communism ended. In Czechoslovakia in 1989 there were 78,555 nurseries care spots for children under the age of three, by 1991 this figure was only 17, 210 (True 2003, 60).

the effects of economic reforms and by successfully enticing direct foreign investment. These two features of the Czech economy in the 1990s are in large part responsible for the country's ability to rebound after 40 years of Communist Party rule. In the early transition, Czech government officials acted on the philosophy that they should get market rules straight and the rest will come (Sacks 1993).

Czechoslovakia, and then the Czech Republic, was not immune to the difficulties of economic restructuring. As elsewhere, after 1989, unemployment numbers soared in the Czech Republic and it too witnessed massive layoffs and factory closures. Again, as elsewhere, the features of that economic downturn had a gendered nature. A Czech academic I spoke with described it as “structural unemployment of women” with many of the factory jobs that women filled disappearing.

Economic restructuring was necessary after the events of 1989, but by then the country was already in a better position than many of the other countries in post-communist Europe. “In 1989 Czechoslovakia had the greatest proportion of capital goods exports to the West and did not suffer either from the high inflation or a foreign debt crisis as did its Central European neighbors” (True 2003, 11). Zemlinenova and Machacek (2003) agree that when compared to the rest of the region, the Czech Republic was in an enviable situation when communism ended. The country enjoyed a relatively high rate of industrial activity and they were producers and exporters of agricultural and industrial goods within the communist region, and with the West to an extent as well.

In Czechoslovakia and then the Czech Republic, the government advanced a shock therapy approach of “privatization, stabilization and liberalization,” which the

public and the Parliament supported (Mejstrik 1995, 39). However, in the Czech Republic, governing elites tempered shock therapy policies into what Sacks (1993) calls a “modified path” that included some features of gradualism. Realizing that shock therapy would be difficult, the government attempted to make preparations to limit the hardships restructuring would have on citizens. True explained that, “[b]etween 1990 and 1992 a package of social policies was crafted to cushion the worst consequences of the liberalization of the economy and to ensure public support for reform” (True 2003, 12). One aspect of the Czech approach that was unique was its use of a relatively cheap voucher system to assist in the privatization process. Citizens were enthusiastic about the program, as were international entities that were also allowed to buy in. In large part due to the voucher system, “...by the end of 1991, small privately held firms accounted for 41.3% of retail sales” (Sacks 1993, 191).

The influx of investment dollars from abroad provided a significant advantage for the Czech Republic and functioned to establish a financial basis for the country’s development and growth throughout the first decade of transition. Foreign direct investment went from \$600 million in 1991 to \$1,200 million a year later (Mejstrik 1995, 39). Jacqui True wrote that, “[t]he Czech Republic has received the most foreign direct investment per capital among those former Soviet Bloc countries since 1994” (True 2004, 84). Through the privatization process, the government was able to sell some large enterprises to large companies: Phillip Morris, Volkswagen, Procter

and Gamble and Nestlé to name a few. This provided large amounts of foreign capita coming into the country (Zemplinenova and Machacek 2003, 219).¹³⁸

In regards to Czech women, the state played a key role in the design and delivery of newly fashioned welfare measures. As noted, unemployment, though quite high in 1990 and 1991, rebounded and stabilized soon after. Even with these lower figures, women remained the majority of the unemployed. In fact, ten years after the Velvet Revolution, True (2003) points out that more women than men registered as unemployed. She argues that this is an indication of not only the gendered nature of unemployment, even at low rates, in the country but also a strong desire of women to find employment.

There were initially policies that aimed at encouraging, somewhat successfully, older women to retire early. As a result of this and some women opting to stay home, labor force participation rates altered and stayed low since the end of communism. In 1988, 73.7% of Czech women were in the labor market, in 2006 that number was at 64.4% despite a good economy (UN Stats). The women who chose early retirement or to voluntarily leave the labor force have often assisted their daughters and sons with childcare (True 2003, 12). Yet it appears that a significant number of women in the Czech Republic wanted to work and sought out opportunities to do so. Jaquette and Wolchick reported early survey data from 1990, where only 7% of Czech women

¹³⁸ Although the entire country has seen this investment, the country has been fortunate to be home to the city of Prague, which has reaped both investment and tourist dollars. In the 1990s, Prague quickly became a tourist hotspot and tourist-draw for western tourists; a role it continues to play. Already by 1993, Czech tourism brought in an additional \$1.3 billion in revenue (Grinda 1997). Today, Prague remains full of European, American and Australian visitors. Prague is but one bright spot among many, yet the entire country has benefited from investment in the city. Additionally, infrastructural improvements, such as more efficient rail to bring people to the capitol have assisted the entire country.

questioned indicated that they wanted to “stay at home permanently” (1998).

Fortunately, for those women jobs, often in tourism or with some of the new forging companies that flocked to the country, were more available than they were for women elsewhere in the region. While many surely did lose their jobs in the early years, the depth and longevity of unemployment for these women was not as extensive as in other ECE countries.

Effects on Political Participation

Given the low female unemployment rate in the Czech Republic, especially in the population center in Prague, theory would lead us to believe that political participation among women should be relatively high. In regional comparison, this appears to be borne out. For many of the same reasons women elsewhere in the region lamented not having jobs during the 1990s, women in the Czech Republic recognized the importance they placed on their employment. For example, an early survey taken by the Sociological Institute of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences in 1992, found that Czech women wanted to be in the labor force for reasons beyond the need for a dual-income. Many questioned indicated that employment brought independence and self-fulfillment (Cermáková 1995). Because unemployment spiked for only a relatively short period of time after 1989 (and then again for a short period in 1997-98), fewer Czech women faced the long-term unemployment frustrations than elsewhere in the region.

A number of the Czech women I spoke with recognized the link between their labor force participation and LIP. Many acknowledged that in the 1990s, and even now, they heard information at work about all sorts of things from the banal to the significant, that they would not hear about were they not employed. During my visit

in the fall of 2007 there were a series of rallies opposing the US plan to build a missile base in the country, and another protest in reaction to a proposed neo-Nazi interruption of events planned to mark “the Night of Broken Glass.” I attended a number of these and asked people how they knew about them and why they were there. Some responded that they happened to be walking by and others said they saw fliers. However, the majority of the people I asked said they heard about it at work (Interviews 2007-2008). Clearly there are other ways to inform people, but work continues to be a means to disseminate information.

Finally, while it would be inaccurate to say that Czech women have more time than other women in the region and therefore participate more in political activities, it may be fair to say that their priorities are different. Most women who wanted to work or needed to work were able to find employment in the 1990s. Czech women in large part were able to stay involved in the labor force and a number of those were involved in political activities as well.

Variable Interaction

Efficacy creation and skill development are important for political activity. In this chapter, I have argued that one way for women to gain these is through involvement in the labor market. Therefore, with gendered job displacement in the ECE region after 1989, this possibility lessened, playing a role in deterring many of the region’s women for LIP during the initial transition away from communism in the 1990s.

However, based solely on the intensity of gendered job displacement, NBL women should not produce high numbers of LIP. In fact, considering the extent and duration of female unemployment in the NBL we might expect women there to be especially prone to non-activity, yet we know the opposite to be true. Women in what

was the GDR were especially active in LIP activities in the early 1990s. The explanation comes from exploring all three of the factors presented for explaining why the region's women, in general, were not politically active.

I have argued throughout the last three chapters that three variables (communist legacy, lack of an institutionalized women's movement and gendered job displacement) are important factors for understanding the low regional female LIP statistics. These three factors were strong and intense during the initial transition period leading to low LIP throughout much of the post-communist region, and certainly in two of my case studies: Poland and Romania. My other cases, the NBL and the Czech Republic lack intensity in one of the factors resulting in higher rates of LIP.

An institutionalized women's movement can also be a valuable tool for the advancement of women. Therefore, I argue that one of the contributing reasons for why the NBL has not followed the pattern of much of the rest of the region is because it had a women's movement prior to 1989 (see Chapter 5). Despite the fact that women in the NBL are extremely frustrated with the economic situation that makes employment difficult and nurseries spots scarce, they continued to participate in low intensity political activities throughout the 1990s in large part because they have a known venue for airing their grievances and the institutional foundation from which to do so. In fact the severity of their economic circumstances may have actually prompted them to even greater activity. Women in the country have a history of organizing, and doing so specifically as women. This appears to mediate the negative effects of gendered job displacement on LIP among women in the country.

Conclusion

In conclusion, gendered job displacement is part of an explanation for low female LIP in the post-communist region. Labor force participation is a known creator of female efficacy, which has the potential to encourage women into greater political participation. In the ECE region, women worked in large percentages and made up a significant (nearly half) of the labor force. Although it remains debatable if this employment created efficacy, some scholars and a number of the women I interviewed indicated that it did. Though the ability to transfer that efficacy into the political realm was limited to a degree by the communist system, though it did advance dissent organizations where women became active, the potential existed. With the economic transformations of the early 1990s, women disproportionately lost their jobs in large number, and in much of the region remained unemployed for long periods of time. Job loss meant less possibility of efficacy creation on the job. It also meant for a number of women a significant decrease in efficacy and devaluation of their self-worth as many struggled to find new employment opportunities. At the same time that a number of women were losing their jobs and feeling that their concerns and opinions were unimportant, the responsibilities of the double burden increased, further discouraging women from political participation.

Chapter VII A Generation Later

Introduction

In all four cases explored in this project, I had the opportunity to speak with young women in their twenties.¹³⁹ These were women who have little, if any, memory of life under communism. In large part, what they know of that time comes from the recollections of their parents and from media portrayals. A few remember the last days of communism. One NBL woman in her early 30s fondly remembered some of the sights, sounds, and tastes from her childhood in the late 1980s. However, she explained that due to the westernization of many East German products most of the items, from candy bars to toys, which characterized her formative years, are only found today in museums.¹⁴⁰ Other young women have vague memories of the early 1990s, and they talked with me about some of the difficulties that their parents faced, but also the excitement everyone felt when new products, such as bananas, oranges, Coke a Cola, and Levis were suddenly available.¹⁴¹ This group of women experienced the end of communism and the beginnings of democratic transition as young children. Today, they are finishing their studies, seeking employment opportunities and making decisions about when to start their families.

¹³⁹ The women I interviewed are broken down into three categories. The first are the 43 interviewees that I often refer to as young or younger women. These are females in their twenties and early 30s who represent the first generation of women to come of age after the end of communism. The second group, the middle generation, are women I interviewed who are in their mid-thirties to mid 50s. These 35 women were young adults during the early transition period. Finally, the third classification is the older generation of interviewees who were in their late 50s or older. This group of 50 women is made up of women who came of age in the 1960s or 1970s who were middle aged in 1989. I also spoke with 5 men in the region from relevant organizations: NGOs, political parties and academia.

¹⁴⁰ There has been a bit of a resurgence of communist items, like *Kofola* soda, recently.

¹⁴¹ The influx of “western” goods continues, and is reaching further eastward. During the summer of 2008, I was surprised to see two Starbucks Coffee shops in the city of Cluj-Napoca, Romania, which did not exist when I initially visited the city a year earlier.

This first generation of post-communist women, face a number of new challenges such as rising food prices, sexist employment practices, and expensive childcare. Despite the existence of these issues, which could unite and mobilize post-communist women, few of those interviewed indicated that this was occurring. Additionally, few felt that society or government fostered their political involvement at the high or low-intensity levels. Regionally, some women interviewed were quite adamant that the apparent lack of female political involvement is a missed opportunity for women, especially younger women, to voice their concerns. Others simply stated that their participation was unwanted and that it “would not make a difference.” Twenty years of democratic transition has brought many changes, despite some positive signs of female social and political involvement, as will be seen, there are still a number of women in the region who refrain from even low intensity political participation.

In this dissertation, I have argued that the communist legacy, the weakness of an institutionalized woman’s movement before 1989, and gendered job displacement after, together helped produce a situation where women were less inclined to participate in low intensity political activity during the initial transition away from communism in Europe. Yet, now it has been two decades since the Berlin Wall fell and a new generation, a post-communist generation, of women has come of age. Therefore, this chapter explores the effects of 20 years of post-communism on women (of the new and older generations) in the ECE region and on female LIP in general.

This chapter is broken into three topics. First, I explore the opinions and perceptions of women, regarding participation, employment and government, in the

post-communist region by analyzing responses to my three country telephone surveys. This provides a quantifiable measure for examining female LIP in the region today. This data shows mixed results, as in almost all instances there is an increase from 1999 in both the number of respondents who might consider LIP activities, but also an increase in those that said they “would never” participate and a drop in those that indicate that they already have done so. In the second section of the chapter, I explore how the eastward expansion of the European Union and the NGO sector, two processes that have resulted in major changes in the region, are affecting women’s willingness and ability to be politically active. To do this, I address the evolution of these processes from the 1990s till today and suggest the potential for, yet to date unrealized, increases in levels of female LIP. In the last section I return to the original argument of this dissertation regarding female LIP during the initial transition period, and assess the importance of the contributing factors today. In doing so, I determine that the communist legacy, the weakness of an institutionalized women’s movement, and gendered job displacement continue to be relevant factors affecting women’s LIP in post-communist Europe. Finally, I conclude with a brief summation of the dissertation project and present some questions for future analysis.

Regionalism

In my research design (see Chapter 2), I explained that it is appropriate to consider the formerly communist countries of Eastern and Central Europe in the early 1990s as a region and in doing so to acknowledge country differences, but to focus heavily on their similarities. Despite obvious geographic, demographic and cultural differences, in 1990 all of the countries were emerging from 40 years of communist rule. For almost half a century, these countries had extremely similar political and

economic systems and in many ways, due to physical and political isolation, citizens in the region had rather similar worldviews as well. Now, 20 years later, while it is still proper to refer to these countries as a geographic region, which does retain aspects of its communist legacy, the individual countries have traversed varying transition paths. Today, it is fitting to highlight the growing differences among countries in the region. The countries of the region have chosen various economic paths, political structures and in some ways have seen a rebirth in their own national identities since 1989. It is interesting to note that this has occurred at the same time that the individual countries sought and achieved membership in the EU, and organization that requires some level of economic and political convergence. In regards to women in the region, it is also true that while they have some similar concerns and challenges as their neighboring eastern sisters, there is a larger degree of divergence now than there was a generation ago. As one of the Polish women I interviewed pointed out, “[w]omen were previously more homogenous, now they are more separate – [there are] more options.”

Participation and Opinion a Generation Later

In Chapter 1, I used results from the World Values Survey as evidence to discuss the informal political participatory attitudes of women in the ECE region. The data showed that the average LIP activities of those in the ECE region were notably lower than the average for responses to the same LIP questions asked in Western Europe, the United States and Canada. Breaking statistics down by individual country, LIP related questions showed that within each country (including what was East Germany and what after 1993 became the Czech Republic) there was a gendered pattern of participation. In each case, men were more willing than women to say that they

participated in these activities. Conversely, women were significantly more likely to respond that they “would never” do so. Although the gendered nature of this finding remained consistent throughout the ECE region, the WVS indicated that women in the NBL and, to a lesser extent, women in the Czech Republic were more likely to participate than women in other countries of the region. Only 8.8% of women in the NBL and 16.1% of women in the Czech Republic indicated that they would never sign a petition, whereas the 1999 regional average was 42.8%. Likewise, in regards to participation in a lawful demonstration, 23.2% of female respondents in the NBL and 34.7% in the Czech Republic said they would never take part in such an activity, below the 49% regional average. My other two cases represented opinions below regional averages. Women in Romania responded at 63% that they would never sign a petition and in Poland the figure was 54%. In terms of willingness to attend a legal demonstration, 54% of female respondents in Romania and 67% of women in Poland answered that they would never do so (WVS 1999).

In 2005, the WVS released an updated, though abridged, survey round. Poland and Romanian were both included in the sample, although the NBL and the Czech Republic were not. Statistics comparing responses to the petition and demonstration question from 1999 to 2005 indicates even greater numbers of Romanian women that claim they would never participate in either activity. For example, in 1999, 63% of female respondents said they would never sign a petition. By 2005, 72.3% of women asked provided the same answer. A similar story arose for women and demonstrations in Romania (54.4% to 70.9% in 2005). In Poland, the statistics were more favorable. In 1999, 54% of women said they would never sign a petition, and in 2005 that

percentage was down to 49.2%. Likewise, for willingness to demonstrate the figures for women in 1999 was 67% and in 2005 it was 64.9%. While the situation in Poland seems to have improved slightly, the WVS still shows that around 50% or more women in the country say they would never take part in these two forms of low-intensity political action (WVS 1999; WVS 2005).

In an effort at contemporary comparison, I commissioned research institutions to conduct telephone surveys in the NBL, the Czech Republic, and Romania. In the surveys I asked questions related specifically to types of LIP (e.g. “would you sign a petition”) as well as questions that can help inform decision about LIP (e.g. “what is your biggest worry?” and “do women support women?”). These questions allude to obstacles to female LIP. For example, as seen in Chapter 6, if women are worried about finding and keeping a job, the labor force and participatory link of enhanced efficacy may not be strong and hence we would expect low female LIP. Related to this, if a majority of women in the country feel that having a job is important or they seek to be employed full time and jobs are not available, this too could damage confidence and efficacy that might affect a woman’s willingness to be politically active.

The information gathered from these surveys highlights the current level of female LIP among the sample populations in these three cases, as well as the patterns of difference between these countries. Although the statistics are quite helpful in this assessment, it is always difficult to compare statistics across sources. Moreover, I purposely sampled only women. Therefore, the statistics from my surveys do not address male participation. However, based on past WVS rounds, as well as interview

data, we know that female participation rates continue to be lower than men's in the post-communist region. Additionally, the individual surveys are representative of women's opinions in the three cases, but they are not necessarily representative of women of the entire ECE region. The inclusion of the NBL survey, the area showing the highest level of female LIP in the 1999 WVS, and of Romania, which had quite low returns on female LIP, does however, provide some range of context for the region.

An effective way to compare survey question responses from different countries is to merge the data into a single dataset and then to compare the results using factor analysis. By determining a number of factor components, I can see which questions "hang together." This indicates that there is some underlying value or reason compelling people to answer groups of questions similarly. This process does not indicate responses to the individual questions, but rather what questions fit together.

Running all of my questions through the factor analysis, the results indicated that the ideal component number is three.¹⁴² This number is selected because it provides the best categorization for the questions, allowing for the most substantial explanation of response variance.¹⁴³ With the addition of a 3rd component and beyond, as represented by a scree plot, the added amount of variance explained was minor and therefore unhelpful. In the end, factor component 1 accounts for the greatest amount

¹⁴² This was done using Principle Component Analysis (PCA), a type of factor analysis. This was run using SPSS software.

¹⁴³ The purpose of factor analysis is to find a limited number of factors (latent variables) that drive question response. There are likely a large number of these variables, but it is most useful to pick out the ones that explain the most significant amount of response variance. Examining the component matrix and the degree of variance (eigenvalue) there is a point at which the added variance becomes so small that its inclusion is unnecessary. This is visible in a scree plot where the line connecting components levels off.

of response variation at 17.7%. The second factor component represents an additional 11.7% of variation with component 3 displaying 8.9% of variation.

FACTOR COMPONENT 1: PARTICIPATION

<i>Survey Question</i>	<i>Factor</i>
Interest in Politics	.676
Willingness to sign a petition	.671
Willingness to work at an NGO	.648
Willingness to attend lawful demonstration	.618
Having women in politics is important	.587

The factor comparison from these five questions, particularly the first four, return high similarity statistics. This means that those that responded a given way to the question about their interest in politics, correspondingly had similar responses when asked about petition signing, demonstrating and so on. Therefore, we can surmise that those who are interested in politics are also willing to participate in lawful demonstrations. Likewise those that are not interested in politics are also likely to have indicated that they would not participate in a demonstration. The underlining value here is the importance, or lack thereof, placed on political participation.

Q 1: Are you interested in politics?

	Very	Somewhat	Not Very	Not At All
Czech Rep.	11.5%	52%	23.8%	12.7%
NBL	9.6%	34.7%	47.1%	8.7%
Romania	4.8%	36.6%	32.2%	26.3%

Q 2: Would you sign a petition? 2008 (WVS 1999)

	Have Done	Might Do	Would Never Do (1999 WVS)
Czech Republic	22.8% (57.4%)	72.1% (26.5%)	5.2% (16.1%)
Germany (NBL)	14.3% (60.6%)	47.3% (30.6%)	38.7% (8.8%)
Romania	5.1% (9.2%)	50.8% (27.8%)	44.1% (63%)

Q3: Would you work for an NGO?

	Have Done	Might Do	Would Never	Don't Know
Czech Republic	16.7%	41.8%	31.0%	10.5%
NBL	13.6%	42.4%	43.3% ⁰	0.7%
Romania	2.5%	35.6%	61.9%	-----

Q4: Would you participate in a lawful demonstration? 2008 (WVS 1999)

	Have Done	Might Do	Would Never Do
Czech Republic	8.7% (23.6%)	52.0% (41.6%)	39.3% (34.7%)

NBL	28.2% (44%)	34.4% (32.8%)	37.3% (23.2%)
Romania	4.3% (11.4%)	38.1% (34.2%)	57.6% (54.4%)

Regarding the question asking respondents about their interest in politics, both the NBL and Romanian samples indicated that a larger percentage of them are either “not very” or “not at all” interested. Women in the Czech sample were much more inclined to answer that they cared about politics.

Exploring the two questions (petition signing – Q2 and demonstrating – Q4) with comparable data from 1999, there are mixed results. In both petition signing and demonstrating, the number of respondents from the 2008 surveys, answered much less that they had participated in such activities. The figure for women demonstrating in Romania was low in 1999 at 11.4%, but in the more recent survey it was lower yet at just 4.3%. Although the “have” participated statistics declined in all cases, there was an increase in all cases of respondents who said they “might do” such activities. This may indicate an availability issue in which respondents have not had the opportunity to take part in such forms of LIP. Having not participated, these “might” responses indicate that for a number of women, the possibility at least exists. However, just as there was an increase in “might do” responses, there was also an increase in “would never” responses. Again, with the exception of Czech petition signing, in the petition signing and demonstrating questions, over a third (and sometimes well over a third) of women asked said that they “would never” take part in these LIP activities. The fact that there is an increase of “would nevers” in the NBL in both questions, and for demonstrating in the Czech Republic suggests that this may be a negative trend, as these are the two cases in the region that in the past exhibited the lowest “would never” responses in 1999.

Assessing NGO work, it is notable that over a third of respondents in each case replied that they have or would work for an NGO. Given that there was no comparable question in the WVS 1999 survey, it is difficult to compare these numbers to earlier times. However, the fact that in all three cases a third of respondents also claimed that they “would never” work for an NGO might suggest that there remains some stigma attached to NGO activity in the region. This is borne out in my interviews, as many noted the legitimacy of NGOs (see next section). For Romania the returns, with 61.9% of female respondents replying that they would not work for an NGO is likely due in part to the exclusion of an “I don’t know” option as well as the shorter existence of NGOs in Romania when compared to her neighbors.

Q5: How Important is it to have women in formal politics?

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not so Important	Not Important
Czech Rep.	39.3%	53.4%	5%	2.4%
NBL	38.9%	46.4%	12.2%	2.4%
Romania	27.5%	48.5%	16%	8%

For those that advocate for increased numbers of women in formal political office holding, the results for the question “how important is it to have women in formal politics” are promising. In each of the three cases, at least 75% of female respondents indicated that it was either “very” or “somewhat” important that women hold political office. This is especially positive in Romania. While the numbers of women in formal office remain quite low there, the fact that a sizable portion of the female population at least sees the role that such women could have is notable. This could be the first step toward more women at least being willing to take part in LIP activities, as argued earlier the most enduring path toward greater HIP, though the data indicates that this has not happened as of yet.

It is interesting that the responses for these five participation component questions all show respondents from the Czech Republic as more participatory in general. Based on these questions, women in the Czech Republic are more interested in politics, more likely to agree that women in office are important, and are more willing to work for NGOs or participate in the LIP activities assessed. My surveys suggest that women in the Czech Republic are now more engaged in LIP activities than female respondents in the NBL, where women were significantly more participatory than women elsewhere in the region in the 1999 WVS survey.

The gendered job displacement variable (see Chapter 6) likely plays a role. The depth and extent of gendered job displacement in the NBL has affected a significant number of women there. Not a single woman I spoke with in the NBL failed to mention the on-going worries of finding employment opportunities. In fact, when asked about their worries today (see subsection on additional questions), women in the NBL were almost three times as likely to mention employment concerns as women asked in the Czech Republic and even Romania. The fact that Czech women have not dealt with such extensive gendered job displacement and have with a few exceptions (the early 1990s, and 1997-98) had relatively stable economies has meant that these women are learning valuable skills on the job and as will be discussed in the final section of this chapter, are beginning to see the link between their position in the labor market and their potential voice in politics.

FACTOR COMPONENT 2: GOVERNMENT AND FEMALE IDENTITY

<i>Survey Question</i>	<i>Factor</i>
How well does the government represent women?	.706
Level of trust for politicians	.665
Women in politics represent the interests of women in general	.480
Do women have specific interests separate from other groups?	.444

The above factor component questions also link together. Specifically, the communist legacy and lack of an institutionalized women’s movement are both at play, leading respondents to have similar responses to these four questions. As explained in Chapter 4, trust in government in the ECE region is especially low due to the history of repression under the communist governments. Although during that time women were held up as examples of the communist ideal and were given significant social benefits, there was and remains a skepticism about political motives. Additionally, the last two questions deal with how women perceive themselves and how they perceive each other.

Q6: How well does government represent women?

	Very Well	Somewhat Well	Not Very Well	Very poorly
Czech Rep.	.8%	14.5%	43.3%	41.5%
NBL	.9%	26%	64.2%	8.4%
Romania	.7%	19.4%	47.4%	32.5%

Q7: How much do you trust government/politicians?

	Completely	Somewhat	Don’t know	Not Much	Not at all
Czech Rep.	2%	26.2%	-----*	33.5%	38.3%
NBL	.2%	22.2%	6.4%	50%	21.1%
Romania	.6%	12.7%	39.9%	46.8%	-----**

* “Don’t know” was not an option in the Czech Republic

** “Not at all” was not an option in Romania

Women in these three cases are not very trustful of government and they do not view government as very effective in representing women. The sense of government distrust inherited from the communist era and perhaps strengthened during the uncertainty of transition is evident here. Additionally, the recognition, in all three countries, that their governments are not doing enough to represent women is notable. Whereas women in the Czech Republic and NBL are involved in female LIP, and Czech women more so than a decade ago, Romanian women are yet to make that link

between their involvement and governing effectiveness exhibiting both low trust and low participatory numbers.

Q8: Do Women Support Women?

	Yes	No	Don't Know
Czech Rep.	54.4%	35.3%	10.3%
NBL	68%	26.7%	5.3%
Romania	58.8%	24.3%	16.9%

The answers to this question on female support runs somewhat counter to the interview data I collected. In the course of my fieldwork, particularly in Romania and Poland, but in the Czech Republic too, I very often heard that women were not supportive of other women. The discrepancy here could be a specificity difference between the question(s) I was asking in person, and the wording of the telephone survey question. When I spoke with women in the region I was able to clarify that I was inquiring primarily about female support of other women who engaged in formal or informal political activity. Reevaluating the survey forms and the translations, the question appears to have been asked in a more general sense. Therefore, the results might not necessarily contradict one another. Here the indication is that a majority of women asked think that women supported each other. This could be more in terms of helping each other on the job or as neighbors or assisting each other with childcare. Unfortunately, due to this specificity issue, this remains unclear.

Q9: Do Women Have Specific Concerns?

	Yes	No	Don't Know
Czech Rep.	45.6%	28.4%	26%
NBL	74.7%	22.7%	2.7%
Romania	46.5%	31.8%	21.7%

The results for this question are rather mixed. In all three cases, at least 45% of the female populations surveyed feel that women have unique concerns *as women*. However, a notable percentage of women in the Czech Republic (54.4%) and

Romania (52.8%) responded “no” or “don’t know” indicating that in those countries there remains a number of women who do not recognize the issues that they face specifically due to their sex. The near 75% “yes” statistic in the NBL and the 10% larger “yes” response in the previous question asking if women support women also stands out. This is likely related to the women’s movement variable. The women of the NBL have experience unifying along gender lines and have at least seen forms of gender mobilization for thirty years now.¹⁴⁴

FACTOR COMPONENT 3: PARTY MEMBERSHIP

<i>Survey Question</i>	<i>Factor</i>
Do you belong to a political party?	.582

One common LIP activity is party membership. In the ECE region party membership requires slightly more time and commitment than in the United States where one just joins, yet it is not an activity that is as time consuming as HIP activities such as running for office or being in party leadership. The level of party membership in the entire ECE region is low for men, and even more so for women. Forced party membership under communism, part of the continuing legacy, has left many wary of joining a party and skeptical of what such membership will mean. In particular, women were encouraged to be in the Communist Party and were often placed in token positions that were viewed by many citizens negatively. An added complication is the newness of political parties, as well as the often large numbers of parties, and the unclear platforms of some parties. The survey responses to the party membership question are not displayed here because, as with similar findings from the WVS, the figures were so small. My 2008 surveys confirm that, at least in these

¹⁴⁴ A larger discussion of the on-going importance of an institutionalized women’s movement is presented in the last section of this chapter.

three cases, the number of women claiming to belong to political parties is miniscule. In each case no fewer than 95% of respondents answered “no” when asked if they belong to a political party.

Additional Questions of Interest

Finally, although not within the factor components, two additional questions about women’s concerns in the region, and about whether women would rather work outside the home, are insightful. The results seem to confirm our assumption about the relationship between financial difficulties and the desire, or in some cases need, for women to be employed outside of the home. Responses to these questions also highlight the role of employment and the gendered job displacement variable and the labor force and participatory link to LIP explored in Chapter 6.

Q10: What is your biggest worry today?

	Money	Family	Having things	Employment	Politics
Czech Rep.	41.4%	29%	4.8%	12.6%	12.1%
NBL	19.6%	41.3%	.2%	32.9%	5.9%
Romania	42.5%	37.1%	4.3%	13.9%	2.1%

What is apparent in the responses to the above question, asking women to pinpoint their biggest concern today, is that the NBL sample focused on family and employment in much higher numbers than respondents in the other surveys. The documented depth and persistence of gendered job displacement in the NBL is evident in these responses. The double-digit number of Czech respondents (12.1%) that answered that their biggest worry was about politics is significantly higher than the other two cases. Whereas the German respondents high concern for employment likely is contributing to less female LIP than seen in 1999 in the NBL, the fact that a number of Czech respondents chose “politics” perhaps signifies the growing view of

women in the Czech Republic that political processes matter, as evidence by their correspondingly higher figures of female LIP seen throughout this data section.

Q11: If you had a choice, what would your ideal work situation be?

	Full-Time Out of House	Part-time Out of House	No Employment	No Preference
Czech Rep.	43.3%	18.7%	29.8%	17.3%
NBL	43.1%	34.9%	13.1%	8.9%
Romania	52.5%	10.3%	6.9%	30.3%

The responses to this final question run contrary to those that argue that women in the ECE region genuinely want to stay home. Surely some of them do, but in each of the three cases, when asked about their ideal work situation, a significant number of women stated that they would prefer full-time employment in the labor market. The rather low responses by women in the Czech Republic and Romania who said they would like part-time employment as opposed to the higher number for the NBL sample, may have something to do with the fact that part-time work is much more common in the NBL (and Germany as a whole) than in the Czech Republic or Romania. Therefore, that response may be more about familiarity than rejection of part-time work.

Demographic Indicators

Taking the three surveys as a whole, it is possible that there might be some additional indicators that may affect responses. Since the rise of behavioralism in the United States during the middle of the 20th century, there has been a great deal of literature attempting to understand individual motivations for political participation. Most famously is *The American Voter* (Campbell et al 1960) and the V.O. Key response, *The Responsible Electorate* (1966). Those seminal pieces, and other early work on political participation, which examined electoral politics in the United States, have come to inform most of the participatory studies done since that time. These

early studies and those that followed, highlight a number of demographic variables that have become commonplace in analysis of political participations. Conway (2000) lists the most important of these as age, race, ethnicity, religion, gender, income and education. Size of community, and more recently family status, have also become variables of interest in participatory studies (Conway 2000; Parker 2007) Therefore, for each of the participatory questions asked in my telephone surveys, I ran a simple linear regression followed by a series of crosstabulations to determine the impact of demographics I included in the questionnaire: age, educational attainment, marital status, number of children and urban or rural residency. In most instances, the relationship between these variables and question responses were not statistically significant beyond the customary $<.05$ mark. However, in a few cases, the demographic variables were important.¹⁴⁵

Marriage

The most significant demographic variable was whether the female respondent is single, married or divorced. Some research has been done that explores what is often termed a “marriage gap” in political participation. However, the results are mixed. Looking specifically at voting, studies suggest that married people are more likely to go to the polls. The reasoning behind this is to emphasize “the role of marriage in encouraging stability in one’s personal life and in fostering integration into one’s community” (Stoker and Jennings 1995, 425). However, in looking at voting rates in the United States, Kingston and Finkel found that there was indeed a marriage gap in terms of voting, but that when other forms of LIP were observed, single people were

¹⁴⁵ Linear regression, due to the nature of non-dicotomous survey questions is used to determine the statistical significance of the demographic variables. Crosstabulations indicated the direction and strength of the relationship.

more likely to participate than those that were married. They found no indication that there was a gendered dimension to this finding. Stoker and Jennings determined that the marriage gap is not simply about if someone is married, rather who they have married. For women, they found that that the values and beliefs of the spousal partner was significant, especially during the early years of marriage and specifically for women who were previously highly politically active. This was based on the fact that there is a confluence that occurs and a sorting out and setting of priorities that happens when people get married (1995).

Regarding the participatory questions (petition signing, attending demonstrations, voting and working for an NGO), asked of women in my three case countries, the respondents marital status did matter. Marital status was not statistically significant in regressions run on the other questions. While some of the participatory response options varied, in each of the three questions, single women were the most likely to say that they “have” or “would” participate in such activities. This relationship could be a time issue. Women who are married or divorced may have additional responsibilities (and often children-see below) that prevent them from having the time to pursue low intensity political participation. This finding corresponds with Kingston and Finkel’s observation that single people are more likely to participate in the referenced forms of LIP.

Children:

Unsurprisingly, having children appears to effect women’s willingness to engage in political activities. In the questions asking about petition signing, demonstrating and NGO work, women without children were more likely to indicate that they had or would take part in those activities. The participatory question where having a child

was not an indicator was voting. This very likely has to do with the confines of time. Brady et al (1995) suggest that time is an important indicator of willingness to participate in civic activities. Voting is one of the least time consuming LIP activities, whereas demonstrating and working with an NGO may require more of a commitment. Signing a petition also is fairly quick to accomplish, yet perhaps there is a feeling that one is committing to something and that there may be some follow up if one signs a petition.

Education:

As addressed in Chapter 3, educational attainment is often a variable linked with political participation. With more education, theory suggests that women have greater efficacy and are more willing to act to advance their goals. However, women in the ECE region were and continue to be well educated. Therefore, perhaps not surprisingly, this demographic variable was not significantly related to responses about different forms of LIP.

Where education level was significant was in regards to trust in government. Those respondents who had gone to school longer, were more likely to view government and politicians in an optimistic light. Also, in the question about government's attention to women in the individual countries, more educated respondents were again more willing to say that government was positively assisting women. Those with more education were also more likely to state that NGOs are political in nature. These women may have a more realistic or nuanced vision of what democratic governance is and therefore, what is can achieve. This could account for the more positive views of government in the two related questions. Additionally, it makes sense that those with more years of education may have had more opportunity

to learn about the role of NGOs and therefore may be more willing to suggest that they are indeed political. Finally, the one activity that was significant was in voting. The most educated respondents were slightly more likely to vote than those with less education.

Rural or Urban:

Theory regarding the role of rural or urban settings is contradictory. For example, Milbrath (1965) determined that in the United States large cities are more conducive to political participation. Fischer (1995) also found this to be the case. He argued that it is because large cities produce many sub-cultures around which to mobilize. On the other hand, Almond and Verba (1963) in their examination of 16 countries, found no such geographic link. Looking again at the United States, Conway (2000) determined that rural communities actually exhibit more participation. He argued that this is because there is a closeness between citizens and seats of power and hence more of a sense that participation matters in rural settings.

In my ECE surveys, the rural or urban variable was statistically important in the questions about voting, petition signing and defining the work of NGO 's as political. Regarding petition signing, the data supports Milbrath and Fisher's conclusions that those in urban areas were more likely to say that they had signed a petition. There simply may be more opportunities for women in population centers to sign petitions. However, contrary to Milbrath and Fisher, in terms of voting, survey returns suggest modestly higher incidences among those in rural areas. It is odd, that the rural or urban variable was not significant in the other two participatory questions (demonstrations and NGO work). Contact may also account for the statistically significant finding in regards to the questions asking if NGOs are political or not.

Those respondents from urban settings more often answered “yes,” whereas those from rural areas indicated in large numbers “do not know.” Again, this may be an issue of familiarity.

Age

Polling data has shown that young people tend to be less inclined toward political participation. As one ages concerns coalesce (such as pension protection) and participation becomes more likely (Dalton 2002). In the European context, Gallego (2007) found age to be one of the most important indicators of participation. In confrontational activities, such as protesting, young people were more inclined to be involved. In other, less confrontational forms of participation like voting, young people were a minority.

In my analysis, age was not an important factor in responses to a number of the questions explored. The two areas where it was important are petition signing and voting. In both instances the youngest category was the least likely to participate, where as women from older categories tended more toward such participation. This confirms past research on the patterns of age and political participation, at least in these two questions. However, the fact that age was not significant in questions about demonstrating counters Gallego’s findings that young people are more attracted direct political participation.

Data Summation

The data presented here provides mixed results. On the one hand in the Czech Republic there appears to be an increase in LIP, whereas in the NBL and Romania, there is a noted decrease in the willingness of women to engage in informal political activities. A number of women in the region seem to recognize that they have unique

concerns, and many feel that women are important in formal politics. At the same time there is some consensus among respondents in the three cases that government is not to be trusted and that in particular it is not benefiting women. The enduring legacy of communism helped instill this distrust. Plus, the fact that women's groups are new and that a women's movement has not yet fully developed in most of the region would explain why many women are feeling that they are not being heard or represented by their governments, yet they are not mobilizing in large numbers yet to alter the situation.

Also of note, are the high statistics in all of the cases that women, given the choice, would rather work full time outside of the home than stay at home. This result speaks to the relationship between the desire for work, and the challenges of economic transitions in many of the countries of the region. In those instances where women want to work, and it is unavailable the ramifications on efficacy and confidence can be substantial.

Finally, the statistics indicate that there are also a couple of demographic indicators of significance. Specifically, marital status and motherhood appear to effect respondent's willingness to participate in LIP activities or to work in conjunction with an NGO. It is notable that some of the other theoretically driven demographics, such as age and education level, were not nearly as significant as one might assume given past studies of political participation.

Women and EU Eastward Expansion

This next section explores the role of the EU's eastward expansion into the post-communist region as well as the influx of a large number of NGOs in the area.

Theorists utilizing path-dependent arguments suggest that not only does history

matter, but the sequence of events is important as well. Those events that are most recent generally have more immediate effects (Pierson and Skocpol 2002). At the same time, as juncture points and historical moments become more distant, the influence of those events begins to lessen. While the communist legacy, the weakness of an institutionalized women's movement and gendered job displacement help explain why women were not politically active, even in low intensity politics, during the early transition years, more recent events could play an even more important role in explaining female LIP today. In particular, the eastern expansion of the European Union and attempts by the organization to include gender policies (specifically on wage equality and gender mainstreaming) in membership accession processes has greatly affected the overall position of women in the region.

EU membership processes could positively relate to increases in female LIP. The requirements for membership might provide legitimacy to new women's groups in the region that might bolster their activities, creating a foundation where women's rights and protections are acknowledged. This could lead to an enhanced sense that women are a vital part of society and result in more desire to participate in the public sphere.

My research suggests that EU expansion has brought funding eastward, helped legitimize the need for a focus on the challenges faced by women and has led to the creation of a number of laws and ministries dedicated to the advancement of women. However, despite these positive developments brought on by the EU membership process, this has not yet corresponded to a significant increase in female LIP. Part of

the reason that this link has not yet formed, is because in many instances the changes have not been accompanied by genuine political, or even significant public, will.

Incentivizing Greater Gender Equality

One of the biggest factors influencing the economic and political transition processes in the post-communist region has been the candidate incentive structure and recent realization of membership for many of the formerly communist countries of the Warsaw Pact into the European Union. The desire to join the economically prosperous Union resulted in speedy responses from the ECE countries when the possibility was first presented in 1992. In 2004, the EU welcomed eight formerly communist countries including the Czech Republic and Poland. In 2007, Bulgaria and Romania also acceded to the Union.

Over the past twenty years, the European Union has attempted to advance the economic, social, and political positions of women among all of its member states. In its 2001-2005 *Community Framework Strategy*, the European Commission went so far as to declare a strong link between democracy and gender equality, stating explicitly that where gender inequalities exist, democracy is lacking (Weiner 2009, 303-304).¹⁴⁶

Previous efforts focused primarily on gender and the labor market, but in recent years, policy has expanded to also include the effects of globalization and trade on women (Gender Equality). The articulation of this new vision is through what officials commonly call “Gender Mainstreaming.” This is the practice of examining all policies and their potential ramifications for women, as well as men, recognizing

¹⁴⁶ The EU has only gradually reached this conclusion. Although the 1970s did see some important EU legislation aimed at improving gender equality, it was only recently that women’s rights, especially equality beyond the labor force, became an important mission of the Union (Anderson 2006).

that often policies will have different effects on people based on their sex (Lombardo 2003, 162). Arguably one of the most important EU agreements on gender is the *Amsterdam Treaty*, which entered into force in 1999. Although lacking in specificity, it solidified equal opportunities for both sexes as a main goal of the organization, requiring member states to take gender considerations seriously in social, economic and political policymaking (Röder 2004; Gender Equality).¹⁴⁷

Relating specifically to the accession process, among the mandated social reforms for aspiring EU candidates are the *acquis* requirements. These are a grouping of human rights (including gender rights) principles (Röder 2004). Beveridge describes them as “the existing body of Treaty provisions, directives and European Court of Justice decisions on equal pay, equal treatment, and maternity and parental leave which is binding on member states” (2007). These *acquis* requirements are also somewhat vague, yet it is clear that they require candidate countries to make an effort to deal with gender issues. This has meant the creation of new governmental institutions to oversee issues of potential gender inequality, and it has led to new laws and increased funding for gender-related projects. During the accession process, the EU attempted to assist the aspiring countries through partnerships with current members and by providing financial assistance for projects viewed as enhancing gender issues (Anderson 2006; Beveridge 2007). Therefore, particularly through membership requirements, the EU has played a significant role in attempting to advance the position of women among its new and aspiring members of the ECE region.

¹⁴⁷ While there might be complaints about the vagueness of these and other EU policies, the very governmental structure of a 27 member large EU relies to a degree on non-specificity to garner support for policies.

Women, the EU and the Case Countries

The EU accession process, and the adherence to the gender requirements, was different in each of my cases.¹⁴⁸ For the Czech Republic, it was a matter of garnering political will, whereas in Poland EU, membership sparked debate on the controversial abortion issue. In Romania, the need to further industrialize and weed out government corruption was a primary concern. Yet, the first two in 2004 and the last in 2007 all eventually reached their membership goals.

Czech Republic

The Czech Republic officially applied for EU membership in 1996 (Anderson 2006). When Czechoslovakia, and after 1993 the Czech Republic, worked on establishing its constitution and building democratic institutions. This process drew focus away from other issues, such as women's social coverage and rights. While there was an antidiscrimination law in the communist constitution, the democratic constitution that replaced it provided no such guarantee. However, in the late 1990s, government officials started putting into place legal protections for Czech women. These included antidiscrimination laws, and more recently, important legislation to protect women from domestic violence. It is no coincidence that this legislation corresponded with the Czech Republic's EU accession process. In fact, though there was little political will to take such actions, the Czech Republic instituted EU requirements relating to gender with little opposition due to strong political desire favoring membership (Haskova 2005).

Despite a late start, once the Czech government moved toward gender equality, it did so with remarkable speed. Officials determined that the Czech Republic had met

¹⁴⁸ The GDR/NBL did not go through the traditional accession process. The NBL entered the EU upon unification with West Germany (an EU member) in 1990.

almost all of the EU gender requirements by 2000. Two years later, the country added a ban on indirect discrimination, further enhancing their membership bid (Anderson 2006).¹⁴⁹

Poland

In Poland, there were few laws that addressed gender, equal rights, or equal opportunities throughout the entire 1990s. In fact, up until 2000, it was legal for job postings to include gender requirements. Even the possibility of EU membership did not lead to an immediate inclusion of gender-related policies.

Poland was one of the first ECE states to apply to join the EU. The Polish government submitted the necessary paperwork in 1994 and pushed forward in its attempt to meet the membership requirements (Anderson 2006). Though starting two years earlier, Poland took much longer to implement the *acquis* gender requirements of the EU than neighboring Czech Republic. The gender requirements were quickly linked to the controversial abortion issue. During the 1990s there was an effort by some groups (newly formed women's groups, liberal political parties-many of them with international support) to legalize abortion. Abortion had been legal under the communist regime, but after 1989, one of the earliest new laws in the predominantly catholic country was a ban on abortion. The struggle to repeal the law brought out a number of those in favor of legalization, but it also mobilized some people (many of them women) against abortion rights. There was short-lived mobilization of women on both sides of the issue. However, even something as controversial as abortion did not prove sufficient to keep significant numbers of women involved in political life. Perhaps had there been a stronger women's movement in the country during the

¹⁴⁹ These are not specific requirements, but the EU mandated that the Czech Republic took significant and sufficient steps to show that the country was "gender sensitive."

1990s, female mobilization against the anti-abortion law could have been larger and could have sustained. Correspondingly, conservative elements dissipated and the anti-abortion fight did not serve as the basis for continued mobilization of “conservative” women either. The ban, with some considerations, is still in place (Puhl 2010).

Despite the desire to join the EU, it was difficult for Poland to push forward on gender mainstreaming legislation. Though a difficult process, Poland did eventually legislate for greater gender equality passing anti-discrimination and equal pay laws. Though some doubt remained, EU officials indicated that Poland had made sufficient progress on gender issues by mid-2001, and the process for membership continued (Anderson 2006).

Romania

After Poland and Hungary, Romania applied for EU membership in 1995. However, Romania’s path toward membership was longer than many of its neighbors. The corruption, poverty, and slumping economy of the 1990s slowed the reform process. Though missing the 2004 round of admissions, after additional reforms and with a warning that there was still much to accomplish, Romania (along with Bulgaria) joined the EU on January 1, 2007.

Given the long path necessary for economic recovery and the country’s recent history, which associated politically active women with the much-despised Elena Ceausescu, it was unlikely that Romania was going to advance female friendly policies. However, EU membership forced the issue. It was only once Romania became serious about EU membership, that politicians began to pass laws and policies to alleviate gender discrimination and provide other protections for women. Perhaps the most significant of these was the 2002 passage of the *Law on Equal*

Opportunities and Treatment for Women and Men. This law was important because it was one of the first notable efforts by the post-communist government to declare, on paper, that men and women be treated the same in education and in the labor force. As membership drew closer, the government also added sexual harassment to the Criminal Code (Oprica 2008, 31).

After Membership: Female LIP

The “carrot and stick” approach to EU membership provided sufficient incentive for the Czech Republic, Poland and eventually Romania to take steps toward greater policy equality between the sexes. Significantly, the process added needed legitimacy to those arguing for more attention to women’s concerns. However, once admitted to the EU, the incentive structure altered. Today, many debate the depth of gender friendly policies and institutions created to aid the candidate country’s membership goals. The process helped make important strides for women, but after membership the extent of waning political will was more evident. This has limited the ability of the EU membership process and eventual partnership in encouraging women’s LIP to date.

Female citizens and representatives of women’s organizations I spoke with in Poland, the Czech Republic, and Romania all agreed that the EU accession process led to significant changes in their countries, including greater attention to gender issues. After 1989, gender differences became more apparent, yet despite the important contributions of small groups of women, gender remained an under-discussed topic. In many ways, it was not until the EU accession talks began in the mid to late 1990s, and it became clear that gender policies would be a membership consideration, that eastern governments began addressing issues of wage disparity,

domestic violence, sex trafficking and other areas of female concern (Interviews 2007-2008). Most people I interviewed said that without the EU there would not even be the minimal reforms associated with compliance.

The EU process bolstered the position of those working to advance women and encouraged their public involvement. Because the EU required these changes, there was an external source of legitimacy. Hašková and Křížková “argue that preparation for the Czech Republic’s accession to the EU was the most important legitimizing force to help promote gender equality in the country” (2008, pnk). An academic at the University of Warsaw suggested that “EU membership creates the right atmosphere” No longer were a small group of women trying to bring gender issues to national attention and facing the predominant anti-feminist culture, but a respected organization was mandating change (Hašková 2005; Lohman 2005). EU activities also created and strengthened networks of women’s organizations, again often with international organizations, so that the young groups in the ECE region began to learn from groups working elsewhere (Regulska and Grbowska 2008). Additionally, the accession process brought financial support for important projects (Hašková 2005; Röder 2004). Women I spoke with felt that these were significant steps, which will provide the basis for more genuine policy changes and they hope greater female LIP, in the future.

Despite these effects, many of the steps aspiring EU countries took, were done simply for political reasons, not due to a genuine sense that more laws and institutions were needed to promote women in the individual countries. With membership attained, the nature of these political intentions became clearer and there has been

some backsliding. One example is in Poland where one of the new ministries, created during the accession process, aimed at enhancing greater gender equality quickly lost funding after membership was assured. Many of the women I spoke with argue that, gender mainstreaming is now only a minor consideration. In the course of her research in Romania, Elaine Weiner found a similar situation. A number of the female activists she talked with felt that the Romanian government acted on gender policies only with EU membership in mind. Beyond that, these women told her, there was no true political desire for the changes to gender policies and the supposed dedication to the issue was waning after the 2007 entry of the country into the Union. As one of her interviewees explained, it was “an issue of compliance not commitment” (2009, 308). There is real concern that with membership achieved, there is little further incentive to maintain the focus on gender that candidacy required.

A few women I spoke with suggested that there might even be some sort of “back-lash” since political will was lacking in many instances and the general public was not overly supportive of gender policies. They felt that it was viewed by some in their countries as “EU imperialism” and aspects of external dictates. Therefore, the EU membership process may have created the basis from which enhanced female LIP may eventually develop, yet the dearth of political and public will so far has not led to a surge in female LIP in the region.

Of my cases, the one place where there really appears to be an increase in female LIP is in the Czech Republic, where the figures from 1999 were already higher than the regional average. Although there was little political will to push gender equality

laws, once EU membership was an option, there was no substantive resistance to the legislation either. This could indicate that perhaps the process of accession has had a positive effect on female LIP in the country. However, the more likely situation is that there was already an underlying atmosphere that made Czech women more accepting of such policies to begin with. I have argued in this dissertation that the moderate levels of gender job displacement in the 1990s and the relative stability of the economy was significant during the early transition period, and I would argue that it remains an important factor for explaining female LIP today. The fact that Poland began the EU membership process earlier and witnessed little in the way of increased female LIP during that time frame suggests that the accession process, at least in these cases, has only had limited effects on LIP to date.

Non-governmental Organizations in Post-Communist Europe

An influx of international NGOs and the birth of local NGOs have accompanied the post-communist transition. Discussed throughout this dissertation (see Chapter 5 in particular), there was a noted absence of a women's movement, a known creator of female LIP) in much of communist Europe. The same can be said of NGOs in general and in particular those that dealt with women's issues prior to 1989 – there were next to none (Huland 2001). After 1989, hundreds even thousands of NGOs seemed to develop almost overnight. NGOs in the ECE region, in many ways attempted to fill the space left by the state. Some NGOs have organized to guard the environment, such as the *Polish Green Network* others to provide healthcare and education (e.g. the *Center for Development and Innovation in Education* in Romania). A few NGOs specifically aim to enhance the position of women. One such organization is *Forum 50%* in the Czech Republic. In 2004, a handful of friends in their twenties, realizing

that there were few female role models in formal politics or in business, founded this NGO. They made it their goal to educate girls and women, to socialize and link them so that they might some day reach their goal of 50% women in the political and economic arenas (Interviews 2007-2008).

Participation with any of these NGOs has the potential to create efficacy for women, and some of their work can classify as LIP. NGOs might provide the opportunity to provide an alternative to participation in formal politics. In this section I address the evolution of NGO activity in the ECE region, specifically as it relates to women. I conclude that the sector is providing some new opportunities for women and it has allowed for the institutional expression of many new ideas, many advanced by women, in the region. However, similar to the situation with EU expansion, NGO development in general does not appear to be corresponding with greater levels of female LIP. Research suggests that third sector legitimacy and funding issues are largely responsible for the lack of a significant link between NGO growth and female LIP.

Over the last decade, scholars observed a trend among a number of NGOs that surfaced in the post-communist region.¹⁵⁰ Many of the people working in these non-governmental organizations were women. This is what many have now termed the “feminization of NGOs.” In my interviews, I asked people why they thought women were particularly drawn to NGO work. Many women I spoke with felt that the effects of NGO work were more direct in that they could see programs develop at a much quicker rate than timely formal political process where “politicians just argue and accomplish nothing.” They also often stated that the work was often in their own

¹⁵⁰ This is an international trend.

communities. As one woman explained, “[w]omen often don’t mind working the lower rungs, even of NGOs, because they feel they are making a concrete contribution.” Respondents also pointed out that often times these jobs were low paying, and therefore women might be more willing to take them than men. Some also commented that it was the fact that there were not a significant number of men in these jobs that made them appealing; there were opportunities for advancement. There was also the notion that this was a natural continuation from some of the dissident work women participated in during the communist era, which focused not on gender, but rather on human rights issues. NGOs, some explained, provide a new means by which to work to help people locally and in troubled areas around the world.¹⁵¹ Some are quick to point out that at the leadership levels, women are not nearly as prevalent as in the sector as a whole. They also suggest that many of the women who are in leadership work, are in NGOs that deal specifically with women and family. Yet, the fact remains that there are a significant number of women involved in or working with NGOs. Hence, a basis exists for female efficacy creation and additional participation in LIP activities.

Despite the presence of women in NGOs and some of the positive benefits they provide, there remain obstacles limiting, so far, their relationship to higher rates of female LIP in general. Much of this is the questioned legitimacy of NGOs, a new phenomenon in the region. Additionally, funding fluctuations and restrictions have made it difficult for small NGOs, often created by women, to flourish.

¹⁵¹ Due to linkages with international organizations, many working with NGOs are actually doing work to provide assistance to trouble areas of the world. There is also some indication, that doing working internationally is more effective as it allows these NGOs to side-step national governments in the ECE region.

First, the NGO structure in much of the region is arbitrary and was previously largely unmonitored. Although the number of NGOs appears staggering, a representative from one of the Czech NGO brokers who educates such organizations about grant availability, cautioned that the numbers are often misleading. He explained that there were officially over 1,000 NGOs registered in the Czech Republic at the end of 2007. However, he noted that roughly a couple hundred of those were actually operating as intended. A politically active woman in Romania explained a similar situation claiming that despite the apparently large number of NGOs in her country, “only about 100 are active.” Though the laws are under review, up until that time, the requirements for registering as an NGO were rather minimal and the tax benefits and potential for grant money were inviting. Therefore, all sorts of groups were trying to claim the benefits of an NGO classification.

Related to this, many in the region are uncertain about the role of NGOs in their countries. It is unclear what their function is and how they relate to politics in general. NGOs currently lack legitimacy among many in the region. A young Czech woman who works in an NGO commented that, “NGOs could save politics from the apathy and negativity it creates in the general public,” but that in many governments these organizations face an uphill struggle as they receive little attention from the institutions of formal power. For example, Czech President Klaus has adamantly declared his dislike and distrust of NGOs and his government provides these NGOs only minimal funding and even less political voice. This is not just the case in the Czech Republic. A Romanian woman I spoke with who works for such an organization lamented that, “[t]here is little partnership between civil society and

ministries.” Explaining that the influence of NGOs at this point is limited. A noted and respected academic at the University of Warsaw explained that while NGOs, even some dealing with women’s issues, have become more commonplace, in Poland they remain “very politically contentious – tensions are high.” Another woman I spoke with in Poland declared that, “NGOs are not popular in Poland. In rural areas especially, people do not see NGOs as avenue for change.”

Finally, the funding structure has altered, in large part due to EU membership, leading to a professionalization of NGOs that favor large, often international, organizations that tended to be more inclusive of several opinions and goals. Czech sociologist Hana Haskova has written about the professionalization of NGOs in post-communist Europe. In her work, and in talks with me, she explained that there was a great influx of money to help establish NGO work during the 1990s. Funding came from organizations in the United States, like the *Soros Foundation*. During that time, money was directed at broad, sweeping, thematic projects. This meant that a project funding call might simply state that funders were looking to fund work dealing with social development or something similarly broad where the organization could remain somewhat flexible in how they interpreted the call.

Over the last decade, however, US funding has dissipated and gone to projects further east. The European Union has stepped in to fill the void, but the restrictions placed on much of today’s funding are more specific than previously. The result was that NGOs shifted their missions toward much more specific, and in many instances “shoe horned,” objectives to meet funding requirements. This means that small NGOs, which may not have the ability to remodel themselves or take on several

diverse projects, most of them operated by women, are losing out (Haskova 2005). One woman explained, that at her organization they spent at least six months out of every year writing and reviewing funding grants in the hopes that they will be able to piece together enough money to continue their work, which has been a huge frustration. In conversations with this woman after the initial interview, she explained that she had left the NGO sector because she felt “too much time was spent finding money, and not enough doing the real work.” The new structure benefits NGOs that have strong international ties, if not mostly international leadership, and those few groups that are established.

Therefore, as with EU membership, while new organizations are being created and some of them do seek to assist women, the increase in the numbers of NGOs across the ECE region has not had a corresponding effect on female political participation. None of the women I spoke with indicated that NGOs were encouraging them to participate. Those that were involved with NGO work, referred to their activity in terms of employment and career as opposed to political activity. Additionally, while such employment could eventually lead women to develop skills and efficacy for participation in more traditionally political areas, those I interviewed did not feel this was happening yet.

In sum, the EU policies and development of the NGO sector in the ECE region since 1989 have both had the potential to create efficacy among women that could result in encouragement toward engaging in more LIP activities. However, to date the possible links between the EU and NGOs with enhanced female LIP are largely limited due to a lack of genuine political and public will (the EU) and legitimacy and

funding concerns (NGOs). Despite the important work done to improve the position of women in a number of ECE societies, it does not yet appear to correspond with any notable increase in female LIP. Therefore, in the next section, I revisit the original argument to determine the current day relevance for female LIP in the ECE region.

Communist Europe: A Generation Later

In the preceding chapters, I argued that three factors help explain low statistics of female LIP across much of the post-communist region during the early transition years. The communist legacy, the weakness of an institutionalized women's movement before 1989, and gendered job displacement after communism, contributed to a situation where many women choose not to participate in low intensity political activities. When one of these factors was not present or was less intense, such as East Germany where there was a woman's movement, and the Czech Republic where gendered job displacement was limited, female LIP was evident in higher numbers than elsewhere in the region. These variables help us understand low LIP during the early 1990s. Here I reexamine my argument in the current context and once again explore the three related variables to determine their continued relevance. Ultimately, I determine that the variables are still significant for understanding female LIP in the region today.

Communist Legacy:

Forty years of communist rule continues to have an important effect on how women in the ECE region view their roles in society and in the political world. As the transition began and the formal institutions and structures of communism disappeared, a number of informal practices, which developed during communism, remained and in some instances became reinforced. For female participation, this

meant that after 1989 women in large part discarded the official policies that “encouraged” women into politics. At the same time the negative image of political women, which was unintentionally vilified under communism due to these policies, became even more entrenched. Concurrently, the informal survival strategy of forming close-knit networks that often placed women and the private sphere at the center persisted and recalibrated to a degree after 1989.

Twenty years later, the communist legacy continues to influence how women in the region view themselves and their role in the political world. Specifically, the communist system created distrust and resulted in a situation where people did not view their own civicness as a public good. In many democracies, women tend to spend significant time volunteering their time. Yet, there appears to be no culture of volunteerism in the ECE region. Also, efforts at reconciling with the past have been sparse in some areas, which in some ways allows for the continuation of the misperception that female political participation is linked to communism. Related to this, the supposed female political role models created by communist tokenism have yet to be replaced by new, positive, images of female political participation. These factors derived from the communist legacy continue to influence female decisions about LIP activity a generation after the transition began.

Lack of Volunteerism

In communist societies, where spying was commonplace and the state often intruded into the lives of its citizens, people were suspicious of one another and did not easily trust those they did not know well. The result of this was the development of the social networks discussed in Chapter 4. Trust in government and in politicians remains extremely low. Due to this, civicness or social capital was not often

developed under the communist system. It was common to hear about the dilapidated buildings and the many public spaces that few saw as public spaces worth their effort to maintain. This has continued to some extent. Either there is an expectation that others, maybe the state or an NGO will work to maintain public spaces or to provide needed services. This appears to particularly be an expectation of women, who received social care benefits from the communist governments and who in large part still expect those services to be provided, although in many instances they are not (Interviews 2007-2008; Alesina and Fuchs-Schundeln 2007).

Even with the boom of NGOs in the region, officials in such organizations lament the dearth of volunteers and the lack of donations of time and money from the public.¹⁵² When asked about volunteerism, a young woman from the NBL agreed with the operation stating that, “[t]he loss of certainty and loss of stability makes for a focus on the self.” In the Czech Republic, an NGO official commented, “our heritage of communism remains a roadblock...even today there is no habit of volunteerism.” The consequence, in some cases is not only a lack of volunteerism, but of LIP as well. Based on my interviews, there is little sense, especially among women in states with lower female LIP, that political action is beneficial.

Reconciling the Past

Part of the reason that the communist past continues to have such a deep and powerful undercurrent is because many of these countries have not addressed the realities of their communist history, nor have they sufficiently explored how communism and the post-communist transition have affected gender relations in the region. Doing so could provide an opportunity to examine the true nature of women’s

¹⁵² As explained earlier, many of these NGOs are such in name only meaning that this contraction may not actually be surprising.

lives under communism, and could help dispel the notion that women in politics and those working to advance the position of women in society are not linked to communism.

The degree of reconciliation varies significantly. On the one hand, is the German case, where officials opened Stasi records and undertook an official process of lustration during the early 1990s. There are also a number of archives, museums and some public lectures that allow people to explore East German communism. The NBL were likely encouraged to reconcile this past by the process of unification. West Germany had experienced a similar period when it went through the years of de-Nazification after WWII. Additionally, likely given the fact that there was an active women's movement in the 1980s, the issue of gender relations before and after communism was and has been explored to some extent (Interviews 2007-2008).

On the other hand, is Romania, where twenty years later many files remain closed and especially tightly guarded (Tismaneanu 2003; Interviews 2008).¹⁵³ Archives are rare and often incomplete. When I scoured Bucharest in search of a museum or public archive where I could study Romanian communism, I found few possibilities. At one point I was told, “[w]hy would we have such a thing? We have spent two decades trying to forget communism.” A Professor at the University of Bucharest echoed the sentiment explaining that there is little attention focused on the past because elites fear what might be uncovered and the public would “just as soon forget.” A male

¹⁵³ Romania did not open its files early on due to instability and rampant corruption in the initial post-communist government, led by “reformed Communists.” It was not politically expedient to release the information at that time. Today, this remains an issue, as a number of officials still in office were also active in the government before the revolution in 1998. The opening of communist files at this point could be very damaging for a number of very influential people (Interviews 2007-2008; Tismaneanu 2003).

party official explained that many top officials have old communist links, which they work hard to suppress. Tismaneanu (2003) agrees, noting that in Romania the break with the past was the least complete in the region. Another young woman at the University in Bucharest lamented the fact that there was so little discussion among the public and even academics, about what communism was in her country. In this context, the specific influence of the Ceausescu regime regarding women and gender relations, although mentioned, has not been analyzed to any great extent within the country (Romanian Interviews 2007-2008).

Poland and the Czech Republic fall somewhere between the NBL and Romanian cases. Neither have fully reconciled with their past, and certainly not in terms of gender equity. An elderly Czech woman explained, "...communism was a national trauma, it is hard to look back." In Poland and the Czech Republic, political considerations may also have been significant in decisions about post-communist lustration. During my time in Poland there was a scandal surrounding former Solidarity Leader and President Lech Walesa. Serious accusations arose about the exact nature of his interactions with the communists in the early 1980s or his attempts to limit access to possibly damning information about that relationship during his presidency in the 1990s (Puhl 2008). In the Czech Republic, minor attempts at "remembering" the past also occurred when there was a potential profit. There exists a rather campy, though entertaining, communist museum in Prague and tourists with enough money can overnight in the room where the police once imprisoned Vaclav Havel.¹⁵⁴ However, much of this is arguably superficial.

¹⁵⁴ These instances are not confined to the Czech Republic. A similar hotel exists in the NBL on the site of a famous women's prison.

In general, respondents stated that there was not much to address or truly learn from the past. This is especially the case among younger people in these countries, many of whom have rather unclear ideas of the region's history. There is little mention of communism in textbooks and most people I spoke with explained that they learned very little about the communist era in their schooling. In fact, in a current Romanian middle school history textbook I read, the discussion of World War II was more extensive and insightful than the few pages that glossed over forty years of Romanian communist history. Interviewees throughout the region, even in the NBL, explained that this is rather common. There is often much more attention paid to dissent and "revolution" than the communist period. The difficulty of reconciling the past with the present is clear and understandable. However, an investigation of what communism was and what it meant for women and for how women viewed the political realm before 1989, could create new opportunities for reshaping the image of political women today.

Female Role Models

In the ECE region today, there are still few positive female role models. One woman that many in other areas of the world might assume serves as a female role model for eastern women is Angela Merkel. Merkel was raised in the GDR and studied physics at the University of Leipzig. She became the German Chancellor in 2005, serving as the country's first female Chancellor and its first from the NBL. Today, Chancellor Merkel is one of the world's most powerful individuals, and arguably its most influential woman (Langguth 2007). Oddly, however, none of the NBL women I interviewed during my fieldwork thought of Angela Merkel as a woman worth admiring. One or two western women, not specifically part of this

research, noted Merkel's political achievements and lauded the "glass ceiling" she broke for German women. Yet based on my interviews this does not appear to be a strong sentiment among women from the new German states. Women I spoke with further east did not see her as a role model either.

Part of the explanation may come from the fact that Merkel represents the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), the party of unification, but also a more conservative party with waning support in the NBL (Ibid). As one German woman I interviewed said "Angie does not give much attention to Eastern issues or to women." Another important factor could simply be that Merkel does not attempt to represent the NBL or to represent women and therefore few think of her as doing so. While no one I spoke with suggested that Merkel was an especially negative role model, no one interviewed felt that she, or any other woman, had filled the "negative" space of past political women such as Elena Ceausescu in Romanian or Margot Honecker in the GDR. The legacies of these two women and the destructive image of political women they presented during communism, has dissipated over time, however the lack of current female role models in political life leaves young women in the region without a positive image of politically engaged women.

Women's Movement

In Chapter 5, I explained the importance of a woman's movement (defined as gendered discourse of, by, and about women) for efficacy building potential and an institutionalized basis geared towards female political participation. A women's movement in democratic societies is known to be a creator of female efficacy and LIP. In communist Europe, however, with the exception of East Germany, there was no such movement available to provide women a true political voice. This situation

was a result of the appropriation of women's issues and the "women's question" by the communists and the us-versus-them mentality that the communist governments created, which situated average citizens against the state apparatus. The universality of suffering obscured societal cleavages, which might otherwise have been a means to mobilize women along gender lines. Women seldom thought of their gendered needs, but rather they thought of their particular family needs or of human rights in general.

East Germany did see the development of a women's movement in the 1980s, which helps explain the NBL's above average numbers of female LIP. Over the past 20 years, there have been some issues reconciling the West German and the East German women's movements since unification. Despite these difficulties, a women's movement has persisted in the NBL. Women I spoke with in the new states often mentioned the women's movement or specific women's groups as important entities operating to represent women. Therefore, despite the many issues of unification, particularly the long-term and gendered nature of post-communist unemployment, women in the NBL have continued to stay rather engaged and to take part in LIP activities. This was evident in the statistical section where NBL women, more than Romanian and Czech women, acknowledged that women have specific concerns and that women support women.

In the rest of the region, today there are signs of the nascent phases of a women's movement in many ECE countries. However, women's organizations are still attempting to define themselves in "eastern terms," which address female concerns relevant to the communist and post-communist experiences. Trying to form a movement that both embrace some of the notions of gender equality laid out in

communist theory and manipulated to their benefit by communist government, while disassociating from that era is difficult at best. At the same time, some women, especially those hoping to develop a women's movement in their countries, feel that Western women's groups are taking Western values and experiences and pushing them onto Eastern women with little regard for the context of the formerly communist region.

Women from the West and those from the East have divergent concerns. For example, western groups emphasize the goal of increased labor force participation as a means toward greater gender equality. Eastern women do not view their employment as a political maneuver. They have been employed in significant numbers for years, and now are more concerned with finding jobs to feed their families. This process of figuring out how to work for gender equality will likely take some time. Siklova wrote, "[p]lease realize that our rejection of many of the ideas supported by feminism is primarily a reason of our own recent past, as well as to the indoctrination we were subjected to for decades" (1996, 77). Perhaps, as one woman suggested, "sisterhood is not universal."

The difficulty in aligning Western and Eastern women is additionally compounded by the fact that some see Western groups as controlling and imperialistic. For example, a Polish woman explained to me that, "Western feminists were welcomed early on because they brought new ideas, but it was also a negative experience. Westerners did not understand Eastern context. They [western feminists] were elitist and pushy." Finally, there are those that see western groups as encouraging women to work and thus devaluing the role of mother. ECE women see

both as important. These differences have made it difficult for convergence (Interviews 2007-2008).¹⁵⁵

Although it has been 20 years, activities associated with advancing women's rights have retained a communist association among large segments of people. Initially, women's rights were a bourgeois ideology that had no place in communist society. During forty years of communism (and longer in the Soviet Union), due to the formal policies that provided social services to women and placed women in political offices, female advancement was no longer seen as bourgeois, but as communist. This association continues to be difficult to bridge.

Feminism: A Four-Letter Word

One of the issues hindering the development of an institutionalized women's movement in many ECE countries, and hence limiting one of the largest known mobilizers of female LIP, remains an aversion to the word feminism. This is a label that groups associated with women are given, even if they are not overtly feminist in nature. In regards to the term "feminist" a young man in the region exclaimed, "I don't like feminists! They are man hating witches!"¹⁵⁶ A number of women I spoke with made similar comments. One said, "[w]e had a role and a place and we didn't need them [feminist organizations]." A middle aged Romanian woman told me that, "Romanian women are not feminists. A woman who asks too much is weird." The distaste and misunderstanding of the very word is prevalent. An older Czech woman relayed a story about her 19-year-old granddaughter, explaining that she was very

¹⁵⁵ This is not simply an East and West issue. The complaints of many of the women from the ECE region about the focus on very "Western" concerns is similar to the concerns many women's groups in the Global South share in their interactions with similar groups in the Developed North.

¹⁵⁶ This comment is likely not dissimilar from comments made by people elsewhere around the world. However, the historical context of the feminist ideology is more loaded in the ECE region than in other places.

excited about a new club she and friends had developed meeting once a week to allow young women to gather and talk about concerns and issues. She hoped that her granddaughter might join the club as well, but was not shocked when her granddaughter responded, “no way, women’s groups are lesbian groups.”

Part of the aversion to western feminism comes from the idea that to advance women’s rights, women must “make the private public.” Still today, many women in post-communist Europe have difficulty speaking about their personal or female concerns. The reconciliation of private and public life is still quite difficult for women who previously found security only in the private sphere and to an extent, their private networks. This again is rooted in the communist experience where the private sphere was a shelter from the government and was almost sacred. Young women I spoke with suggested that they have learned this behavior from their mothers, and that they too have difficulty talking about private issues.

I also discovered first hand that even representatives of women’s NGOs, who clearly advocate for feminist ideals, such as working to advance more women in politics and business, equal pay for equal effort, and abortion rights services, were very careful not to label themselves as “feminist” organizations. In private, they would admit that they personally were feminists and that their organizations certainly were.¹⁵⁷ However, they explained that to get any respect from the population and to best do their work, they shied away from the label “feminist.”¹⁵⁸

When I asked Siklova in person about the Czech women’s movement she commented, “movement, what movement? There is still only the very beginning of a

¹⁵⁷ Using the very basic notion of feminism as the belief in equal opportunities for men and women.

¹⁵⁸ Obviously, despite their reticence to embrace the feminist label, some of the activities of these women might still be considered LIP.

movement here.” A young Romanian woman suggested that the women’s “(struggle) remains in its infancy” in her country. Siklova herself stated confidently, “it will take time, but it will happen.” Given the communist legacy and the interactions with western feminists, it may seem surprising that women’s groups have developed at all. In this, the role of external funding cannot be underemphasized, nor can the role of the EU in legitimizing such efforts. With even just the beginning of such movements across the region, the potential positive effects that participation in such groups could have for women are increasing. As a result, today, the region is more conducive to female political participation.

It is possible, though not inevitable, that these women’s groups will get stronger, stabilize and eventually institutionalize into a functioning women’s movement. If this occurs, the efficacy building and participatory lessons associated with a strong women’s movement could contribute to greater female LIP. For now, the general weakness of such movements remains relevant for explaining why many countries in the region still exhibit low female LIP rates twenty years after the end of communism.

Gendered Job Displacement

Gendered job displacement is the final contributing factor that helps explain low female LIP during the initial post-communist transition years in Eastern and Central Europe. The economic overhaul of the transition was widely felt by all citizens, but especially by women. In almost all cases, women were among the first to lose their jobs and they often remained unemployed for longer periods of time than their male counterparts. In some cases, women willingly left the labor force, only to discover that in the capitalist system, employment is often a necessity. The loss of employment

had psychological consequences for women who sought to provide for their families (especially considering the concurrent retrenchment of social coverage policies) and the numerous women who viewed their employment, even in the most menial of positions, as an important component of their identity. Gendered job displacement also meant that many women were no longer gaining organizational skills or developing work-place efficacy that could potentially affect their willingness to act in the political world.

Today, in some regards, the economies of the post-communist region finally show signs of growth and there appears to be hope for continued progress (cite). The EU accession process has undoubtedly contributed a great deal in this regard, as many Union resources have specifically targeted developing labor force opportunities for both men and women. However, despite some positive economic indicators, women continue to represent a significant and generally disproportionate percentage of the unemployed, and female participation in the labor force continues to be low. Women also continue to make up a larger percentage of the long-term unemployed. Hence, the positive externalities that past researchers have found between participation in the labor market and the political realm remain inaccessible to many women in the ECE.

Economic Recovery

During the 1990s, all countries of the ECE region had to rebuild their economies by retraining employees and enticing foreign investment.¹⁵⁹ At the same time, there was little consensus on how best to achieve this. Throughout the last decade, things have improved somewhat as investors, tourists, and the European Union have moved east.

¹⁵⁹ This remains an on-going struggle.

One country where the gendered nature of unemployment has equalized to a degree is in eastern Germany, where men and women each represent about 50% of the registered unemployed. This is not as positive as it may sound. The 2008 figures of eastern unemployment rates are almost 20%. Additionally, it took 20 years for these statistics to become equal, indicating just how long women have faced disproportionate employment challenges.¹⁶⁰ Plus, as women represent a smaller percentage of the labor force, they are overrepresented in unemployment figures meaning that in many ways unemployment remains gendered. Employment of women in the NBL in particular is still a pressing concern. A decade after unification, 2002 Euro barometer data revealed that 30% of female respondents from the NBL considered unemployment their greatest concern out of 44 different options. Likewise, in my 2008 survey of eastern German women, over a third of respondents indicated that their greatest worry was unemployment or earning a livable income (Cruise Survey 2008).

The situation in Poland also continues to be difficult for women. Coyne (2010) reports that the unemployment rate of women in the country is 14.2%, which is the highest among women in the EU 25. It is also higher than the unemployment rate of Polish men, which stands at 11.2%. She also notes that of those women unemployed, over 50% have secondary or higher education levels, where as only 32% of unemployment men are as educated. These numbers may under-represent the situation some, as women are becoming more likely to leave the country in search of employment opportunities elsewhere. They now represent half of those doing migrant

¹⁶⁰ Additionally, the fact that male unemployment now also hovers around 20% in the NLB is not something to celebrate.

work. In Romania, where official unemployment figures are at an apparently low 8%, men make up a larger percentage of women who are unemployed. However, this is misleading. As elsewhere, female labor force participation in the country is 55% whereas male participation is 69%. Additionally, unemployment and employment do not correspond. It is particularly difficult to judge the true extent of Romanian unemployment due to the estimation that as much as 30% of the country's GDP is produced via unofficial means (Kozeva and Pauna 2006). This means that legal jobs are difficult to find for both men and women.

Similar to its neighbors, unemployment among women in the Czech Republic is greater than that of men. However, with only a few down turns the country continues to escape the harsher economic troubles that have plagued others in the region. For example, when I was in the country in early 2008, unemployment rates were around 3-4% countrywide and in Prague, they hovered around 1%. The general availability of work has resulted in significant competition for the higher paying jobs. The young Czech women who spoke with me were very quick to point out not simply the importance of having a job, but of having a well paying job.

For a number of these women, competition for high-paying employment has made them more aware of gender inequalities, and it appears more willing to get involved in LIP activities in an attempt to advance female issues. Additionally, women in the Czech Republic told me that in recent years there has been a growing sense that women need to do more in public life. As a woman in her early thirties said, "I see it among my friends, and even some of our mothers. We do more and we care more [than before]." She was one of many in the country who suggested an economic link

to this growing female awareness. Stating that because significant numbers of women have jobs, they know that they can achieve things. This is not an economic situation where women are simply happy to have work, but with work generally available, they can be picky about what work they pursue and how they spend their time. “We are smart and competent.” Because of this, “of course more women are getting involved. Another women in the Czech Republic said, “[w]omen are realizing their self-interests and worth.” Employment is allowing them the luxury to think about these things and as many told me, it is providing them the confidence and skills to get more involved in LIP activities. This helps account for the noted increase in female LIP in the country.

A generation after the end of communism, female LIP in the post-communist region remains rather low. Despite the many changes, the factors that discouraged women from such participation during the initial transition period continue to affect their willingness to participate today. The communist legacy continues to impact the view of politically active women in the region. At the same time, in most areas a women’s movement, a known vehicle for female political mobilization, is yet to fully develop. Additionally, though some improvements have been noted, a number of women would like to find employment, yet unemployment in much of the region remains persistent and gendered in nature. These factors operating together are barriers to the enhancement of female efficacy, mobilization and in effect low-intensity participation today as they were 20 years ago.

Conclusion

The purpose of this project was twofold. First, my primary interest was in exploring the reasons why, despite grounds to suspect otherwise, a majority of

women in the post-communist region of Europe were not involved politically, even in low intensity political activities. My research indicated the related factors of the communist legacy, the weakness of an institutionalized women's movement before 1989 and significant and long lasting gendered job displacement decreased the likelihood of female LIP during the initial transition period. Each of these contributing factors, and their causes, were addressed in the three empirical chapters presented. Additionally, I wanted to address the state of female LIP in the region a generation after the transition began. Therefore, in this final chapter I explored opinion polling from three countries in the region. I also assessed the role of the EU membership process and the large increase in NGO activity in the region as a potential influencer of female LIP. However, in the end, I returned to the original argument and found that it still helps explain why some women are choosing not to participate in LIP activities today.

Obviously, this study did not answer all questions, and in some instances has created new questions to ponder. Firstly, while I am generalizing my findings to the entire region of post-communist Europe, I base my research on four cases. Therefore, in-depth analysis of additional cases would contribute a great deal to the accumulation of knowledge on this topic. Additionally, as my fieldwork was ending at the beginning of fall 2008, the world found itself in a global economic crisis. How the economic downturn has affected women in general and how it has contributed to their willingness to act in the political realm poses an interesting question for future research. Finally, I am particularly intrigued by the political effectiveness of women

in formal power in Poland, representing over 20%, and the person of Elena Bâescu in Romania. All of these are topics I hope to address in future studies.

Twenty years ago the rest of the world was stunned by the events playing out in Berlin, Prague and Bucharest. All across the communist region of Europe, citizens rallied to topple communist governments and advance the cause of democracy. Among them were a significant number of women who took part in the events in both large and small ways. Today, the young girls of that era and those that were born during the early 1990s, the daughters and granddaughters of the women who saw the end of communism, are coming of age. These young women, the first post-communist generation of women has grown up in democratic and capitalist systems. However, despite the expansion of the European Union eastward and the large growth of NGOs in the region, both of which have the potential to better the position of women, instill greater efficacy and correspondingly enhance female LIP, this has yet to happen in any significant way. The new generation of women also deals with the barriers of the communist legacy, the lack of an institutionalized women's movement and gendered job displacement. When experienced together, these factors continue to affect female LIP in the ECE region twenty years after communism.

However, with the passage of time, these factors limiting female LIP may become less significant. The foundation laid by the EU membership processes and the growth of NGOs (at least legitimate ones) might someday create a basis for greater female mobilization and political activity. In fact, there is a great deal of hope in this new generation of women. In an interview, a Czech woman motioned toward the town-square and said, "[t]he younger generations are getting involved. University aged

people are more active. They are not sheep.” A ministerial official agreed, stating that the “new generation gives hope, they are travelling and learning new languages.” In Poland, a woman I spoke with shared the same sentiment, “[n]ew generations of women are well educated and they will serve as good capital for the next generation.” Likewise, in Romania I was told that the, “[y]ounger generation of women is more open than their elders.” The ability to travel to Western Europe is a significant difference. Many of the new generation of women have gone abroad and have come into contact with material items, cultures and experiences that those that came before them could never have dreamed of. An older woman assured me that there was reason to be optimistic about the political role women would take in the future. As she said, “There exists a huge potentiality of female energy in the region today.”

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APPENDIX A

Telephone Survey Questionnaire

1. What is your age? (ranges- i.e. 18-30, 31-40...)
2. Are you married? (Yes, No, Divorced)
3. How many children, if any? (0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 or more)
4. Do you live in a rural or urban setting?)
5. Are you currently employed outside of the home? (Yes, No, student etc.)
6. What is your level of educational attainment?
 - a. Primary School
 - b. High School
 - c. Some college
 - e. Graduated college
 - f. Some post Secondary
 - g. Post Sec. degree
7. Are you interested in politics?
 - a. Very interested
 - b. Somewhat Interested
 - c. Not very interested
 - e. Not at all interested
8. Is it important that women be politically active?
 - a. Very important
 - b. Somewhat important
 - c. Not very important
 - e. Not at all important
9. Do women share common concerns apart from other groups?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Don't know
10. Do women in political office represent women's needs?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Don't know
11. How would you compare life for women now to life before 1989?
 - a. Much better now
 - b. Somewhat better now
 - c. About the same
 - d. Somewhat worse now
 - e. Much worse now
12. If you had a choice would you prefer to
 - a. Work full time outside the home
 - b. Work part time outside the home
 - c. Work full time inside the home
 - d. No preference
13. Did you vote in the last major election?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

14. If no, why not? (One that best describes)
- Did not know about it
 - Can not vote
 - Too busy
 - Did not know enough about candidates
 - Did not think my vote would count?
15. Do you belong to a political party?
- Yes
 - No
16. Would you sign a petition?
- Have signed
 - Would sign
 - Would never sign
17. Would you participate in a social organization or NGO?
- Do participate
 - Would participate
 - Would not participate
 - Don't know
18. Would you participate in a lawful demonstration?
- Have participated
 - Would participate
 - Would never participate
19. How much do you trust your government/politicians?
- Fully trust
 - Mostly trust
 - Indifferent
 - Mostly distrust
 - Do not trust
20. How well does the government represent women?
- Very well
 - Somewhat well
 - Not very well
 - Very poorly
21. Are NGOs or 3rd Sector organizations, political organizations?
- Yes
 - No
 - Don't know
22. What do you worry most about today?
- Money
 - Family
 - Buying nice thing and going nice places
 - Finding a good job
 - Politics
23. How has the post-1989 transition gone to date?
- Very well
 - Somewhat well
 - Somewhat poorly
 - Very poorly
 - Don't know
24. Do you talk about personal issues, concerns with your mother/daughter?
- Yes, often
 - Sometimes
 - rarely
 - No, never